



Information on

- **Legislative Authority**
- ***Municipal Government Act***
- ***Public Lands Act***
- **Examples of Co-ordinated Land Use Planning**

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Co-ordinating Land Use Planning on Public Lands with Municipalities

Land use planning is a responsibility shared by the provincial government and local municipalities. The co-ordination of planning activities is a key factor in sustainable development and long-term use of public lands. It also helps achieve local economic development and land use objectives.

In 1995, the provincial government passed amendments to the *Municipal Government Act* incorporating planning and development provisions from the former *Planning Act*. These amendments resulted in changes to Alberta's municipal structure and planning system. Previously, Alberta's rural areas consisted of improvement districts, counties and municipal districts. Rural areas are now largely administered by municipal districts.

Special Places

Land use planning in Alberta is governed by the two pieces of legislation described below.

Public Lands Act

The *Public Lands Act* provides for the administration, use and allocation of provincially owned lands. The Minister of Sustainable Resource Development can classify lands and determine appropriate uses for them. The government classifies lands in a number of ways.

These include the integrated resource management (IRM) planning process, regional integrated decisions (RID) and decisions made through the disposition referral process.

Integrated resource management combines government policies, programs and activities on public land with the goal of gaining long-term economic, social and environmental benefits while minimizing conflicts.

The IRM approach is based on co-operation and communication with all stakeholder groups, including the public and local municipalities. It's based on Integrated Resource Plans (IRP) that are developed for public lands. These plans include an assessment of resource values in a given area and policies for their efficient, long-term management and use. During the development of IRPs, efforts are made to co-ordinate the specific IRP with current municipal planning documents for the area.

Municipal Government Act

Under Part 17 of the *Municipal Government Act*, municipalities have responsibilities in planning, regulating, subdividing and developing land in Alberta. They also have the authority to create planning and regulatory documents that prescribe how the land will be developed. These documents include statutory plans. They describe the planning policies and types of land uses permitted in the municipality and land use bylaws specifying development standards and regulations.

ABOUT PUBLIC LANDS

Before these planning documents are approved, they must go through a public review and consultation process.

The Minister of Sustainable Resource Development can designate public land within a rural municipality for the purpose of exempting them from Part 17. An example of this occurred in a portion of the Municipal District of Clearwater.

Most disposition holders under the *Public Lands Act* are subject to municipal planning and development requirements. On the other hand, the provincial government isn't bound if it initiates a subdivision or development on public land.

Examples of Co-ordinated Land Use Planning on Public Land

Current examples of co-ordination between provincial and municipal governments include:

- **Dispositions:** The provincial government issues dispositions on public lands. As many activities can affect local land use patterns and municipal services, the government consults with municipalities on most applications before making a decision. This type of co-ordination between the provincial and municipal levels of government reduces duplication and administration.
- **Subdivisions:** If a subdivision application on private land includes water bodies or other water features under provincial jurisdiction, it must be referred to the provincial government for review. To protect a water body from encroaching development and to ensure the public has access to the water, the provincial government may recommend that an environmental reserve or other conservation measure be established adjacent to the water body.
- **Significant Provincial Interests:** Through the Provincial Land Use Policies, municipalities are encouraged to work with the provincial government to identify significant provincial interests as part of the statutory planning process. Any significant provincial interests

needs to be reflected in the municipality's decision. Land use objectives for public lands within a municipality can be co-ordinated before reviewing development proposals. By co-ordinating land use policies, provincial objectives can be met for sustainable economic development and orderly growth patterns can be achieved for municipalities.

This information is intended for convenience of reference only. The current relevant government acts and regulations should be consulted for all purposes of interpreting and applying the law.

If you require updated information, contact any of the offices below:

Alberta Sustainable Resource Development
Lands Division
Rangeland Management Branch
South Tower, Petroleum Plaza
9920 - 108 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2M4
Telephone: (780) 427-3595

Forestry Division
Forest Management Branch
9920 - 108 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2M4
Telephone: (780) 422-4590

OR call the Lands Division office in your area.

OR you can visit the Lands Division Website:
http://www.srd.gov.ab.ca/land/c_1.html