SOUTH SASKATCHEWAN REGIONAL PLAN

5-Year Evaluation Report

Prepared For: Alberta Land Use Secretariat

Date: November 18, 2020

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1. Executive Summary

In 2008 the Government of Alberta recognized the need to respond to competing interests on the land base by managing continued growth responsibly for future generations and ensuring that there was a balance between economic, environmental and social demands. As a result, after an extensive stakeholder engagement process the Government developed the Land-use Framework (LUF), which sets out the broad principles and intended outcomes for regional planning.

The *Alberta Land Stewardship Act* (ALSA) was created to provide the mechanisms and legal standing to underpin regional planning. The Land Use Secretariat (LUS) was established as the organization within Government to guide the regional planning process and to provide an oversight role with respect to execution of the plans.

The South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (SSRP), approved and in effect since September 2014, was the second regional plan completed under LUF, representing Alberta's continued efforts at a fully integrated planning process across multiple stakeholder groups, as well as defining, measuring and regulating the effects from a cumulative effects perspective.

The SSRP has been amended twice since coming into effect. The SSRP was first amended in 2017 based on Cabinet's approval of Orders-in-Council to establish the Castle Provincial Park and expand the Castle Wildland Provincial Park. The SSRP was amended again in May 2018 to reflect the creation of two new Public Land Use Zones and the corresponding landscape and recreation management plans.

Pursuant to section 58(d) of ALSA, LUS's mandate includes the following, for each regional plan:

> *At least once every 5 years, to appoint a committee under section 63(3)(b) to evaluate the objectives and audit the policies of regional plans for the purpose of determining whether either or both are meeting the purposes of this Act, and to make a public report to the Stewardship Minister on the evaluation and audit.*

Elevate Consulting was appointed as the Evaluation Committee (hereinafter referred to as the "Committee") to undertake this evaluation. The Committee developed a series of questions to evaluate whether the objectives and strategies of the SSRP meet each of the four purpose statements of ALSA. Under Section 1(2) of the ALSA, the purposes are:

(a) To provide a means by which the Government can give direction and provide leadership in identifying the objectives of the Province of Alberta, including economic, environmental and social objectives;

(b) To provide a means to plan for the future, recognizing the need to manage activity to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of current and future generations of Albertans, including aboriginal peoples;

(c) To provide for the coordination of decisions by decisionmakers concerning land, species, human settlement, natural resources and the environment;

(d) To create legislation and policy that enable sustainable development by taking account of and responding to the cumulative effect of human endeavour and other events.

The questions were evaluated based on a rating criteria that resulted in the following ratings for each question:

Rating	Definition
Green	Fully addresses the question
Yellow	Mostly addresses the question
Red	Does not address the question
Grey	Unsure if question is addressed

For two of the four purposes statements, the Committee found that the SSRP was in full alignment with the purpose statement. However, the Committee found that the SSRP fell short of fully delivering on Section 1(2)(a) and 1(2)(c) of the ALSA, raising concerns with delays in releasing Progress Reports, the effective monitoring and tracking of the implementation of objectives and strategies in the SSRP, and meeting reporting requirements included in the Regulatory Details.

The summary of the evaluation findings is outlined in the following table:

Evaluation Questions	Evaluation Rating
ALSA Section 1(2)(a): to provide a means by which the Government can give direction and provide leadership in identifying the objectives of the Province of Alberta, including economic, environmental and social objectives	
1. *Do the objectives and strategies provide guidance across economic, environmental and social aspects of the South Saskatchewan Region?*	Green
2. *Do the regional outcomes and strategies align with and contribute to the Provincial outcomes?*	Green
3. *Does the plan demonstrate alignment from the outcomes to the objectives?*	Green
4. *Does the plan demonstrate alignment from the objectives to the strategies?*	Green
5. *Have the objectives and strategies been communicated across government, publicly, and to industry and stakeholders?*	Green
6. *Have the objective and strategies been legislated or regulated?*	Green
7. *Is there a structure and/or processes in place for ongoing monitoring and reporting on progress on the objectives and strategies?*	Yellow

Evaluation Questions	Evaluation Rating
ALSA Section 1(2)(b): to provide a means to plan for the future, recognizing the need to manage activity to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of current and future generations of Albertans, including aboriginal peoples	
1. *Do the objectives and strategies provide or contribute to a vision for the future state?*	🟩
2. *Do the objectives and strategies provide guidance to inform decision-makers, industry and stakeholders on moving towards a future state?*	🟩
3. *Do the objectives and strategies provide a basis from which to inform future plans by decision-makers (i.e. provincial government, municipal government, industry), either at a regional or sub-regional basis?*	🟩
ALSA Section 1(2)(c): to provide for the coordination of decisions by decision-makers concerning land, species, human settlement, natural resources and the environment	
1. *Do the objectives and strategies pertain to all the following areas: land, species, human settlement, natural resources, and environment?*	🟩
2. *Were the objectives and strategies developed in a manner that enables coordinated decision-making across government?*	🟩
3. *Is the implementation of the objectives and strategies mandatory across government?*	🟩
4. *Do the objectives and strategies provide a framework by which ongoing coordinated decision-making is enabled?*	🟩
5. *Is the implementation of the objectives and strategies monitored and tracked across government?*	🟥
ALSA Section 1(2)(d): to create legislation and policy that enable sustainable development by taking into account of and responding to the cumulative effects of human endeavour and other events	
1. *Does the Plan identify management strategies to respond to and manage cumulative effects?*	🟩
2. *Does the Plan identify or plan to identify thresholds for acceptable land-use impacts in relation to the objectives and strategies?*	🟩

The Committee has included seven recommendations that can be addressed in future land-use plans to mitigate the concerns raised. The Committee has also included an additional recommendation to expand the scope of the 5-year review, which the Committee feels would provide the Government of Alberta with further information on the progress of implementation of land use plans and their effectiveness at the mid-point of the plan's term.

The recommendations are:

Recommendation #1: Eliminate strategic directions from future land use plans. Incorporate any clarification or high-level direction to decision-makers on the priority areas of focus for the region in the detailed description of each regional outcome.

Recommendation #2: Strive to release annual reports within 12 months of the end of each calendar year. Consider including a commitment to the timeline in the Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting sections of future plans.

Recommendation #3: To foster monitoring, evaluation and reporting, future land use plans should only include objectives and strategies that are clear, measurable and include a time element. Statements that are intended to provide guidance should not be included as strategies; rather these should be framed as guidance within a separate section under the appropriate objective.

Recommendation #4: Progress on **each** objective and strategy should be monitored, evaluated, tracked, and publicly reported in Progress Reports. Include all objectives and strategies in Table 2.

Recommendation #5: Include indicators in land use plans with the following characteristics:

- Relevant: Reflecting the intended activities, outputs and outcomes;
- Direct: Closely measure the intended change;
- Reliable: Consistently measured;
- Understandable; and
- Practical: Data should be reasonable to collect in terms of data collection cost, frequency and timeliness for inclusion in the Progress Reporting cycle.

Recommendation #6:   For each land use plan, develop a suite of indicators that are targeted towards key audiences, such as ministries, local government and the public. Develop and design the indicators to collectively demonstrate to key audiences the progress being made on achieving the objectives.

Recommendation #7: To ensure that all indicators identified in a land use plan will be monitored, tracked and reported on, include all indicators in Table 1 of the land use plan.

Recommendation #8: To enable a better understanding of the implementation status and effectiveness of land use plans, and to enable mid-term course corrections, expand the 5-year Evaluation Terms of Reference to include a review of:

- Progress on implementation of the objectives and strategies; and
- Progress on the effectiveness of achieving the outcomes and objectives.

2. Introduction to Land-use Planning in Alberta

In 2008, the Government of Alberta recognized that competing interests on the land created the need to manage continued growth responsibly for future generations, ensuring that there was a balance between economic, environmental, and social demands. As a result, the Government of Alberta developed the Land-use Framework (LUF) as a framework for land-use management and decision-making, identifying the need to create land-use plans across the Province.

Regional planning is part of the Government of Alberta's Integrated Resource Management System (IRMS), intended to provide a more holistic view to manage and monitor the environment and natural assets. The system is founded on setting and managing to clear policies and cumulative outcomes, providing assurance and maintaining a monitoring and measurement system to measure the achievement of outcomes.

A vision was developed to guide the land-use planning process and outline the desired future state for the Province, as follows:

> ***Albertans work together to respect and care for the land as the foundation of our economic, environmental and social well-being.***

As a means to measure progress, the following three desired Provincial outcomes were also developed:

- Healthy economy supported by our land and natural resources;
- Healthy ecosystems and environment; and
- People-friendly communities with ample recreational and cultural opportunities.

In alignment with the vision and the outcomes seven strategies were established to improve upon existing land-use decision making and give a blueprint to follow for land-use management.

ALSA was proclaimed in 2009, supporting and establishing the legal basis for the development of regional plans. ALSA includes the following components that define:

- the structure within which regional plans will be made, amended and reviewed;
- the content and implementation of regional plans;
- the nature and effect of regional plans;
- the use of conservation and stewardship tools; and
- the land use planning process and its administration.

ALSA also includes four statements that outline the purpose of the *Act*. Related to these purpose statements, the ALSA Section 58(d) includes a requirement for the Land Use Secretariat, at least once every five years, to appoint a Committee to evaluate the objectives and audit the policies and regional plans for the purposes of determining whether the plans are meeting the purposes described in the *Act*.

The land-use planning process is described in more detail in the Land-use Framework.

3. South Saskatchewan Regional Plan Background

The SSRP was the second land-use plan completed under LUF. The plan was developed and had input from the South Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council, Indigenous peoples, stakeholders, municipalities and the public through three phases of public consultation:

- Input on the region's issues;
- Feedback on the advice from the South Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council; and
- Feedback on the draft SSRP.

The SSRP is intended to support growth and a healthy environment in the region over the next 50 years, through setting strategic directions for the region over the next 10 years.

In accordance with ALSA, the plan identifies the intention to assess and, if necessary, update the plan every five years in order to ensure the plan remains relevant and effective while retaining the certainty, stability and commitment to the regulatory intent.

The SSRP builds on and integrates with previous resource objectives, operational policies and resource management plans within the planning boundary. This ensures that there is a coherent planning hierarchy, starting with

Figure 1: SSRP Planning Boundary

regional plans and continuing through subregional, issue-specific and local plans to provide clarity for all decision-makers.

The SSRP is structured in a cascading manner, with a high-level vision for the South Saskatchewan area informing the intended outcomes and strategic directions. This comprehensive direction for the region informs the implementation plan and the regulatory details plan.

The components of the plan include:

- **Plan:** identifies the vision for the future of the region along with the desired regional outcomes.
- **Implementation Plan:** includes regional objectives, strategies and actions that will be undertaken to support achievement of the regional vision and outcomes and indicators and measures to evaluate progress.
- **Regulatory Details Plan:** this section provides the legislative means for achieving the strategic direction and strategies and actions in the Implementation Plan and legislative requirements for reporting on specific strategies and objectives.
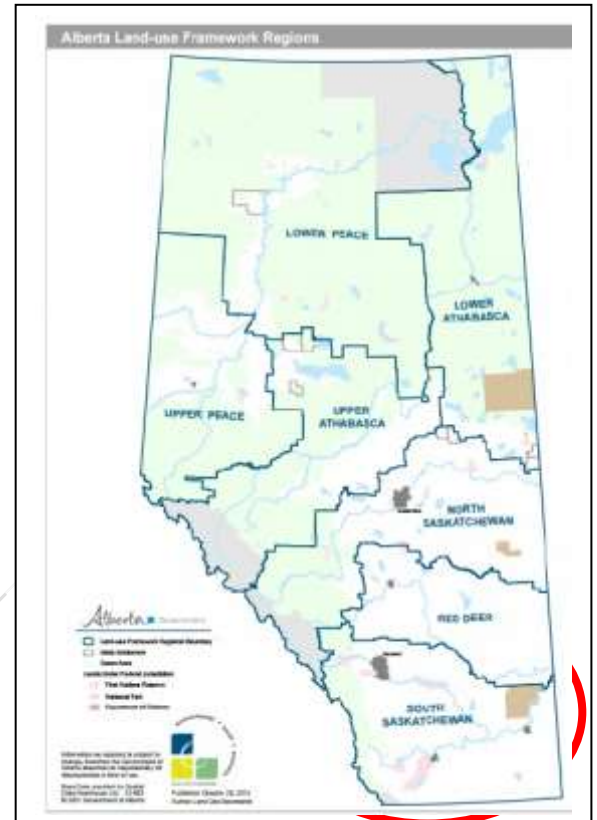
The SSRP is structured in a way to foster alignment between outcomes, objectives, strategies and actions, both within the SSRP and to the broader Provincial outcomes, as identified in the following graphic:
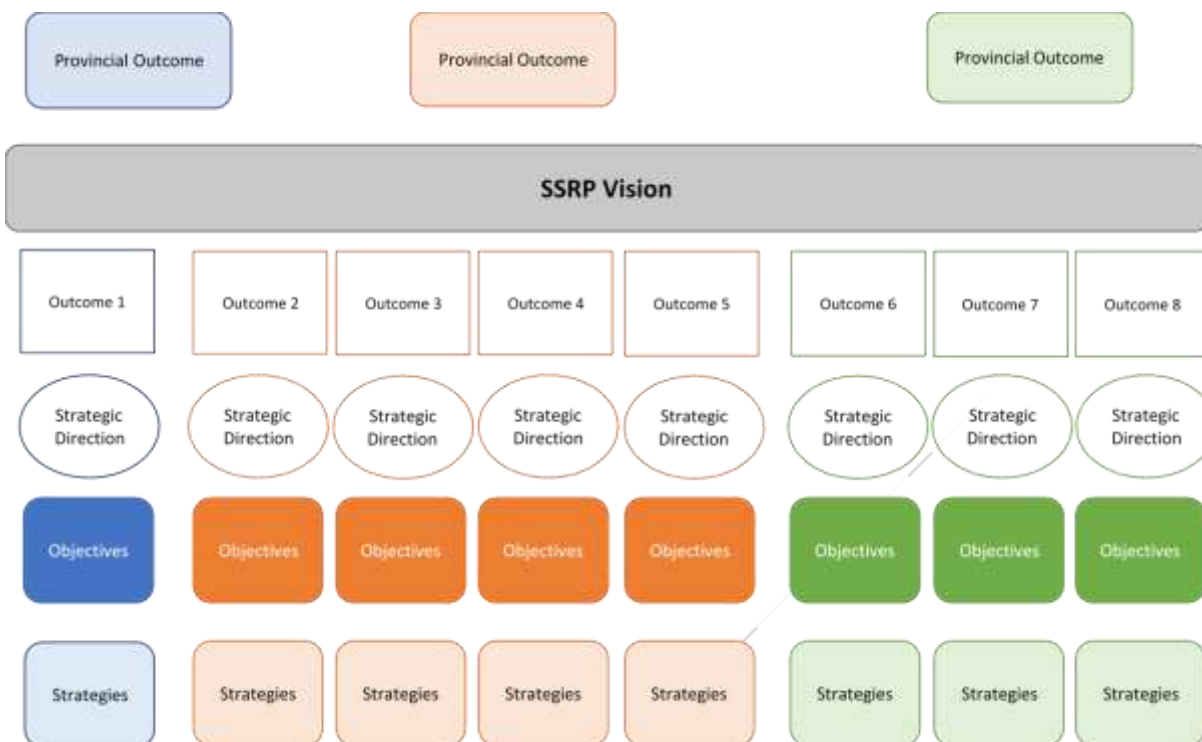
Figure 2: SSRP Alignment

The SSRP includes eight regional outcomes with 21 objectives and 122 strategies aimed at achieving the outcomes. Each regional outcome has its own associated strategic direction intended to further specify the priority areas of focus for the region. The SSRP also includes a number of supporting indicators for seven of the eight regional outcomes, as well as limits and triggers for some of the indicators. The table contained in Appendix 1 identifies the outcomes, objectives and strategies specific to the SSRP. Appendix 2 identifies the supporting indicators, limits and triggers.

Since the SSRP came into force in September 2014, there have been two amendments. In 2017, the SSRP was amended in order to enhance protection of the Castle area through the establishment of a new Castle Provincial Park and expand the Castle Wildland Provincial Park. At that time, a number of other amendments were made to the SSRP to address small oversights or administrative areas.

