

Background and Planning Evaluation

Background and Site Context

The subject site is located in the southeast developing community of Ricardo Ranch. The site is within the western portion of the *Ricardo Ranch Area Structure Plan (ASP)*, as shown on the Site Context Map below. Adjacent lands to the east (Logan Landing) were approved on 2023 May 16 for a predominantly residential community (LOC2020-0100) and the lands to the west include Deerfoot Trail SE. The lands to the south across the Bow River are country residential neighbourhoods in Foothills County. The developing communities of Rangeview and Seton are located to the north. Seton Town Centre (1.6 kilometres to the north) is a Major Activity Centre and contains the South Health Campus, a large retail area, two future Green Line Light Rail Transit (LRT) stations, an interim bus rapid transit (BRT) line (Route 302 – BRT Southeast/City Centre) as well as residential areas, a high school, parks and a recreation centre.

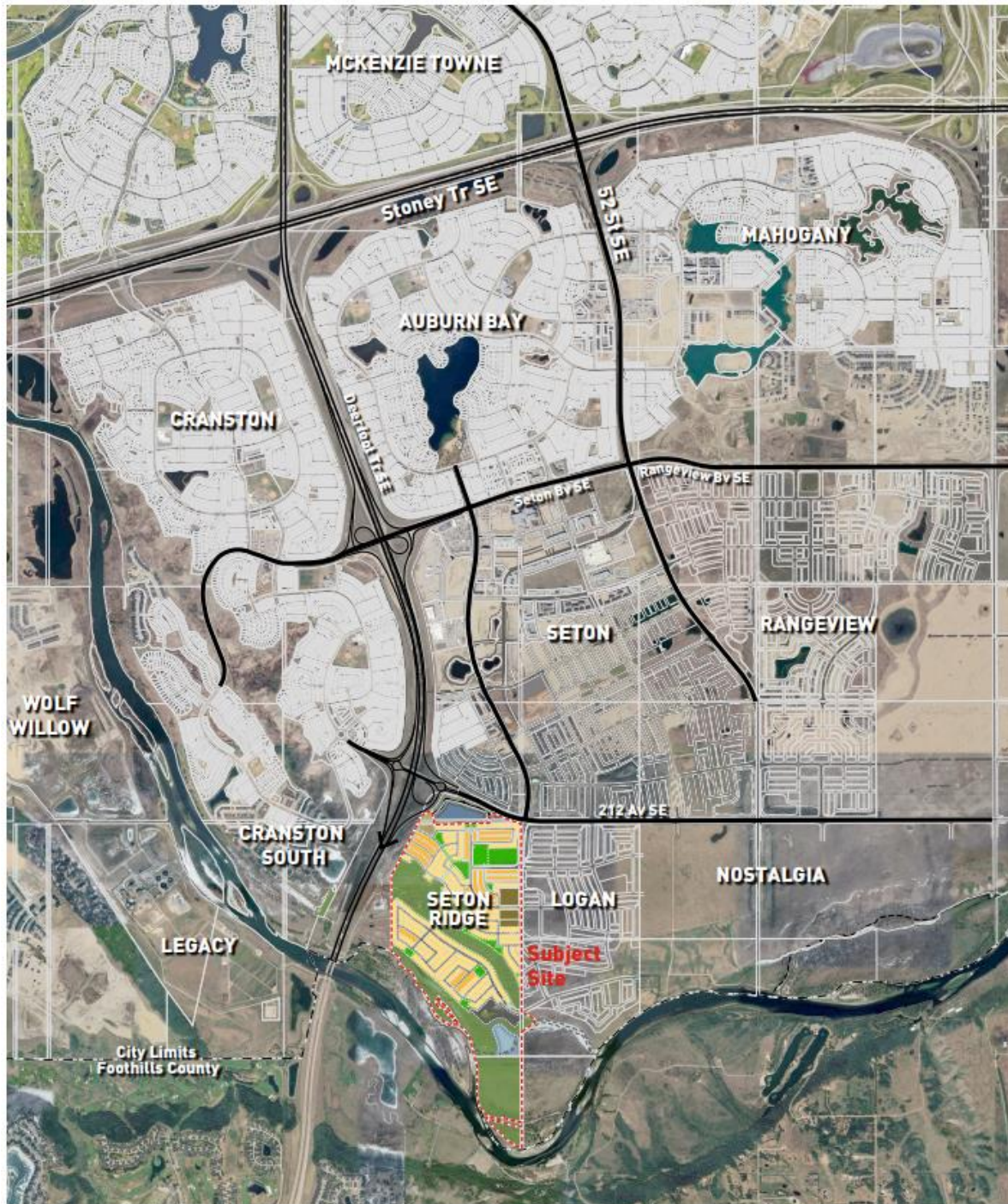
The subject site is approximately 134.88 hectares (333.29 acres) in size with dimensions of roughly 900 metres by 2,200 metres (approximately two quarter sections). The northern portions of the subject site have been used for agricultural purposes and the southern portions have historically been used for aggregate extraction. The northern portion of the site is relatively flat with a moderate slope to the north. The southern portion slopes down to the Bow River which forms the southern boundary of the site and The City of Calgary's southern border. 212 Avenue SE traverses the northern edge of the community and will be the major connection to Deerfoot Trail SE and Calgary's larger mobility system.

