
10-Year Review of the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan

Engagement Guide

Throughout the guide, AWA has provided additional comments and recommendations in this green text to help inform your own answers.

This version of the guide has also been consolidated to contain just the question pages (10 - 32), but the full guide containing background information about what the SSRP is/ how it was developed, can be found on the government's engagement website.



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SECTION 1: Vision and Strategic Directions

Parts of the Vision statement are dated and no longer appropriate. This is particularly evident in how Indigenous Nations are tokenized here and throughout the plan.

Listing the various industries that should be supported in the region could be short-sighted, as their relevancy may wane or grow in coming years, or be replaced entirely.

A strengthened Vision could emphasize setting limits on disturbance to ensure all future development is compatible and supports the ecological realities and thresholds of the region. The vision should also recognize the need to protect sensitive and/or important ecosystems. Industrial activity needs to be extremely limited if not prohibited in these regions. For forests, there needs to be consideration for maintaining diversity, and not only replanting to economically important species.

Strong environmental protections should underpin and inform all development.

Air quality should be improved through more stringent monitoring, regulations, and enforcement.

The protection of water and aquatic ecosystems must be a top priority.

Indigenous Nations must have the sovereignty to decide how they are involved with the SSRP.

The SSRP contains the following 50-year vision:

Southern Alberta is a diverse, healthy, vibrant and prosperous region where the natural beauty of the region is managed so that its citizens feel connected to the land and its history. Albertans, industry, governments and aboriginal peoples work together to share the responsibility for stewardship of the land and the 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 freshwater 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.

1. How relevant is the SSRP Vision today?

- Not at all relevant
- Not very relevant
- Somewhat relevant
- Very relevant

NOTE: Relevancy is the extent to which components of the regional plan have significant bearing on achieving the 50-year vision.

2. What factors did you consider when rating the SSRP Vision's relevance? (Essay)

SSRP Strategic Directions

The SSRP establishes eight strategic directions:

- Sustainable development within economic development takes into account environmental sustainability and social outcomes.
- Managing air quality through continued collaboration.
- Conserving and maintaining the benefits of biodiversity.
- Advancing watershed management.
- Promoting the efficient use of land.
- Providing recreation and nature-based tourism opportunities and preserving and promoting the region's unique cultural and natural heritage.
- Inclusion of aboriginal peoples in land-use planning.
- Strengthening communities.

Many aspects of the SSRP have not been achieved because the majority of sections within the SSRP (including the introduction, strategic plan, and implementation plan) are non-binding, which means decision makers can ignore them without consequence.

The legally binding components (like the regulatory details) of the SSRP need to be expanded to ensure it is informing and guiding where and how land is managed in the region.

The effectiveness of the SSRP could be improved by updating the plan to better reflect current realities, pressures, threats, and priorities in the region.

3. How relevant are the Strategic Directions to achieving the SSRP Vision?
- Not at all relevant
 - Not very relevant
 - Somewhat relevant
 - Very relevant

NOTE: Relevancy is the extent to which components of the regional plan have significant bearing on achieving the 50-year vision.

4. Do you have any suggestions to improve the relevancy of the SSRP Strategic Directions? (Essay)
5. How effective are the Strategic Directions in achieving the SSRP Vision?
- Not at all effective
 - Not very effective
 - Somewhat effective
 - Very effective

NOTE: Effectiveness is the extent to which the regional plan has achieved or is expected to achieve the outcomes and objectives.

6. Do you have any suggestions to improve the effectiveness of the SSRP Strategic Directions? (Essay)
7. Would you like to provide more detailed feedback on specific sections of the SSRP?*
- Yes, all sections
 - Yes, some sections
Which section(s) would you like to provide feedback on? (checkbox)
 - Economy
 - Air
 - Biodiversity and Ecosystems
 - Water
 - Efficient Land Use
 - Outdoor Recreation and Historic Resources
 - Inclusion of Aboriginal Peoples in Land-use Planning
 - Community Development
 - None of the above ([skip to page 32](#))

All and any feedback is appreciated, but if you have the time, consider completing all sections!

* All fields marked with an asterisk (*) are required.

The SSRP takes a silo-ed approach to land management, splitting itself up into sections like the economy, biodiversity, and water.

This suggests that these exist separately, rather than constantly interacting and affecting each other - for instance, the protection and restoration of habitat and species has economic benefits, as healthy ecosystems provide invaluable and innumerable services including pollination, water and air filtration, soil retention and enrichment, carbon sequestration, temperature regulation, nature disaster mitigation, resilience to climate change, improved mental and physical health outcomes, etc.

The economic objectives also assume existing industries are currently sustainable, and by listing the industries they want to support, little room is left for diversifying.

SECTION 2: Economy

The South Saskatchewan Region has a long history of strong economic growth in the agricultural and energy sectors and supported by forestry, mining and tourism. The Strategic Direction for the economic outcome focuses on sustainable development, considering both environmental sustainability and social outcomes.

Outcome: The region’s economy is growing and diversified. (SSRP pages 43 – 52)

Economic Objectives	
Agriculture	The region’s agricultural industry is maintained and diversified.
Energy	Opportunities for the responsible exploration, development and extraction of energy resources are maintained.
Renewable Energy	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. Value-added opportunities that enhance the sustainability of Alberta’s industries and communities are created.
Forestry	The region’s forest industry is maintained and diversified.
Surface Materials	Opportunities for the responsible development of surface material resources are maintained on public lands.
Tourism	The region is positioned as a world-class, year-round, tourist destination.

8. How effective are the Economic Objectives in achieving the SSRP Economy Outcome?

- Not at all effective
- Not very effective
- Somewhat effective
- Very effective

NOTE: Effectiveness is the extent to which the regional plan has achieved or is expected to achieve the outcomes and objectives.