In 2018, the SSRP was amended to facilitate the implementation of the Porcupine Hills - Livingstone Land Footprint Management Plan as well as to update Ministry name references and address minor clerical errors.

4. Evaluation Purpose and Methodology

4.1 Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to evaluate the objectives and audit the policies of the SSRP to determine whether they meet the four purposes of ALSA.

Pursuant to section 58(d) of ALSA, LUS has the following mandate with respect to all regional plans:

At least once every 5 years, to appoint a committee under section 63(3)(b) to evaluate the objectives and audit the policies of regional plans for the purpose of determining whether either or both are meeting the purposes of this Act, and to make a public report to the Stewardship Minister on the evaluation and audit.

Elevate Consulting was appointed on October 28, 2019 as the Evaluation Committee to undertake this evaluation.

Under Section 1(2) of ALSA, the purposes of the *Act* are:

(a)   To provide a means by which the Government can give direction and provide leadership in identifying the objectives of the Province of Alberta, including economic, environmental and social objectives;

(b)   To provide a means to plan for the future, recognizing the need to manage activity to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of current and future generations of Albertans, including aboriginal peoples;

(c)   To provide for the coordination of decisions by decisionmakers concerning land, species, human settlement, natural resources and the environment;

(d)   To create legislation and policy that enable sustainable development by taking account of and responding to the cumulative effect of human endeavour and other events.

The legislation identifies the purpose of this evaluation as evaluating the objectives and auditing the policies of the SSRP. Policies are defined in ALSA Section 2(1)*,* as "… a strategy, plan, scheme, program or initiative". For the purposes of this report, policies were defined as the strategies identified within the Implementation Plan section of the SSRP.

4.2 Evaluation Methodology and Criteria

The Committee developed a series of questions to evaluate whether the objectives and strategies of the SSRP meet the purposes of ALSA.

The Terms of Reference, attached as Appendix 3, established the Committee and its scope of work. The Committee was limited to documents in the public domain and engagement only with LUS in undertaking the evaluation.

In order to evaluate whether the SSRP objectives and strategies are meeting the purposes of ALSA, four evaluation categories were identified with a series of evaluation criteria developed for each

evaluation category. The evaluation criteria include a series of questions intended to provide a mechanism whereby an objective analysis of the plan and its progress can be undertaken, along with an assessment and rating of whether the criteria has been satisfactorily achieved. The evaluation categories, evaluation criteria and the data sources are identified in the following table.

Table 1: Evaluation Questions

Evaluation Criteria	Data Sources
ALSA *Section 1(2)(a): To provide a means by which the Government can give direction and provide leadership in identifying the objectives of the Province of Alberta, including economic, environmental and social objectives* Evaluation Questions: • Do the objectives and strategies provide guidance across economic, environmental and social aspects of the South Saskatchewan Region? • Do the regional outcomes and strategies align with and contribute to the Provincial outcomes? • Does the plan demonstrate alignment from the regional outcomes to the objectives? • Does the plan demonstrate alignment from the objectives to the strategies? • Have the objectives and strategies been communicated across government and publicly (including relevant stakeholders)? • Have the objectives and strategies been legislated or regulated? • Is there a structure and/or processes in place for ongoing monitoring and reporting on progress on the objectives and strategies?	• ALSA Section 1(2) • SSRP - Strategic Plan section • SSRP - Implementation Plan section • SSRP - Regulatory Details section • LUF Regional Plan Progress Reports 2015 and 2016 • Land Use Framework website
ALSA *Section 1(2)(b): To provide a means to plan for the future, recognizing the need to manage activity to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of current and future generations of Albertans, including aboriginal peoples* Evaluation questions: • Do the objectives and strategies provide or contribute to a vision for the future state? • Do the objectives and strategies provide guidance to inform decision-makers, industry and stakeholders on moving towards a future state? • Do the objectives and strategies provide a basis from which to inform future planning by decision-makers (i.e., provincial government, municipal government, industry), either at a regional or sub-regional basis?	• ALSA Section 1(2) • SSRP - Strategic Plan section • SSRP - Implementation Plan section • SSRP - Regulatory Details section • LUF Regional Plan Progress Reports 2015 and 2016
ALSA *Section 1(2)(c): To provide for the coordination of decisions by decision-makers concerning land, species, human settlement, natural resources and the environment* Evaluation questions:	• ALSA Section 1(2) • SSRP - Strategic Plan section • SSRP - Implementation Plan section

Evaluation Criteria	Data Sources
• Do the objectives and strategies pertain to all of the following areas: land, species, human settlement, natural resources, and environment? • Were the objectives and strategies developed in a manner that enables coordinated decision-making across government? • Is the implementation of the objectives and strategies mandatory across government? • Do the objectives and strategies provide a framework by which ongoing coordinated decision-making is enabled? • Is the implementation of the objectives and strategies monitored and tracked across government?	• SSRP - Regulatory Details section • LUF Regional Plan Progress Reports 2015 and 2016
ALSA *Section 1(2)(d): To create legislation and policy that enable sustainable development by taking account of and responding to the cumulative effect of human endeavour and other events* Evaluation questions: • Does the plan identify management strategies to respond to and manage cumulative effects? • Does the plan identify or plan to identify thresholds for acceptable land-use impacts in relation to the objectives and strategies?	• ALSA Section 1(2) • SSRP - Strategic Plan section • SSRP - Implementation Plan section • SSRP - Regulatory Details section

For each evaluation question, the Committee assigned a status assessment of green, yellow, red or grey. Wherever possible, quantitative data was used to assess whether a specific percentage of the criteria were met. In other cases, analysis was based on qualitative data. In all cases, evidence is cited and a description provided to enable the reader to understand how the evaluation conclusion was arrived at. The report includes references to point to the evidence that resulted in the evaluation conclusion.

Evidence citations for specific statements have been identified throughout Section 5 Evaluation in the report. The naming convention used to cite evidence includes identification of the relevant document referenced in Section 9 References and associated page number that the statement, for example the reference (4, p.20) refers to page 20 of the document identified as Document #4 in the Reference Section of this Report.

Status assessments are defined as follows:

Table 2: Evaluation Criteria

Rating	Definition	Criteria
Green	Fully addresses the question	• 75% or more of the criteria have been met; **and/or** • No substantive issues or potential risks were identified
Yellow	Mostly addresses the question	• Between 50% - 75% of the criteria have been met; **and/or** • 1 - 2 concerns or potential risks were identified
Red	Does not address the question	• Less than 50% of the criteria have been met; **and/or** • There were multiple concerns or potential risks identified

Grey	Unsure if question is addressed	• Unable to assess criteria due to insufficient information

Recommendations for future courses of action are included in this report and are intended to provide opportunities to indicate where improvements could be made to future land-use plans to better meet the purpose statements of ALSA.

5. Evaluation

This section of the report examines whether the SSRP is in alignment with the ALSA Purpose Statements. Under Section 1(2) of ALSA, the purposes of the *Act* are:

(a) To provide a means by which the Government can give direction and provide leadership in identifying the objectives of the Province of Alberta, including economic, environmental and social objectives;

(b) To provide a means to plan for the future, recognizing the need to manage activity to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of current and future generations of Albertans, including aboriginal peoples;

(c) To provide for the coordination of decisions by decisionmakers concerning land, species, human settlement, natural resources and the environment;

(d) To create legislation and policy that enable sustainable development by taking account of and responding to the cumulative effect of human endeavour and other events.

The following sections examine each individual Purpose Statement in order to make a determination and rating as to whether the SSRP aligns with each of the four statements.

Throughout this report, there are references to both Aboriginal and Indigenous Peoples. For clarity, the term Aboriginal was used in previous Land Use Framework and Land Use Plan documents. The Government of Alberta is transitioning to the use of the term Indigenous Peoples and this report reflects that transition. This report does not adjust the wording quoted in the LUF documents referenced.

5.1 Alignment with ALSA Purpose Statement 1(2)(a)

The Committee evaluated whether the objectives and strategies create an environment by which government can provide direction and leadership in identifying the strategic objectives of the Province, including economic, environmental and social objectives. There are a number of elements that contribute to the Government of Alberta's ability to provide leadership and direction that were examined in relation to the SSRP objectives and strategies, including:

- Breadth and scope of the SSRP in relation to the objectives of the Province;
- Legal nature of the SSRP;
- Level of communications;
- Ongoing management; and
- Monitoring and reporting.

In support of these elements, the SSRP was evaluated against the following key questions. The questions and the SSRP's fulfillment of the question are summarized in the following dashboard.

Table 3: ALSA Section 1(2)(a) Evaluation Questions

Evaluation Questions	Evaluation Rating
ALSA Section 1(2)(a): to provide a means by which the Government can give direction and provide leadership in identifying the objectives of the Province of Alberta, including economic, environmental and social objectives	
1. *Do the objectives and strategies provide guidance across economic, environmental and social aspects of the South Saskatchewan Region?*	🟩
2. *Do the regional outcomes and strategies align with and contribute to the Provincial outcomes?*	🟩
3. *Does the plan demonstrate alignment from the outcomes to the objectives?*	🟩
4. *Does the plan demonstrate alignment from the objectives to the strategies?*	🟩
5. *Have the objectives and strategies been communicated across government, publicly, and to industry and stakeholders?*	🟩
6. *Have the objectives and strategies been legislated or regulated?*	🟩
7. *Is there a structure and/or processes in place for ongoing monitoring and reporting on progress on the objectives and strategies?*	🟧

1. *Do the objectives and strategies provide guidance across economic, environmental and social aspects of the South Saskatchewan Region?*

The SSRP includes a long-term future state vision [1, p.38] for the South Saskatchewan Region as follows:

Vision for the South Saskatchewan Region

Southern Alberta is a diverse, healthy, vibrant and prosperous region where the natural beauty of the region is managed so that citizens feel connected to the land and its history. Albertans, industry, governments and aboriginal peoples work together to share responsibility for stewardship of the land and resources in a way that ensures current needs are met without compromising opportunities for future generations. Aboriginal peoples, through their traditional knowledge, share their intimate understanding of the region's natural environment and ecosystems.

The South Saskatchewan Region supports a diverse and growing population. Economic diversification supports employment and contributes to a prosperous future. Agriculture is a significant renewable resource industry demonstrating environmental stewardship while pursuing growth and diversification opportunities. There are continued opportunities for oil and natural gas production and renewable energy will become increasingly significant. Forests are managed with watershed management and headwaters protection as the highest priority and healthy forests continue to contribute to the province's timber supply. The region has unique landscapes that form the basis of a popular tourism and recreation destination which continues to grow.

Air, water, land and biodiversity are sustained with healthy functioning ecosystems. The headwaters in the region supply vital regional fresh water quality. Conservation strategies help many species at risk in the South Saskatchewan Region recover, while also preserving the diversity and splendor of Alberta's natural regions with various parks and conservation areas providing Albertans with improved health and inspiration to value nature.

The vision statement for the SSRP includes economic, environmental and social aspects. Flowing from and in alignment with the vision statement, the SSRP Outcomes also contain all three of these aspects, as shown in the following graphic.
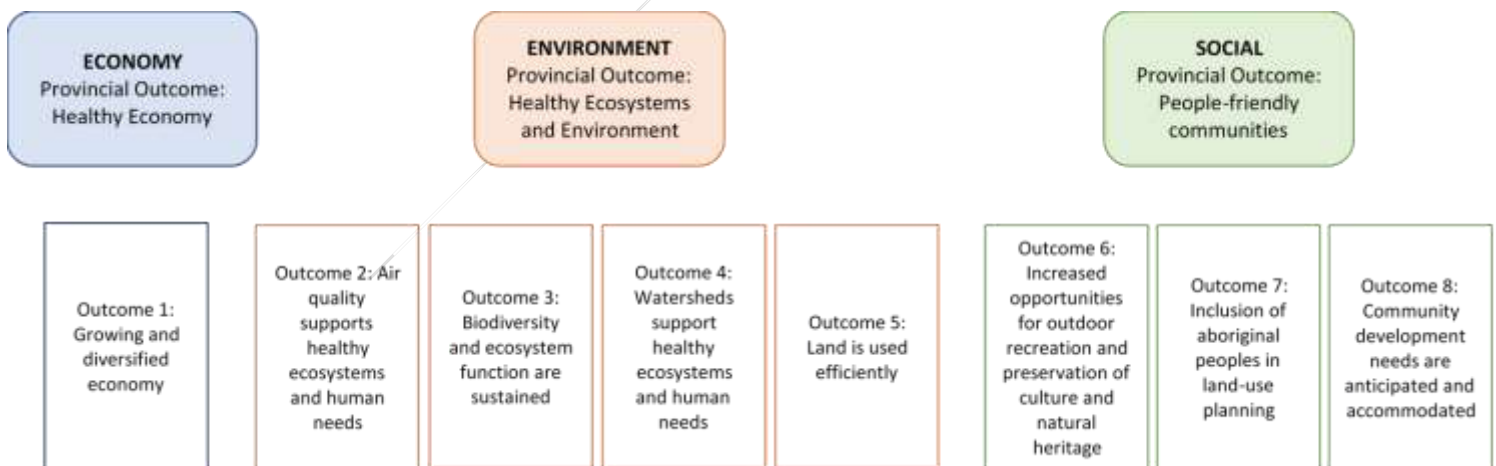

Figure 3: Alignment of Provincial and SSRP Outcomes

As a result, this structure provides a comprehensive set of outcomes, objectives and strategies that provide a vision across the breadth of economic, environmental and social objectives.

2. *Do the regional outcomes and strategies align with and contribute to the Provincial outcomes?*

The SSRP's eight regional outcomes are aligned with the provincial goals, as identified in Figure 3. Strategies are identified and aligned with each regional outcome. As a result, alignment can be demonstrated beginning with the Provincial outcomes, followed by the regional outcomes and finally to the strategies.

There are objectives and strategies identified for each of the three provincial outcomes. The SSRP is structured to identify and report out on progress on the implementation of key strategies and indicator data related to those regional outcomes and strategies. As a result, the regional outcomes and strategies have demonstrated that they contribute to the outcomes.

3. *Does the plan demonstrate alignment from the outcomes to the objectives?*

The SSRP contains eight regional outcomes. Each regional outcome has as few as one objective and as many as seven objectives. The regional outcomes are high level and intended to define what the Government of Alberta is trying to achieve in the region. The objectives are intended to provide a high-level indication of "how" the outcomes will be achieved. The regional outcomes and their respective objectives are outlined in the following table:

Table 4: Alignment of SSRP Regional Outcomes and Objectives

Regional Outcomes	Objectives
1. The region's economy is growing and diversified.	1. The region's agricultural industry is maintained and diversified. 2. Opportunities for the responsible exploration, development and extraction of energy resources are maintained. 3. Opportunities for the responsible development of the region's renewable energy industry are maintained in support of Alberta's commitment to greener energy production and economic development. 4. Value-added opportunities that enhance the sustainability of Alberta's industries and communities are created. 5. The region's forest industry is maintained and diversified. 6. Opportunities for the responsible development of surface materials are maintained on public lands. 7. The region is positioned as a world-class, year-round, tourism destination.
2. Air quality is managed to support healthy ecosystems and human needs through shared stewardship	8. Releases from various point and non-point sources are managed so they do not collectively result in unacceptable air quality.
3. Biodiversity and ecosystem function are sustained through shared stewardship	9(a) Regional: • Terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity are maintained. • Long-term ecosystem health and resiliency are maintained. • Species at risk are recovered and no new species at risk are designated. • Intact grasslands habitat is sustained.

