

CRP Response to the Province's Cross Ministry Review

Speaking Notes & Q&A for Mayor Linda Bruce, Chair of the CRP

Minister likes the Plan and is conducting a cross ministry review of it...

- On September 18, 2009, Alberta Municipal Affairs Minister Ray Danyluk acknowledged all members of the Partnership for their tremendous efforts over the last four years to bring the Calgary Metropolitan Plan (CMP) forward to help guide the region through growth.
- The Minister informed the Partnership that the Province will undertake a cross-ministry review of the plan, which will involve all relevant ministries. The Minister said the review will ensure the plan aligns with provincial policy, and went on to say that having the region's municipalities work together as they did is essential and that the plan is a better plan because of the involvement of both rural and urban municipalities.
- He also committed CRP-requested funding for the CRP to continue its work on the implementation of the CMP including regional transit, regional servicing, regional economic development, regional GIS and regional waste management.
- Once the review is complete, the Minister will advise the Partnership of the findings and any further direction with respect to the plan and its content.

CRP strongly supports the review...

- The fourteen urban members of the CRP strongly support the decision of the Province to undertake a cross ministry review. CRP also welcomes the Province's pledge of continued financial and other support to implement the CMP and other regional projects.
- CRP members are disappointed that the rural jurisdictions of MD of Foothills, Rocky View County and Wheatland County, rejected the plan because the CRP worked very hard for over three years to try to accommodate the concerns of the rural jurisdictions. Although the principles and values of the plan, along with the plan's settlement pattern, was developed collaboratively with all municipalities, fundamental issues raised by the rural members could not be bridged without compromising the principles and rigorous analysis that created the plan.

CRP will work with rural jurisdictions to ensure continued cooperation

- CRP has invited former rural members to its semi-annual General Assemblies.

CRP has a lot more good work ahead

- The CRP and its members have a lot of work ahead within the urban member's jurisdictions. More than 50% of the land base required for the compact urban nodes of the CMP is within the urban land base. This plus 25% urban densification or infill targets means that urban municipalities are responsible to accommodate a very significant share of the future development within their existing boundaries compared to rural jurisdictions.
- With support of the Province, CRP will continue its work on the implementation of the CMP including regional transit, regional servicing, regional economic development, regional GIS and regional waste management.

The CMP delivers what is required under the Land Stewardship Act...

- First, the CMP provides regional perspective for infrastructure and capacity including transit, water servicing, waste management (and regional economic development to help foster complete communities and jobs where people live).
- Secondly, the CMP guides urban growth to where it should more efficiently go and should not go.
- Thirdly, the CMP protects our environment – our regional landscape and the ecological goods and services it provides including the protection of agriculture lands.
- Finally, the CMP provides for efficient implementation of the plan without eroding local municipal autonomy - without creating a level of government or without bureaucracy.
- To underline the above four objectives of the CMP, CRP has some very compelling and measurable deliverables. For example, we will lessen the spread of the region's development footprint by over 60% - or by 80,000 fewer hectares compared to the status quo or more-of-the-same approach to growth. This also means an approximate 30% savings in infrastructure costs.

Besides Servicing and Transit, Regional Economic Development will be an important focus...

- CRP is looking to regional economic development to help deliver the region's 70 year vision and its focus to help foster complete communities and jobs where people live.
- CRP's Regional Economic Development arm continues to market and develop the region as a region through coordinated and strategic projects.
- A regional economic development strategy is being developed to foster jobs where people live in order that the region has more complete communities with efficient transportation, servicing infrastructure and limited ecological footprint.
- Economic sector profiles complete with business plans and strategic case opportunities have been developed and are ready to be fostered and implemented in the region.

Residents and the media are encouraged to go to the www.calgaryregion.ca web site for detailed analysis of the CMP, the four years of hard work and public consultation and the exciting work ahead for the CRP.

For more information please contact Rick Butler, Executive Director, CRP 403-863-7425 rick@calgaryregion.ca Please also go to <calgaryregion.ca> for more details.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Please go to the CRP web site for the general Q&A's. Here are some of the most recent and slightly more difficult questions that have been asked recently.

- 1. The Province has refrained from getting too involved in the decisions for local planning. In their review of the CMP - what if they request or require major changes to the plan? Are there specific areas they should get more involved or less involved?**

CRP has asked the Province for its suggestions and is looking forward to hearing them.

Minister Danyluk has also been very clear that CRP has delivered a good plan that is based on solid principles, manages impacts on the environment and promotes the sound development of land and infrastructure. He's also commended the Partnership for seeing the value in having a regional plan, as he noted, there is a need across the Province to manage finances and ensure no duplication of infrastructure.

It is also important to note that Minister Danyluk has said the cross-ministry review is looking primarily at how the CMP aligns with provincial policy and direction. We believe that the review will confirm a close alignment.

The Minister has indicated that he hopes the rural jurisdictions will rejoin the CRP. The 14 remaining CRP members agree. CRP members are disappointed that the rural jurisdictions of MD of Foothills, Rocky View County and Wheatland County have withdrawn. Although the principles and values of the plan, along with the plan's settlement pattern, was developed collaboratively with all municipalities, fundamental issues raised by the rural members could not be bridged without compromising the principles and rigorous analysis that created the plan.