9. How could the relevancy or effectiveness of the SSRP Economic Objectives be improved? (Essay)

The economic objectives should be expanded to recognize the value of ecosystem services, as well as the direct and indirect costs associated with destroying, degrading, or fragmenting ecosystems. They should not support the maintenance of the status-quo, as currently industries or industry practices are not sustainable long-term in the region (ex: irrigation for agriculture diverts and consumes too much water in the region, resulting in rivers and tributaries that do not have sufficient flows for the maintenance of watershed health. Clearcut logging and coal mining are incompatible with the SSRB’s commitment to protecting headwaters).

Strategies for Economic Outcome and Objectives

The SSRP outlines several strategies to support the Economic Outcome and Objectives (pages 44-51). Below is a summary of those strategies:

Summary of Economic Strategies

Agriculture	<p>Maintain an agricultural land base by reducing the fragmentation and conversion of agricultural land.</p> <p>Support a diverse and innovative irrigated agriculture and agri-food sector.</p> <p>Assist the agriculture and agri-food industry to maximize opportunities for value-added agricultural products.</p> <p>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...</p> <p>Support and enhance the next generation of agricultural, food and rural entrepreneurs.</p> <p>Encourage use of voluntary market-based instruments for ecosystem services...</p>
Energy	<p>Ensure rules regarding access to energy and processing and transportation of energy resources are clear...</p> <p>Maintain physical access to freehold (privately owned) petroleum and natural gas, coals and minerals.</p>
Renewable Energy	<p>Ensure policies are in place to promote and remove barriers to new investments in renewable energy (that is, wind, biofuels, solar, hydro) production.</p> <p>Invest in the development, demonstration and deployment of renewable and alternative energy technologies targeted to improve Alberta's overall energy efficiency....</p> <p>Ensure reinforcement of the transmission system to enable more renewable power in the region.</p> <p>Ensure that opportunities for future routes and siting for pipeline gateways, transportation corridors and utility and electrical transmission corridors are maintained in the region...</p> <p>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.</p>
Forestry	<p>Promote diversification of forestry industry through implementation of the Alberta Forest Products Roadmap to 2020...</p> <p>Deliver an effective forest health management program to mitigate risk to timber supply and forest health.</p> <p>Incorporate wildfire management planning into forest management initiatives....</p>
Surface Materials	<p>Allocate the surface materials appropriately and monitor extraction operations to provide opportunities for sustainable development of the land.</p> <p>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.</p>
Tourism	<p>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....</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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...</p> <p>Provide long-term security (e.g., longer-term leases) for tourism and recreation investment opportunities.</p> <p>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.</p>

Within this water scarce region, the rivers have been over allocated to meet irrigation demand. The canals and reservoirs it relies fragment and destroy aquatic ecosystems. The expansion of irrigated acres and construction of new reservoirs currently planned will result in the loss of native grasslands. Value-added agricultural products are typically water-intensive crops like potatoes and sugar beets that otherwise would not grow naturally here. Agriculture should focus on growing drought-resistant crops to reduce water use, particularly those that could contribute to local food security.

All future energy development in the SSRP should be:

- responsibly sited, and not destroy, degrade or fragment important ecosystems like key biodiversity areas, wildlife corridors, environmentally sensitive areas, critical habitat, etc.
- Accountable to the public (clear, open, and accessible consultation, monitoring and reporting)
- Fully funded for reclamation, upholding the polluter pays principle.
- Subject to stringent regulatory requirements (completion of environmental impact assessments that consider the cumulative effects/contribution to climate change)

Forests should be managed above all else to protect headwaters and watershed health, which provides resiliency to climate change and natural disasters. Forest and woody shrub encroachment on native grasslands must be addressed.

Same rules for energy should apply for surface minerals, with particular emphasis on potential impacts to local aquifers and groundwater storage

Tourism, recreation, and sport should be compatible with maintenance of the local ecosystems, with recognition that certain densities and activities threaten various species and landscapes.

They should also seek to improve environmental knowledge and appreciation, to promote a responsible stewardship ethic in users, improve wildlife-human coexistence, and overall safety within wilderness areas

Tourism, recreation, and sport opportunities should be led by interested communities, and should not push out local livelihoods.

10. How effective are the Strategies in achieving the SSRP Economic Objectives?

- Not at all effective
- Not very effective
- Somewhat effective
- Very effective

NOTE: Effectiveness is the extent to which the regional plan has achieved or is expected to achieve the outcomes and objectives.

11. How could the effectiveness of the SSRP Economic Strategies be improved? (Essay)

12. The Tourism Objective and Strategies position the region as a world-class, year-round tourism destination with enhanced Tourism Destination Areas.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

13. How could the effectiveness of the Tourism Objective and Strategies be improved? (Essay)

In the [Coal Policy Committee's Final report: recommendations for the management of coal resources in Alberta—Open Government](#), it was recommended that land-use planning be used to determine where development of metallurgical coal, also known as coking coal, resources can occur. Metallurgical coal has a higher energy content compared to other types of coal and is used for higher-value industrial production. One of its most notable uses is in the production of steel.

14. Do you have feedback on the plan's effectiveness related to the responsible exploration, development and extraction of energy resources? (Essay)

See comments re: energy above. All energy exploration, development, and extraction should also be consistent with meeting net-zero emission commitments, with environmental impacts assessed on the entire live cycle of a project (including any products it produces).

To prioritize the protection of headwaters and watershed health, limit future carbon emissions, and improve local health outcomes, coal mining in any capacity is no longer an appropriate land use, particularly in the Eastern Slopes. Existing operations should be phased out, and disturbance reclaimed rapidly to help restore ecosystem function.

SECTION 3: Air

Air quality is managed in the region based on provincial policy, legislation and regulations including ambient air quality objectives. The emphasis has been on ensuring effective regulation of point source emissions. Reports about the Management Responses to the Air Quality Management Framework can be found at alberta.ca/south-saskatchewan-regional-planning.