Regional Outcomes	Objectives
	• Biodiversity and healthy, functioning ecosystems continue to provide a range of benefits to communities in the region and all Albertans and there is sustainable use of Alberta's biodiversity resources. 9(b) Crown Lands: • The regional network of areas that support biodiversity conservation is enhanced through additional conservation areas. 9(c) Private Lands: • The contributions of landowners for their stewardship and conservation efforts on private lands are recognized. • The contribution and value of private land in supplying ecosystem services is recognized and opportunities to support ecosystem services on private land are identified. • The value of ecosystem services supplied by economic sectors reliant on private lands is recognized.
4. Watersheds are managed to support healthy ecosystems and human needs through shared stewardship	10. Surface water quality in the Bow, Oldman, South Saskatchewan and Milk rivers is managed so current and future water uses are protected. 11. Regional approaches and tools support integrated management of water and aquatic ecosystems. 12. (a) Water is used as efficiently as possible to meet the current and future human and ecosystem needs. (b) There is resiliency in the ability of the water management system to adapt to change over time. 13. Headwaters in the region are managed to maintain recharge capabilities and support critical water quality, quantity and aquatic ecosystems requirements.
5. Land is used efficiently to reduce the amount of area that is taken up by permanent or long-term developments associated with the built environment	14. The amount of land that is required for development of the built environment is minimized over time.
6. The quality of life of residents is enhanced through increased opportunities for outdoor recreation and the preservation and promotion of the region's unique cultural and natural heritage	15. (a) A wide range of recreation experiences and tourism opportunities that meet the preferences of regional residents and visitors will be provided. (b) The artifacts, fossils, historic places and aboriginal heritage sites that define the region's distinctive character are identified and effectively managed.
7. Aboriginal peoples are included in land-use planning	16. To encourage aboriginal people's participation in land-use planning and input to decision-making in recognition of the cultural and economic importance of land-use to those aboriginal communities with constitutionally protected rights.

Regional Outcomes	Objectives
8. Community development needs are anticipated and accommodated	17. (a) Cooperation and coordination are fostered among all land-use planners and decision-makers involved in preparing and implementing land use plans and strategies. (b) Knowledge sharing among communities is encouraged to promote the use of planning tools and the principles of efficient use of land to address community development in the region. (c) Work together to ensure growth occurs in a sustainable manner in the region. 18. Ensure provincial guidance is provided to municipalities and other stakeholders to: • Promote healthy and sustainable communities; • Foster the establishment of land-use patterns for an orderly, economical and beneficial development, as well as to maintain and improve the quality of the built environment; • Support timely planning and provision of social infrastructure; • Contribute to the "maintenance and enhancement" of a healthy natural environment; • Foster preservation of historic resources through responsible land-use management; • Contribute to a safe, efficient and cost-effective transportation network; and • Minimize risks to health, safety and loss to property damage as a result of land-use decisions.

In all of the objectives, there is a clear linkage back to the specific outcome that the objective falls under.

The SSRP also includes strategic direction statements under each regional outcome statement. These strategic direction statements are intended to help achieve the regional vision and outcomes [1, pg 7] and to further specify the priority areas of focus for the region[1, pg 38]. There is one strategic direction statement for each regional outcome. These strategic directions sit between the outcome statement and the associated objectives under the regional outcome statement.

The strategic directions for each regional outcome statement are:

Table 5: Alignment of SSRP Regional Outcomes and Strategic Directions

Regional Outcomes	Strategic Directions
1. The region's economy is growing and diversified	Sustainable development wherein economic development takes into account environmental sustainability and social outcomes.
2. Air quality is managed to support healthy ecosystems and human needs through shared stewardship	Managing air quality through continued collaboration.

3. Biodiversity and ecosystem function are sustained through shared stewardship	Conserving and maintaining the benefits of biodiversity.
4. Watersheds are managed to support healthy ecosystems and human needs through shared stewardship.	Advancing watershed management.
5. Land is used efficiently to reduce the amount of area that is taken up by permanent or long-term developments associated with the built environment.	Promoting efficient use of land.
6. The quality of life of residents is enhanced through increased opportunities for outdoor recreation and the preservation and promotion of the region's unique cultural and natural heritage.	Providing recreation and nature-based tourism opportunities and preserving and promoting the region's unique cultural and natural heritage.
7. Aboriginal peoples are included in land-use planning.	Inclusion of aboriginal peoples in land-use planning.
8. Community development needs are anticipated and accommodated.	Strengthening communities.

As the strategic directions are included in each regional outcome and are intended to provide further high-level direction to decision-makers on the priority areas of focus for the region, there should also be alignment between the regional outcomes, strategic directions and objectives.

While a review of these components of the SSRP show that there is clear alignment, it is unclear how the strategic directions provide further value and guidance to decision-makers beyond the outcome statement and the introductory comments in each of the eight sections which provide further information on the vision of each section. The Committee has included a recommendation (Strategic Directions) in Section 6 of this report to address this issue.

4. *Does the plan demonstrate alignment from the objectives to the strategies?*

The SSRP contains 21 objectives and 122 strategies with all objectives having associated strategies. Appendix 1 contains a listing of the objectives and their respective strategies.

With one exception, the objectives have two or more associated strategies. The only objective that has one strategy is associated with the management of surface water quality.

For all eight of the regional outcomes, all of the respective strategies can be demonstrated to align with their respective objective as all strategies relate directly to the regional outcome.

5. *Have the objectives and strategies been communicated across government, publicly, and to industry and stakeholders?*

Upon completion of the final draft of the SSRP, the document was presented to Cabinet for approval. As an approved document, all Ministries have endorsed and committed to the objectives and strategies contained in the SSRP.

The SSRP was made available, in its entirety, to Alberta citizens, Indigenous peoples, stakeholders, industry and other government staff through posting the document on the LUS website [2]. LUS also

posts on their website Progress Reports [3] related to the SSRP, as they are completed, ensuring that all interested parties are able to track progress on the SSRP.

The extensive consultation and communications activities throughout the development of the SSRP and post-approval, as well as the website postings associated with the two amendments made since the SSRP was approved, meet the criteria for communicating the objectives and policies across government, publicly, and to industry and stakeholders.

6. Have the objectives and strategies been legislated or regulated?

Under Section 4 of ALSA [4, p 10], the Lieutenant Governor in Council passed Order in Council 294/2014 on July 23, 2014, establishing the SSRP as a regulation.

As a result, the SSRP is a legal document, except where stated otherwise in the Plan, binding the Crown, local government bodies, decision-makers and, subject to ALSA section 15.1, all other persons within the SSRP boundary, to comply with the commitments made in the Plan including the objectives and strategies.

7. Is there a structure and/or processes in place for ongoing monitoring and reporting on progress on the objectives and strategies?

LUS was established under Section 57 of ALSA , as part of the public service of Alberta. While LUS is situated within the Ministry of Environment and Parks, it is an independent agency reporting to a Stewardship Commissioner who is subject to direction from the Stewardship Minister [4, p 46].

Among other responsibilities identified in the *Act*, LUS is responsible for periodically monitoring progress on the achievement of objectives and the effectiveness of its policies to achieve the objectives, and to issue reports as deemed necessary [4, p 61]. LUS is charged with developing the reporting strategies and templates. LUS has worked with the responsible ministries to identify the data sets required for reporting and then each ministry was responsible for reporting out on those data sets at prescribed times.

The SSRP identifies that monitoring, evaluation and reporting are "…a means of assessing the level of progress made towards achieving the desired outcomes…" [1, p 42]. As a result, commitments are made in the SSRP for identifying , monitoring, evaluating and reporting on indicators at the strategy and outcome level [1, p 42] and made for formally reporting on progress on the SSRP [1, p 114].

The Progress Reports provide monitoring and status reporting on those strategies where commitments were made. Progress on these strategies would provide an indication of progress on the related objectives and outcomes. Information in the Progress Reports for each of the strategies includes an identification of the responsible Ministry and a status update [5, p 8] [6, p 13]. Further details are also provided on the progress of implementation in each of the Progress Reports [5, p 25] [6, p 32].

In addition to tracking strategies, Progress Reports also track a number of the SSRP indicators, enabling the reader to compare progress over the first two years on these indicators [5, p 10] [6, p 15]. In addition, further details on each of the SSRP indicators are included in each of the Progress Reports [5, p 36] [6, p 45].

The mandate of LUS, the commitments in the SSRP and the identification of lead ministries responsible for specific strategies and indicators provide a structure to monitor and report on the SSRP progress. However, although neither ALSA nor the SSRP require annual reporting, LUS has publicly released Progress Reports for 2015 and 2016 and the absence of reports for 2017 and 2018 represents a significant reporting gap and an issue with timely and effective progress reporting. Given that the SSRP has completed year five of its implementation, this public reporting is outdated and creates challenges in measuring on-going progress.

The Committee has included a recommendation (Reporting Frequency) in Section 6 of this report to address this issue.

Conclusion

The above analysis has identified that the SSRP has mostly addressed each question, with a minor concern raised in question 7. As a result, the Committee has determined that the SSRP objectives and strategies **partially** meet the purpose statement under Section 1(2)(a) of ALSA.

5.2 Alignment with ALSA Purpose Statement 1(2)(b)

In this section the Committee evaluated whether the objectives and strategies created a vision or framework that enables planned activities to occur on the landscape. It was recognized that these activities would be occurring across multiple organizations, including the provincial government, local government and industry. The SSRP was evaluated against three key questions. The questions and resulting evaluation ratings are summarized in the following dashboard:

Table 6: ALSA Section 1(2)(b) Evaluation Questions

Evaluation Questions	Evaluation Rating
ALSA Section 1(2)(b): to provide a means to plan for the future, recognizing the need to manage activity to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of current and future generations of Albertans, including aboriginal peoples	
1. *Do the objectives and strategies provide or contribute to a vision for the future state?*	
2. *Do the objectives and strategies provide guidance to inform decision-makers, industry and stakeholders on moving towards a future state?*	
3. *Do the objectives and strategies provide a basis from which to inform future plans by decision-makers (i.e. provincial government, municipal government, industry), either at a regional or sub-regional basis?*	

1. *Do the objectives and strategies provide or contribute to a vision for the future state?*

The purpose of the SSRP is identified as setting the stage for robust growth, vibrant communities and a healthy environment within the South Saskatchewan region over the next 50 years. With this long-term vision in mind, the SSRP identifies strategic directions for the region over the next 10 years [1 pg 1].

The SSRP describes a regional vision with a desired future state, aligning provincial policies at the regional level to balance the economic, environmental and social goals of Alberta [1 pg 2]. The SSRP establishes outcomes, objectives and strategies that flow from each other to describe how the vision for the future will be achieved and how progress can be measured.

The structure of the SSRP follows a cascading logic model, beginning with the long-term vision for the region informing and flowing down through Provincial goals, regional outcomes, objectives and strategies, as outlined in the following graphic.
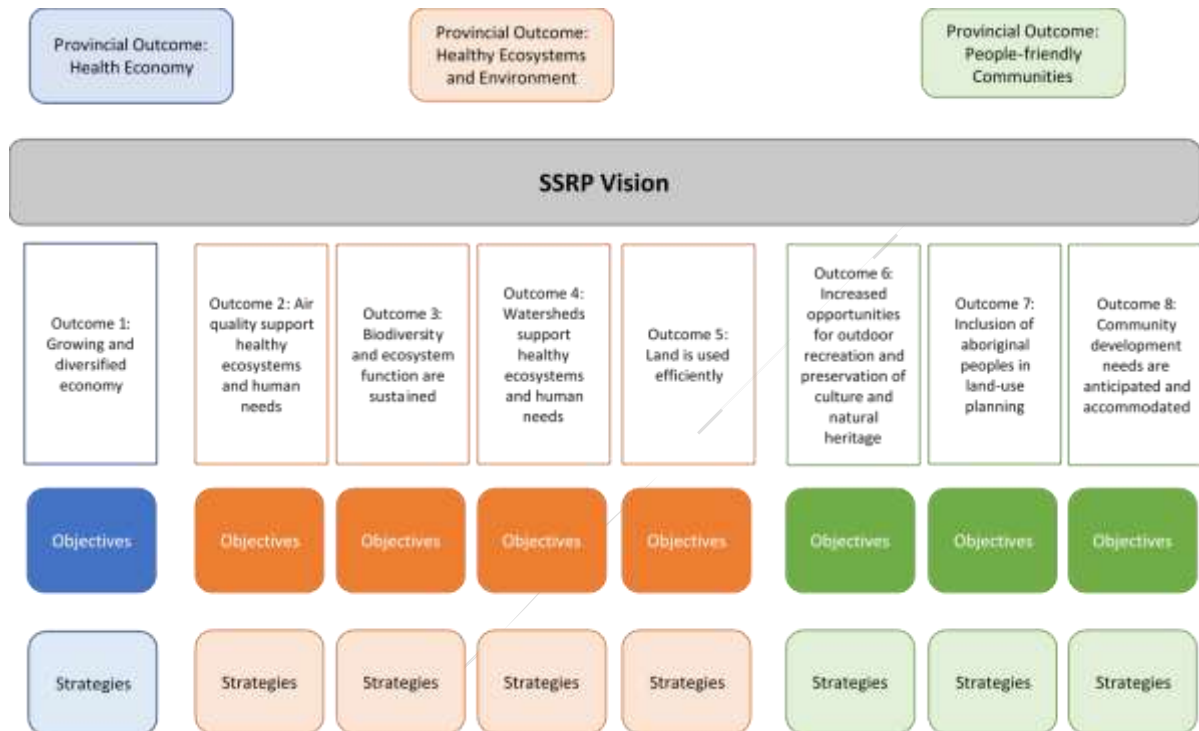
Figure 4: SSRP Logic Model

The outcomes, objectives and strategies have demonstrated, with one exception, that they are aligned and provide more detailed direction to decision-makers on how to move towards the future state vision. As a result, the objectives and strategies contribute to a vision for the future state.

2. *Do the objectives and strategies provide guidance to inform decision-makers, industry and stakeholders on moving towards a future state?*

Provincial legislation and policies already existed to guide planning and decision-making in government when the SSRP was developed and came into effect. The SSRP is intended to align provincial policies at the regional level and shift to a more effective and efficient management system that considers cumulative effectives of development [1 pg 2]. The key policy frameworks and strategies already in place include [1 pg 30]:

- Water for Life [7]
- Water Management Plan for the South Saskatchewan River Basin [8]

- [Clearing the Air: Alberta's Renewed Clean Air Strategy](#) [9]
- [Plan for Parks](#) [10]
- [Social Policy Framework](#) [11]
- [Active Alberta](#) [12]

The objectives and strategies are intended to build upon these by setting out strategic directions that support the achievement of the vision and outcomes.

The SSRP's vision, objectives and strategies establish a set of directions for the South Saskatchewan region that provides direction to decision-makers, whether in the Government of Alberta, municipal government or other bodies classified as decision-making bodies under the ALSA. The Regulatory Details in the SSRP have been established as a regulation and has a binding legal effect on the Crown, local government bodies, decision-makers, and, subject to Section 15.1 of ALSA, all other persons [4 pg 18]. This provides further clarity on the nature of the guidance. As the SSRP is a public document, communicated through the public release of the SSRP and posting of the document on the LUS website, the objectives and strategies are also providing guidance to industry and stakeholders.

3. *Do the objectives and strategies provide a basis from which to inform future plans by decision-makers (i.e. provincial government, municipal government, industry), either at a regional or sub-regional basis?*

The SSRP provides a roadmap of provincial policy direction and intentions, starting at the highest level with a regional vision that supports and aligns to provincial outcomes, followed by Provincial outcomes, regional outcomes, objectives and strategies [1 pg 43]. These are laid out in a clear and logical manner and are intended to provide direction and guidance over a 10-year period.

The objectives identify how the intended regional outcomes will be achieved, while the strategies identify the specific plan of action to achieve the objective. The strategies are drafted in a comprehensive and long-term manner. Examples of strategies include:

- Maintain an agricultural land base by reducing the fragmentation and conversion of agricultural land [1 pg 44];
- Ensure policies are in place to promote and remove barriers to new investments in renewable energy [1 pg 47];
- Implement guidelines to avoid conversion and maintain intact native grasslands on public land [1 pg 70]; and
- Protect key headwaters through the establishment of conservation areas [1 pg 88].

The direction provided in the objectives and strategies provides specific guidance to all decision-makers, while ensuring that the level of that guidance is at a high level to accommodate specific conditions at the regional and sub-regional level. This strategic guidance forms a basis from which decision-makers are informed on their respective future plans.

In addition, Appendix E of the SSRP speaks specifically to an integrated approach for sub-regional and issue-specific planning, providing guidance on how the applicable sub-regional planning-related

strategies need to be implemented. This provides further support and guidance for decision-makers to inform future plans.

Conclusion

The above analysis has identified that the SSRP has successfully addressed each question, with no minor or significant concerns raised. As a result, the Committee has determined that the SSRP objectives and strategies **fully** meet the purpose statement under Section 1(2)(b) of ALSA.

