



JPA 1 Context Study: A Vision for the Future

RECIPIENT

Joint Planning Area 1 - Working Group

DATE

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SECTION 1.0

Introduction

The Joint Planning Area 1 (JPA 1), encompassing parts of the City of Airdrie, Rocky View County, and the City of Calgary, has been recognized as a region poised for substantial growth. In response, these three municipalities are seeking a regional, collaborative approach to address the complexities of adjacent urban and rural expansion. The JPA 1 Context Study is a testament to this commitment, focusing on managing development pressures and growth to ensure that residential, non-residential, and agricultural operations alike benefit from regional cooperation. This unified strategy promotes the efficient use of land, infrastructure, and services, while also helping to manage infrastructure costs, which often necessitate funding from multiple levels of government.

To support this effort, the team at Intelligent Futures have assisted administration and elected officials in creating a shared vision, guiding future growth and development in the area. This work was anchored by the following statement, which represents administration’s ambition for the study:

How might we create a shared vision that aligns diverse municipal priorities, fosters regional collaboration, and remains resilient beyond shifting political landscapes.

This report provides a comprehensive summary of the process, documenting the evolution of the vision. The following includes the methods used, the input received, and a refined vision developed as a result of the working session. It serves as a valuable reference, offering detailed insights to guide future stages of the Context Study. Building on this work, the Context Study will support in achieving the project north star, defined by administration as:

A region defined by shared services, vibrant communities, and a commitment to collaboration—where residents, businesses, and ecosystems flourish under a unified vision for the future.



SECTION 2.0

Process

The draft vision was developed through two key stages of work, first a workshop with the committee of elected officials responsible for JPA 1. The workshop aimed to conceptualize the ideal future of the area and understand how inter-municipal collaboration could be achieved to realize such a future. The second workshop, held with administration, built upon the insights from the first workshop, refining the vision and addressing key gaps and misalignments. The resulting draft vision, as found in Section 4.0, is a direct result of the input gathered from these two distinct sessions.

2.1 JPA 1 Trilateral Committees

Visioning Workshop

On December 13, 2024, a 3-hour workshop was held with six elected representatives, two from each of the municipalities. The session aimed to explore the representatives' aspirations for the future of the JPA and hear how inter-municipal collaboration could be best realized to bring that vision to life. The workshop consisted of two main activities:

- » **VISION KEY WORDS:** Participants engaged in a facilitated discussion to identify key phrases and words that reflect their desired future for the area. Prompts such as 'how have behaviours/ attitudes changed', 'how have policies changed', 'how have values/ norms changed' were used to spark initial thinking. Each elected representative then shared their thoughts and explained the rationale behind their contributions.
- » **RICH PICTURING:** Participants were divided into two groups of three, each including a representative from Airdrie, Rocky View and Calgary. They created "rich pictures", collaborative visual representations symbolizing the future for JPA 1. After completing these pictures, each group presented their depictions and garnered feedback on what those not in their group liked or disliked about what was presented.

The feedback from the vision key words and rich picturing exercises were then carefully analyzed by Intelligent Futures. Using the themes from each of the two rich picturing groups, the broadest possible list of topics for how JPA 1 will grow and develop

was established. This list was then cross-referenced with the key words and phrases to ensure the most holistic picture of the future state was captured. From this comprehensive analysis, Intelligent Futures then distilled the information into seven logical topic areas. These topics were used as the basis for discussion during the second workshop with the administrative working group.

2.2 Admin Working Group Workshop

On January 15, 2025, administration came together in a second workshop to build on the ideas and insights from the elected representatives. This session focused on refining the vision and addressing key gaps and misalignments with existing plans and efforts for collaborative growth. This 2-hour session involved administrative staff from each JPA 1 municipality and was structured around two key activities:

- » **REFLECTIONS:** Participants were prompted to reflect on the outcomes of the initial workshop and the vision shared by the elected representatives. Reflection questions included:
 - » What alignment and overlap were observed among councillors?
 - » How willing were they to cooperate?
 - » What are the obvious or potential areas of conflict?
 - » Were there any blind spots or inconsistencies in the vision?
- » **DRAFT TOPIC REVIEW:** Participants reviewed key topics resulting from the Trilateral Committee's workshop. They reviewed the statements created by the Intelligent Futures team and responded to questions such as:
 - » What is missing?
 - » What stands out?
 - » Are the ideas aligned or misaligned with existing local or regional plans?

