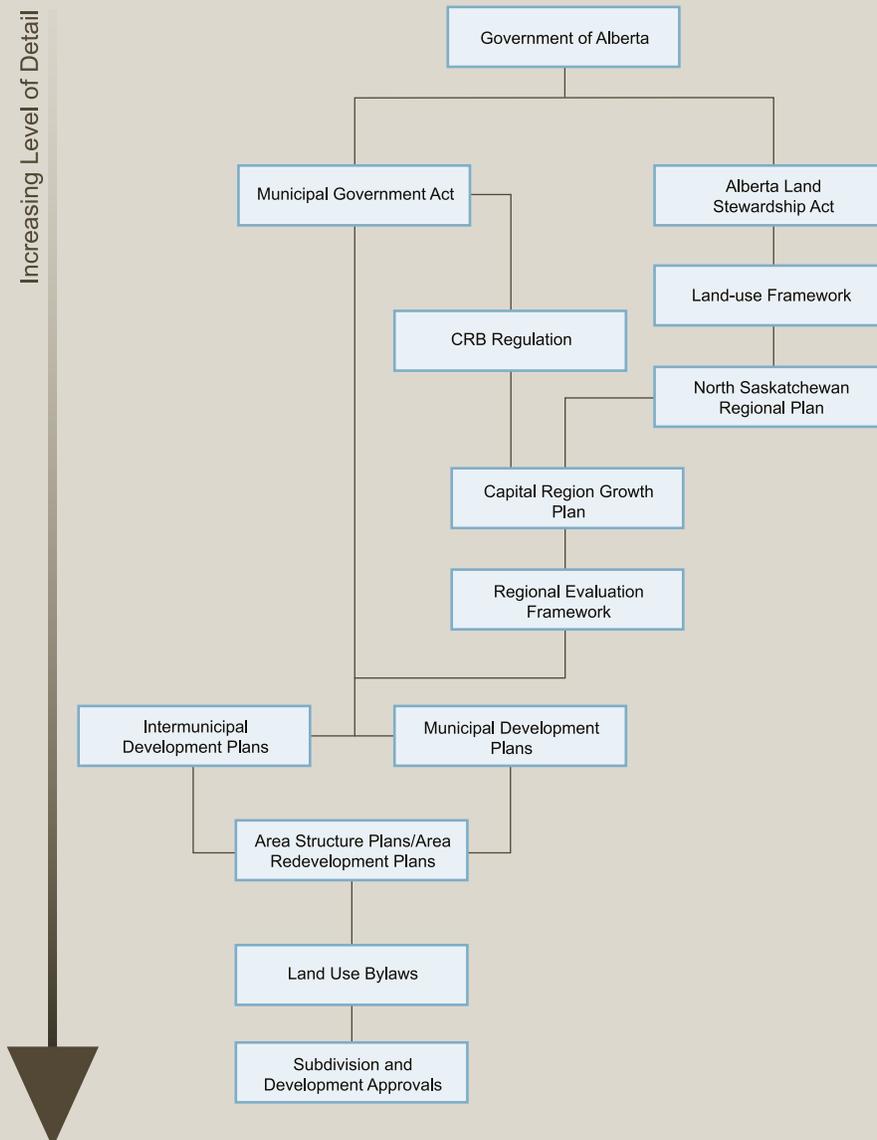


Understanding the Land Use Framework

1. WHAT IS THE LAND USE PLANNING FRAMEWORK?

The framework for land use planning and decision-making in the Province includes provincial, regional and municipal legislation and regulations. The framework organizes these documents in a legislative hierarchy, with each subject to the one above it, to guide decisions on future growth and development in the Province. This module provides a brief description of each of the relevant legal planning documents and also a graphic representation that shows the planning hierarchy relative to the Land-use Framework.

LAND USE PLANNING FRAMEWORK



Land-use Framework

The Government of Alberta adopted the Land-use Framework (LUF) on December 3, 2008. The purpose of the LUF is to provide a land use system that manages public and private lands and natural resources in a responsible manner such that all the combined effects of future growth and new economic development are addressed at the regional level and environmental factors are balanced with economic and social considerations. The Government of Alberta's goal through the implementation of the LUF is to sustain a growing economy, and to achieve the Government's long term social and environmental goals for the benefit of all Albertans and future generations.