The development proposal for this site complements other development in the area. Notable features of the proposal include:

- medium and low density residential in the form of apartments, townhouses, rowhouses as well as semi and single detached homes;
- an elementary school site and associated playfields;
- preservation of parts of the Bow River natural corridor, including sloped ravines, riparian areas and escarpment corridors;
- a well-connected pathway network; and
- a block-based grid street network that fosters strong walking and wheeling connectivity.

This proposed outline plan and land use amendment provides a logical extension and connection to the adjacent street and block pattern approved for adjacent neighbourhood areas while protecting environmentally significant areas such as the Bow River corridor and escarpment areas.

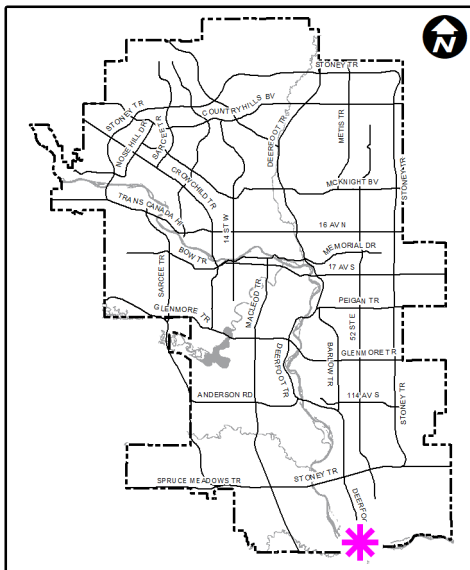
Site Context Map



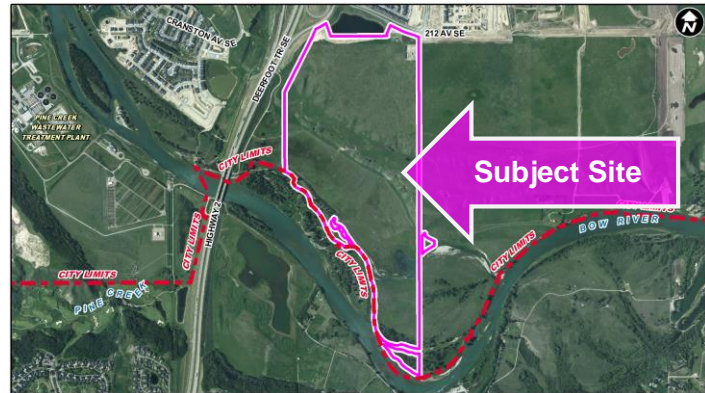
Community Peak Population Table

As of The City of Calgary 2019 Civic Census, there is no population data for the subject site as this is a new community.