Outcome: Air quality is managed to support healthy ecosystems and human needs through shared stewardship. (SSRP pages 53 – 55)

Efforts should be made not just to maintain air quality, but to improve it.

Air Objective

Air Quality	Releases from various point and non-point sources are managed so they do not collectively result in unacceptable air quality.
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15. How could the effectiveness of the SSRP Air Objective be improved? (Essay)

The SSRP outlines several strategies to support the Air Outcome and Objectives (pages 53-54). Below is a summary of those strategies:

Summary of Strategies for Air Quality

Implement the [South Saskatchewan Region Air Quality Management Framework for Nitrogen Dioxide \(NO₂\), Ozone \(O₃\) and Fine Particulate Matter \(PM_{2.5}\)](#).

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 Region Air Quality Management Framework](#).

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.

16. How effective are the Strategies in achieving the SSRP Air Outcome and Objective?

- Not at all effective
- Not very effective
- Somewhat effective
- Very effective

NOTE: Effectiveness is the extent to which the regional plan has achieved or is expected to achieve the outcomes and objectives.

17. Do you have any suggestions to improve the effectiveness of the SSRP Air Strategies? (Essay)

The SSRP provides the following indicators for managing air quality:

Air Quality Indicators	Link to Indicator Data
Fine particulate matter	Reports about the Status of Air Quality can be found at alberta.ca/south-saskatchewan-regional-planning
Ground-level ozone	
Nitrogen dioxide	

Expanding the framework to include more indicators, including CO, SO₂, and PM₁₀, as well as adopting more stringent thresholds and limits would make this more consistent with the World Health Organization's Air Quality Guidelines.

Of the current stations, all six had triggers crossed in the last three years reported (2019-2021).

18. Do you have any suggestions to improve the effectiveness of the SSRP Air Indicators? (Essay)

The South Saskatchewan Region Air Quality Management Framework sets regional threshold values, including limits and triggers. Limits are clear boundaries not to be exceeded. Triggers are warning signals that allow for evaluation, adjustment and innovation on an ongoing basis (SSRP pages 184 – 185).

19. Do you have any suggestions to improve the effectiveness of the limits and triggers for managing air quality? (Essay)

As mentioned previously, much of this document assumes our current state and baselines are acceptable for long-term sustainability. In reality, the extent of environmental destruction, degradation, and fragmentation necessitates we not just *maintain* the biodiversity and ecosystem health, but that we rapidly *restore and improve* it.

Other objectives should include ensuring no further loss of native grasslands and wetlands. More than 70% of both habitat types have been lost in Alberta already, but are essential to ecological function in Southern Alberta.

The protected areas network must be expanded to be ecologically representative of the region's biodiversity, and prioritize conserving critical habitat for species at risk, environmentally sensitive and important areas, key biodiversity areas, and wildlife corridors/ ecological connectivity.

The value of ecosystem services should be recognized and factor into decision making on ALL lands.

SECTION 4: Biodiversity and Ecosystems

The Government of Alberta is committed to using an integrated approach to address changes and impacts to the province's natural biodiversity assets and ecosystems. Conservation of landscapes and connectivity of wildlife habitat across landscapes are key factors in maintaining biodiversity leading to increased healthy and functioning ecosystems.

Outcome: Biodiversity and ecosystem function are sustained with shared stewardship. (SSRP pages 56 – 76)

Biodiversity and Ecosystems Objectives

Regional	<p>Terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity are maintained.</p> <p>Long-term ecosystem health and resiliency is maintained.</p> <p>Species at risk are recovered and no new species at risk are designated.</p> <p>Intact grasslands habitat is sustained.</p> <p>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.</p>
Crown Lands	<p>The regional network of areas supports biodiversity – conservation is enhanced through additional conservation areas.</p>
Private Lands	<p>The contributions of landowners for their stewardship and conservation efforts on private lands are recognized.</p> <p>The contribution and value of private lands in supplying ecosystem services is recognized and opportunities to support ecosystem services on private lands are identified.</p> <p>The value of ecosystem services supplied by economic sectors reliant on private lands is recognized.</p>

20. How effective are the Objectives in achieving the SSRP Biodiversity and Ecosystem Function Outcome?

- Not at all effective
- Not very effective
- Somewhat effective
- Very effective

NOTE: Effectiveness is the extent to which the regional plan has achieved or is expected to achieve the outcomes and objectives.

A draft of the Biodiversity Management Framework has been available since 2015, but never implemented. This framework lacks most of the best practices for cumulative effects management, including: measurable objectives, the precautionary principle, clear limits, mandatory action; and a focus on proactive action before thresholds are exceeded. These issues must be addressed in an updated version, and the framework enforced to protect biodiversity in the region.

In the absence of land management plans for the remaining public lands, the Livingstone-Porcupine Land Footprint Management could be expanded to encompass them all, as it sets clear linear disturbance limits and has been implemented to an extent. Some tools within the plan are still incomplete, including the human spatial footprint thresholds. These must also be finished and enforced.

Stocking rates (in reference to cattle) should be periodically reviewed.

No conversion of intact native grasslands should be permitted at all.

Efforts must be made to restore ecological processes and disturbances within the region, through the reintroduction of bison and application of prescribed fires which are integral to the health and maintenance of prairies.

Offsetting projects, which allow the destruction of an ecosystem as long as another can be established elsewhere, are not advisable. For example, planted saplings in an area the same size as a clearcut forest section does not, and will not provide the same ecosystem services for decades to come. Similarly, a newly planted plot of native species over previously cultivated lands does not have the same benefits as intact native grasslands, who have spent many years enriching the soil and sequestering carbon.

