Topic: Area Structure Plan (ASP) Prioritization Project - Update and Proposed Approach

Introduction:

Administration recommends that the Governance and Priorities Committee (the "Committee") receive the report on the Area Structure Plan (ASP) Prioritization Project ("the Project") Proposed Approach for information.

The ASP Prioritization Project aligns with the County's strategic approach for supporting economic growth and adaptability. This project intends to provide direction on the desired future state of the County's Area Structure Plans by:

- Conducting a review of existing ASPs;
- Researching best practices for ASPs in rural serviced and non-serviced areas; and
- Creating a framework for prioritizing the creation, updating, or rescinding of ASPs.

The goals of the ASP Prioritization Project are:

1. Align ASP policies to the County's statutory and non-statutory plans/initiatives;
2. Streamline services to reduce overall red tape;
3. Make ASPs living documents that are flexible and adaptable; and
4. Create policies and plans that are user friendly.

Please see **Attachment 1: ASP Prioritization Project Goals, Objectives, and Expected Outcomes** for further details.

Facts (Background Information):

Why are Area Structure Plans Important?
Area Structure Plans are statutory land use plans that give detailed policy direction to areas where development is more intense in use and/or is more technically complex. Examples of lands that warrant the creation of ASPs could include lands with high commercial / industrial demand where strategic build out of municipal services is required, lands surrounding interconnected Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs) and water bodies, and lands within Priority Growth Hamlets.

Challenges with Existing ASPs
The County's ASPs vary in scope, level of detail, and technical background. The majority of the County's ASP's have not been reviewed within the intended five (5) year cycle, resulting in outdated policies and objectives that need updating to align with the County's strategic priorities, changing economy, and social and environmental conditions. This lack of consistency creates barriers and uncertainty for the public, applicants and County staff which can create delays during the development process. These delays impact the County's ability to attract economic development, provide diverse housing choices, and increase the quality of life for County residents. See **Attachment 2: Existing State of ASPs** for a table of all existing ASPs, their time of creation, and the time of their last amendment.

Why do this Project?
The ASP Prioritization Project is the next step in the County's strategic approach for supporting economic growth and adaptability. The Project will achieve a baseline assessment of the County's ASPs and will create predictability for Council and Administration when executing ASP updates over the next five (5) years.

Analysis:

Analysis of the County's statutory plans will provide direction regarding which ASPs need to be updated, rescinded, or newly created. This analysis will support the implementation of the County's new Municipal Development Plan (2024-22), the County's new Land Use Bylaw (2025-12), and other County department's key plans and policy documents.

Proposed Project Scope
A review of all existing ASPs in the County will be completed through:
1. Using internal and external expertise to complete:
   a. Jurisdictional Scan comparing the County's ASPs to those in similar municipalities.
   b. Gap Analysis of the County's planning framework to determine if the County's ASPs contain the appropriate level of detail or if another type of plan may be more suitable.
   c. ASP Evaluation Framework that allows the County to determine whether an ASP needs to be updated, rescinded, or newly created. This Framework will include political, financial, environmental, and technical considerations.

2. Running each ASP through the Evaluation Framework to create the final project deliverable:
   a. A breakdown of which ASPs should be prioritized for:
      i. Updating;
      ii. Rescinding; or
      iii. New ASP or other planning document creation.

Timeline
The proposed timeline for information sharing is as follows:

Item	Description	Duration
1	Execution of Internal and External Expertise Deliverables	Spring - Summer 2025
2	Governance and Priorities Committee – Project Introduction	June 17th 2025
3	Review Evaluation Framework and present it to Senior Leadership Team	Fall 2025
4	Use Evaluation Framework to Create Recommendations	Fall 2025
5	Governance and Priorities Committee Presentation – Sharing Findings	Winter 2026
6	Council Presentation(s)* – Request Decision to go Forward	Spring 2026

A second presentation to the new Council may be required and would be prepared when timing was best.

Alignment with Council Strategic Plan 2022-2025
The Project aligns with the following Strategic Pillars:

Pillar A - Complete Communities
- A1: To ensure that County infrastructure meets the needs of residents, businesses, and industry.