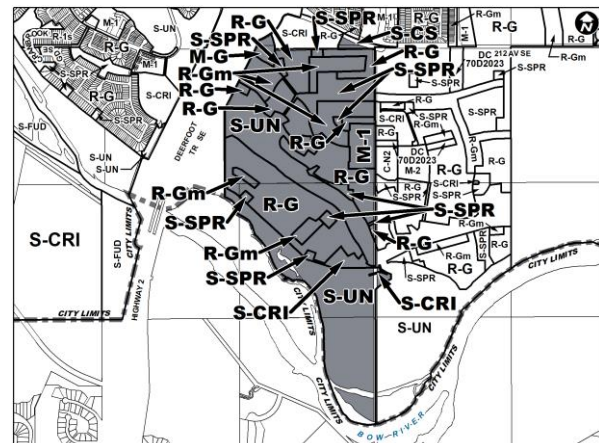
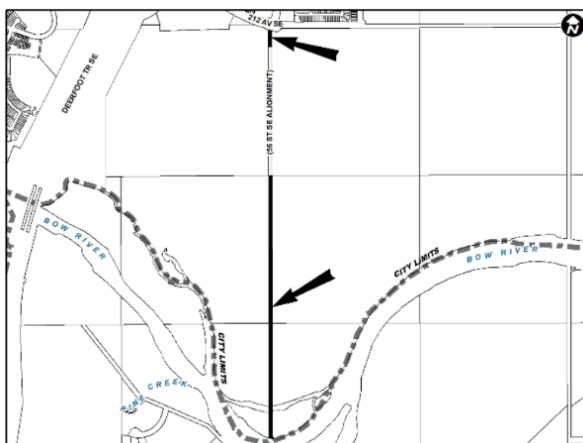
Location Maps

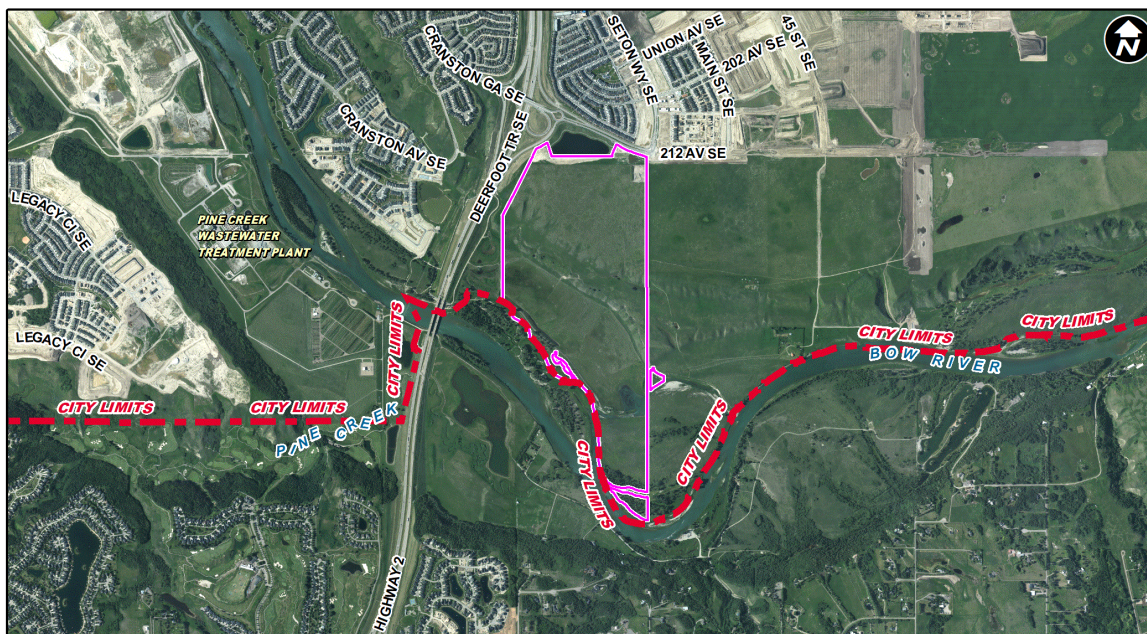


Road Closure Map



Proposed Land Use Map





Previous Council Direction

None.