The indicators for biodiversity are quite limited, and those that exist are not very informative. Many available and currently measured metrics could be included, like:

- Extent of intact native habitat
- Extent of human footprint
- Population trends in species at risk, and general animal categories (mammals, birds, plants, insects, etc.)
- Ecological connectivity/extent of wildlife friendly infrastructure
- Proportion of habitat restored.

The SSRP outlines several strategies to support the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Outcome and Objectives (pages 68-76). Below is a summary of those strategies:

Summary of Biodiversity and Ecosystems Strategies

Integrated Management of Crown Land	<p>Complete the South Saskatchewan Region Biodiversity Management Framework...</p> <p>Implement the Livingstone-Porcupine Hills Land Footprint Management Plan.</p> <p>Develop landscape management plans to address footprint management for remaining Green Area and White Area public land...</p> <p>Align forest management planning in the region with the Alberta Forest Strategy...</p> <p>Review Integrated Resource Plans in the region for their relevance and incorporate as appropriate under the regional plan...</p> <p>Consolidate and expand Public Land Use Zones for Green Areas on public lands.</p> <p>Complete the Majorville Guidelines for Land and Resource Management by the end of 2015.</p> <p>Implement guidelines to avoid conversion and maintain intact native grasslands on public land...</p> <p>Implement a policy to allow for increased grazing tenure terms, from 10 years to 20 years, to continue to sustain intact native grasslands.</p> <p>Continue the commitment to stocking rates in effect as of September 1, 2014.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Create new and expanded conservation areas on provincial Crown land...</p> <p>Manage the Castle area for future generations, protect the headwaters, support the continued practice of traditional land uses...</p> <p>Manage conserved lands to achieve long-term conservation of biological diversity and ecosystem processes.</p> <p>Establish a Special Management Area adjacent to the Pekisko Heritage Rangeland linking to the existing Public Land Use Zones...</p> <p>Explore opportunities for further conservation management approaches using a collaborative approach in areas of grasslands.</p>
Stewardship and Conservation on Private Land	<p>Encourage and support the continued stewardship of Alberta's private lands through the development and piloting of regionally appropriate conservation tools...</p> <p>Complete development and evaluation of the Southeast Alberta Conservation Offset Pilot...</p> <p>Develop and facilitate the continued voluntary adoption of beneficial management practices that demonstrate agriculture and agri-food sector commitment to environmental stewardship.</p> <p>Consider connectivity of intact native grasslands as the highest priority under the Land Trust Grant Program.</p>

21. How effective are the Strategies in achieving the SSRP Biodiversity and Ecosystem Function Outcome?

- Not at all effective
- Not very effective
- Somewhat effective
- Very effective

NOTE: Effectiveness is the extent to which the regional plan has achieved or is expected to achieve the outcomes and objectives.

22. Do you have any suggestions to improve the effectiveness of the SSRP Biodiversity and Ecosystem Function Strategies? (Essay)

Most of the protected areas promised in the SSRP were never established or expanded. This includes the expansions planned for the Don Getty, Bow Valley, and Bob Creek Wildland Provincial Parks, as well as the establishment of Pekisko Heritage Rangeland, and Livingstone Range and High Rock Wildland Provincial Parks. The promised protected areas are also heavily concentrated in the western half of the region. New protected areas need to be established in the eastern half. Prairie ecosystems including native grasslands, continue to be under protected and underrepresented in Alberta's protected area network.

Management plans for the protected areas established under the SSRP, like the Provincial and Wildland Parks in the Castle, must be enforced, including the phase out of off highway-use vehicles as identified as necessary within the plan.

Conservation Areas

Conservation areas are one of the key approaches that support achieving environmental objectives in the SSRP for biodiversity and ecosystem function, and headwaters protection. The SSRP describes how conservation areas provide opportunities for Albertans to enhance their quality of life through the enjoyment of outdoor recreation and low-impact tourism opportunities, contributing to these social and economic outcomes and objectives.

23. How effective have conservation areas been in supporting sustainable biodiversity and ecosystem function in the region?

- Not at all effective
- Not very effective
- Somewhat effective
- Very effective

24. How effective have conservation areas been in supporting outdoor recreation opportunities in the region?

- Not at all effective
- Not very effective
- Somewhat effective
- Very effective

25. How effective have conservation areas been in supporting tourism diversification in the region?

- Not at all effective
- Not very effective
- Somewhat effective
- Very effective

NOTE: Effectiveness is the extent to which the regional plan has achieved or is expected to achieve the outcomes and objectives.

26. How could the effectiveness of conservation areas be improved to meet SSRP Outcomes and Objectives? (Essay)

SECTION 5: Water

The complex relationship between water, the land and all those that live on it has been recognized and our collective knowledge, understanding and appreciation of this complexity has improved significantly over time.

The province's system for management of water and watersheds continues to be the foundation. Watershed management and headwaters protection are priorities for both water supply and water quality. The [Approved Water Management Plan for the South Saskatchewan River Basin](#) continues to provide important guidance for water management in the region.

Outcome: Watersheds are managed to support healthy ecosystems and human needs through shared stewardship. (SSRP pages 77 – 88)

Current water use is not sustainable (in recent years, human demand for water has exceeded the natural flows in both the Bow and Oldman). Surface water quantity must be managed to ensure river and their tributaries have sufficient flows to meet their instream needs and ensure their long-term viability, which means drastically reducing the water diverted and consumed by human uses

Watershed management should prioritize taking nature-based approaches to increase resiliency and health, which includes restoring stream connectivity, riparian and wetland habitats, re-meandering rivers, reintroducing beavers, re-establishing habitat complexity, replacing culverts with fish-friendly infrastructure, protecting headwaters and headwater forests, and more.

Groundwater resources need to be protected and until sufficient data and information gathered, their management guided by the precautionary principle.

