



COUNCIL – AGENDA REPORT

Meeting Date: 17 December 2024

Subject: North Highland Park Update

Directorate: Strategic Growth and Investment

Issue:

Council is being provided with a recommendation regarding growth management in North Highland Park.

Policy / Council Direction:

A report regarding growth management of North Highland Park was submitted to Council on [September 5, 2023](#). Council direction was the following:

That Council directs Administration to undertake a conceptual planning process (i.e. non-statutory) with the landowners located within the NE15-27-29-W4M ("North Highland Park" area) to better understand the various development intentions and create a shadow-plan of how the future of this quarter section could evolve once urban servicing is available, by the Fourth Quarter of 2023.

Accordingly, Administration consulted with the landowners in November 2023 and undertook a conceptual planning process to explore long term potential for urban development of these lands.

Background:

There are currently significant limitations to allowing comprehensive urban development in this area. Regional servicing solutions are not yet funded and general phasing for this servicing is from the south part of the municipality to the north. Airdrie's servicing standards do not accommodate comprehensive urban density with rural standards of servicing such as communal wells and wastewater treatment facilities. Therefore, lack of regional servicing is a major limitation for this area. This report will provide further details.

First, there is no urban servicing (water / wastewater) capacity to this area. The area is within the future Northeast Pressure Zone, which relies on the Highland Park Reservoir and Pumpstation for water supply. The Highland Park Reservoir and Pumpstation can

only service the existing development boundary of Highland Park. Beyond this boundary, upgrades to the reservoir's storage, pumping capacity, and water supply are required.

Significant sanitary infrastructure improvements are also needed. Development in this cell requires:

- Lift station #5 and force mains;
- Lift station 7 and force mains;
- the East sanitary sewer trunk;
- Highland Park reservoir and pumpstation upgrade;
- water supply main from Calgary,*
- Lift station 8 and a force main*; and
- the Southeast sanitary trunk*.

The *approximate* total capital cost of the infrastructure needed (listed above) to service the North Highland Park area as per the UMP/TMP updates and levy update is forty-six million dollars. This does not include the regional items (shown with an asterisk) which come to *approximately* one hundred and fifty-three million dollars. These regional improvements are required with or without North Highland Park. It needs to be noted that the infrastructure listed above will benefit more than just the North Highland Park and development of this quarter section will ultimately rely on its share of this infrastructure. It should also be noted that development of North Highland Park, ahead of the order of development contemplated by the UMP, would take away a proportional amount of servicing capacity for the East Points CASP area.

Transportation capacity is also limited and would require significant upgrades to Veterans Boulevard, including the Queen Elizabeth (QE) II interchange and Township Road 273 construction, including the QE II fly over. The City does not yet have a magnitude cost for transportation improvements but an estimate is sixteen million dollars.

Airdrie's 12 Thousand Acres Plan and Utilities Master Plan (UMP) prioritize other areas to the south in obtaining access to urban services such as water and sanitation.

Another challenge is that the area is fragmented with multiple owners. This makes it challenging for the landowners to approve and fund the required plans, supporting studies and developer funded infrastructure difficult to achieve. Further, subdivision consolidation among the multiple landowners would be prerequisite to accommodate comprehensive urban servicing and development. There does not appear to be any current landowner interest in consolidating properties.

Finally, the Calgary Metropolitan Region Growth Plan does not support substantive development intensification in preferred growth areas, which includes Airdrie, without having a plan for concurrent provision of an urban level of services.

Nonetheless, to *explore* potential long-term development, a ***theoretical*** land use concept was prepared based using existing City Plan and Airdrie 12 Thousand Acres Plan policies

and existing long-range servicing studies. This is presented in Attachment 2 – Long Range Servicing Maps. The land use concept transitions from the QE II interface with commercial/light industrial use to the existing acreages to the east. Attachment 2 provides a summary of key maps describing the long-term urban services development plan, which is not within the near-term forecast to be constructed.

Consultation and results:

Per Council direction, Administration undertook consultation with the twenty-five landowners. A letter was mailed out from Policy Planning to all properties within the North Highland Park (NHP) Area. A North Highland Park Land Use Planning City of Airdrie webpage has been available since December 2023 to solicit public feedback. Policy Planning offered individual meetings to share information and learn about ideas for the area. Policy Planning received two inquiries and had two meetings. Respondents wanted to know what would happen in the area. No specific ideas or proposals were received regarding a desire to plan and fund development to an urban standard.

Overall, it appears landowner interest regarding comprehensive land use planning for North Highland Park is limited. However, landowners are still able to submit Development Permits and/or Land Use Amendment applications in support of interim development proposals that would not compromise future development of the quarter section to an urban standard.

Administration Recommendation:

Administration is recommending that no further comprehensive land use planning be pursued for the North Highland Park area for the following reason:

1. The growth management policies of the City Plan do not support broad development intensification without an accompanying comprehensive plan for providing an urban standard servicing plan (water, sanitary, stormwater), which remains outside the City of Airdrie's 10-year Capital Investment Plans.

This recommendation also aligns with the growth planning policies of Airdrie's 12 Thousand Acres Plan and Utilities Master Plan.

Alternatives/Implications:

1. Extend servicing to the area.

This option is not recommended. Significant infrastructure for this area would have to be funded. This would be out of sequence with the UMP and prioritization of projects identified in the Off-Site Levy Bylaw. This would also be contrary to the sequencing strategy set out in Airdrie's 12 Thousand Acres Plan and the growth management policies of the City Plan. Every portion of water and sanitary capacity used to service this cell affects the capacity available for statutory plan areas approved by Council, including East Points.

Additionally, subdivision consolidation to accommodate servicing is challenging given the large number of landowners.

Budget Implications:

Not pursuing comprehensive land use planning for the area maintains budget requirements at status quo. Extending services to the area would have major budget implications to the City.

Communications and Engagement:

If the recommendation is accepted by Council, no further engagement is required. The current City webpage will be updated to reflect Council direction following distribution of the letter in Attachment 1. No further engagement would be undertaken until such time that area landowners initiate a Community Area Structure Plan Justification Application.

Recommendation:

That Council endorses Administration's recommendation that no further comprehensive land use planning be pursued for the North Highland Park area.

Daria McDonald, RPP, MCIP
Senior Planner, Policy Planning

Staff Presenter:	Daria McDonald, RPP, MCIP
External Presenter:	N/A
Department:	Policy Planning, Strategic Growth and Investment
Reviewed by:	Stephen Utz, Director, Strategic Growth and Investment
Attachments:	#1: Follow up Letter to Landowners #2: Longe Range Servicing Maps