Planning Evaluation

Road Closure

An original range road (RR291) aligned north-south along the eastern boundary of the subject site is currently identified as 56 Street SE. This application is proposing to close a portion of the original road allowance and rename the remaining portion Ricardo Ranch Boulevard SE. A small road segment (approximately 92 metres in length) at the northern boundary of the plan area and a road segment starting 800 metres south of the northern boundary of the site and continuing to the Bow River are being proposed for closure to enable the proposed community network design. The remaining segments of the road are being retained and integrated with the proposed site design, with some portions of this being re-aligned to better adapt to site topography.

Land Use

The majority of existing land use designation on the site is the Agricultural and Natural Resource Industry (ANRI) District under Rocky View County's [Land Use Bylaw C-4841-97](#), which is intended for agriculture and aggregate extraction operations. The designation is a legacy of the annexation from the County and was intended to allow for interim activities prior to full urban development. A portion of the lands are also undesignated road right-of-way.

The northern edge of the plan area is currently designated as Special Purpose – City and Regional Infrastructure (S-CRI) District and Special Purpose – Future Urban Development (S-FUD) District. The S-CRI District is intended to provide for infrastructure and utility facilities and accommodates the storm pond located on the northern boundary of this site. The S-FUD District is intended for lands awaiting urban development and utility servicing.

This application proposes several residential and special purpose districts:

- Residential – Low Density Mixed Housing (R-G and R-Gm) District;
- Multi-Residential – At Grade Housing (M-G) District;
- Multi-Residential – Low Profile (M-1) District;
- Special Purpose – City and Regional Infrastructure (S-CRI) District;
- Special Purpose – School, Park and Community Reserve (S-SPR) District;
- Special Purpose – Community Service (S-CS) District; and
- Special Purpose – Urban Nature (S-UN) District.

The proposed R-G and R-Gm Districts are intended to support a variety of low-density residential building forms including single and semi-detached dwellings, duplex dwellings, and rowhouse buildings, which may also accommodate secondary suites or backyard suites. The maximum building height in these districts is 12.0 metres. The R-Gm District is not intended to accommodate single detached dwellings except where subdivision results in remnant single lots. R-G District sites comprise 35.72 hectares \pm (88.27 acres \pm) and R-Gm District sites comprise 10.23 hectares \pm (25.28 acres \pm) of the plan area.

The M-G District accommodates multi-residential development that is designed to provide all units with pedestrian access to grade. These developments are characterized by low height and low density and requires a density between 35 and 80 units per hectare. The maximum building height in the M-G District is 13.0 metres. The M-G District site comprises a 1.42 hectare \pm (3.51 acre \pm) site in the northwest corner of the plan area.

The M-1 District accommodates multi-residential development of low height and medium density and is intended to be in close proximity or adjacent to low density residential development. The M-1 District allows for a maximum building height of 14.0 metres (approximately three to four storeys) and a density between 50 and 148 units per hectare. The M-1 District sites comprise 3.44 hectares \pm (8.5 acres \pm) of the plan area.

The proposed S-CRI District is intended to provide for city and regional infrastructure necessary for the proper servicing of the development. This district is proposed for the stormwater pond and associated infrastructure and the sites will be designated as Public Utility Lots (PUL) pursuant to the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA). S-CRI District sites comprise 1.94 hectares \pm (4.79 acres \pm) of the plan area.

The proposed S-SPR District is intended to provide for schools, parks, open space and recreational facilities, with parcels of varying sizes and use intensities. This district is only applied to lands that will be dedicated as School Reserve or other forms of Municipal Reserve (MR) pursuant to the MGA. A joint use site for a proposed elementary school and corresponding playfields is located in the eastern portion of the plan area, south of 212 Avenue SE, and is approximately 4.19 hectares \pm (10.35 acres \pm) in size. Throughout the plan area, parks are provided that serve varying functions and recreational opportunities, either as neighborhood parks or as complementary space to the natural area. Altogether, S-SPR District sites comprise 8.12 hectares \pm (20.06 acres \pm), which is 10 percent of the net developable area.

The S-CS District which is intended to accommodate education and community uses, as well as limited scale, public indoor and outdoor recreation facilities. This land use district is not intended for lands that are designated as reserve pursuant to the MGA. The Home Owner's Association

site in the northern portion of the plan is being proposed with this district encompassing approximately 0.66 hectares \pm (1.63 acres \pm) within the subject site.