- 2. What do you believe are the implications to regional growth if all jurisdictions are not part of the Regional Partnership?**

This is a question that the Province, and the three rural municipalities, will have to consider as implementation of the CMP and the development of the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan continues.

CRP and its members have a lot of work ahead within just the urban member's jurisdictions. This is because more than 50% of the land base required for the

compact urban nodes of the CMP is within the urban land base. This plus 25% urban densification or infill targets means that urban municipalities are responsible to accommodate a far greater share of the future development within their existing boundaries than rural jurisdictions. The urban jurisdictions have a lot of work to do in terms of implementation planning while remaining hopeful that the rural members will re-join us at the regional planning table.

With respect to regional growth, the Municipal Government Act annexation is still a key tool for municipalities to accommodate their growth needs. While we would prefer the rural municipalities to be on the inside with us in implementing the CMP, growth will still be accommodated by the urban centres through tools like annexation as well as through intermunicipal development plan processes.

3. In a general sense, what impact on value will the Plan have on raw land value? – Recently land sales are few due to unfavourable market conditions, but are we seeing prices reduced? In light of both Rocky View County and the MD of Foothills withdrawing from the CMP where do you predict land prices to go in the City and these jurisdictions?

Typically, raw land values for urban development escalate when supplies are constrained, all things being equal. The CMP has identified where urban growth will locate for the next 60+ years. I would expect the development industry to target urban growth areas for their long term needs in much the same way they do now – rely on where MDP's and IDP's and other urban growth studies envision expansion to be.

Optional addition: We believe that the CMP brings a higher level of certainty to the industry - to developers, investors, homebuyers and to municipalities.

- Developers and their lenders who are investing money in land prospects will have a higher level certainty that services like transit, water and sewer can be provided and that their investment can be realized – likely sooner
- Processes for receiving services and gaining municipal approvals can be streamlined
- Whether the desire is to buy in an urban area or a more rural setting, the homebuyer will have a better understanding of future intended plans and related impacts on their investments and their future
- The plan still provides for a diversity of market choices – urban choices and less urban choices – it just makes those choices clearer and leaves less of the guessing out of what the future might bring

4. The key concern seems to be the Calgary veto - Calgary running things?

First and foremost, the fundamental principle of local autonomy remains. The CMP would not be able to force a municipality to change its land use to accept a specific land use that it did not accept, such as:

- The CMP could not force a municipality against its will or zoning bylaw to require, for example, certain riparian setbacks, septic system standards or wildlife corridors (the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan or the Province through its legislation could require such new environmental standards).

The CMP does apply to planning matters that have regional implications. For example, the CMP would be able to require that a water or transit line be placed through a municipal jurisdiction that may not be in favour of (or not in favour of some aspect of) such a regional service. This would maintain the integrity of critical regional water, wastewater or transit services and be subject to a regional decision.

Consensus will always be the goal, but we recognize that this may not always be possible when it comes to regional planning matters. Decisions will have to be made and where consensus cannot be reached, we have agreed upon a super-majority decision making model. This model takes into account two factors that democratically represent the membership of the Partnership and population of the region. That means any binding decision requires the support of least 2/3 of the membership and a majority of the region's population.

If you call this "a Calgary veto", it could also be called a regional veto as Calgary with 85% of the region's population could be 'vetoed' by six members with population of 4% of the population.

The Province has already set a precedent with a similar decision making model in the Capital region.

We have also proposed a dispute resolution process that begins with discussion, then to mediation, then to binding fast track arbitration.

5. At times Rocky View County has been criticized for allowing development without proper infrastructure, local job development or amenities, because the residents could simply benefit from the existing established neighboring areas. Do you feel this has been the case and what do you see changing if anything?

We wouldn't expect that large one-off entities would be duplicated in all compact urban node areas, e.g., Saddledome or Centre for the Arts. However, the CMP does expect that local services be supplied for local development to help avoid needless vehicle trips, and locate jobs in close proximity to avoid cross-boundary trips, and to foster local economic development. Under the CMP we would expect the regional discussion to occur that addresses cost sharing for services across municipal boundaries that does not happen today.

As a critical part of the CMP, the CRP is looking to regional economic development to help deliver the region's 70-year vision and its focus to help foster complete communities and jobs where people live.

Optional addition: Our Regional Economic Development arm of the CRP continues to market and develop the region as a region through coordinated and strategic projects. A regional economic development strategy is being developed to foster jobs where people live in order that the region has more complete communities with efficient transportation, servicing infrastructure and limited ecological footprint. Economic sector profiles complete with business plans and strategic case opportunities have been developed and are ready to be fostered and implemented in the region.

6. How practical do you believe it is to have urban densities in rural areas, albeit in growth clusters?

This is a long term plan. We wouldn't expect to see stand-alone 10 UPA communities spring up in 2010 throughout the region. Regional growth will extend firstly along established corridors (say highway 2 north) where existing infrastructure, jobs, etc already exist. Infill existing communities will also be a challenge, but Calgary's Plan It and other members' plans are already going in that direction.

