



PLANNING SERVICES REPORT BYLAW 23-20 – MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

PROPOSAL

The purpose of Bylaw 23-20 is to adopt a new Municipal Development Plan, which will replace the Legacy Plan, adopted in 1998.

RECOMMENDATION OF PLANNING SERVICES

Planning Services is in SUPPORT of this proposal because:

- The Municipal Development Plan (MDP) is the overarching planning document for the Town and will guide land use decision in the coming years.
- The MDP is the result of more than two years of work by Council, administration, consultants, stakeholders and the public;
- It directly supports four of Council's strategic directions:
 - Manage Community Growth
 - Foster Economic Vitality
 - Provide Quality Infrastructure
 - Promote Environmental Excellence

REPORT

Plan Area

The MDP applies to all the lands within the boundaries of the Town of Okotoks.

Background

The current MDP, "The Legacy Plan", was adopted in 1998. There has been a significant shift in community dynamics since the Legacy Plan was adopted. Until 2012, growth and development were limited by the land base and supply of fresh water. However, after three years of public consultation, and with increasing pressure in the region, Okotoks switched from a finite growth approach to a managed growth approach.

To support the managed growth approach, Okotoks annexed additional lands north and south of the former Town boundary and is working on securing additional water supply. This will help to accommodate expected growth over the next 60 years, or to a population of 70,000 to 90,000.

The MDP needed to be updated to provide policy guidance for the development of the annexed lands and to ensure this development happens in a sustainable way that maintains a high quality of life for current and future residents. Additionally, in the past twenty years, there have been changes in legislation, trends and best practices which required a more fulsome update to the Legacy Plan than amendments could provide.

After more than two years of work and community and stakeholder engagement, the Town of Okotoks has prepared a new MDP. “Uniquely Okotoks” will guide future growth and development as the town’s population grows and provide a policy framework that will direct the development of the Land Use Bylaw, Area Structure and Area Redevelopment Plans, Master Plans and Town policies.

Process to Develop the Municipal Development Plan

Residents and stakeholders were invited to participate in a range of engagement opportunities to identify key issues and ideas for the new MDP.

The process was designed to:

- Raise broad awareness of the planning process, increase knowledge about an MDP and gain understanding about the need to update it.
- Provide a range of meaningful opportunities to learn about the project, share input, and engage in dialogue while avoiding ‘engagement fatigue’ with other initiatives.
- Provide clear information about key issues and opportunities, as well as the implications and trade-offs of proposed options and recommendations that would build a shared understanding of what the MDP will look like ‘on the ground’.
- Gather meaningful ideas and input from a diverse range of community members and stakeholders to inform the MDP update.
- Provide clear and transparent information to report back on what we did, who participated, what we heard through engagement activities and how input would or would not be incorporated into the MDP (and why).

Three rounds of engagement activities were offered to the public:

- Phase 1 engagement included broad public outreach and targeted stakeholder workshops, surveys and interviews. This introduced the process and expanded understanding of key issues, trends, and possibilities while providing multiple opportunities to gather community input and identify priorities for the future.
- In Phase 2, specific topics and policies were examined in more detail to build a shared understanding of issues, trade-offs, and implications. Using a variety of dialogue-based activities, consensus started to emerge to guide the development of the plan in Phase 3.
- Phase 3 a full draft and ‘snapshot’ of the new MDP was presented for public review and comment. Online and in-person activities guided the community through core elements of the new plan to gather meaningful input to refine and finalize it.



Policy and Planning Considerations/Analysis

The Municipal Development Plan (MDP) is a statutory plan that is the overarching visioning and policy document outlining land-use planning and development for the Town. The primary function of the MDP is to provide guidance on the long-range planning and physical growth of the Town. It also addresses the social, economic, cultural, historical, physical and environmental health of the community. As per the Municipal Government Act (MGA), Okotoks is mandated to have a MDP in place to guide and direct growth.

Currently, Okotoks is prospering in many ways while planning for and working to address the challenges associated with economic changes to the region. Although not growing as rapidly in recent years, compared to the exceptional growth rates of the past few decades, the Town wants to ensure that future development is sustainable and provides a high quality of life for residents.

The MDP will provide guidance for many of the other projects being undertaken by the town currently and in the near future. Without this coherent policy guidance, it will be difficult to ensure that these projects are undertaken in a manner which works towards the achievement of the community vision in a coherent and effective way.

Overview of Proposed Municipal Development Plan

The MDP is divided into four parts:

- Part A: Introduction
- Part B: Goals for a Unique Okotoks
- Part C: Policy
- Part D Maps

The appendices contain interpretation, relationship with other plans, planning process and engagement, measuring success and implementation.