The proposed S-UN District is intended for lands that provide for significant natural landforms, including river valleys, natural drainage channels and their required setbacks, habitats, and natural vegetation. Development within these lands is limited to improvements that facilitate passive recreational use. This district is intended to apply only to those lands that will be dedicated as Environmental Reserve (ER) pursuant to the MGA. A significant portion of the Bow River Valley and escarpment areas will be protected in these ER areas through this application. S-UN lands comprise approximately 53.66 hectares \pm (132.60 acres \pm) within the subject site.

Subdivision Design

The design of the proposed outline plan responds to the context and characteristics of the site. Given the presence of the Seton Major Activity Centre located 1.6 kilometres to the north and the Bow River and City boundary to the south, the Ricardo Ranch community was not expected to have major concentrations of commercial activity, but rather have neighbourhood focal points and large natural areas. Growth in this area will support the vitality of the Seton Major Activity Centre. The proposed outline plan includes one connection to the north across 212 Avenue SE, which is the northern edge of the neighbourhood. To the east is the Logan Landing neighbourhood which is approved and currently in the early development phase (LOC2020-0100). The proposed outline plan has considered the approved edge condition with Logan Landing and has provided logical transportation and pathway connections and extensions of neighbourhood blocks to create a cohesive and comprehensive neighbourhood design. Other features of the proposal include:

- medium and low density residential in the form of apartments, townhouses, rowhouses and semi and single detached homes;
- an elementary school site and associated playfields;
- a block-based grid street network that fosters strong walking and wheeling connectivity;
- the north side of the Bow River Valley, large portions of which will be formally protected as Environmental Reserve; and
- sloped ravines and escarpment areas, large portions of which will be formally protected as Environmental Reserve.

This proposed outline plan and block layout provides a seamless extension and connection to the street and block pattern in adjacent outline plans. The east-west streets that connect to adjacent areas have blocks designated M-1, R-Gm, R-G and S-SPR Districts, mostly with rear lanes. This will mean that the main movement corridors will have a more urban character by being lined with rowhouses and semi-detached dwellings without front driveways. The proposed design also accounts for laned vehicular access for lower density residential in some areas interior to the neighbourhood or consolidated vehicle access points for larger sites. This will ensure a strong public realm with a focus on the pedestrian experience.

Open Space

Throughout the outline plan area, parks are provided that serve varying functions and recreational opportunities. Approximately 8.12 hectares (20.06 acres) of land in total, which is 10 percent of net developable land, is to be dedicated as MR in the plan area. The open space in the upper plan area includes a Calgary Board of Education (CBE) elementary school site on Municipal School Reserve (MSR) and four sub-neighborhood parks with play amenities on MR.

One neighborhood park is proposed in the middle area of the plan with a gathering space, natural play area and panoramic views of the Bow River valley.

The application proposes about 1.04 hectares (2.56 acres) of MR park space planned in the lower portion of the subject site, providing complementary open space in addition to the adjacent ER lands. These three parks feature active play areas such as pickleball courts, basketball courts, a community plaza, and play equipment. Two of these neighbourhood parks provide for links from the community and larger pathway network to the pathways proposed along the Bow River.

One of the defining features of this plan area is the extensive protection of the escarpment area along the western portion of the site. This area is to be dedicated as ER and maintained in its natural state – connecting community residents and Calgarians to the land and natural features that define this region. The protected escarpment area in concert with the protected Bow River waterfront and riparian areas creates a natural asset to the city and all its residents and visitors.

The elementary school site (CBE) is provided in the northeastern portion of the proposed outline plan. The overall school site is approximately 4.19 hectares (10.35 acres) in size. The school has access to two collector roads and the site is visible from all four sides, allowing for passive surveillance to enhance safety. In addition to the school building envelope, one soccer field and one baseball field are provided with space for landscaping and street trees around the edges.

In the northeastern corner of the plan area is an approximately 0.66 hectare (1.63 acre) site which contains a utility right of way and is being proposed as a Home Owner's Association (HOA) managed dog park, entry feature and seating areas. This site is highly visible from 212 Avenue SE and connects to the storm pond located directly to the west of the site, building on a larger open space and pathway network.