5.3 Alignment with ALSA Purpose Statement 1(2)(c)

In this section the Committee evaluated whether the objectives and strategies created an environment that fostered coordinated decision-making across land, species, human settlement, natural resources and the environment.

To understand how the SSRP supports this purpose statement, it was evaluated against five key questions. The questions and the SSRP's fulfillment of the question is summarized in the following dashboard:

Table 7: ALSA Section 1(2)(c) Evaluation Questions

Evaluation Questions	Evaluation Rating
ALSA Section 1(2)(c): to provide for the coordination of decisions by decision-makers concerning land, species, human settlement, natural resources and the environment	
1. *Do the objectives and strategies pertain to all the following areas: land, species, human settlement, natural resources, and environment?*	
2. *Were the objectives and strategies developed in a manner that enables coordinated decision-making across government?*	
3. *Is the implementation of the objectives and strategies mandatory across government?*	
4. *Do the objectives and strategies provide a framework by which ongoing coordinated decision-making is enabled?*	
5. *Is the implementation of the objectives and strategies monitored and tracked across government?*	

1. *Do the objectives and strategies pertain to all of the following areas: land, species, human settlement, natural resources, and environment?*

The SSRP has identified outcomes and objectives pertaining to all of the identified areas, as outlined in the following table:

Table 8: Topic Areas Included in SSRP Outcomes and Objectives

Topic Area	SSRP Outcomes and Objectives
Land	**Outcome 5: Land is used efficiently** • <u>Objective:</u> The amount of land that is required for development of the built environment is minimized over time
Species	**Outcome 3: Biodiversity and ecosystem function are sustained** • <u>Objective:</u> Species at risk are recovered and no new species at risk are designated
Human Settlement	**Outcome 6: Increased opportunities for outdoor recreation and preservation of culture and natural heritage** • <u>Objective:</u> A wide range of recreation experiences and tourism opportunities that meet the preferences of regional residents and visitors will be provided • <u>Objective:</u> The artifacts, fossils, historic places and aboriginal heritage sites that define the region's distinctive character are identified and effectively managed. **Outcome 8: Community development needs are anticipated and accommodated** • <u>Objective:</u> Cooperation and coordination are fostered among all land-use planners and decision-makers involved in preparing and implementing land plans and strategies • <u>Objective:</u> Knowledge sharing among communities is encouraged to promote the use of planning tools and principles of efficient use of land to address community development in the region • <u>Objective:</u> Work together to ensure growth occurs in a sustainable manner in the region
Natural Resources	**Outcome 1: Growing and diversified economy** • <u>Objective:</u> The region's agricultural industry is maintained and diversified. • <u>Objective:</u> Opportunities for the responsible exploration, development and extraction of energy resources are maintained. • <u>Objective:</u> Opportunities for the responsible development of the region's renewable energy industry are maintained in support of Alberta's commitment to greener energy production and economic development. • <u>Objective:</u> Value-added opportunities that enhance the sustainability of Alberta's industries and communities are created. • <u>Objective:</u> The region's forest industry is maintained and diversified. • <u>Objective:</u> Opportunities for the responsible development of surface materials are maintained on public lands.
Environment	**Outcome 2: Air quality supports healthy ecosystems and human needs** • <u>Outcome:</u> Releases from various point and non-point sources are managed so they do not collectively result in unacceptable air quality **Outcome 3: Biodiversity and ecosystem function are sustained** <u>Objective (Regional):</u> • Terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity are maintained. • Long-term ecosystem health and resiliency are maintained. • Intact grasslands habitat is sustained. • Biodiversity and healthy, functioning ecosystems continue to provide a range of benefits to communities in the region and all Albertans and there is sustainable use of Alberta's biodiversity resources.

Topic Area	SSRP Outcomes and Objectives
	Objective (Crown Lands): • The regional network of areas that support biodiversity conservation is enhanced through additional conservation areas. Objective (Private Lands): • The contributions of landowners for their stewardship and conservation efforts on private lands are recognized. • The contribution and value of private land in supplying ecosystem services is recognized and opportunities to support ecosystem services on private land are identified. • The value of ecosystem services supplied by economic sectors reliant on private lands is recognized. **Outcome 4**: **Watersheds support healthy ecosystems and human needs** • Objective: Surface water quality in the Bow, Oldman, South Saskatchewan and Milk rivers is managed so current and future water uses are protected. • Objective: Regional approaches and tools support integrated management of water and aquatic ecosystems • Objective: (a) Water is used efficiently as possible to meet the current and future human and ecosystem needs; (b) There is resiliency in the ability of the water management system to adapt to change over time. • Objective: Headwaters in the region are managed to maintain recharge capabilities to support critical water quality, quantity and aquatic ecosystem requirements.

As discussed in Section 5.1 Alignment with ALSA Purpose Statement 1(2)(a), the strategies included in each of the objectives, with one exception, align to the objectives. As a result, both the objectives and strategies pertain to the identified areas.

2. *Were the objectives and strategies developed in a manner that enables coordinated decision-making across Government?*

The SSRP was developed by LUS with advice from the South Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council, consultations with the public, First Nations communities, Metis communities, municipalities and stakeholders, and supported by Government of Alberta Land Use Integration teams. This established a foundation of coordinated priority setting and decision-making across multiple levels of government and decision-makers.

Municipal governments and decision-makers are required to provide LUS with statutory declarations that they have reviewed their respective plans and are in compliance with the SSRP. In addition, the regulatory requirements are binding on the Government of Alberta and any statutory decision-makers, creating the requirement to comply with the mandatory provisions within the SSRP.

The Implementation Plan also identifies the intended approach for integrated management of Crown Land in both the White and Green Areas [1 pg 58].

Given the structure of the SSRP, regulatory requirements, stated intents in the SSRP for integrated management and the logic model structure of the vision, goals, objectives and strategies, the SSRP has demonstrated that it enables coordinated decision-making across government.

3. Is the implementation of the objectives and strategies mandatory across government?

The SSRP in its entirety is a Cabinet approved document and is not intended to have binding legal effect. The SSRP is a statement of policy intended to guide and inform the Crown, decision-makers and local government bodies [1, pg 8]. Direction provided through the objectives and strategies under the SSRP are delivered through existing legislation and through existing tools such as integrated landscape management plans and access management plans [1 pg 4].

The SSRP is intended to inform land-use decisions by those decision-makers that have legal authority to grant some form of statutory consent. Decision-makers include local governments bodies and decision-making bodies, and these bodies are required under the Regulatory Details to ensure their regulatory instruments comply with the SSRP as well as using the SSRP to inform their policies [1 pg 5]. As these requirements are included in the Regulatory Details, these are mandatory for local governments and decision-making bodies.

The Regulatory Details also include requirements to report on the effectiveness of achieving the objectives included under each of the regional outcomes. The implementation of components of the SSRP are tracked, monitored and reported on through annual Progress Reports that are published on the LUS website [3].

While the implementation of the objectives and strategies are not legally binding, they are contained in a Cabinet approved document and have been publicly released creating a public expectation that the SSRP regional objectives and strategies will be implemented. Binding components of the SSRP are reflected in the Regulatory Details, which relate to establishing programs and management responses related to the policy direction outlined in the SSRP, monitoring, evaluating and reporting on progress in achieving the outcomes, and restrictions on activities in areas designated under the SSRP. Failure to comply with these binding components could result in potential legal action.

4. Do the Objectives and strategies provide a framework by which ongoing coordinated decision-making is enabled?

The SSRP makes a commitment for …"governments, ministries and agencies to work together in an integrated manner to develop the required system and tools to support implementation of the regional plan." [1 pg 42]. The responsibility for strategies and actions fall primarily into the mandate of one or more ministries; however, there is a recognition that a government-wide approach is to be taken to implement the strategies as part of the cumulative effects management system [1 pg 42].

The Implementation Plan includes objectives and strategies that commit to collaborative management approaches – specifically through environmental management frameworks. These include completion and/or implementation of the South Saskatchewan Region Air Quality Management Framework [1 pg 54], the South Saskatchewan Region Biodiversity Management Framework [1 pg 68] and the South Saskatchewan Region Surface Water Quality Management

Framework [1 pg 82]. The SSRP also describes how integrated management of Crown Land in the Green Area and White Area Public Lands will occur [1 pg 58], with further details on how an integrated approach for subregional and issue-specific planning will occur [1 pg 134].

Outcome 8 (Community development needs are anticipated and accommodated) includes an objective and related strategies regarding to planning cooperation and integration between the Government of Alberta and local governments, committing to cooperate and coordinate, share knowledge and work together to achieve the outcome [1 pg 107].

Through these commitments and approaches, the SSRP, including the objectives and strategies, enable ongoing coordinated decision-making by all levels of government and decision-making bodies.

5. *Is the implementation of the objectives and strategies monitored, tracked and reported on?*

The SSRP Implementation Plan outlines how the implementation of the regional plan will be monitored and tracked [1, p 114]. The Government of Alberta has responsibility for measuring and tracking the strategies and indicators identified in Tables 1 and 2 of the SSRP and formally communicating that progress to the public. The SSRP identifies a lead ministry from across Government for each of its leading indicators [1, p 116]. LUS manages the ongoing monitoring and reporting for the SSRP, including coordinating with the relevant lead ministries to gather data and report on results. As a result, there is a structure, system and processes in place to enable monitoring and tracking of objectives and policies across government.

There are a total of 122 strategies identified across the eight outcomes in the SSRP. See Appendix 1 for a complete listing of the strategies.

Table 2 in the SSRP identifies a subset of strategies that will be implemented within an identified timeline [1 pg 118]. The 2015 and 2016 Progress Reports include a summary status report on progress for those 24 strategies made in the SSRP that were included in Table 2.

A review of all strategies in the SSRP was undertaken to evaluate whether progress on the strategies could be measured based on a set of defined criteria. Strategies were deemed to be measurable if they were:

- Specific, identifying a "who", "what" or "where";
- Actionable;
- Timebound;
- The responsibility of Alberta Government; and
- There was a defined expected target change.

Those strategies that were defined as not measurable included the following aspects:

- Actions that were the responsibility of other parties (i.e. local government); and
- Strategies that included language such as "support", "assist", "encourage", "maintain", "ensure", "work with", "allocate appropriately", "explore", "continue to", "facilitate", "consider", and "build awareness".

Based on these criteria, the following table summarizes the number of strategies that were deemed to be measurable. See Appendix 3 for a comprehensive listing of which specific strategies were measurable.

Table 9: Number of Measurable Strategies

Outcomes	Number of Strategies	Measurable Strategies
Outcome 1	23	3
Outcome 2	3	1
Outcome 3	18	10
Outcome 4	15	6
Outcome 5	2	0
Outcome 6	15	9
Outcome 7	7	5
Outcome 8	39	0
Total	**122**	**34**

Of the 34 strategies meeting the criteria for measurable, 10 strategies are not included in Table 2 and therefore do not include reports on the status of implementation in the Progress Reports. This creates an inability to measure progress on these 10 strategies. The strategies not being measured include:

- Strategy 1.1
- Strategy 1.23
- Strategy 3.3
- Strategy 3.5
- Strategy 3.8
- Strategy 4.4*
- Strategy 4.13
- Strategy 4.15
- Strategy 6.5
- Strategy 6.13

*Strategy 4.4 includes a component that is not measurable ("continue to facilitate the advancement of wetland knowledge…") as well as a component that is measurable ("establish regional wetland management objectives…").

Three measures that are deemed not to be measurable according to the above criteria, are included in Table 2 and have status updates reported in the Progress Reports. The strategies being reported on that that are deemed to be not measurable include:

- Strategy 5.1
- Strategy 5.2
- Strategy 8.9

Strategy 1.1, related to reducing the fragmentation and conversion of agricultural land, has also been deemed _not_ to be measurable according to the above criteria. However, data related to where and how much land is converted to other uses, or fragmented is included in the details of the Progress Reports. While this information does not report on any measures to maintain the agricultural lands base (per the specific wording in the strategy), it does illustrate the broadly the impacts to agricultural land over time which, in turn, help to inform municipal planning.

Given that a number of measurable strategies are not being report on, or data is being reported on that does not directly relate to progress on strategies, this provides an incomplete picture of progress on the implementation of the SSRP. In addition, the structure of the SSRP identifies a significant number of strategies that, by their design, are not able to be monitored, tracked and reported on. This creates a risk that progress on these strategies cannot be tracked and, as a result, progress on and achievement of the related objectives and outcomes cannot be tracked either. As a result, attribution of success in achieving the goals and objectives of the SSRP is limited.

In addition to the reporting commitments in the SSRP Implementation Plan, there are two sections of the SSRP Regulatory Details which identify monitoring and reporting requirements for the Government of Alberta:

1. Section 6(1) identifies specific reporting required for air quality, conservation areas, conserved land, surface water quality, recreation and parks areas, and landscape management [1 pg 165]; and
2. Section 59 identifies the broad reporting required for each supporting indicator and strategy identified in Table 1 and 2 of the SSRP Implementation Plan [1 pg 183].

Section 6(1) requires that the relevant Designated Minister is responsible for providing a report on specific matters (identified in the sections below), in writing and publicly available upon request and posted on the Land Use Secretariat's website, "…not less than once within the first 4 years following the coming into force of the Regulatory Details…". The specific matters and subsections referred to in clause 6(1) include the following:

Part 2: Air Quality

12. *In respect of the {South Saskatchewan Region Air Quality Management} framework, the Designated Minister shall establish and maintain programs*

    (b) monitoring and evaluating the ambient air quality in the planning region; and

    (c) evaluating the effectiveness of the framework in meeting the air quality objective stated in the SSRP Implementation Plan.

Part 3: Conservation Areas

29. *In respect of the land use in a conservation area, the Designated Minister shall establish and maintain programs evaluating the effectiveness of the conservation area in meeting the relevant conservation objectives in the SSRP Strategic Plan and the SSRP Implementation Plan.*

Part 4: Conserved Land

33. The Designated Minister shall establish and maintain programs

(a) monitoring the total combined area of conserved land in this planning region, and

(b) evaluating the ratio of conserved land referred to in clause (a) to the total area of land comprising this planning region.

Part 5: Surface Water Quality

37. In respect of the {South Saskatchewan Region Surface Water Quality Management} framework, the Designated Minister shall establish and maintain programs

(b) monitoring and evaluating the water quality in the main stem of each of the Bow, Milk, Oldman and South Saskatchewan Rivers, and

(c) evaluating the effectiveness of the framework in meeting the water quality objective for the main stem of each of Bow, Milk, Oldman and South Saskatchewan Rivers as stated in the SSRP Implementation Plan.

Part 6: Recreation and Parks Areas

54. In respect of the land use in provincial parks or provincial recreation areas, the Designated Minister shall establish and maintain programs evaluating the effectiveness of the provincial parks or provincial recreation areas in meeting the relevant recreation and tourism objectives in the SSRP Strategic Plan and SSRP Implementation Plan.

Part 6.1 Landscape Management

56.6. In respect of the {Livingstone-Porcupine Hills Land} footprint {Management} plan, the Designated Minister shall establish and maintain programs

(a) managing coordinated systems among decision-makers for monitoring, tracking, and communicating limits, and

(b) evaluating the effectiveness of the footprint plan in meeting the biodiversity and ecosystem objective stated in the SSRP Implementation Plan.

The Progress Reports do not report on the requirement of evaluating the effectiveness of the specific matters referenced in Section 6(1) in meeting the objectives stated in the SSRP Strategic Plan and Implementation Plan. Neither are there reports reporting on these requirements on the LUS website. As the SSRP has now completed its fifth year of implementation, the Government of Alberta has not met its regulatory reporting requirements as outlined in Sections 12(c), 29, 33(b), 37(c), 54 and 56(b) of the Regulatory Details.

In addition, the wording of some of the objectives may create significant challenges in being able to determine whether the objectives have been met. Examples of wording of objectives that may have challenges in measuring progress include:

- Opportunities for the responsible exploration, development and extraction of energy resources are maintained.
- The region is positioned as a world-class, year-round, tourism destination.
- Biodiversity and healthy-functioning ecosystems continue to provide a range of benefits to communities in the region and all Albertans and there is sustainable use of Alberta's biodiversity resources
- To encourage aboriginal peoples' participation in land-use planning and input to decision-making in recognition of the cultural and economic importance of land-use to those aboriginal communities with constitutionally protected rights
- Work together to ensure growth occurs in a sustainable manner in the region.