BIG MOVES

There are five “big moves” in the policy in the draft MDP which move Okotoks towards achieving our strategic goals:

Big Move #1: Neighbourhood Hubs

Hubs provide a mix of land uses with jobs, shopping, education, recreation, leisure, and other conveniences to meet daily needs within a 10-minute walking distance of a variety of homes in a neighbourhood. Hubs will be compact to support walking, cycling, and public transit use and incorporate a high degree of quality urban design, pedestrian elements and social gathering spaces.

Big Move #2: Housing

New communities across Okotoks will have a variety of housing forms to meet different types of needs and income levels. This will include multi-family housing, rental housing, non-market housing and housing for seniors and those with special needs.

Big Move #3: Renewable Energy

Okotoks will encourage renewable energy in existing and new developments and will provide incentives to business owners and residential developers who show innovation in renewable energy.

Big Move #4: Flood Hazard Area

Okotoks will restrict new subdivisions and manage development in the flood hazard zone, expanding the flood hazard area to a one in two hundred flood scenario for greater protection against major climate events.

Big Move #5: Responsible Project Costs

Okotoks will require all developments to account for the social, environmental and economic costs, also called triple bottom line fiscal accounting.

PRINCIPLES

The MDP has been developed with the following principles:

- *Okotoks is a healthy, safe, inclusive community*
- *Okotoks is a sustainable, green and resilient community*
- *Okotoks has a vital, prosperous, innovative economy*
- *Okotoks Council is a fiscally responsible and responsive government*

GOALS

The ten goals for the MDP have been adapted from the One Planet Living Framework.

Managing Growth

Okotoks is a compact, complete and sustainable community that lives within its means so future generations can flourish and where everyone has access to all they need to live quality lives.

Health and Happiness

Okotoks is a place where people live happy and healthy lives using their fair share of Earth's resources sustainably. We work together as a community and with our neighbouring municipalities to discuss and create conditions where people and the environment thrive.

Equity and Local Economy

Okotoks is supported by a diverse and thriving economy, driven by equitable opportunities for all to live, work and thrive. Equitable economic development will allow us to unlock the full potential of the local economy by dismantling barriers and expanding opportunities for everyone.

Culture and Community

Okotoks recognizes the past, present, and future of our town, families and communities through learning, connection and celebration.

Land and Nature

Okotoks prioritizes, protects, conserves and restores our land and water for the health of our people and wildlife.

Sustainable Water

Okotoks uses an end-to-end, watershed lens to protect and conserve our water while preparing for weather and climate change impacts.

Local and Sustainable Food

Okotoks promotes access to healthy, local, organic food as part of a sustainable food and agriculture system that minimizes negative impacts to our community and environment and maximizes opportunities for food and agriculture entrepreneurs and innovators.

Travel and Transport

Okotoks is a community with integrated, connected, multimodal, sustainable transportation options to better support those walking and rolling, people on bicycles and transit-riders, while still facilitating automobile access, for the benefit of our residents and the environment.

Zero Waste

Okotoks promotes a culture of sharing, reusing, and recycling at home, work, school, events and throughout day to day life to achieve zero waste and zero pollution.

Zero Carbon Energy

Okotoks is a leader in net zero carbon energy and encourages innovative solutions to carbon energy consumption in building design, energy sources. We develop partnerships to deliver renewable energy and all our energy comes from non-polluting, renewable sources. We eliminate fuel poverty while sharing information on energy education programs for individuals, companies, and institutions.

OVERVIEW OF POLICY

Managing Growth

To manage growth, the MDP includes policies that will help us develop compactly and sustainably. We will sequence growth ensuring we have sufficient servicing capacity for new homes and businesses. Growth will be managed to make the Town more resilient to climate events and so we can deliver infrastructure needed that aligns with the Town's priorities.

Policy areas under Managing Growth include:

- Manage growth to create a complete, compact and sustainable community
- Plan for and sequence growth to meet the Town's goals
- Allocate water to support Okotoks' vision
- Manage growth to improve resilience
- Plan growth to deliver infrastructure to meet the Town's goals
- Align infrastructure funding with the Town's principles and priorities
- Use Area Structure Plans to define and shape growth
- Requiring Area Redevelopment Plans
- Adapt growth management to reflect changing local conditions
- Manage constraints

Neighbourhood Planning and Design

New neighbourhoods will be livable and sustainable. Vibrant and attractive neighbourhoods will create a unique sense of place and provide mixed-use development opportunities so people can live, work, play and thrive in their community.

