

## 8.0 Consultation Process and Outstanding Concerns

### 8.1 Consultation Activities and Events

The City of Spruce Grove implemented two sets of public consultation processes in support of the proposed annexation. The first took place over the time period of late April 2017 through July 2017. The second set was marked by the release of the Annexation Agreement and negotiated annexation areas, conducted between May 2019 and July 2019. A summary of the consultation activities and events from 2017-2019 are summarized in **Table 8.1** below. A detailed summary the activities, events and views expressed is provided in **Appendix M**.

Table 8.1: Consultation Activities and Events

Activity/Event	Date
1. Committee of the Whole meeting, project launch and overview	April 20, 2015
2. News release announcing project launch	April 21, 2015
3. Growth Study webpage launched with an initial set of frequently asked questions (FAQs) and an email link to provide questions and comments	April 21, 2015
4. Final Growth Study Report accepted by Council	December 12, 2016
5. News release announcing public engagement	April 25, 2017
6. Direct invitations sent to landowners and mines and minerals owners to attend an open house session for affected owners	April 25, 2017
7. Public open houses advertised on project website	April/May 2017
8. Public open houses advertised on City social media	April/May 2017
9. Public open houses advertised on four reader board digital signs	April/May 2017
10. Public open houses advertised on radio (88.1 The One)	Week ending May 6, 2017
11. Two public open houses advertised for first time in both the Spruce Grove Examiner and the Stony Plain Reporter	April 28, 2017
12. Two public open houses advertised for second time in the Spruce Grove Examiner and the Stony Plain Reporter	May 5, 2017
13. Second public open house advertised for a third time in the Spruce Grove Examiner and the Stony Plain Reporter	May 12, 2017
14. First of two open houses held with general public to discuss annexation process and hear views of the general public	May 6, 2017 (midday)
15. First of two open houses held with affected owners (land and mines and mineral rights) to discuss annexation process and hear views of affected owners	May 6, 2017 (afternoon)
16. Second of two open houses held with affected owners (land and mines and mineral rights) to discuss annexation process and hear views of affected owners	May 13, 2017 (midday)
17. Second of two open houses held with general public to discuss annexation process and hear views of the general public	May 13, 2017 (afternoon)
18. Invites sent to key stakeholders (developers, service commissions, industry representatives and Alberta Transportation) to attend stakeholder information sessions in June	May 17, 2017
19. First of two stakeholder information sessions is held	June 14, 2017
20. Second of two stakeholder information sessions is held	June 15, 2017



Activity/Event	Date
21. Open house follow-up letter sent to landowners and mines and mineral rights owners who did not attend open houses with applicable open house materials	July 17, 2017
22. Meeting with representatives of Alberta Transportation	February 7, 2018
23. News release on signing of memorandum of understanding to guide annexation process	January 16, 2019
24. News release on signing of letter of intent for sub-regional plan with Stony Plain and Parkland County	January 16, 2019
25. News release on ratifying of memorandum of agreement to proceed with annexation process	April 24, 2019
26. City updated its annexation webpage and advertised two open houses on its events calendar	June 7, 2019
27. Direct invitations sent to landowners and mines and minerals owners, as well as key stakeholders, to attend 2019 open house sessions or schedule a one-on-one interview if desired	June 10, 2019
28. Two 2019 open houses advertised for first time in both the Spruce Grove Examiner and the Stony Plain Reporter	June 14, 2019
29. Facebook and Twitter posts	June 18-26, 2019
30. Two 2019 open houses advertised for second time in the Spruce Grove Examiner and the Stony Plain Reporter	June 21, 2019
31. Additional Facebook and Twitter posts	June 26, 2019
32. First of two 2019 open houses held with affected owners and the general public to discussion the negotiated annexation areas and hear their views	June 26, 2019 (afternoon)
33. Second of two 2019 open houses held with affected owners and the general public to discussion the negotiated annexation areas and hear their views	June 26, 2019 (evening)
34. Open house materials and annexation consent forms sent directly to landowners and mines and mineral rights owners who did not attend 2019 open houses with second invite to schedule a one-on-one interview if desired	July 4, 2019