The final section of the Regulatory Details also provides more details on the Government of Alberta reporting requirements:

59. *In respect of each supporting indicator and strategy for which the Designated Minister is responsible, as identified in Tables 1 and 2 of the SSRP Implementation Plan, the Designated Minister shall establish and maintain programs monitoring and evaluating*

 (a) the status of each supporting indicator, and

 (b) the level of progress made towards implementing each strategy,

 In achieving the regional outcome identified in the corresponding row in those Tables.

While the Progress Reports provide detail on the status of each supporting indicator being monitored and the level of progress made towards implementing each strategy that is being tracked, meeting the requirements of Section 59 of the Regulatory Details, the public reports only provide details on the first two years of the SSRP implementation. Given that the SSRP has completed year five of its implementation, this public reporting is outdated and creates challenges in measuring on-going progress.

The Committee has included recommendations (Reporting Frequency, Objectives and Strategies, and Indicators) in Section 6 of this report to address the issues identified in this section.

Conclusion

While the SSRP **partially** meets the purpose statement under section 1(2)(c) of ALSA, the above analysis has identified that there are significant challenges in tracking the implementation of the objectives and policies across government. In addition, there is a contravention of the Regulatory Details of the SSRP related to reporting requirements, which are legislated requirements for the Government of Alberta.

These challenges create a serious risk to the ongoing implementation of the SSRP and the ability to measure its progress at the mid-term mark of the SSRP's 10-year term. This risk can be mitigated by ensuring that progress is monitored on an ongoing basis and in as timely a manner as possible and that the regulatory reporting requirements are fulfilled by the responsible Designated Minister.

5.3 Alignment with ALSA Purpose Statement 1(2)(d)

In this section the Committee evaluated whether the objectives and strategies enabled sustainable development by considering and managing the impact of cumulative effects on the South Saskatchewan Region.

The SSRP was evaluated against two key questions. The questions and the SSRP's fulfillment of the question is summarized in the following dashboard:

Table 10: ALSA Section 1(2)(d) Evaluation Questions

Evaluation Questions	Evaluation Rating
ALSA Section 1(2)(d): to create legislation and policy that enable sustainable development by taking into account of and responding to the cumulative effects of human endeavour and other events	
1. *Does the Plan identify management strategies to respond to and manage cumulative effects?*	
2. *Does the Plan identify or plan to identify thresholds for acceptable land-use impacts in relation to the objectives and strategies?*	

1. *Does the Plan identify management strategies to respond to and manage cumulative effects?*

The SSRP uses environmental management frameworks as the main approach for responding to and managing cumulative effects. Specifically, the relevant strategies are:

- Implement the South Saskatchewan Region Air Quality Management Framework [1 p 54]
- Complete the South Saskatchewan Region Biodiversity Management Framework [1 p 68]
- Implement the South Saskatchewan Region Surface Water Quality Management Framework [1 p 82]

The Regulatory Details also legislate that management responses need to be initiated when triggers or limits are exceeded for air quality and water quality [1 p 184 & 186].

The Biodiversity Management Framework focuses on key indicators that represent the broad range of biodiversity in the region, including indicators reflecting species, habitats and the landscapes that sustain long-term ecosystem health. The Biodiversity Management Framework will include a description of actions to be taken, threshold values and monitoring. Guidance for decision-makers on decisions about future and existing land-use activities will also be included, as well as guidance for integrated management approaches on public lands.

2. *Does the Plan identify or plan to identify thresholds for acceptable land-use impacts in relation to the objectives and strategies?*

The SSRP establishes a legislative and policy framework that enables sustainable development by taking into account of and responding to cumulative effects of human activity. The SSRP is

comprehensive in its approach to having objectives and policies to identify and manage these impacts across air quality, water quality, and the land base.

The SSRP identifies thresholds for land-use impacts in relation to Air Quality [1 p 184] and Water Quality [1 p 186], with these thresholds and limits included in the Regulatory Details and therefore are legislated thresholds.

However, one of the key foundations of the framework is the development and implementation of a Biodiversity Management Framework. The Biodiversity Management Framework is intended to establish indicators to reflect species, habitats and the landscapes that sustain long-term ecosystem health. Monitoring of the indicators will be undertaken by the Alberta Biodiversity Monitoring Institute and other monitoring by the Government of Alberta and partners.

A draft of the Biodiversity Management Framework was released for comment in November 2015. Continued engagement on the draft Framework continues to occur with First Nations and local governments. To date, the Framework has not been finalized and the target completion date is 2020. Without the Framework completed and being implemented, there are limited targets established and therefore a significantly restricted ability to monitor those targets. Biodiversity management is limited to what is currently in place or has been put in place since the implementation of SSRP (i.e. trail usage) for tracking and monitoring impacts on the land base.

The SSRP is now in year five of its implementation and the Biodiversity Management Framework has yet to be finalized. The Biodiversity Management Framework was targeted for completion in 2015 [1 p 68]. This undermines the ability for the Government of Alberta and its partners to measure and determine the impacts of land-based activities that have been occurring since the effective date of the SSRP.

In addition, the Biodiversity Management Framework will need to be established for a period of time in order to gather data, monitor the data and interpret any trend lines. Given that, there is a risk of a limited ability to measure and monitor the data before the term of the SSRP is reached.

Conclusion

The above analysis has identified that the SSRP has successfully addressed each question. As a result, the Committee has determined that the SSRP objectives and strategies **fully** meet the purpose statement under Section 1(2)(b) of ALSA.

However, the Committee has identified the risk to the Government of Alberta in the ability to monitor and track land-use impacts related to ecosystem health as a result of delays in finalizing the Biodiversity Management Framework.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Strategic Directions

While the Strategic Directions are aligned with the Regional Outcomes, it is unclear what additional direction they add to the regional outcome statement or to the detailed description of the intent of the regional outcomes included in the text immediately below each Regional Outcome. As a result, the Committee feels that the strategic directions are not necessary and do not add any value to the SSRP.

> **Recommendation #1:** Eliminate strategic directions from future land use plans. Incorporate any clarification or high-level direction to decision-makers on the priority areas of focus for the region in the detailed description of each regional outcome.

6.2 Reporting Frequency

To support meeting the commitments in SSRP for releasing reports on a regular basis [1 p 115] and the commitments by LUS to reporting on an annual basis [3], processes need to be in place and commitments made to approve the finalization and publication of annual Progress Reports in a timely manner. The Committee recognizes that there needs to be sufficient time to collect the data, draft and format the Annual Report, and approve the Annual Report and, as such, has accommodated this in the recommendation.

> **Recommendation #2:** Strive to release annual reports within 12 months of the end of each calendar year. Consider including a commitment to the timeline in the Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting sections of future plans.

6.3 Objectives and Strategies

The success of any land use plan is dependent on the ability to monitor, track and report on the progress and implementation of objectives and strategies. This needs to be considered as a critical part of the development of a land use plan. As a result, objectives and strategies need to be designed in a manner that are clear, measurable and include a time element and all objectives and strategies should be monitored and reported on.

> **Recommendation #3:** To foster monitoring, evaluation and reporting, future land use plans should only include objectives and strategies that are clear, measurable and include a time element. Statements that are intended to provide guidance should not be included as strategies; rather these should be framed as guidance within a separate section under the appropriate objective.

> **Recommendation #4:** Progress on **each** objective and strategy should be monitored, evaluated, tracked, and publicly reported in Progress Reports. Include all objectives and strategies in Table 2.

6.4 Indicators

Indicators should be developed to support measuring the effectiveness of the land use plan in meeting the stated goals, outcomes and objectives. In identifying an indicator for inclusion in a land use plan, consideration should be given to whether there are existing processes in place to collect data or whether these processes would need to be developed. If data does not exist at the time of implementation of the plan, the land use plan should state how the processes will be developed and when data will start being collected.

In order to ensure that indicators contribute to the measurement of the effectiveness of the land use plan, indicators should be chosen that are relevant to the goals, outcomes and objectives and are not at such a high level as to be challenging to attribute changes in the indicator to the objectives and strategies implemented in the land use plan.

> **Recommendation #5:** Include indicators in land use plans with the following characteristics:
>
> - Relevant: Reflecting the intended activities, outputs and outcomes
> - Direct: Closely measure the intended change
> - Reliable: Consistently measured
> - Understandable
> - Practical: Data should be reasonable to collect in terms of data collection cost, frequency and timeliness for inclusion in the Progress Reporting cycle.

Indicators should provide evidence of the efficacy of delivering on the objective and strategies. As a result, indicators should be developed that are targeted towards the audiences, including ministries, local governments and the public. Collectively, this suite of indicators should enable target audiences to understand the progress that is being made towards achieving the objectives.

> **Recommendation #6:** For each land use plan, develop a suite of indicators that are targeted towards key audiences, such as ministries, local government and the public. Develop and design the indicators to collectively demonstrate to key audiences the progress being made on achieving the objectives.

To foster transparency and openness of the land use plan, all indicators should be monitored, tracked and reported on, and, as a result, should be included in Table 1.

> **Recommendation #7:** To ensure that all indicators identified in the land use plan will be monitored, tracked and reported on, include all indicators in Table 1 of the land use plan.

6.5 Measuring Progress

The 5-year evaluation report represents an opportunity to understand how a land use plan is progressing in both its implementation and in the achievement of its outcomes and objectives. Analysis of the implementation and effectiveness of the plan at the mid-term mark would enable course corrections to be made to address unforeseen circumstances or to address shifts in policy

and/or priorities. In addition, understanding how the plan is progressing at the mid-point of its term provides an opportunity focus efforts where required to potentially improve the results at the end of the 10-year term of the plan.

The current 5-year evaluation process has focused on evaluating the system processes in place without examining the implementation and effectiveness of the plan. The Committee recommends that a broader scope for the 5-year review should be incorporated into future land use plan 5-year Evaluation Terms of Reference.

> **Recommendation #8:** To enable a better understanding of the implementation status and effectiveness of land use plans, and to enable mid-term course corrections, expand the 5-year Evaluation Terms of Reference to include a review of:
>
> - Progress on implementation of the objectives and strategies; and
> - Progress on the effectiveness of achieving the outcomes and objectives.

7 South Saskatchewan Regional Plan 5-Year Evaluation Conclusion

In accordance with Section 58(d) of the *Alberta Land Stewardship Act* and within the scope of the Committee's Terms of Reference, the Committee has completed its evaluation of the objectives and policies of the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan to determine whether either or both are meeting the purposes of the *Act.* The evaluation analysis suggests that the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan is mostly meeting the purpose statements set out under Section 1(2) of the *Act*.

For two of the four purposes statements, the Committee found that SSRP fully meets the purpose statement. However, the Committee found that SSRP fell short of fully meeting Section 1(2)(a) and 1(2)(c) of the *Act*.

The summary of the findings is outlined in the following table:

Table 11: Summary Evaluation Table

Evaluation Questions	Evaluation Rating
ALSA Section 1(2)(a): to provide a means by which the Government can give direction and provide leadership in identifying the objectives of the Province of Alberta, including economic, environmental and social objectives	
1. *Do the objectives and strategies provide guidance across economic, environmental and social aspects of the South Saskatchewan Region?*	🟩
2. *Do the regional outcomes and strategies align with and contribute to the Provincial outcomes?*	🟩
3. *Does the plan demonstrate alignment from the outcomes to the objectives?*	🟩
4. *Does the plan demonstrate alignment from the objectives to the strategies?*	🟩
5. *Have the objectives and strategies been communicated across government, publicly, and to industry and stakeholders?*	🟩
6. *Have the objective and strategies been legislated or regulated?*	🟩
7. *Is there a structure and/or processes in place for ongoing monitoring and reporting on progress on the objectives and strategies?*	🟧
ALSA Section 1(2)(b): to provide a means to plan for the future, recognizing the need to manage activity to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of current and future generations of Albertans, including aboriginal peoples	
1. *Do the objectives and strategies provide or contribute to a vision for the future state?*	🟩
2. *Do the objectives and strategies provide guidance to inform decision-makers, industry and stakeholders on moving towards a future state?*	🟩
3. *Do the objectives and strategies provide a basis from which to inform future plans by decision-makers (i.e. provincial government, municipal government, industry), either at a regional or sub-regional basis?*	🟩

Evaluation Questions	Evaluation Rating
ALSA Section 1(2)(c): to provide for the coordination of decisions by decision-makers concerning land, species, human settlement, natural resources and the environment	
1. *Do the objectives and strategies pertain to all the following areas: land, species, human settlement, natural resources, and environment?*	🟩
2. *Were the objectives and strategies developed in a manner that enables coordinated decision-making across government?*	🟩
3. *Is the implementation of the objectives and strategies mandatory across government?*	🟩
4. *Do the objectives and strategies provide a framework by which ongoing coordinated decision-making is enabled?*	🟩
5. *Is the implementation of the objectives and strategies monitored and tracked across government?*	🟥
ALSA Section 1(2)(d): to create legislation and policy that enable sustainable development by taking into account of and responding to the cumulative effects of human endeavour and other events	
1. *Does the Plan identify management strategies to respond to and manage cumulative effects?*	🟩
2. *Does the Plan identify or plan to identify thresholds for acceptable land-use impacts in relation to the objectives and strategies?*	🟩

The Committee raised the minor concern that since the SSRP came into effect, Progress Reports have been released only for the 2015 and 2016 years, representing a reporting gap and an issues with timely and effective progress reporting.

In addition, the Committee raised concerns regarding the effective monitoring and tracking of the implementation of objectives and strategies in the SSRP, raising concerns regarding the small number of strategies that are tracked and reported relative to the overall number of strategies, as well the structure of the strategies and ability to effectively measure progress on them.

Finally, the Committee raised a concern that reporting requirements included in the Regulatory Details not being met.

The Committee has included six recommendations that can be addressed in future land-use plans to mitigate the concerns raised. The Committee has also included an additional recommendation to expand the scope of the 5-year review, which the Committee feels would provide the Government of Alberta with further information on the progress of implementation of land use plans and their effectiveness at the mid-point of the plan's term.

8 Report Submission

In fulfilment of the final element of its mandate, the Committee is submitting this Report to the Stewardship Minister, consistent with the requirements outlined in Section 58(d) of the ALSA.

The Committee would like to express its appreciation to LUS staff for the support and assistance they have provided in completing this report.

9 References

1. South Saskatchewan Regional Plan
https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/LandUse%20Documents/South%20Saskatchewan%20Regional%20Plan%202014-2024%20-%20May%202018.pdf

2. Land Use Secretariat Website for the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan
https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/SouthSaskatchewanRegion/Pages/default.aspx

3. Land Use Secretariat Progress Reports
https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/ResultsResources/Pages/default.aspx

4. Alberta Land Stewardship Act
http://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Acts/A26P8.pdf

5. South Saskatchewan Regional Plan Progress Report 2015
https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/LandUse%20Documents/LUF%20Progress%20Report%202015%20Final_2017-11-29%20PUBLIC.pdf

6. South Saskatchewan Regional Plan Progress Report 2016
https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/LandUse%20Documents/Progress%20Report%202016%20-%20Final%20PDF.pdf

7. Water for Life
https://www.alberta.ca/water-for-life-strategy.aspx

8. Water Management Plan for the South Saskatchewan River Basin
https://www.alberta.ca/south-saskatchewan-river-basin-water-management-plan.aspx

9. Clearing the Air: Alberta's Renewed Clean Air Strategy
https://open.alberta.ca/publications/9781460104767

10. Plan for Parks
https://www.albertaparks.ca/albertaparksca/about-us/plan-for-parks/

11. Social Policy Framework
https://open.alberta.ca/publications/6214203

12. Active Alberta
https://open.alberta.ca/publications/9780778593331

10 Appendices

Appendix 1: SSRP Outcomes, Objectives and Strategies Table

Appendix 2: SSRP 5-Year Evaluation Committee Terms of Reference

Appendix 3: Reporting on Strategies

Outcome 1: The region's economy is growing and diversified

Strategic Direction: Sustainable development wherein economic development takes into account environmental sustainability and social outcomes

Objective: The region's agricultural industry is maintained and diversified.