Water Objectives

Surface Water Quality	Surface water quality in the Bow, Oldman, South Saskatchewan and Milk Rivers is managed so current and future water uses are protected.
Enhanced Integrated Watershed Management	Regional approaches and tools support integrated management of water and aquatic ecosystems.
Efficient and Resilient Water Supply	Water is used as efficiently as possible to meet the current and future human and ecosystem needs. There is resiliency in the ability of the water management system to adapt to change over time.
Headwaters	Headwaters in the region are managed to maintain recharge capabilities and support critical water quality, quantity and aquatic ecosystem requirements.

27. How effective are the Objectives in achieving the SSRP Water Outcome?

- Not at all effective
- Not very effective
- Somewhat effective
- Very effective

NOTE: Effectiveness is the extent to which the regional plan has achieved or is expected to achieve the outcomes and objectives.

28. How could the effectiveness of the SSRP Water Objectives be improved? (Essay)

The SSRP outlines several strategies to support the Water Outcome and Objectives (pages 82 – 88). Below is a summary of those strategies:

Summary of Water Strategies

Surface Water Quality	Implement the South Saskatchewan Region Surface Water Quality Management Framework...
Enhanced Integrated Watershed Management	Develop a comprehensive approach for groundwater management... 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... Continue to increase knowledge and improve management of wetland areas within the region. Continue to increase knowledge and improve management of riparian lands within the region. Encourage the use of best management practices for land disturbances to minimize sedimentation of water bodies... Encourage the development of source water protection plans and the use of source water protection measures... Continue to require the development of drinking water safety plans for all municipal waterwork systems as required under the current regulatory system... 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.
Efficient and Resilient Water Supply	Continue to develop an optimized water management system in the region. Continue to work towards the targets set within the Water for Life strategy with all sectors demonstrating best management practices to reach overall water efficiency and productivity improvements by 30 percent... Continue to develop approaches to address the climate variability found in the region.
Headwaters	Protect key headwaters through the establishment of conservation areas. Continue collaboration with the Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils on headwaters management initiatives such as development of headwaters integrity indicators. Review existing water conservation objectives for headwaters tributaries in support of the Approved Water Management Plan for the South Saskatchewan River Basin.

In the last year reported (2021), 9 indicators had their triggers crossed, including 2 where limits were exceeded.

Current indicators are largely chemical and physical qualities collected monthly, which only captures quality for a moment in time and can miss pollution or disturbance events. They should be monitored and reported more frequently, and continuously where possible.

The Water Quality indicators should also be expanded to include biomonitoring metrics like benthic invertebrate abundance and diversity (using standardized protocols like CABIN) and epilithic algae samples, as biomonitoring better evaluates water quality over longer periods of time.

Other indicators that could be added include:

- continuous instream temperature monitors (particularly important for climate change monitoring)
- concentrations of metals known to be toxic like selenium
- mercury and methylated mercury, which can accumulate in fish tissues and is a significant human consumption concern.

Water Quantity indicators should be expanded:

- human use versus natural flow/supply
- extent to which water conservation objectives/ instream flow needs are met

Reports about the Management Responses to the Surface Water Quality Management Framework can be found at alberta.ca/south-saskatchewan-regional-planning.

29. How effective are the Strategies in achieving the SSRP Water Objectives?

- Not at all effective
- Not very effective
- Somewhat effective
- Very effective

NOTE: Effectiveness is the extent to which the regional plan has achieved or is expected to achieve the outcomes and objectives.

30. Do you have any suggestions to improve the effectiveness of the SSRP Water Strategies? (Essay)

The SSRP provides the following indicators for surface water quality on key rivers at key locations in the region through the South Saskatchewan Water Quality Management Framework (SSRP pages 186 – 194) and water quantity (Table 1, SSRP page 116). The indicators are:

Water Indicators		Link to Indicator Data
Surface Water Quality	Total Ammonia (NH ₃₊₄ -N)	Reports about the Status of Surface Water Quality can be found at alberta.ca/south-saskatchewan-regional-planning
	Chloride (Cl ⁻)	
	Nitrate (NO ₃ -N)	
	Total Nitrogen (TN)	
	Total Dissolved Phosphorus (TDP)	
	Sulphate (SO ₄ ⁻)	
	Sodium Adsorption Ratio (SAR)	
	Specific Conductivity	
	Total Dissolved Solids	
	Total Organic Carbon	
	Total Suspended Solids	
Water Quantity	Turbidity	Links to Water Quantity monitoring can be found at alberta.ca/environmental-monitoring#water
	pH	
	<i>Escherichia coli</i>	
	Water Quantity	

31. Do you have any suggestions to improve the effectiveness of the SSRP Water Indicators? (Essay)

The South Saskatchewan Region Surface Water Quality Management Framework sets regional threshold values, including limits and triggers on key rivers at key locations in the region. Limits are clear boundaries not to be exceeded. Triggers are warning signals that allow for evaluation, adjustment and innovation on an ongoing basis (SSRP pages 186 – 194).

32. Do you have any suggestions to improve the effectiveness of the SSRP Water Quality Triggers and Limits? (Essay)

SECTION 6: Efficient Use of Land

Recognizing that Alberta will continue to grow and develop over time, the Land-use Framework promotes approaches to reduce the amount of land that is taken up by permanent or long-term developments associated with the built environment. To improve knowledge and understanding of the approaches and best practices that have been used in Alberta and other jurisdictions, the Government of Alberta has created the [Integrated Land Management Tools Compendium](#).

Outcome: Lands are efficiently used to minimize the amount of area taken up by the built environment. (SSRP pages 89-90)

Efficient Use of Land Objective

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

33. How could the effectiveness of the SSRP Efficient Use of Land Objective be improved? (Essay)

The SSRP outlines several strategies to support the Efficient Use of Land Outcome and Objective (pages 89 – 90). Below is a summary of those strategies:

Summary of Efficient Use of Land Strategies

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.