Policy areas under Neighbourhood Planning and Design include:

- Create new neighbourhoods that are livable and sustainable
- Include food and agriculture in the Town's design and management of parks
- Create vibrant, attractive neighbourhoods with a unique sense of place
- Create mixed-use neighbourhoods and centres
- Encourage appropriate infill in existing neighbourhoods

Integrated Transportation

Our multi-modal transportation network will be safe, equitable and sustainable. We will improve access to regional and local transit while providing efficient transportation alternatives by employing the transportation hierarchy to reduce dependency on the automobile.

Policy areas under Integrated Transportation include:

- Create a safe, equitable, sustainable and multi-modal transportation network

- Improve access to regional and local transit to provide efficient transportation alternatives
- Reduce car dependency

Climate Change, Community Resilience and Environment

We will foster resilience to climate change. We will enhance innovative water management measures and create resilient buildings, working with ecosystems to make Okotoks a leader in environmentally conscious design. To further this, we will encourage and support net zero-carbon measures and technology.

Policy areas under Climate Change, Community Resilience and Environment:

- Foster resilience to climate change
- Enhance innovative water management measures
- Create resilient buildings
- Make Okotoks a leader in environmentally conscious design
- Encourage and support low-carbon measures and technology

Housing

An increase in the variety of housing options throughout the community will mean more and better housing options for individuals and families of all economic backgrounds and compositions. Our 'housing first' approach will create more diverse neighbourhoods where everyone can thrive.

Policy areas under Housing include:

- Increase the variety of housing options throughout the community
- Increase non-market affordable housing for low-income households
- Provide housing to meet the community's diverse needs

Employment Lands

Facilitating the development of employment-rich industrial lands will attract institutions and businesses to create a more sustainable economy. We will encourage the development of flexible and affordable commercial spaces and support vibrant, attractive mixed-use centres to meet daily needs.

Policy areas under Employment Lands include:

- Facilitate the development of employment-rich industrial lands
- Facilitate the development of vibrant and attractive mixed-use centres
- Encourage the development of flexible, affordable commercial spaces
- Attract institutions and businesses to create a more sustainable economy
- Ensure culture is a contributing force in the Okotoks economy

Parks, Recreation and Natural Areas

We will conserve, restore and protect local and regional ecosystems by utilizing natural asset management as a conservation tool. Through planning and design, we will minimize detrimental environmental impact in our community. We will maintain and enhance the Town's healthy urban forest and uphold our love of recreation by providing rich, accessible recreation and leisure opportunities.

Policy areas under Parks, Recreation and Natural Areas include:

- Conserve, restore and protect local ecosystems and work together with regional partners to identify opportunities to conserve, restore and protect regional ecosystems
- Utilize natural asset management as a conservation tool
- Minimize detrimental environmental impact through planning and design
- Maintain a healthy urban forest
- Provide rich, accessible recreation and leisure opportunities

Downtown

As a distinct district, our Downtown will continue to reflect our unique culture and history. We will create a mix of uses in the downtown core to support business success and a vibrant public realm for the enjoyment of all residents and visitors.

Policy areas under Downtown include:

- Downtown is distinct and identifiable and reflects the unique culture and history of Okotoks
- Create a mix of uses downtown that support business success and a vibrant public realm
- Create a safe and comfortable pedestrian realm downtown

Culture, Heritage and Arts

We will implement standards to conserve and protect heritage resources. Generating and encouraging heritage awareness and education will cultivate an understanding of the importance of knowing where we've come from. We will work to establish heritage conservation funding and celebrate Okotoks through cultural programming while supporting the local economy thereby championing the value of culture for Okotoks.

Policy areas under Culture, Heritage and Arts include:

- Consider and Conserve Heritage
- Generate and encourage heritage awareness and education
- Establish and facilitate heritage conservation incentives and funding
- Grow the capacity and leadership of the community to contribute to culture
- Broker opportunities for all Okotokians to come together through culture

- Champion the value of culture for Okotoks

Alignment with Council's Strategic Priorities:

Provide Quality Infrastructure

Okotoks strives to be a leader in sustainable infrastructure. Our MDP will encourage closed loop energy and economic systems, an active transportation network and working with ecosystems to create low-impact design for stormwater management.

Foster Economic Vitality

The MDP supports a diverse economy so people can live and work in Okotoks, helping them live quality, complete lives in our community.

Manage Community Growth

With our managed growth model, we look to create more complete, compact communities that offer a variety of housing and services so people can live, work, play and thrive in their neighbourhood.