Pathways

Proposed green corridor, multi-use and regional pathways form a comprehensive pathway network and are located throughout the outline plan area. A green corridor is located along the Bow River waterfront which runs east to west connecting to Logan Landing to the east and under the Deerfoot Trail SE bridge and onto the Cranston pathway network to the west. The regional pathway network traverses the site east to west along the southern edge of the protected escarpment area as well as the top of the slope on the eastern side of the plan. These regional pathways provide a connection to Logan Landing and connect the green corridor along the Bow River to the multi-use pathway located at the bottom of slope through the Deerfoot Trail SE right-of-way. The regional pathways network also connects the school site, Seton Major Activity Centre, the Bow River, and the escarpment together – ensuring the major elements located in and near this plan are safely and effectively connected by active transportation.

The remaining pathway link is located along the western side of the plan area, inside the Deerfoot Trail SE right-of-way. A multi-use pathway was explored to connect the river to the top of slope but was met with grade challenges where the construction of this pathway would have destroyed the ecological integrity of the area. As a result, a gravel pathway is being proposed that will utilize appropriate existing grades and create additional connections in the local network.

Density and Intensity

The proposed plan area is expected to have an anticipated 1,749 residential units. The proposed development is anticipated to achieve a residential density of 21.5 units per hectare (8.71 units per acre). The MDP sets out minimum density and intensity (population and jobs) targets for new communities at a density of 20 units per hectare (8 units per acre) and 60 people and/or jobs per gross developable hectare, respectively. The Ricardo Ranch ASP sets out the same density and intensity targets as the MDP. Based on the anticipated residential density of 21.5 units per hectare, the proposed development meets the targets of both the MDP and ASP.

Transportation

The regional transportation network consists of 212 Avenue SE along the northern boundary of the plan area and Deerfoot Trail SE along the western boundary of the plan area. Deerfoot Trail SE is classified as a Skeletal Road and 212 Avenue SE is classified as an Arterial Street as per the Calgary Transportation Plan. Ricardo Ranch Boulevard SE, along the east boundary of the plan, aligns with Seton Way SE to the north and is classified as an Arterial Street as per the Calgary Transportation Plan. The Bow River is located along the southern boundary of the plan area.

A Transportation Impact Assessment (TIA) was submitted to establish internal street classifications and intersection configurations for the plan area as part of the outline plan process. The TIA was reviewed and accepted by Administration. The community has multiple access points from Ricardo Ranch Boulevard SE, which distributes the local traffic effectively and evenly. The proposed active transportation network includes regional pathways, local multi-use pathways and gravel paths, which allow for good walking and wheeling connectivity.

Customized street cross-sections have been utilized to accommodate unique circumstances and requirements, such as 3.0 metre multi-use pathways, school requirements for sidewalks and custom streets to limit disturbance to the escarpment. Future transit service for the community will be provided along Ricardo Ranch Avenue SE, Ricardo Ranch Drive SE, Ricardo Ranch Way SE and Setonridge Rise SE, connecting transit riders to the future Green Line LRT Station planned approximately 1.5 kilometres to the north in the community of Seton. The plan area has a total road dedication of 24 percent.

Environmental Site Considerations

Biophysical Impact Assessment

The Bow River Valley area within the proposed outline plan was identified as an Environmentally Significant Area (ESA). It is within a provincial Key Wildlife and Biodiversity Zone, providing winter ungulate habitat, has a wide range of species diversity and serves as an ecological corridor. The proposed outline plan dedicates approximately 55 percent (53.66 hectares) of the 98 hectares of pre-development ESA as ER. The ESAs protected as ER lands include riparian areas adjacent to the Bow River and avulsion channel, the river meander belt, the lower escarpment including sloped wetlands, natural drainage courses and setbacks and portions of the upper escarpment including ravines, drainage courses and setbacks. Protected ESAs include contiguous riparian and escarpment lands that maintain an ecological corridor and support unique ecosystems such as the sloped wetlands and native grasslands.