Principles:

1. Reduce the rate at which land is converted from an undeveloped state into permanent, built environment.
2. Utilize the minimum amount of land necessary for new development and build at a higher density than current practice.
3. Increase the proportion of new development that takes place within already developed or disturbed lands either through infill, redevelopment and/or shared use, relative to new development that takes place on previously undeveloped lands.
4. Plan, design and locate new development in a manner that best utilizes existing infrastructure and minimizes the need for new or expanded infrastructure.
5. Reclaim and/or convert previously developed lands that are no longer required in a progressive and timely manner.
6. Provide decision-makers, land users and individuals the information they need to make decisions and choices that support efficient land use.

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.

34. How effective are the Strategies in achieving the SSRP Efficient Use of Land Outcome and Objective?

- Not at all effective
- Not very effective
- Somewhat effective
- Very effective

NOTE: Effectiveness is the extent to which the regional plan has achieved or is expected to achieve the outcomes and objectives.

35. Do you have any suggestions to improve the effectiveness of the SSRP Efficient Use of Land Strategies? (Essay)

These strategies are great in theory, but because the SSRP lacks binding components, anthropogenic sprawl and disturbance has continued to occur in the region.

The SSRP must be updated to set enforceable disturbance limits that decrease sprawl, consolidate linear disturbances like roads, transmission lines, and other utilities, promote the co-location of land-uses and increase multi-use zoning, decrease transportation distances between product and use, prioritize development on already disturbed sites, and improve ecological connectivity through wildlife friendly infrastructure and expanded protected areas.

A cumulative effects framework should be created to reduce total land use, and maximize efficiencies on the land currently developed.

Some new indicators could include:
- extent of human footprint
- proportion of multi-use zones

SECTION 7: Outdoor Recreation and Historic Resources

Recreation, sport, and tourism opportunities must be compatible with the environment in which they are situated. The types of activities or densities that can be supported in various locations will differ and this must be acknowledged.

Acceptable density thresholds and activities permitted should be identified and inform all future opportunities.

Areas where current recreation, sport, or tourism activities threaten ecological function/integrity must be managed to address or remove these pressures.

An additional objective could be to increase local environmental knowledge, awareness, and appreciation, to foster a better stewardship ethic on the landscape, and improve wildlife coexistence and outdoor safety outcomes.

Indicators could include:

- quality/enjoyment of outdoor experiences reported
- number of human-wildlife conflicts
- number of infractions/enforcements required.
- Frequencies of trail/amenity use and maintenance
- density measurements (number of visitors/vehicles within a time frame)

Outdoor recreation areas are important for residents and visitors and provide areas for people to visit, play and enjoy the natural beauty of Alberta. These areas are intended to provide quality recreational experiences, attract tourism investment and provide security of land tenure for private and not-for-profit investment.

Historic resources will be managed to minimize the impacts of development on their integrity. Promoting the preservation of historic places and structures will ensure that tangible examples of the past continue to be accessible.

Outcome: 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 pages 91 – 101)

Outdoor Recreation and Historic Resources Objectives

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

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

36. How could the effectiveness of the SSRP Outdoor Recreation and Historic Resource Objectives be improved? (Essay)

NOTE: Effectiveness is the extent to which the regional plan has achieved or is expected to achieve the outcomes and objectives.

The SSRP outlines several strategies to support the Outdoor Recreation and Historic Resources Outcomes and Objectives (pages 96–100). Below is a summary of those strategies:

Summary of Outdoor Recreation and Historic Resource Strategies

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.

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

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

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

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

Implement the [Livingstone–Porcupine Hills Recreation Management Plan](#).

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

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

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

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

Summary of Outdoor Recreation and Historic Resource Strategies

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

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

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 recreational demand in the region.

Ensure all regional sites within the provincial parks system are appropriately classed and consolidated...

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

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...

37. How effective are the Strategies in achieving the SSRP Outdoor Recreation and Historic Resources Objectives?

- Not at all effective
- Not very effective
- Somewhat effective
- Very effective

NOTE: Effectiveness is the extent to which the regional plan has achieved or is expected to achieve the outcomes and objectives.

38. Do you have any suggestions to improve the effectiveness of the SSRP Outdoor Recreation and Historic Resource Strategies? (Essay)

SECTION 8: Inclusion of Aboriginal Peoples³ in Land-use Planning

Aboriginal culture, with its connection to the land and environment, provides a unique opportunity to inform land-use planning and land management initiatives. The Government of Alberta continues to look for opportunities to engage aboriginal peoples and to identify ways of working together.

Outcome: Aboriginal peoples are included in land-use planning. (SSRP pages 101 – 104)

Objective for the Inclusion of Aboriginal Peoples in Land-use Planning

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. This will provide both aboriginal communities and the Government of Alberta with a basis for better addressing current and potential land-use conflicts, in a manner supportive of aboriginal traditional uses, such as the exercise of Treaty rights.

39. How could the effectiveness of the SSRP Objective for the Inclusion of Aboriginal Peoples in Land-use Planning be improved? (Essay)

NOTE: Effectiveness is the extent to which the regional plan has achieved or is expected to achieve the outcomes and objectives.

The only people who should be deciding where, how, and to what extent Indigenous Nations get involved with the SSRP, including what outcomes, objectives, strategies, and indicators are appropriate, are Indigenous Nations.

³ For the purpose of this Survey, the term "aboriginal" is used when referring directly to the SSRP 2018 or to section 35 of the *Constitution Act*, 1982. In more recent years, the term "Indigenous" has been more frequently used.

The SSRP outlines several strategies to support the Outcome and Objective for the inclusion of aboriginal peoples in land-use planning (pages 102-104). Below is a summary of those strategies:

Summary of Strategies for the Inclusion of Aboriginal Peoples in Land-use Planning

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.