Implementation of the LUF is guided by seven strategies. The first of these strategies is to develop a regional land-use plan for each of the seven land use regions created by the Province. As of early 2010, two of these regional plans are under development: the Lower Athabasca and the South Saskatchewan. The Capital Region is part of the pending North Saskatchewan Regional Plan.

Alberta Land Stewardship Act

The Alberta Land Stewardship Act (ALSA), also known as Bill 36, became law on October 1, 2009. This is the supporting legislation for the implementation of the regional planning system under the Land-use Framework. The legislation directs the integration of provincial policies at the regional planning level and signifies a change in the land use planning and decision-making process in Alberta. In those areas where provincial policy does not exist, but there is provincial interest, the Government of Alberta will work to provide that policy direction.

North Saskatchewan Regional Plan

The North Saskatchewan Regional Plan (NSRP) will cover a distinct region that is generally defined as the area within the North Saskatchewan River basin. The purpose of the NSRP is to provide direction regarding land use and watershed management within the Plan area.

Capital Region Growth Plan

The Government of Alberta approved Growing Forward, the Capital Region Growth Plan, on March 31, 2010 and this plan supports implementation of the Land-use Framework at the metropolitan regional planning level. At the regional level, the Growth Plan integrates the following:

- Capital Region Population & Employment Projections Report;
- Capital Region Land Use Plan;
- Capital Region Intermunicipal Transit Network Plan;
- Capital Region Geographic Information Services: Strategy and Implementation Plan; and,
- Capital Region Housing Plan: Strategy and Implementation Plan.

The Land Use Plan of the Growth Plan is based on a shared vision for the future of the Capital Region, best planning practices, and six core principles:

- Protect the Environment and Resources;
- Minimize Regional Footprint;
- Strengthen Communities;
- Increase Transportation Choice;
- Ensure Efficient Provision of Services; and,
- Support Regional Economic Development.

The Growth Plan addresses a wide range of growth and development issues affecting the 25 member municipalities within its boundaries, by providing regional planning principles and policies that promote integrated, efficient and sustainable growth in the Capital Region.

Municipal Statutory Plans

As defined in the Municipal Government Act (MGA), and as required by the CRB Regulation, all municipal statutory plans must conform to the appropriate Metropolitan Regional Plan Principles and Policies, and for municipalities where no metropolitan regional plan exists, the municipal statutory plan must conform to the higher order Regional plan. What this means for municipal statutory plans in the Capital Region is that until the North Saskatchewan Regional Plan is in place, they must conform to the approved Capital Region Growth Plan.

2. HOW DOES THE CAPITAL REGION GROWTH PLAN BENEFIT THE REGION?

The Capital Region Growth Plan, through the implementation of approved Land Use Principles and Policies, establishes a direction for future growth and development in the Capital Region. The Growth Plan aims for more compact growth and efficient delivery of services in the region, thereby minimizing the regional development footprint. It also provides the basis for member municipalities within the Capital Region to form regional partnerships around common goals on matters of shared interest, such as intermunicipal transit service.

The Capital Region Board Regulation became law on March 15, 2010 and Part 2, Section 11 established the objectives of the Capital Region Growth Plan regarding future growth and development in the Capital Region, as:

- (a) to promote an integrated and strategic approach to planning for future growth in the Capital Region;
- (b) to identify the overall development pattern and key future infrastructure investments that would:
 - (i) best complement existing infrastructure, services and land uses in the Capital Region, and
 - (ii) maximize benefits to the Capital Region;
- (c) to coordinate decisions in the Capital Region to sustain economic growth and ensure strong communities and a healthy environment.

The municipal statutory plans of member municipalities in the Capital Region must be consistent in the application of the Land Use Principles and Policies of the Growth Plan. To ensure this consistency, the above objectives are evaluation criteria in the Regional Evaluation Framework (REF).

Overall, the application of the Land Use Principles and Policies of the Growth Plan will result in a comprehensive, integrated approach to managing future growth and development across the Region, and will provide certainty to encourage new economic development and growth that will contribute to the prosperity of all member municipalities.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Capital Region Board

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DISCLAIMER: This Planning Toolkit is a guide to aid understanding of the Land Use Principles and Policies of the Capital Region Growth Plan. It is not a substitute for reading and understanding the Growth Plan. For certainty, the reader is advised to refer to the Growth Plan and related legislation available through the Capital Region Board.