Promote Environmental Excellence

We are known as leaders in environmental excellence. This plan furthers that reputation and commitment by respecting and protecting natural systems and working with them. We aim for a net zero carbon energy future and environmentally conscious design in our housing, neighbourhoods and parks and natural areas. Managing our demands on water resources so as to not over shoot our carrying capacity through development.

Implementation and Monitoring:

The plan will be implemented through regional cooperation, Council's Strategic Plans and fiscal responsibility, while Area Structure Plans, Area Redevelopment Plans and Neighbourhood Area Structure Plans will provide the backbones through which we will further build our community. Our plan will be monitored and reported on every two years and reviewed every five years. Our success will be measured against quantitative and qualitative metrics defined in the Plan.

The metrics found in Appendix D are a unique feature of the MDP that will help Okotoks monitor and measure the performance of how successfully the MDP is being implemented.

Although the Legacy Plan had laudable goals, the policy needed to implement those goals was lacking and there was no commitment to tracking the Town's progress towards these goals. For this reason, implementation of the current MDP was not completed, so metrics are an important tool we can use to ensure regular monitoring of successful implementation going forward.

The metrics section sets Okotoks apart from other municipalities as it illustrates the commitment Council has made to ensuring this MDP is implemented to address the needs of town residents and business owners, to attract new businesses, protect the

environment, mitigate and plan for climate change and help Okotokians achieve a quality of life that helps everyone be happy and healthy.

The metrics were based on best practice and vetted with staff on several occasions. Staff were able to help customize the draft metrics to the Okotoks context by suggesting measures that were more applicable to Okotoks. In consulting with staff we identified areas where we currently collect data and areas where we need to collect data. Having the metrics in the MDP helps to consolidate our data collection. For any gaps in baseline data, staff identified strategies to collect data, or to alter how data is currently collected. This includes adding questions in the community survey, utilizing census data more effectively, etc.

The plan is for metrics to be reported out on every two years. As they are reported out on, Administration will use this information to help direct Council on MDP performance, which can help identify where resources and efforts need to be focused, relaxed or refocused. This, in turn can inform the Corporate Strategic Plan and prioritize other projects (e.g., the Affordable Housing Strategy, Land Use Bylaw, Master Plans, etc.).

The recommendation is that the MDP will be reviewed and updated every five years and the metrics section of the MDP will be updated at that time to reflect any changes in targets or metrics depending on the performance of the implementation of the MDP. The metrics are part of an appendix and therefore not part of the document itself and can be more easily adjusted as needed.

Public Participation and Stakeholder Consultation

Community members and stakeholder groups were invited to share their feedback through three phases of the process to update the MDP.

In Phase 1, community members and stakeholder groups were invited to share their ideas and priorities for the future through interviews, an online survey, and a public launch event.

In Phase 2, community members and stakeholder groups were invited to share their feedback on key policy options and trade-offs through public workshops, interactive MDPizza party workbooks, and workshops in schools in Okotoks.

In Phase 3, a complete draft and snapshot of the update to the Municipal Development Plan was released. Community members and stakeholder groups were invited to share their feedback on the draft through an online survey, at open houses, and at stakeholder workshops.

The following is an overview of the engagement outcomes for the Municipal Development Plan.

Phase 1 Engagement Outcomes

Key issues that were highly supported in Phase 1 engagement included:

- Water Infrastructure
- Parks and natural areas
- Jobs and economy
- Housing options

Table 1. Big ideas that were supported in each key issue category

Key Issue	Big Ideas Supported	How the MDP Responds
Community Resilience (climate change)	Stormwater management Planning for climate change Energy performance Flood management Renewable energy	Vision Principle – Okotoks is a sustainable, green and resilient community Goals Policies 1.4 Manage growth to improve resilience (flooding) 4.1 Enhance innovative water management measures 4.3 Create resilient buildings 4.5 Encourage and support low-carbon measures and technology
Housing Options	Require diverse housing Inclusionary housing	Vision Principle – Okotoks is a healthy, safe, inclusive community Goals Policies 5.1 Increase the variety of housing options throughout the community 5.2 Increase non-market affordable housing for low income households
Jobs and Economy	Attract new businesses Encourage innovation Eco-industrial park Mixed-use neighbourhoods	Vision Principle – Okotoks has a vital, prosperous, innovative economy Goals Policies 6.1 Facilitate the development of employment-rich industrial lands