The insights and outcomes from both the elected representatives' workshop and the administrative staff workshop directly informed the development of the draft vision presented in Section 4.0.

SECTION 3.0

Feedback Summary

3.1 Trilateral Committee Visioning Workshop

Vision Key Words

Council representatives were asked to share key phrases and words that they believed should be included in the JPA 1 vision. There was consistency among the responses as well as some unique hopes and ambitions. The key words they identified have been boiled up into themes by Intelligent Futures, however the verbatim language they used is found in the bullet points below:

ENVIRONMENTAL AND NATURAL SYSTEMS

- » Environmental protection
- » A common and protected natural space network
- » Regional park system
- » Agricultural capability
- » Water and wastewater management

MOBILITY AND TRANSPORTATION

- » Rail line and transportation corridor
- » Traffic flows are configured regionally
- » Tri-lateral transit and active modes network
- » Transportation nodes for vehicles and pedestrians
- » Understanding what land use additions are necessary to support multiple mobility services

COLLABORATION AND GOVERNANCE

- » Collaboration
- » Mutual benefit

- » Mutual cooperation
- » Collaboratively interact

VISION AND PLANNING PRINCIPLES

- » Plan with intent and purpose
- » Outcomes are clear
- » Forward looking
- » Patience

COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

- » Diverse cultures
- » Recreation offerings
- » Harmony
- » Character preservation

SUSTAINABILITY

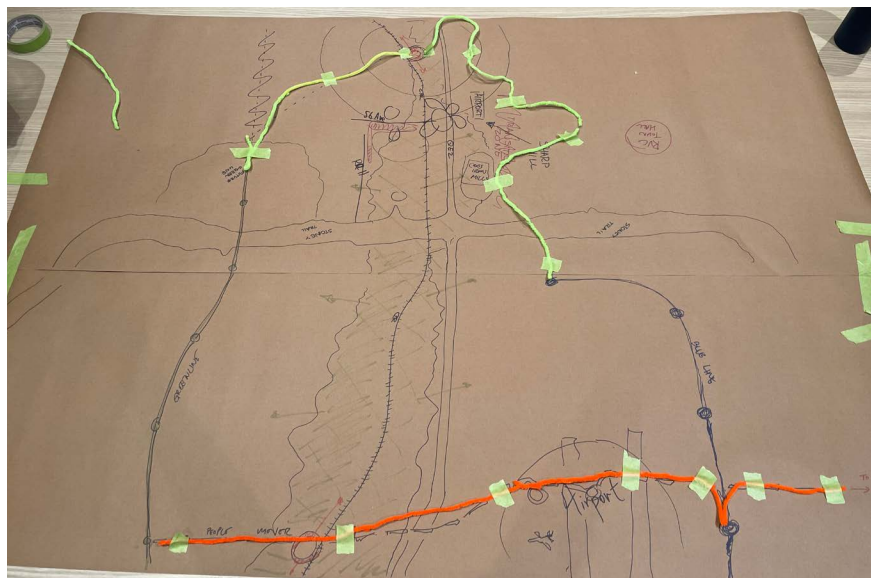
- » People, environment, economy (sustainability)
- » Transition areas between land uses

Rich Picturing

Using the key terms generated in the first exercise, elected representatives divided into two groups, each having representation from all municipalities, to create a rich picture for the future of JPA 1. One group was directed to focus on mobility and the environment, while the other was to emphasize economic development and land use, however, significant overlap emerged between the resulting rich pictures from each group. The rich pictures, including links to the report back can be found below.

