

Rocky View Residents Need Balanced Information about Regional Planning and the CMRB

Rocky View residents have been inundated with misinformation about the Calgary Metropolitan Region Board (CMRB). Residents deserve better. Here are some facts to put the various claims into perspective.

Who created the CMRB?

The CMRB was planned by Conservative governments and implemented by the NDP. The CMRB members are the mayors and reeves from the 10 member municipalities, each of whom is elected to represent the interests of their municipality and residents. The CMRB is not an unelected body – each of its members is elected by their respective residents.

Will the CMRB eliminate landowner rights?

No. The vast majority of land use changes in Rocky View will be unaffected by the CMRB. First parcels out, subdivisions with less than 50 houses, and non-residential development on less than 20 acres can all proceed without CMRB involvement so long as they are consistent with Rocky View's policy.

Any development within an Area Structure Plan (ASP) approved before 2018, regardless of its size, can also proceed, again so long as it is consistent with policy. Developments within the East and West Balzac, Conrich, and Omni ASPs can continue under those ASPs, or may develop more intensely with regional cooperation. Langdon, Bragg Creek, and Harmony can build out as planned.

What if development doesn't meet these criteria?

Large-scale developments outside of existing ASPs, or inconsistent with those ASPs, must go through an additional review at the CMRB before they can proceed. If Rocky View can convince its neighbours that a development makes sense, the CMRB won't get in its way.

Does Calgary have ultimate control over all development in the region?

No. The voting structure does give Calgary an effective veto which can stop proposals it does not support. However, to move its own initiatives forward, it needs support from other municipalities – it can't just do what it wants on its own.

Rather than imposing an appeal mechanism, the CMRB's legislation gave it the authority to design an appeal process supported by its members. As a result, it has taken time to get the mechanism in place – it is currently awaiting provincial approval.

Does the CMRB’s Growth Plan simply “preserve” Rocky View as a land bank for Calgary?

No. A key element of the Growth Plan is that Calgary (and the other urban municipalities) must develop at higher densities than they have in the past. This means that it will take significantly longer for them to expand beyond their existing municipal boundaries.

While Calgary intensifies development within its current footprint, Rocky View can continue to develop its unique country residential communities around Calgary. Once these rural residential communities are established (or expanded, as the case may be), if Calgary wanted to annex them, it would face massive costs to upgrade servicing to city standards.

Why is all this relevant?

The pro-development lobby group, Rocky View 2020 led by Bruce McAllister, is trying to scare you into choosing candidates in the October 18th election who will continue their fight with the CMRB. Major developers and landowners have benefitted from Rocky View’s past practice that allowed unfettered development wherever they happened to own land. They don’t want to lose that. But, it is you who has the vote on October 18th. Think carefully about your options.

Prepared by:
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