		6.2 Facilitate the development of vibrant and attractive mixed-use centres
Neighbourhood Design	Well-connected streets Community hubs Design guidelines	Vision Principle – Okotoks is a healthy, safe, inclusive community and Okotoks is a sustainable, green and resilient community Goals Policies: 2.3 Create vibrant, attractive neighbourhoods with a unique sense of place 2.3.1 Define unique neighbourhoods 3.1 Create a safe, equitable, sustainable and multi-modal transportation network
Parks and Natural Areas	Protect views and landscapes Protect and conserve ecosystems Plan for annexed land Protect biodiversity Require environmental inventory and assessments	Vision Principle – Okotoks is a sustainable, green and resilient community Goals Policies: 1.0 Managing Growth 7.1 Conserve, restore and protect local ecosystems and work together with regional partners to identify opportunities to conserve, restore and protect regional ecosystems 7.3 Minimize detrimental environmental impact through planning and design
Sustainable Transportation	Safe walking and cycling Smart design (complete community) Active kids (safe routes to school) Local transit	Vision Principle – Okotoks is a healthy, safe, inclusive community Goals Policies 2.3 Create vibrant, attractive neighbourhoods with a unique sense of place

		<p>2.4 Create mixed-use neighbourhoods and centres</p> <p>3.1 Create a safe, equitable, sustainable and multi-modal transportation network</p> <p>3.2 Improve access to regional and local transit to provide efficient transportation alternatives</p>
Unique Identity and Places	<p>Retrofit spaces (re-use, e.g., Heartland Café)</p> <p>Pilot projects (to test new ideas)</p>	<p>Vision</p> <p>Goals</p> <p>Policies:</p> <p>2.3 Create vibrant, attractive neighbourhoods with a unique sense of place</p> <p>2.4 Create mixed-use neighbourhoods and centres</p>
Water Infrastructure	<p>Re-Use stormwater (for lawn watering)</p> <p>Use reclaimed water (for toilet flushing and lawn watering)</p> <p>Pilot water projects</p>	<p>Vision</p> <p>Principle – Okotoks is a sustainable, green and resilient community</p> <p>Goals</p> <p>Principles:</p> <p>4.2 Enhance innovative water management measures</p>

Table 2. Big ideas that received the least amount of support in Phase 1 engagement

Key Issue	Big Ideas with Low Support	Comment
Neighbourhood Design	<p>Suburban agricultural edge</p> <p>Focus Density</p>	<p>Although there is no mention of suburban-agricultural edge, there are policies related to food production and urban agriculture.</p> <p>Density is necessary for the Town to accommodate growth. There are a number of policies that deal with how the Town will treat density. Negative responses to density may be due to NIMBY-ism, a lack of understanding about the way in which density looks or a lack of support for increasing the Town's population. There is a defined Town boundary and expectation of</p>

		increased population which equals increased density.
Unique Identity + Places	Winter Strategy Design competitions	Several policies deal with winter that are necessary given Okotoks is a municipality that experiences winter conditions. These include: 2.3.5 b) [Public spaces]... welcoming, programmed and low maintenance during winter months 3.1.3 Embrace winter in street design 7.5.1 g) embrace all seasons. Embrace winter and design for year round use, enjoyment, comfort, safety, fun and interest. There is no reference to design competitions in policy.
Community Resiliency (climate change adaptation + mitigation)	Although this was a lower priority for respondents, all ideas in this category received support	We believe the community didn't fully understand the term "community resiliency". See Table 1 for details

PHASE 2 ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

This table does not repeat where the vision, principles or goals are reflected in these categories. See Phase 1 Engagement Summary, Table 1 for those references.

Table 3. Policy Areas and Direction Supported in Phase 2 Engagement

Policy Area	Policy Direction Supported	How the MDP Policies Respond
Water	Design guidelines for water conservation Piloting reclaimed water	1.3 Allocate water to support Okotoks' vision 4.2 Enhance innovative water management measures
Neighbourhood Design	Neighbourhood Design is a priority Strong support for complete communities Over 80% support for all policy direction for neighbourhood design	2.1 Create new neighbourhoods that are livable and sustainable 2.4 Create mixed-use neighbourhoods and centres