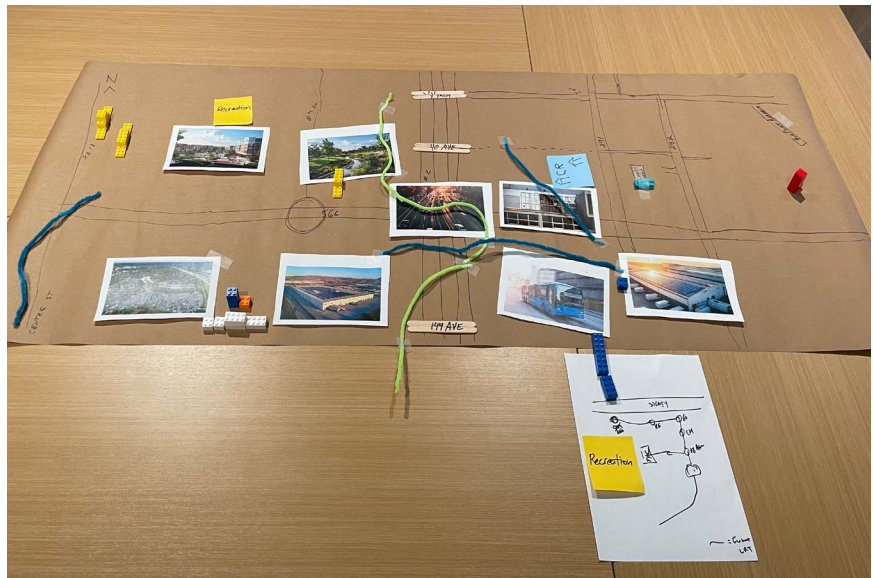
Group 1 - Mobility and Environment

A recorded video of the presented rich picture can be accessed here: [Group 1 Video](#)



Group 2 - Economic Development and Land Use

A recorded video of the presented rich picture can be accessed here: [Group 2 Video](#)



3.2 Admin Working Group Workshop

Reflections

Building on the workshop feedback from the Trilateral Committee, administrative representatives from each municipality refined the vision for JPA 1. Key reflections from their discussions were as follows:

ALIGNMENT AND OVERLAP OBSERVED AMONG COUNCILLORS:

- » Strong alignment on the importance of transit systems, including future transit through Rocky View County.
- » A shared willingness to listen to each municipality's growth goals and pressures.
- » Consensus on the need for shared services with equitable access and considerations for who can access them and how.
- » Broad support for the potential future of Nose Creek, which was well-received and resonated across the group.
- » Appreciation for maintaining a big-picture, visionary approach while acknowledging that some discussions remained too focused on current realities.
- » Recognition of the need for innovative approaches to ensure future livability in the municipalities.

WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE:

- » Councillors displayed a general willingness to collaborate, especially at the regional scale.
- » Cooperation is expected to enhance/improve as the context study progresses, though detailed issues like funding ("who pays for what") could complicate collaboration.
- » Observed agreement to work together on areas where joint efforts make sense.
- » Acknowledgment that the election cycle could add complexities to collaboration.

OBVIOUS OR POTENTIAL AREAS OF CONFLICT:

- » Funding arrangements for shared initiatives.
- » Allocation and location of industrial development.
- » Urban-rural differences, particularly concerning shared services.
- » Limited unplanned or undeveloped space, necessitating careful decisions about protecting servicing corridors and land use.

BLIND SPOTS OR INCONSISTENCIES:

- » Challenges in fostering inter-council collaboration, particularly across generations.
- » Diminishing importance of boundaries, with councillors viewing the JPA lines as somewhat arbitrary.
- » Questions about the scope and parameters of JPA 1, influenced by the aftermath of the CMRB dissolution.
- » The need to shift the focus from multiple stakeholders to a streamlined group of three decision-makers.
- » Broad Terms of Reference allowed flexibility but required clarity on desired outcomes within a tight timeline.

ADDITIONAL REFLECTIONS:

- » Greater alignment among councillors than initially expected, with good agreement on key priorities.
- » Consensus that transit should connect all three municipalities, with surprising alignment on this point.
- » Flexibility in addressing density transitions and the need to preserve agricultural space.
- » Confidence that regional transit could be effectively promoted to areas in Rocky View County not currently served.

The group really drove the message that the best way forward is one that maintains the unique identities of each municipality while also creating transitions that feel seamless to those moving between them. We heard intermunicipal connections matter and a collaborative approach to land use planning and economic development is the most primed for success. These and other reflections have been considered in the draft vision statement and should carry forward into the Context Study for JPA 1.

- » Enhanced mobility and housing diversity
- » Preservation of regional character and identity
- » Environmental preservation and recreational accessibility
- » Strategic infrastructure and growth anchors
- » Adaptive and outcome driven planning
- » Integrated and multimodal transit network
- » Regional collaboration and coordinated land use planning

Draft Topic Review

The feedback from the first workshop with the Trilateral Committee was distilled into seven key topics. These topics were used as the basis for discussion during the second workshop with the administrative group. As a note, there is no particular order or hierarchy to these topics.