Not all ESA area within the plan qualifies to be protected as ER and as such, 44.34 hectares (45 percent) of the pre-development ESA in the Bow River Valley will be permanently lost. These areas include portions of escarpment that are stable and the valley bottom lands outside of the Bow River setback. Some ER-qualifying lands (i.e., one sloped wetland and two ravines

with natural drainage courses adjacent to the wetland) are planned to be removed for development; however, most of the 45 percent of ESA is located on developable lands within the river valley where ER cannot be used to protect these lands. Further development within the Bow River Valley is likely to result in increased habitat fragmentation and loss, where upstream ecological connectivity has already been significantly disrupted.

Mitigation measures for the loss of ESA include the use of planning tools (e.g., ER) to protect ESA as future natural area, to buffer some of the ER lands with adjacent MR and to maintain ecological corridors. Mitigation measures for the removal of the sloped wetland, ravines and drainage courses on the east upper escarpment include increasing the buffers on the west upper and lower escarpments to create a large patch of natural habitat and reduce fragmentation and the construction of a stormwater wetland adjacent to the Bow River setback. Wetland mitigation also follows the requirements of the provincial *Wetland Policy*.

The great blue heron colony just east of the outline plan is the last known colony within the city boundary. The measures prescribed in the Biophysical Impact Assessment (BIA) include avoidance of direct disturbance to the colony and maintaining the setbacks identified in the Mitigation Plan. These mitigation and setback recommendations have been accepted by Alberta Environment and Protected Areas. On a regional scale, the occurrence of the great blue heron colony is significant, and while the rookery is not being removed by the future development footprint, indirect residual impacts may occur to the colony. Residual impacts are likely to be the result of increased recreational pressures within the Bow River Valley and habitat disruption, resulting in species stressors. Collectively, the developments in Ricardo Ranch have negative cumulative effects and long-term residual impacts. Strong public education, signage, and appropriate setbacks are crucial to ensure the longevity of the colony as development expands in the area and within the Bow River Valley as a whole.

The occurrence of bank swallow nesting sites within the avulsion channel of the Bow River Valley in proximity to the subject site is also significant. The nesting sites and associated habitat will be maintained with setbacks and no direct impacts to the nesting sites are anticipated. Indirect residual impacts may occur to species populations because of increased recreation in the area and surrounding changes in land use. Successful implementation of all mitigation measures outlined in the BIA is crucial to minimize residual impacts and ensure that nesting can continue to occur as development expands in the area.

A Park Management Plan will be prepared to guide ongoing mitigation and natural area management in the Ricardo Ranch area to support habitat function and biodiversity. The document will incorporate the Habitat Restoration Plan, Heritage Resources Management Plan, Natural Area Management Plan, Heron Rookery Mitigation Plan, and landscape design and drawings.

Utilities and Servicing

The proposed outline plan is located within an area that had a recent removal of the Growth Management Overlay (GMO). As a result, regional servicing installations underway in the area are now substantially complete. Servicing can be provided with some developer funded extensions to the site connecting to the City-funded regional infrastructure installations.

Sanitary Infrastructure

Sanitary servicing is proposed to be provided through main extensions connecting to the Rangeview Sanitary Trunk Sewer constructed by The City along 212 Avenue SE. Sanitary servicing for the north half of the plan area will be by gravity. Due to grade constraints, sanitary servicing for the south half of the plan area will be through a sanitary lift station to be constructed by the developer in the southeast corner of the plan area.

Storm Infrastructure

Storm servicing for the north half of the plan area is proposed to be provided through main extensions connecting to the existing stormwater management pond adjacent to the north boundary of the plan. The storm servicing for the south half of the plan area will be accommodated through the construction of an on-site stormwater management facility with controlled discharge to a new outfall to the Bow River in the southeast corner of the development area.

Water Infrastructure

Water servicing will be provided through main extensions connecting to the Ogden Feeder Main extension that is being constructed along 212 Avenue SE, along with supporting connections to the developing lands to the north in Seton.

Fire Infrastructure

Emergency services will be provided from the nearby existing Seton Fire Station and meet the minimum response standard.