Strategies[1]:

1.1. Maintain an agricultural land base by reducing the fragmentation and conversion of agricultural land.

1.2. Support a diverse and innovate irrigated agriculture and agri-food sector.

1.3. Assist the agriculture and agri-food industry to maximize opportunities for value-added agricultural products

1.4. Support a business climate and complementary production and marketing approaches that recognize the contribution of local production in addition to existing domestic and international market opportunities for Alberta's agriculture, agri-food and agri-product sectors.

1.5. Support and enhance the next generation of agricultural, food and rural entrepreneurs.

1.6. Encourage the use of voluntary market-based instruments for ecosystem services in order to recognize and reward the continued stewardship and conservation of private agricultural lands and to potentially diversify the agricultural economy.

Objective: Opportunities for the responsible exploration, development and extraction of energy resources are maintained.

1.7. Ensure rules regarding access to energy and processing and transportation of energy resources are clear and ensure economic development opportunities are appropriately considered against other land uses and values.

1.8. Maintain physical access to freehold (that is, privately owned) petroleum and natural gas, coal and minerals.

Objective: Opportunities for the responsible development of the region's renewable energy industry are maintained in support of Alberta's commitment to greener energy production and economic development.

Objective: Value-added opportunities that enhance the sustainability of Alberta's industries and communities are created.

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[1] Some strategies have been abbreviated for the purposes of developing this table. Readers should reference the SSRP document if they wish to read the entirety of each strategy.

1.9.   Ensure policies are in place to promote and remove barriers to new investments in renewable energy (that is, wind, biofuels, solar, hydro) production.

1.10.   Invest in the development, demonstration and deployment of renewable and alternative energy technologies targeted to improve Alberta's overall energy efficiency. This will include support for the application of new technologies and support on-going research and development in partnership with other institutions.

1.11.   Ensure reinforcement of the transmission system to enable more renewable power in the region.

1.12.   Ensure that opportunities for future routes and siting for pipeline gateways, transportation corridors and utility and electrical transmission corridors are maintained in the region and in consideration of the needs of adjacent Land-use Framework regions and provinces.

1.13.   Work with municipalities, landowners and industry to explore multi-use corridors for co-location of linear infrastructure that supports critical economic linkages to markets for expanded access.

Objective: The region's forest industry is maintained and diversified.

1.14.   Promote diversification of the forest industry through implementation of The Alberta Forest Products Roadmap to 2020 which will identify opportunities to diversify the sector through new markets and products, including the bioenergy sector.

1.15.   Deliver an effective forest health management program to mitigate risk to timber supply and forest health.

1.16.   Incorporate wildfire management planning into forest management initiatives including the development of landscape wildfire risk assessments, landscape disturbance planning and FireSmart strategies.

Objective: Opportunities for the responsible development of surface materials resources are maintained on public lands.

1.17.   Allocate the surface materials appropriately and monitor extraction operations to provide opportunities for sustainable development of the land.

1.18.   Work with municipalities, industry and other stakeholders to identify areas of existing and future extraction of surface materials and mineral resources and determine appropriate land uses in the vicinity of these resources.

Objective: The region is positioned as a world-class, year-round, tourism destination.

1.19.   Enhance Tourism Destination Areas within the South Saskatchewan Region (Kananaskis, Canadian Badlands and Southwest Alberta) by engaging with aboriginal communities, municipalities, industry and local stakeholders.

1.20.   Work with municipalities, private investors and landowners to identify areas of high value for recreation and tourism and to encourage tourism investment and infrastructure development opportunities on identified lands.

1.21.   Work with municipal governments and other partners to identify, establish and promote scenic byways in and around areas with high-quality attractions and recreation and tourism features.

This would include routes, trails and waterways to create distinctive travel experiences and showcase the region's unique scenic resources and cultural landscapes.

1.22. Provide long-term security (e.g. longer-term leases) for tourism and recreation investment opportunities.

1.23. Develop a regional tourism strategy that will identify strategic actions that the Government of Alberta can undertake in order to support the development of the Castle Region as a successful tourism destination.

Outcome 2: Air quality is managed to support healthy ecosystems and human needs through shared stewardship

Strategic Direction: Managing air quality through continued collaboration

Objective: Releases from various point and non-point sources are managed so they do not collectively result in unacceptable air quality.

Strategies:

1.1 Implement the South Saskatchewan Region Air Quality Management Framework
1.2 Continue to support the implementation of the Calgary Region Airshed Zone Particulate Matter and Ozone Management Plan in alignment with implementation of the national Air Quality Management System and the South Saskatchewan Air Quality Management Framework.
1.3 Encourage municipalities, industry and the public to be proactive in addressing air quality issues through voluntary programs and initiatives to address emissions sources such as transportation.

Outcome 3: Biodiversity and ecosystem function are sustained through shared stewardship

Strategic Direction: Conserving and maintaining the benefits of biodiversity

Objective:

(a) Regional:
- Terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity are maintained
- Long-term ecosystem health and resiliency is maintained
- Species at risk are recovered and no new species at risk are designated
- Intact grasslands habitat is sustained
- Biodiversity and healthy, functioning ecosystems continue to provide a range of benefits to communities in the region and all Albertans and there is sustainable use of Alberta's biodiversity resources

(b) Crown Lands:
- The regional network of areas that support biodiversity conservation is enhanced through additional conservation areas

(c) Private Lands:
- The contributions of landowners for their stewardship and conservation efforts on private lands are recognized
- The contribution and value of private land in supplying ecosystem services is recognized and opportunities to support ecosystem services on private land are identified
- The value of ecosystem services supplied by economic sectors reliant on private lands is recognized

Strategies:

3.1 Complete the South Saskatchewan Region Biodiversity Management Framework by the end of 2015

3.2 Implement the Livingstone-Porcupine Hills Land Footprint Management Plan

    3.2.1 Develop landscape management plans to address footprint management for remaining Green Area and White Area public land.

3.3 Align forest management planning in the region with the Alberta Forest Strategy which is under development and with other subregional planning to ensure planning for the highest priority of watershed management and headwaters protection (including water storage, recharge and release functions)

3.4 Review Integrated Resource Plans in the region for their relevance and incorporate as appropriate under this regional plan by the end of 2015.

3.5 Consolidate and expand Public Land Use Zone for Green Area on public lands.

3.6 Complete the Majorville Guidelines for Land and Resource Management by the end of 2015.

3.7 Implement guidelines to avoid conversion and maintain intact native grasslands on public land.

3.8 Implement a policy to allow for increased grazing tenure terms, from 10 years to 20 years, to continue to sustain intact native grasslands.

3.9 Continue the commitment to stocking rates in effect as of September 1, 2014.

3.10 Continue to work with other government agencies, other levels of government, landholders, non-government organizations, industry, the research community and other partners within and outside the province to manage risk associated with invasive species.

3.11 Create new and expanded conservation areas on provincial Crown land.

    3.11.1 Manage the Castle area for future generations, protect the headwaters, support the continued practice of traditional land uses, such as the exercise of treaty rights, and provide outdoor recreational opportunities.

3.12 Manage conserved lands to achieve long-term conservation of biological diversity and ecosystem processes.

3.13 Establish a Special Management Area adjacent to Pekisko Heritage Rangeland linking to the existing Public Land Use Zones by the end of 2015.

3.14 Explore opportunities for further conservation management approaches using a collaborative approach in areas of grasslands.

3.15 Encourage and support the continued stewardship of Alberta's private lands through the development and piloting of regionally appropriate conservation tools.

3.16 Complete development and evaluation of the Southeast Alberta Conservation Offset Pilot by the end of 2015.

3.17 Develop and facilitate the continued voluntary adoption of beneficial management practices that demonstrate agriculture and agri-food sector commitment to environmental stewardship.

3.18 Consider connectivity of intact native grasslands as the highest priority under the Land Trust Grant Program.

Outcome 4: Watersheds are managed to support healthy ecosystems and human needs through shared stewardship

Strategic Direction: Advancing watershed management

Objective: Surface water quality in the Bow, Oldman, South Saskatchewan and Milk rivers is managed so current and future water uses are protected.

Strategies:

4.1   Implement the South Saskatchewan Region Surface Water Quality Management Framework.

Objective: Regional approaches and tools support integrated management of water and aquatic ecosystems

Strategies:

4.2   Develop a comprehensive approach for groundwater management by the end of 2017.

4.3   Continue to support the work of the Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils on watershed assessment and planning under the Water for Life strategy, in alignment with regional planning.

4.4   Continue to increase knowledge and improve management of wetland areas within the region.

4.5   Continue to increase knowledge and improve management of riparian lands within the region.

4.6   Encourage the use of best management practices for land disturbances to minimize sedimentation of water bodies and encourage municipalities to work with land developers to develop and

implement best management practices appropriate for the site and establish policies and guidelines for erosion and sediment control in locations with high development pressures.

4.7   Encourage the development of source water protection plans and the use of source water protection measures.

4.8   Continue to require the development of drinking water safety plans for all municipal waterworks systems as required under the current regulatory systems.

4.9   Encourage decision-makers and land managers to use the available planning information, including: riparian and wetland mapping and inventories, environmentally significant areas mapping and groundwater vulnerability mapping.

Objective:

(a)   *Water is used as efficiently as possible to meet the current and future human and ecosystem needs.*

(b)   *There is resiliency in the ability of the water management system to adapt to change over time.*
Strategies:

4.10 Continue to develop an optimized water management system in the region.

4.11 Continue to work towards the targets set within the Water for Life strategy with all sectors demonstrating best management practices reach overall water efficiency and productivity improvements by 30 per cent from 2005 levels by 2015.

4.12 Continue to develop approaches to address the climate variability found in the region.

Objective: Headwaters in the region are managed to maintain recharge capabilities and support critical water quality, quantity and aquatic ecosystem requirements.

Strategies:

4.13 Protect key headwaters through the establishment of conservation areas.

4.14 Continue collaboration with the Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils on headwaters management initiatives such as development of headwaters integrity indicators

4.15 Review existing water conservation objectives for headwaters tributaries in support of the Approved Water Management Plan for the South Saskatchewan River Basin.

Outcome 5: Land is used efficiently to reduce the amount of area that is taken up by permanent or long-term developments associated with the built environment

Strategic Direction: Promoting efficient use of land

Objective: The amount of land that is required for development of the built environment is minimized over time.

Strategies:

5.1 All land-use planners and decision-makers responsible for land-use decisions are encouraged to consider the efficient use of land principles in land-use planning and decision-making.

5.2 Build awareness and understanding of the efficient use of land principles and the application of land-use planning tools that reduce the footprint of the built environment, how they might be applied and how their effectiveness would be measured over time with municipalities, land-use decision-makers and land users, on both public and private lands.

Outcome 6: The quality of life of residents is enhanced through increased opportunities for outdoor recreation and the preservation and promotion of the region's unique cultural and natural heritage

Strategic Direction: Providing recreation and nature-based tourism opportunities and preserving and promoting the region's unique cultural and natural heritage

Objective:

(a) A wide range of recreation experiences and tourism opportunities that meet the preferences of regional residents and visitors will be provided.

(b) The artifacts, fossils, historic places and aboriginal heritage sites that define the region's distinctive character are identified and effectively managed.

Strategies:

6.1 In collaboration with communities, industry, stakeholders and aboriginal peoples develop the South Saskatchewan Regional Trail System Plan to provide designated land and water trails for year-round recreation linking communities, parks and outdoor spaces.

6.2 Explore legislative tool options to help address liability concerns and facilitate continued work with trail groups and stewards in planning, developing and managing trails.

6.3 Address flood (2013) damage recreation and parks areas including infrastructure such as campground facilities, staging areas and trails.

6.4 Support current and future projects to identify, maintain and enhance sustainable long-term public access to recreational water bodies.

6.5 Deliver education, awareness and compliance programs to promote and support responsible land use and shared stewardship.

6.6 Implement the Livingstone-Porcupine Hills Recreation Management Plan.

6.6.1 Develop comprehensive and integrated recreation management plans for remaining lands in the Green Area working with communities, industry, other stakeholders and aboriginal peoples.

6.7 Create new public land recreation areas in the eastern slopes to provide defined "no service" camping areas and improve access to trails.

6.8 In concert with developers, ensure that land-based development activities are assessed to identify and protect historic resources.

6.9 Ensure continued public accessibility to information regarding historic resources in the region.

6.10 Identify and designate important historic resources in the region with municipal partners.

6.11 Work with and support Parks Canada to nominate Writing-on-Stone Provincial Park for inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

6.12 Invest in existing parks facilities and expand and designate new provincial parks and provincial recreation areas to enhance the experiences of users across the region and provide recreational opportunities, contribute to tourism growth and address growing outdoor recreational demand in the region.

6.13 Ensure all regional site within the provincial parks system are appropriately classified and consolidated and potential land transfers between ministries are reviewed to gain efficiencies in management approach.

6.14 Manage Recreation and Parks Areas to ensure quality outdoor recreation activities and nature-based tourism opportunities and experiences while minimizing environmental impacts.

6.15 Develop the regional parks plan for the South Saskatchewan Region to direct the planning and management of new and existing parks within the provincial parks system by the end of 2016.

Outcome 7: Aboriginal peoples are included in land-use planning

Strategic Direction: Inclusion of aboriginal peoples in land-use planning

Objective: To encourage aboriginal peoples' participation in land-use planning and input to decision-making in recognition of the cultural and economic importance of land-use to those aboriginal communities with constitutionally protected rights**.**

Strategies:

7.1 In accordance with applicable government policy as it may be from time to time, the Government of Alberta will continue to consult with aboriginal peoples in a meaningful way when government decisions may adversely affect the continued exercise of their constitutionally protected rights and the input from such consultations continues to be considered prior to the decision.

7.2 Explore and present potential new approaches to draw on the rich cultural, ecological and traditional land-use knowledge and stewardship practices of aboriginal communities.

7.3 Establish a South Saskatchewan Region Land Sub-Table with First Nations with an interest in the region. This initiative will consider:

- Development of a mechanism for engagement and strategic consultation;

- Fish and wildlife management, access management and economic/business opportunities;
- Management of current and new conservation areas and public land;
- Strategic direction and joint priorities; and
- Linkages for environmental management frameworks and sub-tables (e.g. land, water, biodiversity)

7.4 Continue First Nation involvement in the following watershed management planning initiatives:

- Treaty 7 First Nations Water Sub-Table
- Understanding First Nations existing and future water needs;
- Developing and implementing water agreements with interested First Nations;
- Encouraging First Nation participation in Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils; and
- Encouraging First Nation involvement in headwaters management.

7.5 Engage aboriginal peoples on initiatives to support tourism development

7.6 Promoting the economic, social and cultural well-being of aboriginal communities.

7.7 Encourage and facilitate information sharing and education opportunities between First Nations with an interest in the region and the Government of Alberta

Outcome 8: Community development needs are anticipated and accommodated

Strategic Direction: Strengthening communities

Objective:

- ***Cooperation and coordination are fostered among all land-use planners and decision-makers involved in preparing and implementing land plans and strategies.***

- ***Knowledge sharing among communities is encouraged to promote the use of planning tools and the principles of efficient use of land to address community development in the region.***

Calgary Regional Partnership

- ***Work together to ensure growth occurs in a sustainable manner in the region.***

Strategies:

When making land-use decisions, municipalities, provincial departments, boards and agencies and other partners are expected to:

8.1 Work together to achieve the shared environmental, economic and social outcomes in the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan and minimize negative environmental cumulative effects.

8.2 Address common planning issues, especially where valued natural features and historic resources are of interest to more than one stakeholder and where the possible effect of development transcends jurisdictional boundaries.

8.3 Coordinate and work with each other in their respective planning activities (such as in the development of plans and policies) and development approval processes to address issues of mutual interest.

8.4 Work together to anticipate, plan and set aside adequate land with the physical infrastructure and services required to accommodate future population growth and accompanying community development needs.

8.5 Build awareness regarding the application of land-use planning tools that reduce the impact of residential, commercial and industrial developments on the land, including approaches and best practices for promoting the efficient use of private and public lands.

8.6 Pursue joint use agreements, regional service commissions and any other joint cooperative arrangements that contribute specifically to intermunicipal land-use planning.