The administrative working group were presented with these topics, including detailed descriptions, as found in the table below. They were asked to individually provide feedback on what was missing, what stood out, and whether the ideas were aligned or misaligned with existing local or regional plans. Once all topics were reviewed individually the group gathered to discuss and elaborate on their input. The output from this exercise is summarized in the following tables.

ENHANCED MOBILITY AND HOUSING DIVERSITY

- » Higher-density, mixed-use developments line transit routes, supporting our riders and fostering vibrant, walkable communities
- » Diverse housing options, including apartments, townhomes, and single-family residences, meet varied community needs and support inclusive growth
- » Key roadways such as Eighth Street, Highway 13, Highway 11 and range roads also accommodate growth and improve traffic flow

WHAT IS MISSING	WHAT STOOD OUT	LOCAL/REGIONAL PLAN ALIGNMENT:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Active transit via pathways and trails » Trans-Canada trail » Active transportation integrated along creeks or road ways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Key roads need to be identified for targeted growth » Housing, what, if any, role is there for regional provision of market and non-market options 	

PRESERVATION OF REGIONAL CHARACTER AND IDENTITY

- » Development respects the region’s historical, cultural, and environmental identity while fostering sustainable and cohesive growth
- » Planning reflects the cultural diversity of the area, creating spaces and programs that celebrate various traditions and provide recreational opportunities for all demographics

WHAT IS MISSING	WHAT STOOD OUT	LOCAL/REGIONAL PLAN ALIGNMENT:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Indigenous history and engagement/ empowerment » Defining the meaning of why visioning » Vision timeline broadly (is it a 5-, 10-, 30-year vision?) » Individual identity of each municipality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Alignment with Nose Creek » Need to create cohesion 	

ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION AND RECREATIONAL ACCESSIBILITY

- » Our regional park system, centered on Nose Creek Valley, integrates green corridors and natural spaces for environmental preservation and recreational use
- » A balance of ecological stewardship and public uses are taken into consideration when enhancing the natural space network

<p>WHAT IS MISSING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Cost sharing for maintaining access » Active transportation regionally - real barriers (such as the highway) to connecting neighbourhoods » Identifying what is appropriate for public use, and what needs to be protected from human use » Protection/enhancement of the ecological quality » Nose Creek and West Nose Creek, and how they connect » Recreational access to waterways 	<p>WHAT STOOD OUT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Difference between public use and conservation (limited use/access) » Network at regional scale - but might need to look bigger than just JPA 1 	<p>LOCAL/REGIONAL PLAN ALIGNMENT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Would need to refer to Nose Creek watershed plans to assess alignment » Collaboration to establish regional park and protect corridor in in strategic plans across all three municipalities » Work is ongoing to understand water management in Nose Creek
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STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND GROWTH ACTORS

- » The region leverages existing and planned infrastructure, such as the North Calgary Health Campus, Airdrie Southwest Recreation Centre, and key employment areas, to guide our growth
- » Key facilities in JPA1 are accessible via transit and integrated into surrounding communities maximizing their utility and impact

<p>WHAT IS MISSING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Transportation network, specifically roads » Water and waste water infrastructure » Water licenses and agreement are contentious » Transit oriented development as growth nodes/mixed-use nodes » Cost sharing between municipalities » Are these facilities regionally scaled? Should they be? 	<p>WHAT STOOD OUT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Need for regional coordination » Need to ensure equitable distribution and location of strategic infrastructure 	<p>LOCAL/REGIONAL PLAN ALIGNMENT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » North Calgary Health Campus » Airdrie SW rec centre
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ADAPTIVE AND OUTCOME-DRIVEN PLANNING

- » Intentional, results-oriented planning balances short-term needs with long-term sustainability
- » The region sets clear goals for increased transit ridership, reduced environmental impact, and improved quality of life while maintaining flexibility to adapt to future challenges and opportunities