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

Establish a South Saskatchewan Region Land Sub-Table with First Nations with an interest in the region...

Continue First Nation involvement in watershed management planning initiatives...

Engage aboriginal peoples on initiatives to support tourism development...

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

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

40. How effective are the Strategies in achieving the SSRP Inclusion of Aboriginal Peoples in Land-use Planning Objective?

- Not at all effective
- Not very effective
- Somewhat effective
- Very effective

NOTE: Effectiveness is the extent to which the regional plan has achieved or is expected to achieve the outcomes and objectives.

41. Do you have any suggestions to improve the effectiveness of the SSRP Inclusion of Aboriginal Peoples in Land-use Planning Strategies? (Essay)

SECTION 9: Community Development

The community development section is incredibly lengthy, but includes just the single indicator (population growth) to evaluate its efficacy.

Other indicators that would better reflect the objectives include:

- Affordability
- Disparity
- Quality of life/happiness
- Accessibility/quality of services (healthcare, education, recreation, etc.)

The South Saskatchewan Regional Plan incorporates updated broad land-use policy statements that replace the land-use policies established under the *Municipal Government Act* (Order in Council 522-96). The province retains the authority to provide guidelines to municipalities on expectations needed to promote cooperation and coordination in land-use planning to reflect the uniqueness of the region.

The Government of Alberta is committed to continuing to encourage and promote this collaborative approach in the South Saskatchewan Region. One of the models is the Calgary Regional Partnership⁴, a voluntary partnership consisting of municipalities in the Calgary region working together to address issues of a regional nature in the Calgary Metropolitan Plan.

Outcome: Community development needs are anticipated and accommodated.
(SSRP pages 105 – 113)

Community Development Objectives

Planning Cooperation and Integration	<p>Cooperation and coordination are fostered among all land-use planners and decision-makers involved in preparing and implementing land plans and strategies.</p> <p>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.</p>
Calgary Regional Partnership	<p>Work together to ensure growth occurs in a sustainable manner in the region.</p>
Building Sustainable Communities	<p>Ensure provincial guidance is provided to municipalities and other stakeholders to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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; • Minimize risk to health, safety and loss to property damage as a result of land-use decisions.

42. How could the effectiveness of the SSRP Community Development Objectives be improved? (Essay)

NOTE: Effectiveness is the extent to which the regional plan has achieved or is expected to achieve the outcomes and objectives.

⁴ Note: The Calgary Regional Partnership is now the Calgary Metropolitan Growth Board.

SSRP identifies several strategies to support the Community Development Outcome (SSRP pages 107-113). Below is a summary of those strategies:

Summary of Community Development Strategies

<p>Planning Cooperation and Integration</p> <p>Calgary Regional Partnership⁵</p>	<p>Municipalities, provincial departments, boards and agencies and other partners are expected to:</p> <p>Work together to achieve the shared environmental, economic and social outcomes in the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan and minimize negative environmental cumulative effects...</p> <p>Address common planning issues, especially where valued natural features and historic resources are of interests to more than one stakeholder and where the possible effect of development transcends jurisdictional boundaries...</p> <p>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...</p> <p>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...</p> <p>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...</p> <p>Pursue joint use agreements, regional service commissions and any other joint cooperative arrangements that contribute specifically to intermunicipal land-use planning...</p> <p>Consider the value of intermunicipal development planning to address land use on fringe areas, airport vicinity protection plans or other areas of mutual interest...</p> <p>Coordinate land-use planning activities with First Nations, irrigation districts, school boards, health authorities and other agencies on areas of mutual interest...</p>
	<p>Government of Alberta</p> <p>Build awareness and work with municipalities to implement strategies that support achieving the regional outcome that community development needs are anticipated and accommodated...</p>
	<p>Calgary Regional Partnership</p> <p>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...</p>
<p>Building Sustainable Communities</p>	<p>Land-Use Patterns - Municipalities</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Contribute to a healthy environment, a healthy economy and a high quality of life.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Feature innovative housing designs, range of densities and housing types such as mixed-use, cluster developments, secondary suites, seniors' centres and affordable housing...</p> <p>Minimize potential conflict of land uses adjacent to natural resource extraction, manufacturing and other industrial developments.</p>

⁵ Note: The Calgary Regional Partnership is now the Calgary Metropolitan Growth Board.

Summary of Community Development Strategies

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

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

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

Agriculture - Municipalities

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

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.

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.

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

Water and Watersheds - Municipalities

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.

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.

Prohibit unauthorized future use or development of land in the floodway in accordance with the *Flood Recovery 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 use...

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.

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

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

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.

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

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.

Summary of Community Development Strategies

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

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

Non-renewable Resources - Municipalities

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.

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

Historic Resources - Municipalities in consultation with the Minister responsible for the *Historical Resources Act*

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

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

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

Transportation - Municipalities in consultation with the Minister responsible for the *Highways Development and Protection Act*

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

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

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 if subdivision and development is to be approved in the vicinity of the areas identified in accordance with the above strategies.

43. How effective are the Strategies in achieving the SSRP Community Development Outcome and Objectives?

- Not at all effective
- Not very effective
- Somewhat effective
- Very effective

NOTE: Effectiveness is the extent to which the regional plan has achieved or is expected to achieve the outcomes and objectives.