Housing Options	<p>Housing was a top priority for many residents and all MDPizza workbooks selected the housing section to respond to</p> <p>Housing choice and diversity was a top priority</p>	<p>5.1 Increase the variety of housing options throughout the community</p> <p>5.3 Provide housing to meet the community's diverse needs</p>
Sustainable Transportation	<p>Strong support for all policy directions including reviewing parking standards</p> <p>Support for prioritizing sustainable modes while recognizing that vehicles and parking are still needed</p>	<p>3.1 Create a safe, equitable, sustainable and multi-modal transportation network</p> <p>3.2 Improve access to regional and local transit to provide efficient transportation alternatives</p>
Parks, Recreation + Natural Areas	<p>Broad support</p> <p>Balancing natural character of Okotoks with recreation facilities was important</p>	<p>7.1 Conserve, restore and protect local ecosystems and work together with regional partners to identify opportunities to conserve, restore and protect regional ecosystems</p> <p>7.3 Minimize detrimental environmental impact through planning and design</p> <p>7.5 Provide rich, accessible recreation and leisure opportunities</p>
Climate Action	<p>Few participants chose to participate in this discussion in the workshops</p> <p>Supportive of incentives for developers</p>	<p>4.3 Create resilient buildings</p> <p>4.4 Make Okotoks a leader in environmentally conscious design</p> <p>4.5 Encourage and support low-carbon measures and technology</p>
Local Economy + Jobs (stand-alone workshop)	<p>Themes</p> <p><i>Partnerships:</i></p> <p>Anchor institutions (post-secondary satellite campus, research facilities, senior government offices) and regional collaboration</p> <p><i>Connected and Vibrant:</i></p> <p>Connecting key destinations throughout</p>	<p>6.1 Facilitate the development of employment-rich industrial areas (innovation)</p> <p>6.2 Facilitate the development of vibrant and attractive mixed-use centres</p> <p>6.3 Encourage the development of flexible, affordable commercial spaces</p>

	<p>community that promotes walkability. Enhance and expand downtown core</p> <p>Smaller hubs (neighbourhood hubs)</p> <p><i>Innovation:</i></p> <p>Establish an innovation centre or business district</p> <p>Attract green businesses (recreational tourism, mentoring new businesses, social/green business innovation strategy, study changing nature of work)</p> <p><i>Flexible and Business Friendly:</i></p> <p>Flexible and affordable commercial spaces (incubator and shared work spaces, home based businesses)</p> <p>Business friendly – cutting red tape to make it easier for small businesses and entrepreneurs to start up, renovate, expand and grow by designating a navigator to assist through permitting process</p>	<p>6.4 Attract institutions and businesses to create a more sustainable economy</p>
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Table 4. Specific Areas that were not Supported In Phase 2 Engagement

Policy Area	Policy Direction Not Supported	Response
Water	<p>Prioritize commercial and industrial development (received the least amount of responses and with mixed support)</p> <p>Comments included making businesses accountable for water consumption and using fees to influence</p>	<p>This policy remains in the draft MDP based on technical expertise and Council desire to invest in the local economy and prioritize mixed-use developments.</p>

	behaviour change to lower consumption.	
Housing Options	Inclusionary zoning (received the least amount of responses and with mixed support)	<p>5.2.1 Prepare for and implement inclusionary zoning</p> <p>This policy is in the draft MDP as a tool to allow Council to develop mixed-use neighbourhoods with diversity in housing. Diverse housing options were highly supported in Phase 1 engagement and diverse neighbourhoods help support social sustainability and resilience. Designing areas for low-income housing only may lead to the stigmatization of those with lower incomes. The lack of support in responses here may be attributed to residents not understanding the technical definition of “inclusionary zoning”.</p>
Parks, Recreation + Natural Areas	Identify and protect ‘conservation reserve’ areas from development. (received mixed support)	<p>Comments indicated that participants want protections for ecological networks in the annexed lands before development is approved and can proceed. There is also support to protect prime agricultural land.</p> <p>Policies in the draft MDP are aligned.</p> <p>7.1.3 Use an ecological network approach</p> <p>7.2.2 Continue to protect and enhance natural assets and their associated ecosystem services</p> <p>7.3.1 Require new developments to address natural systems</p>
School Policy	Naturalization of school grounds	<p>Comments indicate this is not a priority for residents and may not always be appropriate.</p> <p>Nothing in the draft MDP refers to naturalizing school grounds.</p>

Youth Workshops

Workshops held with high school students asked about their preferences for parks and recreation and hang out spaces. Discussions produced the following outcomes.

