

ALIGNING LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT POLICY WITH WATERSHED MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion & Implementation Guides for Municipalities & Indigenous Communities in the Battle River and Sounding Creek Watersheds



BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

The Battle River Watershed Alliance (BRWA) is collaborating with Municipal Planning Services (MPS) to prepare discussion and implementation guides for municipalities, First Nations and the Métis Nation of Alberta within the Battle River and Sounding Creek Watersheds (the Battle River and Sounding Creek jurisdictions) The project is intended to improve awareness about how communities are currently implementing watershed management recommendations and environmental land management practices into land use planning documents and to identify opportunities for communities to take further action to achieve watershed resilience and sustainability. This briefing note is intended to provide BRWA communities with information about the project and upcoming opportunities for engagement.

The purpose of this project is to:

1. Improve consistency and support the implementation of environmental land management goals and recommendations identified in the BRWAs Watershed Management Planning Process to improve Water Quality, Water Quantity, Biodiversity and Land Management Practices within the Battle River and Sounding Creek Watersheds.
2. Recognize and share information about local successes and celebrate how communities within the watersheds have effectively established policies in existing land use plans to achieve watershed resilience and sustainability.
3. Collaborate with communities throughout the Battle River and Sounding Creek watersheds to develop individualized guides including specific policy recommendations that can be incorporated into the Municipal Development Plans and land management policies or plans of Indigenous communities. These recommendations and policies are intended to support future development in a manner that more comprehensively integrates land management processes with practices and design mitigations to support:

Water Quality	Wetlands conservation and restoration	Riparian Area Intactness
Habitat Conservation and Management	Biodiversity	Water Quantity

Project Funding: Alberta Community Partnerships Grant, partnering with Camrose (managing partner), Flagstaff and Lacombe Counties.

BENEFIT TO BATTLE RIVER AND SOUNDING CREEK WATERSHED JURISDICTIONS

Through the BRWA’s work with communities across the watershed, local jurisdictions have identified the need for “tools” to assist in:

1. Implementing watershed recommendations and environmental land management beneficial practices into development policies in their planning documents; and
2. Establishing more consistent land management policy approaches in the Battle River and Sounding Creek watersheds.

This project will provide the Battle River and Sounding Creek jurisdictions with straightforward recommendations and tools to incorporate into municipal development plans and the management policies or plans of Indigenous communities. Adoption of the recommendations in the guides will improve consistency in land management practices throughout the Watersheds and support the long-term health, protection, and ecological restoration of the Battle River and Sounding Creek Watersheds.

PROJECT TIMELINE

Fall – Winter 2023 – WATERSHED MANAGEMENT POLICY ASSESSMENT

- Review policy documents from watershed jurisdictions to assess alignment with watershed goals (38 jurisdictions)

Winter & Spring 2024 – DISCUSSION GUIDE & ENGAGEMENT

- Prepare a Discussion Guide that summarizes policy review, highlights successes and identify gaps
- Two in-person sessions with leaders and administrators

Summer 2024 – Winter 2025 IMPLEMENTATION GUIDES

- Prepare Implementation Guide Framework and specific Guides for 18 jurisdictions that: identify existing areas of alignment, suggest opportunities for alignment and provide sample policy and actions

PROJECT DELIVERABLES

The following project deliverables are proposed:

Part 1: Discussion Guide for Aligning Land Use Policy and Watershed Management Goals

The Discussion Guide is a high level report for the Battle River and Sounding Creek Watersheds identifying priorities and opportunities to implement recommendations from the Battle River Watershed Alliance's work. It provides a focused review of the current policies in the Watershed jurisdictions' policies and plans related to watershed recommendations and environmental land management beneficial practices.

Part 2: Engagement with Municipal & Indigenous Leaders & Administrators

Each jurisdiction in the Battle River and Sounding Creek Watersheds has unique environmental features, development footprints, and regulatory approaches to land management. These considerations may impact the achievability of land use and development regulation recommendations. To ensure that this project accurately addresses the priorities of the jurisdictions, BRWA and MPS will host an informal workshop for the leaders and administrators in Winter 2024 (tentative date). At the workshop, we will present the preliminary findings of the Discussion Guide, explore the unique needs of each community, and gather input on existing and proposed policies for land use and development in the Battle River and Sounding Creek Watersheds.

As part of the workshop, we will collaborate to explore opportunities to amend/update land use and development policies to support a more consistent approach to land use and development within the Watersheds.

Invitations for the workshop will be provided to communities in early 2024.

Part 3: Implementation Guides for Watershed Management Policies

The Implementation Guides will include individualized reports for select communities that identify areas where policies are already successfully implemented and areas where new policies could be considered. A critical component to the collaborative development of the Implementation Guides will be the Engagement with Municipal & Indigenous Leaders & Administrators to review the preliminary findings of the Discussion Guide, review and refine policies to ensure that the proposed recommendations address the diverse needs of the Battle River and Sounding Creek jurisdictions and identify areas where there may be challenges to implementation. Where there are opportunities for amendments to the policies and/or plans, draft policies will be provided for Administration and Council consideration.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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