



Intermunicipal Development Plan

"What we Heard" Report

March 2025

Introduction:

The City of Red Deer and Red Deer County undertook a comprehensive public engagement process in 2024 to gather feedback on the Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP). The IDP serves as a guiding document for managing growth, land use, and infrastructure coordination between The City and County.

Engagement efforts included broad community input from residents, businesses, and community, as well as dedicated Indigenous engagement sessions to ensure Indigenous voices and perspectives were meaningfully included. A letter received from the Remembering the Children Society after the formal engagement period also provided critical insight into historical and cultural preservation needs.

This report summarizes the key themes that emerged from the engagement process to inform Council and the community as they consider next steps for the IDP.

Engagement Summary:

A variety of engagement methods were used to ensure broad participation:

- Open houses (October 24 and 30, 2024) at the Red Deer County Centre.
- Drop-in engagement through information boards and surveys at Red Deer City Hall and the Red Deer County Centre.
- Online engagement (October 24–November 30, 2024) via engage.reddeer.ca, offering surveys and interactive tools.
- Indigenous engagement sessions (July and November 2024) facilitated by pipikwan pêhtâkwan, an Indigenous-owned engagement agency, using traditional methodologies.
- A letter from the Remembering the Children Society (March 2025) outlining concerns related to historical preservation and Indigenous cultural recognition.

Key Themes from Public Engagement:

1. Protecting agricultural lands & natural environments:

- Strong public support for preserving prime agricultural lands, river valleys, wetlands, and treed areas.
- Calls for sustainable, low-impact development that balances growth with environmental stewardship.

2. Sustainable & future-focused growth:

- Desire for long-term planning to prevent urban sprawl and promote infrastructure improvements, including ring roads and multi-modal transportation options.
- Interest in incorporating emerging technologies, such as advanced waste management systems and data centers.

3. Coordinated economic development & infrastructure:

- Support for collaborative, "developer-friendly" policies between the City and County.
- Emphasis on attracting value-added industries, including advanced manufacturing and family-oriented businesses.
- Need for seamless coordination of utilities, water, and sanitation services to ensure regional prosperity.

4. Innovative land use & mixed-density development:

- Public preference for diverse housing options, including infill development and walkable communities.
- Advocacy for preserving green spaces and integrating parks and trails into new subdivisions.

5. Inclusivity, Indigenous engagement, & cultural recognition:

- Importance of recognizing historically and culturally significant sites.
- Requests for Indigenous histories to be incorporated into planning documents and public spaces.
- Emphasis on ongoing and meaningful Indigenous engagement rather than one-time consultations.

6. Thoughtful annexation & urban expansion:

- Concerns about maintaining Red Deer's "small city feel" while planning for future growth.
- Desire to explore greenbelts or retain agricultural and natural lands for ecological and community benefit.

7. Enhanced transportation & trail connectivity:

- Calls for coordinated planning of ring roads, roundabouts, and safe pedestrian/cycling infrastructure.
- Emphasis on ensuring transportation infrastructure evolves alongside population and economic changes.

Key Themes from Indigenous Engagement:

Indigenous engagement sessions, facilitated by pipikwan pêhtâkwan, followed a culturally grounded approach known as "The Visiting Way." Discussions focused on transparency, meaningful participation, and the importance of Indigenous perspectives in regional planning.

1. Transparency & relationship building:

- Participants emphasized the need for early and ongoing engagement rather than last-minute invitations to provide input.
- Materials should be provided in advance, in accessible language, to allow for informed discussions.

2. Truth & Reconciliation commitments:

- Recognition that the City and County have an opportunity to lead in reconciliation by taking concrete actions.
- The Red Deer Indian Industrial School (RDIIIS) site requires special attention, including access for Indigenous communities, preservation efforts, and historical recognition.

3. Space for Indigenous peoples:

- Requests for dedicated cultural spaces to support Indigenous ceremonies, language, and traditional practices.
- Ensuring Elders and Knowledge Keepers are compensated appropriately for their time and contributions.

4. Environmental & cultural preservation:

- Protection of culturally significant spaces and natural environments as key priorities.
- Importance of incorporating Indigenous Knowledge into planning efforts, particularly regarding water, land, and air stewardship.

5. Governance-to-Governance engagement:

- Participants emphasized the need for formal relationships with Treaty Six and Treaty Seven First Nations and the Otipemisiwak Métis Government.
- Existing agreements, such as the Protocol Agreement with the Red Deer Urban Indigenous Voices Society, should be acknowledged and upheld.

Key Considerations from the Remembering the Children Society:

The Remembering the Children Society (RTCS) provided additional insights through a letter received in March 2025. Their concerns focused on:

- **Preservation of the Red Deer Indian Industrial School (RDIIIS) Site:** The need for further Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) surveys to locate unmarked graves.
- **Indigenous Access to Historic Sites:** Ensuring that Indigenous communities have access to land for ceremony, memorialization, and cultural healing.
- **Sweat Lodge & Natural Spaces:** Continued access to Fort Normandeau's sweat lodge and ensuring Indigenous communities have space for traditional practices.
- **Collaboration & Reconciliation Efforts:** Encouraging the City and County to continue working with Indigenous Elders and leaders to align planning efforts with Truth and Reconciliation principles.

Conclusion & Next Steps:

- The engagement process revealed strong community interest in thoughtful land use, environmental preservation, sustainable growth, and meaningful Indigenous engagement.

Next steps include:

- **Integrating feedback into the IDP:** Ensuring community and Indigenous priorities are reflected in the final plan. The plan will then be presented to both Councils and a joint Public Hearing will take place to approve the revised IDP.
 - **Continued Indigenous engagement:** Developing formalized, ongoing relationships with Indigenous communities and leaders.
 - **Environmental & cultural protection measures:** Incorporating policies that preserve significant lands and support reconciliation efforts.
 - **Ongoing transparency & communication:** Keeping the community informed and involved as the IDP evolves.
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