Table 5. Youth Workshop Supportive Outcomes Phase 2 Engagement

Areas of Need	How the MDP Policies Respond
Need more recreation facilities and a greater variety, both in and outdoors	7.5 Provide rich, accessible recreation and leisure opportunities
Places for informal hanging out	2.3 Create vibrant, attractive neighbourhoods with a unique sense of place 2.4 Create mixed-use neighbourhoods and centres
Better and more diverse shopping and restaurants (including a new movie theatre)	8.2 Create a mix of uses downtown that support business success and a vibrant public realm
Public transit	3.2 Improve access to regional and local transit to provide efficient transportation alternatives

Table 6. Youth Workshop Not Supported Outcomes Phase 2 Engagement

Areas not Supported	Comments
Community Garden	Comments suggest this is not the demographic who would be gardening.
Covered Outdoor Spaces	Their points of reference for covered outdoor areas is that existing ones are outdated and need to be in better locations. This suggests that if covered areas were more attractive and located in desired places, they would be used. Policies related to neighbourhood hubs respond to this.
Skateboard Parks	Comments were that the current skateboard park is not a safe space and is associated with drug use. It is also too small and attracts younger kids with their families. Not always a desirable situation for teenagers who are becoming more independent. This suggests that an appropriately sized and designed skateboard park with better stewardship is needed. Some policies related to recreation detail the need for diverse recreation opportunities which might address the need for a different approach to skateboard parks. These comments are too detailed to be addressed in a MDP.

Elementary School Workshop

The elementary school workshops produced the following outcomes.

Table 7. Elementary Workshop Outcomes Phase 2 Engagement

Areas of need	How the MDP Policies Respond
Recreation facilities	7.5 Provide rich, accessible recreation and leisure opportunities
Better movie theatre	There are no policies that deal directly with specific types of retail. However, this also came up in conversation with high school students. Policies related to mixed-use development may address this.
More schools	2.5 Encourage appropriate infill in existing neighbourhoods (speaks to schools)
Science centre or museum	There are no policies that deal directly with specific types of institutional uses.
More interactive downtown	8.2 Create a mix of uses downtown that support business success and a vibrant public realm
Affordable housing	5.2 Increase non-market affordable housing for low income households
Public Transit	3.2 Improve access to regional and local transit to provide efficient transportation alternatives

Phase 3 Engagement Outcomes

Table 8. Policies that were strongly supported in Phase 3 Engagement

Policy Area	Policies Supported	How the MDP Policies Respond
Neighbourhood Planning and Design	Cluster cultural facilities Identify and protect important views Co-locate community facilities with schools	2.3 Create vibrant, attractive neighbourhoods with a unique sense of place (protects views) 2.5 Encourage appropriate infill in existing neighbourhoods (speaks to integrating schools in neighbourhoods) 6.1 Facilitate the development of employment-rich industrial lands (light industrial cultural precinct) 6.2 Facilitate the development of vibrant and attractive mixed-use centres (integrate residential, institutional, artisanal-industrial and cultural uses)

		7.5.6 Require parks, open spaces, recreation facilities and cultural facilities in all developments 9.5 Broker opportunities for all Okotokians to come together through culture
Managing Growth	Conserve the environment	1.3 Allocate water to support Okotoks' vision 1.4 Manage growth to improve resilience 4.0 Climate Change, Community Resilience + Environment
Employment Focused Lands	Smaller parcels for small businesses	6.2 Facilitate the development of vibrant and attractive mixed-use centres 6.3 Encourage the development of flexible, affordable commercial spaces

Table 9. Policies that were strongly Not supported in Phase 3 Engagement

Policy Area	Policies Not Supported	How the MDP Policies Respond
Housing	Housing diversity Non-traditional housing stock Innovative forms of Housing Non-market housing in new neighbourhoods Integrate non-market housing	Comments on housing centred on the need for parking, concern for reduced real estate values when mixing housing types, the desire for single detached housing, letting the market decide what types of housing are needed, not wanting property taxes to support innovative housing forms, and a declared lack of understanding of definitions. Okotoks is experiencing a need for housing typologies that are not detached housing and recent developments of attached housing have sold out, indicating the market is there. There is a strong NIMBY attitude in many of the comments. Housing policies in the draft MDP support the diverse and emerging needs of housing in the Town, including those to help residents age-in-place (which does not mean in the same house, but the same

		<p>neighbourhood, across housing typologies based on need and where social ties and services exist).</p> <p>The Town has a responsibility to address housing needs and policies in the MDP create the conditions to develop housing to meet those needs.</p>
Water	<p>Water allocation</p> <p>Specifically: Prioritize water allocation for industrial, commercial, or mixed-use developments over residential developments.</p>	<p>Respondents want development halted until a water source is secured and they want enough water supply so conservation is not an issue.</p> <p>We know that conserving water is a wise approach.</p> <p>1.3.1 b) Prioritize water allocation for industrial, commercial, or mixed-use developments over residential developments.”</p> <p>Remains in the MDP as investment in the local economy and mixed-use developments are key priorities for the Town.</p>
Sustainable Transportation	<p>Create a pedestrian-only or ‘care light’ street on McRae Street</p>	<p>Respondents were concerned about losing parking, thoughts about the current downtown led to a feeling that there weren’t enough attractions currently to warrant a pedestrian-only street, and recognition that people don’t want to be outside in winter.</p> <p>These comments fail to consider that the downtown area will change over time and provide different experiences and opportunities for residents, business owners and visitors.</p> <p>There are no policies referencing car-free streets in the draft MDP. However, the attitude of cars and parking over people can be disastrous for creating, designing and developing complete communities.</p>