8.7 consider the value of intermunicipal development planning to address land use on fringe areas, airport vicinity protection plans or other areas of mutual interest.

8.8 Coordinate land-use planning activities with First Nations, irrigation districts, school boards, health authorities and other agencies on areas of mutual interest.

The Government of Alberta is expected to:

8.9 Build awareness and work with municipalities to implement strategies that support achieving the regional outcome that community development needs are anticipated and accommodated.

Calgary Regional Partnership:

8.10 The Government of Alberta recognizes the significance and importance of the Calgary Regional Partnership, and the Calgary Metropolitan Plan, in contributing to the objectives of the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan.

Objective: Ensure provincial guidance is provided to municipalities and other stakeholders to:

- Promote healthy and sustainable communities;
- Foster the establishment of land-use patterns for an orderly, economical and beneficial development, as well as to maintain and improve the quality of the built environment;
- Support timely planning and provision of social infrastructure;
- Contribute to the "maintenance and enhancement" of a healthy natural environment;
- Foster preservation of historic resources through responsible land-use management;
- Contribute to a safe, efficient and cost-effective transportation network; and
- Minimize risks to health, safety and loss to property damage as a result of land-use decisions.

Strategies:

Municipalities are expected to establish land-use patterns which:

8.11 Provide an appropriate mix of agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, public and recreational land uses; developed in an orderly, efficient, compatible, safe and economical manner.

8.12 Contribute to a healthy environment, a healthy economy and a high quality of life.

8.13 Provide a wide range of economic development opportunities, stimulate local employment growth and promote a healthy and stable economy. Municipalities are also expected to complement regional and provincial economic development initiatives.

8.14 Feature innovative housing designs, range of densities and housing types such as mixed-use, cluster developments, secondary suites, seniors' centres and affordable housing. Provide the opportunity for a variety of residential environments which feature innovative designs and densities and which make efficient use of existing facilitates, infrastructure and public transportation.

8.15 Minimize potential conflict of land uses adjacent to natural resource extraction, manufacturing and other industrial development.

8.16 Minimize potential conflict of land uses within and adjacent to areas prone to flooding, erosion, subsidence, or wildfire.

8.17 Complement their municipal financial management strategies, whereby land use decisions contribute to the financial sustainability of the municipality.

8.18 Locate school and health facilities, transportation, transit and other amenities appropriately, to meet increased demand from a growing population.

Municipalities are expected to:

8.19 Identify areas where agricultural activities, including extensive and intensive agricultural and associated activities, should be the primary land use in the region.

8.20 Limit the fragmentation of agricultural lands and their premature conversion to other, non-agricultural uses, especially within areas where agriculture has been identified as a primary land use in the region. Municipal planning, policies and tools that promote the efficient use of land should be used where appropriate to support this strategy.

8.21 Employ appropriate planning tools to direct non-agricultural subdivision and development to areas where such development will not constrain agricultural activities, or to areas of lower-quality agricultural lands.

8.22 Minimize conflicts between intensive agricultural operations and incompatible land use by using appropriate planning tools, setback distances and other mitigating measures.

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8.23 Utilize or incorporate measures which minimize or mitigate possible negative impacts on important water resources or risks to health, public safety and loss to property damage due to hazards associated with water, such as flooding, erosion and subsidence due to bank stability issues, etc., within the scope of their jurisdiction.

8.24 Incorporate measures in future land-use planning decisions to mitigate the impact of floods through appropriate flood hazard area management and emergency response planning for floods.

8.25 Prohibit unauthorized future use or development of land in the floodway in accordance with the *Flood and Reconstruction Act* and the Floodway Development Regulation under development, which will control, regulate or prohibit use or development of land that is located in a floodway and define authorized uses.

8.26 Identify and consider, based on available information including information from the Government of Alberta, the values of significant water resources and other water features, such as ravines, valleys, riparian lands, stream corridors, lakeshores, wetlands and unique environmentally significant landscapes, within their boundaries.

8.27 Determine appropriate land-use patterns in the vicinity of these significant water resources and other water features.

8.28 Consider local impacts as well as impacts on the entire watershed.

8.29 Consider a range of approaches to facilitate the conservation, protection or restoration of these water features and the protection of sensitive aquatic habitat and other aquatic resources.

8.30 Establish appropriate setbacks from waterbodies to maintain water quality, flood water conveyance and storage, bank stability and habitat.

8.31 Assess existing developments located within flood hazard areas for long-term opportunities for redevelopment to reduce risk associated with flooding, including human safety, property damage, infrastructure and economic loss.

8.32 Facilitate public access and enjoyment of water features, to the extent possible.

8.33 Use available guidance, where appropriate, from water and watershed planning initiatives in support of municipal planning.

    8.33.1 Collaborate with industry, the provincial government and other stakeholders to identify areas of existing and future extraction of energy resources, surface materials, such as sand and gravel, and determine appropriate land uses in the vicinity of these resources.

    8.33.2 Utilize or incorporate measures, which minimize or mitigate possible negative impacts, and minimize risks to health, safety and property.

Municipalities, in consultation with the Minister responsible for the *Historical Resource Act*, are expected to:

8.34 Identify significant historic resources to foster their preservation and enhancement for use and enjoyment by present and future generations.

8.35 Work toward the designation of Municipal Historic Resources to preserve municipally significant historic places.

8.36 Formulate agreements with the Ministry for development referrals to assist in the identification and protection of historic resources within the scope of their jurisdiction.

Municipalities, in consultation with the Minister response for the *Highways Development and Protection Act*, are expected to:

8.37 Identify the location, nature and purpose of key provincial transportation corridors and related facilities.

8.38 Work with the Ministry to minimize negative interactions between the transportation corridors and related facilities identified in accordance with strategy 8.37 above and the surrounding areas and land uses through the establishment of compatible land-use patterns.

8.39 Enter into highway vicinity agreements with the Ministry and employ appropriate setback distances and other mitigating measures relating to noise, air pollution and safety to limit access of subdivision and development is to be approved in the vicinity of the areas identified in accordance with 8.37 above.

Terms of Reference for Conducting a Regional Plan 5-Year Evaluation

Updated: August 1, 2019

1. Introduction

Under the *Alberta Land Stewardship Act* (ALSA), a regional plan 5-Year Evaluation Committee is established in an advisory role to the government on matters laid out in these terms of reference.

These terms of reference complement the legislative requirements of ALSA by offering additional details regarding the authority, composition, function, reporting and administration of the 5-Year Evaluation committee.

The committee chairperson may seek clarification before the evaluation begins. Changes must be approved by the Land Use Secretariat or Stewardship Commissioner and have regard to the purposes of ALSA.

> Within these terms of reference, blue italic underlined text specifically refers to the 5-Year Evaluation of the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (SSRP).

2. Legislative Authority

Pursuant to ALSA section 58(d), the Land Use Secretariat has the following mandate with respect to regional plans and proposed regional plans:

> *58(d) At least once every 5 years, to appoint a committee under section 63(3)(b) to evaluate the objectives and audit the policies of regional plans for the purpose of determining whether either or both are meeting the purposes of ALSA, and to make a public report to the Stewardship Minister on the evaluation and audit.*

The 5-Year Evaluation is a legislatively required, scheduled assessment to determine whether the regional plan is meeting the purposes of ALSA.

Unless stipulated otherwise in the regional plan or an amendment to the regional plan, this evaluation includes any and all amendments made to the regional plan since the plan came into effect.

The Land Use Secretariat, headed by the Stewardship Commissioner, carries out this evaluation by appointing an independent body to evaluate the objectives and audit the policies of a regional plan to determine whether they are meeting the needs of ALSA then submit their public report to the Stewardship Minister.

3. Governance

The agreement is executed on behalf of the Stewardship Minister who is also the Minister of Alberta Environment and Parks.

Stewardship Minister is designated as the minister responsible for ALSA. Responsibilities of the Stewardship Minister are described within the Act.

Stewardship Commissioner is responsible for overseeing development, implementation, reviews and amendments of regional plans and addressing concerns regarding compliance with regional plans.

Land Use Secretariat established by ALSA as part of the public service of Alberta but not as part of a government department, reports to the Stewardship Commissioner and Stewardship Minister but works independently of a department. The Secretariat coordinates development and implementation of regional plans.

> The SSRP 5-Year Evaluation Committee works closely with the Land Use Secretariat and remains accountable to the Stewardship Commissioner for its effective management and operation.

4. Objectives and Policies

The 5-Year Evaluation Committee *evaluates the objectives* and *audits the policies* of a regional plan for the purpose of determining whether either or both are meeting the purposes of ALSA then makes a public report to the Stewardship Minister on the evaluation and audit. Within this context:

Objectives often describe "what must be done" or commitments made during planning in order to achieve the regional outcomes and vision.

They are specifically identified in the Implementation Plan section of a regional plan. Objectives, strategies (both regulatory and non-regulatory) and actions are undertaken to support achievement of the desired regional outcomes and vision.

> There are 8 objectives within SSRP. Refer to Appendix 1 for a listing of these objectives.

Policies are often a set of enforceable principles to guide actions and decision-making in order to achieve an objective. Policy, as defined in ALSA section 2(1)(t), includes a strategy, plan, scheme, program or initiative.

For the purposes of the evaluation, the committee focuses on regional policies (including strategies, plans, schemes, programs or initiatives) specifically introduced and implemented by a regional plan. Existing provincial policies or ongoing strategies, such as the Alberta Provincial Energy Strategy, already underway within government and in effect regardless of the presence or absence of a regional plan, may be excluded from this evaluation.
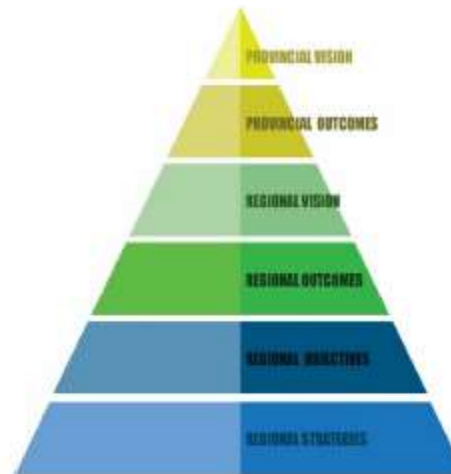
While regional policies may be located in any section of a regional plan, many are identified and regulated through "Table 2: Regional Outcomes and Strategies" of a regional plan and are often associated with a specific timeline as opposed to being described as "ongoing."

> There are regional strategies with specific timelines in Table 2 of SSRP.

Regional objectives are often achieved through the actions or decisions made as a direct result of the strategies or policies of an implemented plan. Together, they help achieve the desired outcomes and vision for the region, which, in turn, contribute to the outcomes and vision for the province as described in the Land-use Framework.

5. Purposes of ALSA

The committee evaluates the objectives and audits the policies of a regional plan for the purpose of *determining whether either or both are meeting the purposes of ALSA* then makes a public report to the Stewardship Minister on the evaluation and audit. Within this context, the purposes of ALSA are described in section 1(2) as follows:

(a) *to provide a means by which the Government can give direction and provide leadership in identifying the objectives of the Province of Alberta, including economic, environmental and social objectives;*

(b) *to provide a means to plan for the future, recognizing the need to manage activity to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of current and future generations of Albertans, including aboriginal peoples;*

(c) *to provide for the co-ordination of decisions by decision-makers concerning land, species, human settlement, natural resources and the environment;*

(d) to create legislation and policy that enable sustainable development by taking account of and responding to the cumulative effect of human endeavour and other events.

A 5-Year Evaluation Committee evaluates the regional plan objectives and/or policies and submits a report that is used by the Stewardship Minister and the Legislature to determine whether SSRP is meeting the purposes of ALSA. Extra attention is paid to the Regulatory Details of a plan which are enforceable as law.

Except as otherwise noted in the SSRP Regulatory Details; the Introduction, Strategic Plan and Implementation Plan within SSRP are not intended to have binding legal effect and are statements of provincial policy to guide the Crown, decision-makers, local government bodies and all other persons.

6. Public Report

The committee evaluates the objectives and audits the policies of a regional plan for the purpose of determining whether either or both are meeting the purposes of ALSA then *makes a public report to the Stewardship Minister* on the evaluation.
The committee prepares a public report in the public interest. The report:

- presents findings having regard to the purposes of ALSA;
- identifies objectives and/or policies within a plan that, in its views, *do* or *do not* meet the purposes of ALSA; and provides a description, analysis or explanation of these findings;
- includes a completed evaluation matrix such as the one found in Appendix 1;
- recommends improvements to the plan should objectives or policies not meet the purposes of ALSA;
- provides evidence of findings, cites sources and identifies areas where information is insufficient to conduct an evaluation;
- contains a description of the legislative requirements, committee membership and relevant experience, approach including practices and procedures, evaluation period, and understanding of the regional plan;
- contains a brief executive summary outlining legislative requirements, approach, criteria and findings of the 5-Year Evaluation Committee; and
- considers social, economic and environmental perspectives and reflects the consensus (defined for these purposes as 75% support or greater) of committee members.

The Land Use Secretariat will collect and analyze existing information and provide evidence of findings in a preliminary assessment. The Committee may leverage this assessment, in whole or in part, for their public evaluation report.

7. Evaluation Period

The 5-Year Evaluation Committee evaluates the objectives and/or policies and submits a report that is used to determine whether LARP is meeting the purposes of ALSA from the date a regional plan came into force through the same day five years later.

> For SSRP, the 5-year period under evaluation is September 1, 2014 through September 1, 2019.

8. Scope

The 5-Year Evaluation Committee:

- limits their evaluation to one named regional plan. For example, the evaluation does not assess other approved or draft regional plans, proposed future amendments to the plan, unnamed sub-regional and issue-specific plans, or municipal or local plans;
- limits their evaluation to formal, written materials in the public domain that are referenced in the regional plan and any non-public/draft materials provided by the Land Use Secretariat. Committee members do not interview any groups or persons, hold hearings or inquiries, request non-public information from sources other than the Land Use Secretariat or base their assessments on undocumented materials;
- limits their evaluation of objectives and audit of policies to those that are specifically identified or introduced by the regional plan to determine whether they *are* or *are not* meeting the purposes of ALSA section 1(2).

When conducting the evaluation, the Committee may employ a 5-step, structured decision-making process in which members: 1) clarify the context; 2) define objectives and evaluation criteria; 3) develop a range of options; 4) consider consequences and implications; and 5) evaluate trade-offs and select recommendations. The Committee's approach and evaluation criteria must appear in the report.

The 5-Year Evaluation Committee does not make recommendations, suggestions or otherwise comment on matters outside of this jurisdiction. Committee members do not have authority:

- to provide information or advice to non-members or solicit opinions from non-members,
- to take action solely on the basis of the advice, or
- to identify, suggest or award any form of exemption or compensation.

9. Conduct

The 5-Year Evaluation Committee members recognize independence and impartiality are integral to their function. Members conduct their duties with impartiality and integrity.

For example, members do not comment publicly or privately on the matters before the committee, do not release confidential or privileged information, do not receive gifts perceived to be connected with their duties, and do not further their own private interests.

Members avoid any conflict of interest or apparent conflict of interest and immediately disclose

to the Land Use Secretariat or Stewardship Commissioner any conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest which may bring the members' impartiality or integrity into question.

10. Administration

The committee chairperson:

- represents the interests of the committee and operates as a liaison with government;
- governs committee operations, resources and development of the report;
- requests, in writing, additional required information from the Land Use Secretariat;
- escalates, if necessary, issues and concerns with the Stewardship Commissioner;
- ensures requirements described within these terms are met;
- submits the committee's report to the Stewardship Minister on or before the report due date;
- presents, if required, committee findings and responds to questions that may arise as a result of the evaluation; and
- protects substantive materials, disposes of transitory materials and completes all business.

11. Access to Information

In conducting their evaluation, the committee may access any and all public documents relevant to their evaluation. Many of the documents are electronically available on or through the Alberta Land-use website at landuse.alberta.ca.

On an as-needed basis, the chairperson of the committee may formally request non-public/draft information from the Land Use Secretariat that is required for the evaluation.

Additionally, the Land Use Secretariat provides information that may be beneficial to the evaluation. For example, the Secretariat offers draft versions of Land-use Framework Regional Plan Progress Reports developed in response to legislative and regulatory requirements to monitor, evaluate and publicly report on the status of each indicator and effectiveness of each strategy within a regional plan.