Flood Risk

A portion of the site is located within the Bow River Floodway and Flood Fringe. All proposed development is required to conform to the applicable Floodway / Flood Fringe regulations at the time of development, which includes raising the elevation of proposed homes and roads above the designated flood elevations, and ensuring the stormwater management system will be able to fully function during a 1:100 year flood event. All development and infrastructure are located outside of the Floodway, which is protected with Environmental Reserve. Furthermore, in determining the appropriate setback from the riverbank for the proposed residential development, river morphology reports were prepared and reviewed to look at erosion potential from future flood events for the next 200 years. As the area was lowered due to past gravel mining operations, some grading / back-sloping may be proposed within Environmental Reserve and Floodway to restore these areas. Any proposed work within the Floodway must obtain approval from The City and The Province, after completing the required studies to confirm the proposed work will not have a negative impact on future flood events.

Legislation and Policy

South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (2014)

Administration's recommendation aligns with the policy direction of the [South Saskatchewan Regional Plan](#), which directs population growth in the region to cities and towns, and promotes the efficient use of land.

Growth Plan (2022)

Administration's recommendation aligns with the policy direction of the Calgary Metropolitan Region Board's [Growth Plan](#) (GP). The proposed outline plan and land use amendment builds on the principles of the GP by promoting efficient use of land and regional infrastructure, and establishing strong, sustainable communities.

Our Shared Boundary: An Intermunicipal Development Plan for the Municipal District of Foothills and The City of Calgary (Statutory – 2017)

The site is within Map 1: Plan Area of the [Our Shared Boundary: An Intermunicipal Development Plan for the Municipal District of Foothills and The City of Calgary](#) (IDP). While the subject site is not within any specific interface or policy area of the IDP, the IDP does note that there are regional assets in the IDP area, such as the Bow River Valley, that provide significant environmental/biophysical benefit, culturally significant sites, recreational opportunities and services. The application was circulated to Foothills County for their review and no concerns were identified.

Municipal Development Plan (Statutory – 2009)

The subject parcel is located within the Developing Residential - Planned Greenfield with Area Structure Plan as identified on Map 1: Urban Structure in the [Municipal Development Plan](#) (MDP). The proposed outline plan and land use amendment meets the MDP's more specific policy direction, including the New Community Planning Guidebook. This application proposes integrating a mix of dwelling types and land uses, using a grid-based pattern of complete streets in the subdivision design, protecting and integrating elements of the ecological network into the design and meeting minimum density targets.

Calgary Climate Strategy (2022)

This application includes actions that specifically address the mitigation objectives of the [Calgary Climate Strategy – Pathways to 2050](#) (Program Pathway F: Zero emissions vehicles – Accelerate the transition to zero emissions vehicles and Program Pathway K: Natural infrastructure – Manage natural infrastructure to maximize carbon sequestration). The plan area utilizes extensive green infrastructure through enhanced wetlands, protection of escarpment areas and native vegetation which act as effective carbon sink areas as well as protecting native habitat and wildlife corridors. Native species are to be re-introduced into the riparian areas of the plan to achieve resilient, natural erosion control of the site. The outline plan also proposes smaller roadway cross sections to reduce hard surface paving and increase water infiltration. Electric vehicle chargers and solar ready construction will be considered at the development permit stage.

Further opportunities to align development with applicable climate strategies, such as maximizing carbon sink potential, mitigating river and stormwater flood risk, and integrating natural infrastructure and asset management, will be encouraged at subsequent development approval stages.

Ricardo Ranch Area Structure Plan (Statutory – 2019)

The subject site is located within the [Ricardo Ranch Area Structure Plan](#) (ASP). The ASP identifies the subject lands as predominantly residential, with large areas of Environmental Open Space Study Areas and a joint use site (CBE Elementary).

The proposal is sensitive to the Environmental Open Space Areas (Section 4.5) and the policies of Neighbourhood 4 through careful consideration of access, allowable building forms, and street network to support the preservation of environmentally sensitive areas, provide regional open space connections and maintain the natural character of the Bow River valley.

Historic Resource clearance was provided for this application; however, more detailed review may be required at each subsequent subdivision application.

This application further fulfills the policy objectives for this area by providing a range of housing forms within the community, open spaces and protected natural areas that are sufficiently sized and spread throughout the plan area, and the provision of a joint-use site which is anticipated to contain an elementary school and associated playfields. This application aligns with the applicable ASP policies.