44. Do you have any suggestions to improve the effectiveness of the SSRP Community Development Strategies? (Essay)

Section 10: Regional Indicators of Interest

Table 1 of the SSRP (page 116) identifies the indicators of interest that are representative of the broad economic, environmental and social outcomes desired for the region:

Provincial Outcome: Healthy economy supported by our land and natural resources

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

Economic Indicators		Link to Indicator Data
General Economy	Gross domestic product	Indicator data for the South Saskatchewan Region can be found at lufereporting-esrd.hub.arcgis.com/pages/south-saskatchewan
Affordability	Business establishments	
Disparity	Inventory of major projects	
Quality of life/happiness	Building permits	
Accessibility and quality of services (Healthcare, education, recreation, etc.)	Employment	
	Average total income	
Agriculture	Agricultural land fragmentation	Indicator data for the South Saskatchewan Region can be found at lufereporting-esrd.hub.arcgis.com/pages/south-saskatchewan
Land/water use efficiency	Agricultural land conversion	
Local food security		For more detailed information on Agriculture indicators, including their values and trends, see alberta.ca/agriculture-reporting-south-saskatchewan-regional-plan
Agrochemical inputs (fertilizer, pesticides)		

Provincial Outcome: Healthy ecosystems and environment

Regional Outcome:	Indicator	Link to Indicator Data
Air quality is managed to support healthy ecosystems environment and human needs through shared stewardship.	Air Quality	Reports about the Status of Air Quality can be found at alberta.ca/south-saskatchewan-regional-planning
Biodiversity and ecosystem function are sustained through shared stewardship.	Biodiversity indicators (not yet developed as part of biodiversity management framework) Area of conserved land	
Watersheds are managed to support healthy environment ecosystems and human needs through shared stewardship.	Water quality	Reports about the Status of Surface Water Quality can be found at alberta.ca/south-saskatchewan-regional-planning
	Water quantity	Links to Water Quantity monitoring can be found at alberta.ca/environmental-monitoring#water
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.	Indicators in development	

Environmental values, like ecosystem services and reclamation costs/liabilities, should be included within the economic indicators. Other relevant indicators are also listed.

See previous sections where these were discussed in detail.

Provincial Outcome: People-friendly communities with ample recreational and cultural opportunities

Regional Outcome:	Indicator	Link to Indicator Data
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.	Parks per capita Recreation infrastructure Historic resources	Indicator data for the South Saskatchewan Region can be found at lufereporting-esrd.hub.arcgis.com/pages/south-saskatchewan
Aboriginal peoples are included in land-use planning.	Aboriginal peoples continue to be consulted when Government Alberta decisions may adversely affect their continued exercise of their constitutionally protected mineral resources rights and the input from such consultation continues to be reviewed prior to the decision.	
Community development needs are anticipated and accommodated.	Population	Indicator data for the South Saskatchewan Region can be found at lufereporting-esrd.hub.arcgis.com/pages/south-saskatchewan

45. Do you have any suggestions to improve the effectiveness of the SSRP Regional Indicators? (Essay)

NOTE: Effectiveness is the extent to which the regional plan has achieved or is expected to achieve the outcomes and objectives.

SSRP Indicators

The SSRP identifies a number of indicators for the SSRP outcomes and objectives:

- Indicators for Economic Growth and Diversification (SSRP, page 52)
- Indicators for Managing Air Quality (SSRP, page 55)
- Indicators for Managing Biodiversity and Ecosystems (SSRP, page 76)
- Indicators for Managing Water Quality (SSRP, page 82)
- Indicators for Managing Water Supply (SSRP, page 88)
- Indicators for Efficient use of Land (SSRP, page 90)
- Indicators for Outdoor Recreation and Historic Resources (SSRP, page 101)
- Indicators for Inclusion of Aboriginal Peoples in Land-use Planning (SSRP, page 104)
- Indicator for Community Development (SSRP, page 113)

Links to the indicator data may be found at:

- lufereporting-esrd.hub.arcgis.com/pages/south-saskatchewan
- alberta.ca/south-saskatchewan-regional-planning
- alberta.ca/agriculture-reporting-south-saskatchewan-regional-plan
- alberta.ca/environmental-monitoring

46. Please provide your feedback on the effectiveness of the SSRP's Indicators, or ways you think their effectiveness can be improved. (Essay)

SECTION 11: Overall Feedback on the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan

47. Would you like to provide any additional feedback on the overall relevancy and effectiveness of the SSRP? (Essay)
48. Do you have any suggestions on how to further streamline and remove barriers in the land use planning process under the *Alberta Land Stewardship Act*? (Essay)

SECTION 12: Tell Us About Yourself

49. Where do you live?*
- In Alberta, in the South Saskatchewan Region
 - In Alberta, outside the South Saskatchewan Region
 - In Canada, outside of Alberta
 - Outside of Canada
 - Prefer not to answer
50. Over the past 12 months, how often have you participated in recreation or tourism experiences within the South Saskatchewan Region?*
- Haven't visited in the past 12 months
 - A few times
 - Once a month
 - Once a week
 - More than once a week

* All fields marked with an asterisk (*) are required.

51. Are you providing feedback on behalf of an organization, community or interest group?*

a. Yes

- i. What is the name of the community or organization you are providing input on behalf of? (single line)
- ii. What sector best describes your organization? (radio)
 1. Agriculture sector
 2. Forestry sector
 3. Indigenous group or community
 4. Non-governmental organization
 5. Oil and gas sector
 6. Public sector
 7. Tourism sector
 8. Other (please specify):_____

b. No

- i. Do you currently work in the South Saskatchewan Region? (radio)
 1. Yes
 - a. Are you a member of, employed by, or associated with any of the following sectors or groups? (radio)
 - i. Agriculture sector
 - ii. Forestry sector
 - iii. Indigenous group or community
 - iv. Non-governmental organization
 - v. Oil and gas sector
 - vi. Public sector
 - vii. Tourism sector
 - viii. Other (please specify):_____
 2. No
 3. Prefer not to answer

52. How was your experience sharing your input today? (radio)

- a. Poor
 - i. What made your experience poor? (255-character limit)
- b. Acceptable
- c. Good
 - i. What made your experience good? (255-character limit)

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