

Airdrie City Plan

Municipal Development Plan for the City of Airdrie

*Bylaw No. B-17/2014
Adopted Sept. 2014*

CHAPTER 3

Environmental Sustainability

Goal: Contribute to environmental sustainability by improving environmental protection throughout the city.

Environmental Sustainability Objectives:

- Protect and enhance environmentally significant areas and features.
- Reduce the impact of development on the natural environment.
- Ensure that natural areas and features are valued, protected and sensitively integrated into the City's open space system.
- Apply environmental reserve and other provisions to protect natural areas and enhance biodiversity.
- Protect, preserve and enhance Nose Creek as Airdrie's most significant natural asset.

Within the City of Airdrie, certain areas exist that due to their physiographic character or environmentally sensitive nature should be retained in their natural state or protected from incompatible development. Environmental considerations form an integral part of the local planning process and are an important contributor to the quality of life enjoyed by Airdrie residents. Integrating natural features into the open space system enhance the appearance of the city and provide important linkages between the urban environment and the natural environment that sustains it.

Urban communities can also generate significant environmental impacts. High energy consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, land consumption, loss of habitat and watershed impacts are factors that must be taken into account in the community development process. It is critical to the on-going sustainability of the city and the region to ensure that key environmental features, systems and areas are adequately protected from adverse impacts associated with urban development. Lands identified as having environmental significance or hazardous properties should be identified and addressed in the preliminary planning stages, protected and permitted to perform their natural functions.

POLICIES

Plan Requirement

3.1 Through the Community Area Structure Plan process, the City shall require that lands considered unsuitable for development because it is subject to flooding, contains steep slopes or consists of a natural drainage course or wetland be identified as environmental reserve. The actual boundaries will be further defined through the NSP and dedicated as environmental reserve through the subdivision process in accordance with the provisions of the *Municipal Government Act*.

Sustainability & Environmental Preservation & Conservation

3.2 The City will continue to implement the AirdrieOne Sustainability Plan and will promote awareness of environmental issues related to water conservation, air quality, climate change, waste management, habitat protection, energy efficiency, riparian protection and sustainable development.

- 3.3 As part of the AirdrieOne Sustainability program, the City will work with partners to support stewardship initiatives which, among other things, provide education, promote awareness and encourage residents to value the environment, steward the Nose Creek system, plant native vegetation, naturalize their property, and assist in monitoring the health of the city's natural areas (e.g. controlling the spread of invasive plants).
- 3.4 The City will promote sustainability and environmental protection and conservation initiatives aimed at:
- a) Reducing air pollution and energy consumption.
 - b) Protecting natural areas and features, including riparian areas, wetlands, and healthy tree stands.
 - c) Ensuring the provision of adequate buffer areas around sensitive natural areas of sufficient size to minimize the impacts of development on natural features.
 - d) Providing low impact public access to natural areas where it can sustain human uses with minimal impacts to the overall health of ecosystems.
 - e) Effectively managing Nose Creek to ensure that it is preserved and maintained for the enjoyment of current and future generations.
- 3.5 All environmentally significant areas (ESA), natural environments suitable for parks, and significant wildlife and fish habitat will be conserved, or protected (as the case warrants) through the dedication of reserve lands and other forms of conservation techniques.
- 3.6 The City may use, but is not limited to, the following means of protecting and conserving natural areas:
- a) Dedication of environmental reserve areas in accordance with the provisions of the *Municipal Government Act*.
 - b) Municipal reserve dedication.
 - c) Environmental reserve easements.
 - d) Conservation easements.
 - e) Donations and bequests
 - f) Acquisition through purchase or land trades.
 - g) Transfer of development rights.

Ecological Inventory

- 3.7 The City will utilize the *Ecological Inventory and Environmental Best Practices Report*, as updated from time to time, as a key starting point to land use planning in Airdrie as it pertains to:
- a) The identification of natural features and environmentally sensitive areas. All area structure plans must address how these features can be retained and managed.
 - b) Creating and implementing a regional approach to the conservation and management of natural areas and functions. The City will work with Rocky View County and the Calgary Regional Partnership and other interested parties to develop a connected regional system.
 - c) Identification of environmental reserve areas.
 - d) The identification and development of critical linkages; The City will explore opportunities to link natural areas and features with the city's open space and pathways system.

Use & Access Restrictions in Environmental Reserve

- 3.8 Lands dedicated as environmental reserve are intended to remain in their natural state and/or be used as part of a passive park and pathway system. Major municipal infrastructure may cross