- A2: To create a sense of belonging and well-being by enriching our communities with relevant amenities.

Pillar - Strategic Economic Diversification

- B1: To explore strategies that encourage new businesses to locate in Parkland County, with strategic emphasis on Acheson and the Wabamun area.

- B2: To add emphasis to recreation and rural tourism to diversify the County's economic opportunities.

- B3: To attract diversified energy investment in Parkland County.

- B4: To support existing and new businesses in Parkland County with a focus on micro and small businesses.

Pillar C - Respected Environment and Agriculture

- C1: To develop a policy framework that ensures the protection of environmentally significant areas.

- C2: To recognize the importance of preserving prime agricultural land available for production.

- C3: To support our agricultural community.

Pillar - Responsible Leadership

- D1: To ensure that County Council is supported by a robust and current framework of bylaws, policies, and plans.

- D2: To strive for organizational excellence in delivering County services and programs to residents, businesses, and community groups.

Conclusion/Summary:

Administration supports the proposed approach for the ASP Prioritization Project and recommends that the Governance and Priorities Committee (the "Committee") accept the report on the Project Proposed Approach for information.

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Attachment 1: ASP Prioritization Project Goals, Objectives, and Expected Outcomes

Project Goals	Project Objectives	Expected Outcomes
Goal 1 – Align Policies	1.1: Create a land use planning policy structure that is predictable, easy to maintain, and consistently applied throughout the County.	1. ASPs are consistent with the County's statutory and non-statutory planning documents. 2. ASPs are consistent with other County Department's documents and standards. 3. The County sees a reduction in the number of ASP amendment applications required for development to proceed, resulting in reduced application processing times and costs.
Goal 2– Streamline Services	2.1: Ensure that each ASP in the County contains the appropriate level of policy detail to enable a streamlined development process.	1. Number of policies in ASPs are simplified and right sized. 2. Policies are easy to maintain and contain reasonable development requirements. 3. Remove/Reduce: ASP policies that are outcomes in disguise, require syntax updates, duplicate direction, external references and tips, regulations in disguise, not suited to the ASP level, or are vague, outdated, or not implementable are either updated or removed. 4. ASPs that are no longer required to meet the County's development and growth targets are recommended to Council for rescinding. 5. ASPs that require updates or need to be newly created to meet the County's development and growth targets are ranked in terms of priority and are recommended to Council for actioning. 6. Determine areas within the County that do require an ASP to support development opportunities/ environmental protection.
Goal 3 – Flexibility and Adaptability	3.1: Make ASPs living documents that manage risk for the County and provide opportunities/transparency to applicants that identify "hard no's" early in the process while always working towards "how can we get to a yes?	1. ASPs contain policies that meet the intent of the new Municipal Development Plan's Decision-Making Framework. 2. Major developer-led ASP amendment applications are reduced.
Goal 4: User Friendliness	4.1: Write ASPs that are approachable to the general public and adaptable to the changing economic environment.	1. A member of the public can interpret what they need to know from an ASP within 15 minutes of opening it. 2. Plain language is incorporated as much as possible. 3. Increase in the use of graphics or imagery. 4. Reduction in the number of pages for each ASP in the County. 3. ASPs avoid reference to other County documents wherever possible.

Attachment 2: Existing State of ASPs

Name	Date Created	Last Amendment*
Acheson Industrial	2014	2020
Atim Creek North	2002	2013
Big Lake	1991	2013
Entwistle	2012	2017
Fifth Meridian	2001	2003
Glory Hills	1979	2010
Highvale End Land Use	1997	2016
Jackfish Lake	1997	2013
Jackfish-Mayatan	1981	2013
Woodbend-Graminia	1984	2013
Wabamun Hamlet	2023	-
Wabamun Waterfront	2010	2011

*Date of Last Amendment does not mean that the amendment was a comprehensive review and update.
Recent amendments have mainly been site specific amendments or changes to a specific policy.*