Contrary to some interpretations of the plan – the CMP does not expect or envision that rural growth should try to become urban in nature. It needs to be clear that the compact urban nodes in the CMP represent a distribution of the regions historical urban growth -which will continue to account for the greatest share of growth into the future – holding a constant 94% “urban” share. The CMP settles the future expected urban growth in a denser, more efficient form which we are calling compact urban nodes.

Notwithstanding the question of which jurisdiction the compact urban nodes fall in, when you look at the regional map you can see that the urban nodes are

located - for the most part – as continuous extensions of existing urban areas and transportation and servicing corridors - leaving more of the rural landscape intact.

As for rural growth, Rocky View County's forecast share of the region's historic growth is expected to increase only slightly from 3.1% (or 36, 817 people in 2006) to about 3.8% or an addition of 69,500 people to about 106,317 people in 2076. These rural growth forecast numbers refer to people in the County who would have traditionally settled in a lower density rural form.

The CMP does not regulate or impose densities; locations or forms on any of this future expected rural forecast population and does not expect or envision that this rural growth should try to become urban in nature.

On the other hand, the plan has a built in flexibility that supports and enables the rural jurisdictions to grow their current hamlets to urban densities over time where they feel it is right.

Continuing with the status quo, or something close to that, is not sustainable (financially or environmentally).

7. At this point in the process there are a wide range of understandings and viewpoints floating around in the media and through the region about the CMP. What are those misunderstandings and what does the plan actually mean for residents?

There are many misunderstanding because human nature loves to dwell on the 1% negative perspective, forgetting that we have 100% unanimity on 99% of the plan.

Myth / misunderstanding #1 - *No water for rural partners.*

What part of yes don't people understand ... the regional plan provides water for urban form that may occur in rural jurisdiction (compact urban nodes), water for rural commercial and industrial (like Balzac area industry), water for existing rural hamlet locations identified as potential compact urban nodes, even including some that do not exist yet such as highway 8 (when they have a plan). Again the Province requires that we manage our growth sustainably and not duplicate infrastructure.

Myth/misunderstanding #2 - *8-10 density is required NOW overnight*

NOT TRUE: policy 4.5 indicates that a local plan will be developed for the area to show plan for staging into 8-10 over TIME. Other factors are also involved such as cost.

Myth /misunderstanding #3 - *All development in rural jurisdiction will be 8 –10 UPA*

NOT TRUE: "Rurals" can do as they wish outside the urban compact nodes. We are hoping they will look at more sustainable models but that is clearly their call. If there are sides to this argument, CRP erred on the side of protecting local autonomy and left the Province and its jurisdiction to deal with environmental matters in rural jurisdictions. Again to reiterate, the Province has mandated municipalities to foster sustainable, efficient growth.

8. With regards to the CMP what's next in the “implementation planning”, or some would say “the interim” (waiting for the Province's review), or some would say “the impasse”?

The Minister has told us to carry on with implementation and that is what we are doing. As stated earlier, CRP and its members have a lot of work ahead within just the urban member’s jurisdictions. This is because more than 50% of the land base required for the compact urban nodes of the CMP is within the urban land base. This plus 25% urban densification or infill targets means that urban municipalities are responsible to accommodate a far greater share of the future development within their existing boundaries than rural jurisdictions. We urbans have a lot of work to do in terms of implementation planning while remaining hopeful that the rural members will re-join us at the regional planning table.

A final point - the Province is not mediating some kind of dispute here. They are reviewing the CMP for alignment to provincial policies and will provide us their suggestions to improve that plan.

CRP understands that the three rural municipalities see themselves as already regional players. While there are challenges with the CMP from their perspective, we ultimately believe that we will come together as a full regional partnership again for the benefit of the Calgary region.

9. What impact will the planned density have on serviced land value?

Serviced land is valued higher than unserviced or rural serviced land. It is the urban centre's experience that higher density land commands higher values.

10. Do you see the regulatory environment surrounding future development changing, either within the major towns and cities, or in the municipal districts?

The plan and the CRP ensure that local autonomy is retained. Municipalities retain current decision making authority but are guided by the plan

And there are very few regional decisions that will be allowed under provincial regulation. They include:

- Implementation of the CMP.
- Alignment of municipal plans with the CMP and South Saskatchewan Regional Plan;
- Determination of the location of the compact urban nodes;
- Implementation of regional water/wastewater servicing and transit.

Areas that may eventually be protected or legislated from development – like possibly certain natural corridors - will fall to the Province and its Land Stewardship Act and the current South Saskatchewan Regional Plan

While local autonomy for local planning matters will be retained, it's not yet known how the regulatory environment may change as it relates to regional planning. The Alberta Land Stewardship Act - the guiding legislation for the Province's Land Use Framework - still has a number of regulations to be developed around cumulative effects that could provide directives that may impact where, when and how development occurs. As well, we have to see what directions come out of the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan, which is expected to be completed next June.