## 8.2 2017 Consultation Process Results and Identification of Concerns

The summary below identifies the emerging themes as outcomes of all consultation activities in five categories. The five categories are:

1. Town of Stony Plain Expansion Area Landowners
2. Parkland County Expansion Area Landowners
3. Mines and Mineral Owners
4. Key Stakeholders
5. General Public

### 8.2.1 Town of Stony Plain Expansion Area Landowners

Feedback from landowners within the Stony Plain expansion area focused on:

- More information on the implications of annexation is necessary due to location of property in study area;
- Impacts of property being governed by two municipal jurisdictions;
- Rationale for annexation boundary makes sense due to physical geography of lands (within Stony Plain);
- Timing of potential future development if annexation was approved; and
- Timing of road realignment and construction.

Note that feedback from the Town of Stony Plain expansion area landowners is not addressed herein as annexation discussions between the Town and the City are on hold. The feedback received will be carried forward and addressed in a separate annexation application once the City and the Town are ready to proceed.

### 8.2.2 Parkland County Expansion Area Landowners

Themes that emerged from the feedback received from the landowners within the Parkland County expansion area focused on:

- Implications on property values and taxation; and
- Impacts and opportunities of City bylaws on current land uses.

### 8.2.3 Mines and Minerals Owners

Common themes among mines and minerals owners focused on:

- Impact on existing operating wells with a change in jurisdiction from a rural municipality to an urban municipality;
- Effects of City bylaws on drilling activities; and
- Integration of urban development around operating wells.

### 8.2.4 Key Stakeholders

As key stakeholders represent their own interests and the business sector, common themes across all stakeholders are limited. Overall, stakeholders had questions about the assumptions and methodology for both the Growth Study and Financial Impact Assessment with respect to population projections and infrastructure financing. Topics of questions and feedback from stakeholders also included:

- municipal property taxes;
- level of services needed to support projected growth;
- impact of development on Wagner Natural Area and the ability to develop land in its proximity;
- rail separation; and
- development of existing and projected industrial land.

### 8.2.5 General Public

Themes and questions from the public at the open houses, and from a letter received by Administration, focused on:

- the timing of improvements to Highway 628;
- clarification about the methodology and conclusions of the Growth Study and Financial Impact Assessment;
- proposed land uses depicted and assumed in the Growth Study;
- the possibility of amalgamation with Stony Plain; and
- impact of annexation on land values and property taxes.



### 8.3 2019 Consultation Process Results and Identification of Concerns

The summary below identifies the emerging themes as outcomes of the 2019 consultation activities in four categories. The four categories are:

1. Landowners Within the Negotiated Annexation Areas
2. Mines and Minerals Owners Within the Negotiated Annexation Areas
3. General Public
4. Key Stakeholders and Affected Authorities

#### 8.3.1 Landowners Within the Negotiated Annexation Areas

Themes that emerged from the feedback received from the remaining owners within the negotiated annexation areas are presented in **Table 8.2** below.

Table 8.2: Summary of Landowner Themes

Theme	Comments
Taxes	Changes to tax rate; process of transition
Property Value	Increase or decrease property value
Impact to services	Mail service; gas provider; garbage/dump access; internet & phone service changes; water service; potential well drilling restrictions
Lifestyle	Ability to keep livestock (chickens, goats); transition from quiet rural to city lifestyle
Development	Timelines; inquiry about industrial interest; zoning and subdivision rights; road upgrades

#### 8.3.2 Mines and Minerals Owners Within the Negotiated Annexation Areas

No new themes of feedback emerged from the 2019 consultation activities as no mines and minerals owners attended the 2019 open houses or submitted a questionnaire. The City therefore relies on the themes of feedback that emerged through the 2017 open houses as a representation of the feedback from those mines and minerals owners that remain within the negotiated annexation areas.