<p>WHAT IS MISSING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Buffers between municipalities » Is this something that we want? Does it allow us to achieve our common goals? » Shift wording to consideration of km's traveled per person 	<p>WHAT STOOD OUT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Need to stay higher level and more visionary » Indicators and metrics - need to be the right kind, and need to be accessible/easy to report on 	<p>LOCAL/REGIONAL PLAN ALIGNMENT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » IDPs are very outdated
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INTEGRATED AND MULTIMODAL TRANSIT NETWORK

- » Our seamless, well-connected transit system thoughtfully integrates rail, bus, and active transportation into one seamless network
- » Extensions onto key transit lines (e.g., Green Line, Blue Line) connects residential, industrial, and employment hubs in the area
- » Bi-directional travel is prioritized and supported by transit hubs, driving ridership in transit corridors and reducing our car dependency

<p>WHAT IS MISSING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Density required to support transit in some areas » Residential density and employment density required to support » A link to land use » Public/private transit partnerships » Car sharing opportunities » Accessibility to and from transit hubs » Universal design » How to distribute transit service throughout the day/non-peak days and times 	<p>WHAT STOOD OUT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Alignment on this topic from electeds in all three of the municipalities 	<p>LOCAL/REGIONAL PLAN ALLIGNMENT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Future transit extensions shown in Calgary and Airdrie strategic plans, but not in Rocky View's » IDPs are outdated » Uncertainty of the RTTMP (Regional Transportation and Transit Master Plan) » Different active transit capacities and standards between municipalities » Rocky View County has no operation or maintenance budget for active or transit modes
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REGIONAL COLLABORATION AND COORDINATED LAND USE PLANNING

- » Cooperation among municipalities means aligned growth strategies, sharing resources and managing land use transitions together
- » Growth boundaries, infrastructure and funding decisions are realized through mutual agreement of achieving our shared goals

<p>WHAT IS MISSING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Identifying what will be shared, both in terms of access and financing » Uncertainty of approval body for regional planning » Cost sharing outlines » How we maintain individual identities 	<p>WHAT STOOD OUT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Need to assess how growth in one municipality affects services and infrastructure in other municipalities » We can work together towards different goals - need to identify who need/wants what » Managing seamless land use transition between municipalities » Continued collaboration and coordination between municipalities is very important 	<p>LOCAL/REGIONAL PLAN ALLIGNMENT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Plans have been historically done in isolation between municipalities » How do we come together to collaborate? » The Airdrie and Rocky View shared servicing agreement has guidance on working together
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SECTION 4.0

Draft Vision

A vision is a forward-looking statement that defines the desired future state of the region. It serves as an overarching guide for decision-making and policy development, and outlines the long-term aspirations of the community.

Based on this input received from both elected officials and administrative representatives have led to the following draft vision for consideration in the JPA 1 Context Study. This vision captures the breadth of hopes and ideas the trilateral committee put forward, while being concise and inspirational enough to garner collective buy-in and momentum toward realizing what's set out in the Context Study.

The JPA 1 Context Study creates a foundation for collaboration and planning with purpose. JPA 1 is celebrated as a vibrant and connected part of the region, where people and the natural environment are at the heart of key decisions. Enhanced Mobility connections between the municipalities will create a seamless transit system, with efficient buses, reliable trains, and safe bike and walking routes, makes travel easy, accessible, and enjoyable for everyone. Each of our distinct yet unified communities is a welcoming hub of inclusivity, offering housing for diverse lifestyles, abundant amenities, and activities for people of all ages and backgrounds.

Each municipality commits to sustainable growth that safeguards our cherished natural systems while strengthening public services and enhancing opportunities for meaningful employment. By focusing on working together, we lay the foundation for lasting prosperity and a high quality of life that benefits everyone.

While the vision may not encompass every single piece of input gathered throughout this process, it does serve as the guiding force behind the detailed work of the Context Study that lays ahead.

Next Steps

The draft vision and feedback gathered during this process serve as foundational for future work on the Context Study for JPA 1. The vision represents a significant milestone, as it establishes a guiding direction for the project's next steps. With the vision now drafted, the study will proceed through the following phases:

- » **Policy Guidance (Q1/Q2 2025):** Engagement with subject matter experts (SMEs) to develop policy recommendations.
- » **Context Study Drafting (Q2/Q4 2025):** Preparation of the draft Context Study document.
- » **Approvals (Q3 2025):** Council approvals for the finalized Context Study.

These steps will ensure the vision is translated into actionable strategies for JPA 1.