12. Related Reports

Progress Reports: these reports meet legislative requirements described in ALSA section 61(a) and regulatory requirements embedded in regional land-use plans by periodically monitoring and reporting progress on achieving regional plan objectives and the effectiveness of policies in achieving these objectives; however, they do not determine whether objectives and policies within a regional plan are meeting the purposes of ALSA.

Regional Plan Reviews: pursuant to ALSA section 19.2(1), a person who is directly and adversely affected by a regional plan or an amendment to a regional plan may, within 12 months from the date the regional plan or amendment comes into force, request a review of a regional plan. An independent panel submits their recommendations which may be addressed through a

wide variety of mechanisms. Again, this review does not determine whether objective and policies within the plan were meeting the purposes of ALSA.

Review recommendations, progress reports and other results may help inform the 5-Year Evaluation of a regional plan which, in turn, may inform the 10-year review of the regional plan.

> With respect to SSRP, the Land Use Secretariat provides results that may be beneficial to the evaluation such as progress reports, review recommendations, approved variances, any complaints of non- compliance, or policy descriptions.

13. Submission

The chairperson will be required to submit an interim report in paper and electronic form, on or before January 15, 2020 to the Land Use Secretariat. This interim report should outline:
- Overall progress;
- Budget expended
- Remaining work;
- Issues and concerns affecting the work; and
- A draft report of the evaluation work conducted to January 15, 2020, which may be utilized in discussions with stakeholders.

The final 5-Year Evaluation Report, submitted by the chairperson:
- must be submitted in paper and electronic form, on or before the due date to the Stewardship Minister, Stewardship Commissioner and Land Use Secretariat;
- must be accompanied by a signed cover letter to the Stewardship Minister citing the legislative requirement fulfilled by the report.

> For the SSRP 5-Year Evaluation, the chairperson submits the final report to the Stewardship Minister by March 31, 2020 or date determined by the Stewardship Commissioner. The Land Use Secretariat makes the report public.

14. Public Communication

The Land Use Secretariat ensures the report produced by the 5-Year Evaluation Committee is publicly available and does so by posting it on the Alberta Land-use website (landuse.alberta.ca) after the report is submitted to the Stewardship Minister.

The Land Use Secretariat manages the public report and all other substantive materials as records.

The Land Use Secretariat, often working closely with the committee chairperson, responds to enquiries from stakeholders, partners, decision-makers, government, Indigenous peoples and Albertans regarding legislative requirements, the process and the public report. The committee redirects all inquiries to the Land Use Secretariat for response.

15. Results

Appointments of the committee members expire on the day the report is submitted to the Stewardship Minister or on the date specified by the Stewardship Minister or Commissioner.

Aside from the need to comply with existing Acts and regulations, there are no legislative or regulatory requirements specifically identified within ALSA to respond to the 5-Year Evaluation Report.

However, results of the 5-Year Evaluation will likely inform sub-regional and local planning, amendments to a regional plan, progress reporting, the 10-year review of a regional plan, and the development and implementation of future regional plans.

The 5-Year Evaluation does not replace formal consultation with citizens, stakeholders and Indigenous peoples. Amendments made to a regional plan will undergo appropriate public consultation as per ALSA section 5.

The 5-Year Evaluation is a key component of an on-going cycle of monitoring, evaluating and reporting that encourages continuous improvements in planning, decision-making and actions, so current and future generations have a healthy economy, healthy environment and people-friendly communities within the region and realize the provincial vision of: *Albertans working together to respect and care for the land as a foundation of our economic, environmental, and social well-being.*
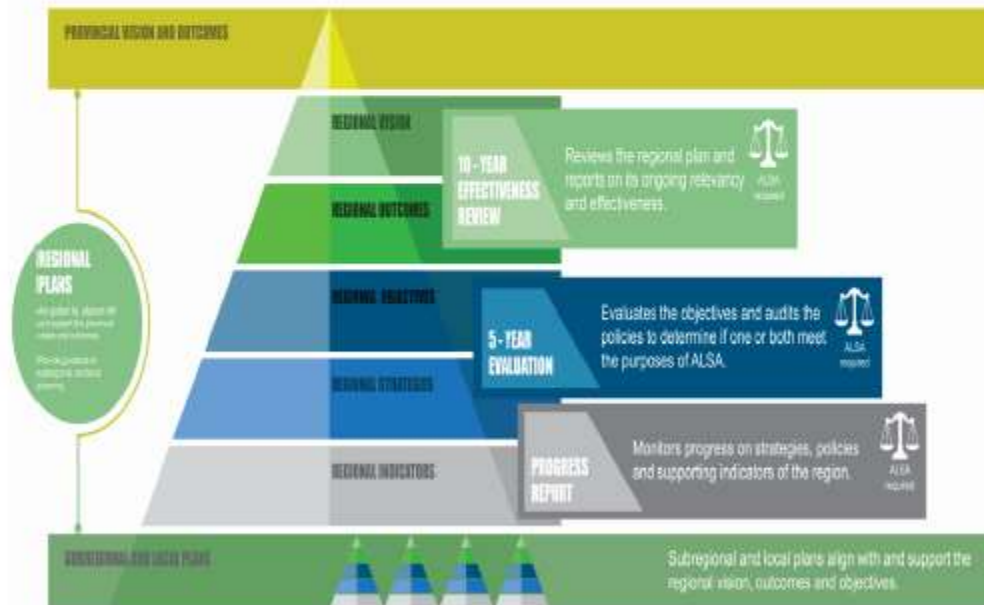
16. Additional Information

These terms of reference, the final 5-Year Evaluation Report, public communiqués and other

materials of interest to Albertans are publicly posted on the Alberta Land-use website (landuse.alberta.ca) as soon as practicable.

Questions, requests or concerns should be directed to:

Land Use Secretariat
South Petroleum Plaza, 12th Floor
9915-108 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2g8
Phone: (780) 427-6372
Fax: (780) 644-1034
Email: LUF@gov.ab.ca

Appendix 1: Evaluation Matrix

Pursuant to ALSA section 1(2), the purposes of this Act are:

(a) to provide a means by which the Government can give direction and provide leadership in identifying the objectives of the Province of Alberta, including economic, environmental and social objectives;

(b) to provide a means to plan for the future, recognizing the need to manage activity to meet the reasonably foreseeable needs of current and future generations of Albertans, including aboriginal peoples;

(c) to provide for the co-ordination of decisions by decision-makers concerning land, species, human settlement, natural resources and the environment;

(d) to create legislation and policy that enable sustainable development by taking account of and responding to the cumulative effect of human endeavour and other events.

An example matrix below may support the evaluation of objectives and auditing of policies of SSRP to determine whether either or both are meeting the purposes of ALSA as described in section 1(2).

Provincial Vision:	Albertans work together to respect and care for the land as the foundation of our economic, environmental and social well-being.
Provincial Outcome:	Healthy economy supported by our land and natural resources
SSRP Outcome 1:	The region's economy is growing and diversified
SSRP Strategy	• Tourism destination areas: Develop and implement destination management strategies and destination management plans
Provincial Outcome:	Healthy ecosystems and environment
SSRP Outcome 2:	Air quality is managed to support healthy ecosystems and human needs through shared stewardship
SSRP Strategy:	• Implement the South Saskatchewan Region Air Quality Management Framework
SSRP Outcome 3:	Biodiversity and ecosystem function are sustained with shared stewardship
SSRP Strategy:	• Complete the South Saskatchewan Region Biodiversity Management Framework • Implement the Livingstone-Porcupine Hills Land Footprint Management Plan

	• Complete landscape management plans for Green and White Area public lands for remaining areas
	• Review Integrated Resource Plans in the region for their relevance and incorporate under this regional plan
	• Complete the Majorville Guidelines for Land and Resource Management
	• Establish the Pekisko Special Management Area and complete management plan
	• Complete the development and evaluation of the Southeast Alberta Conservation Offset Pilot
SSRP Outcome 4:	*Watersheds are managed to support healthy ecosystems and human needs through shared stewardship*
SSRP Strategy:	• Implement the South Saskatchewan Region Surface Water Quality Management Framework • Develop a comprehensive approach for groundwater management • Develop a water storage opportunities study for the South Saskatchewan River Basin
SSRP Outcome 5:	*Land is used efficiently to reduce the amount of area that is taken up by permanent or long-term developments associated with the built environment*
SSRP Strategy:	• Strategies are on-going
Provincial Outcome:	**People-friendly communities with Ample Recreation and Culture Opportunities**
SSRP Outcome 6:	*The quality of life of residents is enhanced through increased opportunities for outdoor recreation and the preservation and promotion of the region's unique cultural and natural heritage*
SSRP Strategy:	• Develop the South Saskatchewan Regional Trail Systems Plan • Address flood (2013) damaged recreation areas • Complete recreation management planning and updates to existing plans for other areas including McLean Creek, Sibbald and Ghost-Waiparous • Create Public Lands Recreation Areas in the eastern slopes areas • Invest in existing parks facilities and designate new Provincial Parks and Provincial Recreation Areas • Develop a regional parks plan for the South Saskatchewan Region
SSRP Outcome 7:	*Aboriginal peoples are including in land-use planning*

SSRP Strategy:	• Establish a South Saskatchewan Region Land Sub-Tale with interested First Nations in the region • Continue First Nation involvement in watershed management planning initiatives • Engage aboriginal peoples on initiatives to support tourism development • Encourage and facilitate information sharing and education opportunities between First Nations with an interest in the region and the Government of Alberta
SSRP Outcome 8:	*Community development needs are anticipated and accommodated*
SSRP Strategy:	• Build awareness and work with municipalities to implement land-use strategies

Appendix 3: SSRP Reporting on Strategies

The following table indicates:

1. Whether each Strategy is directly measurable; and
2. Whether progress on implementation of each strategy has been reported in the Land Use Framework Regional Plans Progress Report.

Table 12: Objectives that are Measurable and Reported

Objective	Strategies	Directly Measurable	Not Directly Measurable	Reported	Not Reported
Provincial Outcome: Healthy economy supported by our land and natural resources.					
SSRP Outcome 1: The region's economy is growing and diversified.					
Objective 1	Strategy 1.1	✓			X
	Strategy 1.2		X		X
	Strategy 1.3		X		X
	Strategy 1.4		X		X
	Strategy 1.5		X		X
	Strategy 1.6		X		X
Objective 2	Strategy 1.7		X		X
	Strategy 1.8		X		X
Objective 3 & 4	Strategy 1.9		X		X
	Strategy 1.10		X		X
	Strategy 1.11		X		X
	Strategy 1.12		X		X
	Strategy 1.13		X		X
Objective 5	Strategy 1.14		X		X
	Strategy 1.15		X		X
	Strategy 1.16		X		X
Objective 6	Strategy 1.17		X		X
	Strategy 1.18		X		X
Objective 7	Strategy 1.19	✓		✓ *	
	Strategy 1.20		X		X
	Strategy 1.21		X		X
	Strategy 1.22		X		X
	Strategy 1.23	✓			X
SSRP Outcome 2: Air quality is managed to support healthy ecosystems and human needs through shared stewardship					
Objective 1	Strategy 2.1	✓		✓	
	Strategy 2.2		X		X
	Strategy 2.3		X		X
SSRP Outcome 3: Biodiversity and ecosystem function are sustained through shared stewardship.					

Objective	Strategies	Directly Measurable	Not Directly Measurable	Reported	Not Reported
Objective 1	Strategy 3.1	✓		✓	
	Strategy 3.2	✓		✓ *	
	Strategy 3.3	✓			X
	Strategy 3.4	✓		✓	
	Strategy 3.5	✓			X
	Strategy 3.6	✓		✓	
	Strategy 3.7		X		X
	Strategy 3.8	✓			X
	Strategy 3.9		X		X
	Strategy 3.10		X		X
	Strategy 3.11	✓		✓	
	Strategy 3.12		X		X
	Strategy 3.13	✓		✓	
	Strategy 3.14		X		X
	Strategy 3.15		X		X
	Strategy 3.16	✓		✓	
	Strategy 3.17		X		X
	Strategy 3.18		X		X

SSRP Outcome 4: Watersheds are managed to support healthy ecosystems and human needs through shared stewardship.

Objective	Strategies	Directly Measurable	Not Directly Measurable	Reported	Not Reported
Objective 1	Strategy 4.1	✓		✓	
Objective 2	Strategy 4.2	✓		✓	
	Strategy 4.3		X		X
	Strategy 4.4	✓	X		X
	Strategy 4.5		X		X
	Strategy 4.6		X		X
	Strategy 4.7		X		X
	Strategy 4.8		X		X
	Strategy 4.9		X		X
Objective 3	Strategy 4.10	✓	X	✓ *	X
	Strategy 4.11		X		X
	Strategy 4.12		X		X
Objective 4	Strategy 4.13	✓			X
	Strategy 4.14		X		X
	Strategy 4.15	✓			X

SSRP Outcome 5: Land is used efficiently to reduce the amount of area that is taken up by permanent or long-term developments associated with the built environment.

Objective	Strategies	Directly Measurable	Not Directly Measurable	Reported	Not Reported
Objective 1	Strategy 5.1		X	✓	
	Strategy 5.2		X	✓	

SSRP Outcome 6: The quality of life of residents is enhanced through increased opportunities for outdoor recreation and the preservation and promotion of the region's unique cultural and natural heritage.

Objective	Strategies	Directly Measurable	Not Directly Measurable	Reported	Not Reported
Objective 1	Strategy 6.1	✓	X	✓	
	Strategy 6.2		X		X
	Strategy 6.3	✓		✓	
	Strategy 6.4		X		X
	Strategy 6.5	✓			X
	Strategy 6.6	✓		✓ *	
	Strategy 6.7	✓		✓	
	Strategy 6.8		X		X
	Strategy 6.9		X		X
	Strategy 6.10	✓		✓ **	
	Strategy 6.11		X		X
	Strategy 6.12	✓		✓	
	Strategy 6.13	✓			X
	Strategy 6.14		X		X
	Strategy 6.15	✓		✓	
SSRP Outcome 7: Aboriginal peoples are included in land-use planning.					
Objective 1	Strategy 7.1		X		X
	Strategy 7.2		X		X
	Strategy 7.3	✓		✓	
	Strategy 7.4	✓		✓	
	Strategy 7.5	✓		✓	
	Strategy 7.6	✓		✓	
	Strategy 7.7	✓		✓	
SSRP Outcome 8: Community development needs are anticipated and accommodated.					
Objective 1	Strategy 8.1		X		X
	Strategy 8.2		X		X
	Strategy 8.3		X		X
	Strategy 8.4		X		X
	Strategy 8.5		X		X
	Strategy 8.6		X		X
	Strategy 8.7		X		X
	Strategy 8.8		X		X
	Strategy 8.9		X	✓	
	Strategy 8.10		X		X
Objective 2	Strategy 8.11		X		X
	Strategy 8.12		X		X
	Strategy 8.13		X		X
	Strategy 8.14		X		X
	Strategy 8.15		X		X
	Strategy 8.16		X		X
	Strategy 8.17		X		X
	Strategy 8.18		X		X
	Strategy 8.19		X		X

Objective	Strategies	Directly Measurable	Not Directly Measurable	Reported	Not Reported
	Strategy 8.20		X		X
	Strategy 8.21		X		X
	Strategy 8.22		X		X
	Strategy 8.23		X		X
	Strategy 8.24		X		X
	Strategy 8.25		X		X
	Strategy 8.26		X		X
	Strategy 8.27		X		X
	Strategy 8.28		X		X
	Strategy 8.29		X		X
	Strategy 8.30		X		X
	Strategy 8.31		X		X
	Strategy 8.32		X		X
	Strategy 8.33		X		X
	Strategy 8.34		X		X
	Strategy 8.35		X		X
	Strategy 8.36		X		X
	Strategy 8.37		X		X
	Strategy 8.38		X		X
	Strategy 8.39		X		X

* Strategy being reported on not exactly as written in the SSRP Implementation Plan

** Strategy 6.10 is not included in Table 2 of the SSRP and therefore not reported on as part of the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan Progress Summary tables included in the annual Progress Reports. However, detailed annual data on Historic Resources is included in the Strategies section of each Progress Report.