#### 8.3.3 General Public

Themes from the general public included:

- concerns with existing major roads;
- a general curiosity about the annexation process; and
- a desire from landowners within the previous recommended expansion area in Parkland County who would like to be a part of the City in the future.

#### 8.3.4 Key Stakeholders and Affected Authorities

Key stakeholders identified by the City as most affected by the proposed annexation were invited to the 2019 open houses. Alberta Transportation and West Parkland Gas Co-op attended the 2019 open house events and provided feedback as follows.

## ALBERTA TRANSPORTATION

- Advised of future interchange requirements by Alberta Transportation along Highway 628
- Submitted as a part of the questionnaire: “As part of regular government stakeholder consultation: When timing is appropriate, investigate transportation requirements in consideration of access management, lowered dependence of provincial road network for travel, and sustainable growth among other things”

## WEST PARKLAND GAS CO-OP

- Due to the small size of the negotiated annexation areas, a dual franchise agreement opportunity for natural gas cannot be triggered by this annexation, resulting in the loss of five customers

The City also notified 19 affected local authorities, other authorities/agencies, and utility providers of its negotiated annexation areas by way of copy to its Notice (see **Appendix H**). The 19 affected parties are listed in **Table 8.3**. The City did not receive responses from the 19 parties copied to the Notice.

Table 8.3: Affected Parties Notified through 2019 Notice of Intent to Annex

Affected Party	Affected Party Type
Parkland County	Local Authority
Town of Stony Plain	Local Authority
Capital Region Parkland Water Services Commission	Local Authority
Alberta Capital Region Wastewater Commission	Local Authority
Capital Region Assessment Services Commission	Local Authority
West Inter Lake District Regional Water Services Commission	Local Authority
Parkland School Division No. 70	Local Authority
Evergreen Catholic Separate Regional Division No. 2	Local Authority
Regional Authority of the North Central Francophone Education Region No. 4	Local Authority
Alberta Health Services – Edmonton Zone	Local Authority
Alberta Transportation (North Central) – Stony Plain District	Other Authority
ATCO Pipelines	Other Agency
Kinder Morgan Pipelines	Other Agency
EPCOR	Utility Provider
West Parkland Gas Co-op	Utility Provider
ATCO Gas North	Utility Provider
Fortis Alberta Inc.	Utility Provider
TELUS	Utility Provider
Shaw Communications	Utility Provider



## 8.4 Response to Concerns

The tables below set out the issues that were raised by landowners, mines and minerals owners, the general public and key stakeholders during the consultation. The issues are grouped together by theme.

Table 8.4: Responses to Concerns Raised by Landowners

Concern Raised	Response
Impact of Annexation on Property Values	Annexation does not in itself affect the value of property. Property values are affected by changes in use and intensification of development, not changes in municipal jurisdiction.
Future Land Use in Negotiated Annexation Areas	<p>The future land use concept presented in the Growth Study is preliminary in nature and not intended to be binding. Landowners and the public will have opportunities to participate and provide feedback to the land use designation of lands within the negotiated annexation areas through the Municipal Development Plan (MDP) update process, and future Land Use Bylaw (LUB) amendments.</p> <p>The City's MDP will be updated to reflect the City's new boundaries after annexation. The MDP update process will include opportunities for the public to provide input and feedback through a consultation process and a public hearing on the future land use designation of lands within the negotiated annexation areas, as well as the policies that will guide future development.</p> <p>In addition, as per the Municipal Government Act, the process to redistrict lands requires an amendment to the City's LUB, and also includes a public hearing providing the public an opportunity to respond and provide submissions to proposed amendments.</p>
Assessment and Taxation	<p>The Annexation Agreement reflects a reasonable transition of assessment and taxation for parcels within the negotiated annexation areas. The triggering events also align with recent annexation agreements and decisions.</p> <p>The Annexation Agreement dated April 23, 2019 provides that for taxation purposes in 2021 and up to and including 2051, the land in the negotiated annexation areas and the assessable improvements to it must be a) assessed by the City on the same basis as if they had remained in the County; and b) taxed by the City in respect of each assessment class that applies to the annexed land and the assessable improvements to it using the lower of the tax rates established by the County and the City.</p> <p>If a parcel within the negotiated annexation areas is subject to subdivision (at the request of, or on behalf of, the landowner), is redistricted through an amendment to the City's LUB (at the request of, or on behalf of, the landowner), or connected to the City's sewer or water services, that portion of land and the assessable improvements to it must be assessed and taxed in the same manner as other property of the same assessment class in the City.</p>

