

Heartland 101: Land Use Planning for Long Term Growth

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With over 660 million km² of hills, mountains, forests, rivers, and prairies, Alberta covers almost 7% of Canada's land mass. Over 4 million people call Alberta home and use its land for many activities including agriculture, recreation, mining, housing, forestry, infrastructure, and industrial development.

Provincial Land-use Framework

Balancing a variety of land uses on a finite amount of land requires planning. In 2008, the Government of Alberta created the Land-use Framework to help guide the planning process. It acts as a high level blueprint to manage our province's land and natural resources. This is particularly important as growth and development pressures occur over time.

The Land-use Framework established seven regions across the province. The regions are distinct in topography, activities, population, and resources. Therefore, unique plans are being developed for each region. The North Saskatchewan Region is the third largest of the seven regions and includes Edmonton and Alberta's Industrial Heartland. The North Saskatchewan Regional Plan is currently in the development stage, having completed public consultation and a Terms of Reference. More details on the regional plan and its progress can be viewed at landuse.alberta.ca.

Approved Regional Plans will define a broad plan for land and natural resource use for public and private lands. This means that local municipalities are required to align their land use management processes to these Regional Plans.

Land Use Planning at a Local Level

Development within Alberta's Industrial Heartland region is guided in part by a set of [Complementary Area Structure Plans \(CASP\)](#). The CASP was established in 2001. It coordinated land use zoning across the four original Heartland Association municipal partners and was a model for municipal cooperation.

These plans:

- Minimize land use conflicts by ensuring appropriate land is provided for various types of development
- Utilize risk management assessments to ensure buffer or transition zones between heavy industrial and residential uses
- Ensure effective land use planning is seamless across municipal boundaries
- Provide long term guidance for overall development of the region

The Heartland CASP is an important part of the larger land use plans for the municipalities and Capital Region as a whole. Additionally, it will be incorporated into the provincial land use plan for Alberta.

For more information about Life in the Heartland, visit lifeintheheartland.com or follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

*Heartland 101 is a monthly print and on-air (Mix 107.9 FM) series brought to you by **Life in the Heartland**, a partnership of five local organizations improving access to information, resources, and contacts for communities in and around Alberta's Industrial Heartland.*