Shifts in Support

There are some interesting observations in the shifts in support for different policy areas of the MDP.

The most striking is the shift in support for housing and water allocation, which were both highly supported in Phase 1. Water allocation and many housing policies were strongly not supported in Phase 3 engagement. NIMBY-ism, not fully understanding what density can look like and a fear of increased taxation can be attributed to the shift in support on housing. The comments for water in Phase 3 indicate a lack of support for development overall until a water supply is secured as opposed to not supporting the policy.

Although community resiliency was the least supported key issue area in Phase 1 engagement, conserving the environment was strongly supported in Phase 3 engagement. This may be attributed to language. After Phase 1 engagement, we recognized that “resilience” was not a commonly understood phrase and we changed the language to climate change for the remainder of the project.

Renewable energy was highly favoured in Phase 1 engagement, but fell to slightly not supported in Phase 3. Comments suggest solar panels are carbon intensive and don't provide an adequate return on investment. This opinion is based on older information for solar panels and not necessarily true today.

Parks and natural areas were highly supported in Phase 1 engagement and many policies related to parks and natural areas in Phase 3 engagement were neutrally supported. Comments suggest respondents didn't understand some of the technical language in policies.

External Circulation

The MDP was circulated to external referral agents on February 12, 2020 and an amended version, with a list of changes, was circulated on March 5, 2020. As of writing, we have received a response from Foothills County, which is attached to this report.

Two significant changes were made to the draft MDP to address Foothills County's comments. Specifically, a paragraph was removed from the Local and Sustainable Agriculture section and the policy regarding maintaining a 50 year land supply was removed.

Prepared by:
Amanda J. Brinda, MCIP, RPP
Senior Planner
April 27, 2020



MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF FOOTHILLS NO. 31

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March 19th, 2020

Town of Okotoks
PO Box 20, Station Main
5 Elizabeth Street, Okotoks, AB
T1S 1K1

Attention: Amanda Brinda, Senior Planner, Town of Okotoks

Regarding: Draft Okotoks Municipal Development Plan

Further to your emails dated February 12th and March 5th providing Foothills County the opportunity to download and review the draft Okotoks Municipal Development Plan, Foothills County would like to provide several comments for your consideration.

Food Production Systems:

While the positions taken and suggested policy direction in Section 7. *Local +Sustainable Food* on page 40 are not detrimental to Foothills County, we question the stance that the Town appears to be taking regarding the ethicality and sustainability of current food production practices. It seems incongruous that the Town considers the existing inexpensive, world enviable, safe, accessible food systems and the current practices of the agriculture producers of Alberta as unethical and detrimental to the environment.

Growth Areas:

Foothills County objects to the statement contained in Section 1.2 *Plan for and sequence of growth* on page 58 of the document. Policy 1.2.1 (d) is very problematic for Foothills County. Reading this policy in the draft MDP is the first time Foothills has been made aware that the Town wishes to hold 50 years of growth within their borders. This proposed policy has a significant impact on Foothills County and we object to the inclusion of it without appropriate consultation, of which there has been none. We request that this policy be placed on the agenda of the next IMC meeting for a discussion in advance of the public hearing on the proposed MDP.

Further points:

Map D.2 *Regional Context* shows a map of the CMRB jurisdiction. If this map is intending to show regional context it may be prudent to provide a map that shows all of Wheatland County. This map labels a small area as Wheatland County, which is incorrect.

Map D.3 *Regional Corridors* is also derived from the CMRB Interim Growth Plan. The regional corridors are not labeled and there is a dotted line showing a 1.6 kilometre radius around the Town boundary, the purpose of which is not explained.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide Foothills County's comments and concerns regarding the Town's draft MDP. We look forward to continuing to work collaboratively with the Town of Okotoks for the benefit of all our residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Heather Hemingway". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'H'.

Heather Hemingway, RPP, MCIP
Director of Planning
Foothills County

cc. Harry Riva Cambrin, Municipal Manager Foothills