Concern Raised	Response
Impact of Annexation on Existing Land Use Activities and Rural Lifestyle	Owners within the negotiated annexation areas will be able to continue to use their land in the same manner as prior to annexation. Any change in land use would require an amendment to the City's LUB (and possibly its MDP), which requires the City to notify and provide an opportunity for landowners and the public to provide feedback as well as hold a public hearing.
Service Levels Within Negotiated Annexation Areas	The City will review the services being provided by the County to impacted landowners and assess whether these services are consistent with those provided to existing City residents. Once assessed, a decision will be made whether existing County services will be maintained or amended. The City of Spruce Grove currently provides an equitable level of service to all residents.
Impact of Annexation on Cost of Additional Infrastructure to the City and to Landowners	<p>The Growth Study reviewed a number of infrastructure studies undertaken by the City to assess the long-term planning of its transportation and utility systems. The annexation and proposed staging of development represents a logical extension of existing and planned transportation and municipal infrastructure. The Financial Impact Assessment presents a sustainable model for growth considering capital and operational budgets and considers the ability of the City to recover costs through off-site levies. The annexation represents an efficient approach to infrastructure investment, both in terms of capital and operational costs.</p> <p>The extension of municipal services must be logical and recovered through implementation of the City's off-site levy bylaw. There are many steps in the planning process that would be required prior to the extension of municipal services to the negotiated annexation areas including, but not limited to, an update to the City MDP and redesignation of lands through an amendment to the City's LUB, and a subdivision application that implements the LUB. Development of properties from a rural to urban standard are typically initiated by an interested landowner.</p>

Table 8.5: Responses to Concerns Raised by Mines and Minerals Owners

Concern Raised	Response
Impact on Existing Operating Wells	A change in municipal jurisdiction has no impact on licensees or leaseholders since the operation of existing and drilling of new wells is government by provincial regulations and directives.
Effects of City Bylaws on Drilling Activities	Development on the land surface has no impact on subsurface mineral rights and directional drilling may provide access to the resource.
Integration of Urban Development on Operating Wells	Minimum setback requirements are set by the Alberta Energy Regulator.

Table 8.6: Responses to Concerns Raised by the General Public

Concern Raised	Response
Timing of Improvements of Highway 628	The upgrade of Highway 628 is solely under the responsibility of the provincial government.
Proposed Land Uses Depicted and Assumed in the Growth Study	The future land use concept presented in the Growth Study is preliminary in nature and not intended to be binding. Landowners and the public will have opportunities to participate and provide feedback to the land use designation of lands within the negotiated annexation areas through the MDP update process, and future LUB amendments.
Possibility of Amalgamation with Stony Plain	The Growth Study focused on the need for the City to have available land for future development. Discussions related to amalgamation would involve all three municipalities in the Tri-Region under a different process.
Impact of Annexation on Land Values and Property Taxes	The Annexation Agreement reflects a reasonable transition of assessment and taxation for parcels within the negotiated annexation areas. The triggering events also align with recent annexation agreements and decisions.
Desire to be Part of the City in the Future	The City, the County and the Town of Stony Plain have agreed to embark on the preparation of a sub-regional plan. Future growth directions for Spruce Grove beyond the 30-year negotiated annexation areas, and the merits of the balance of the 50-year recommended expansion areas in the City's 2016 Growth Study, will be discussed through this forthcoming sub-regional planning process.

Table 8.7: Responses to Concerns Raised by Key Stakeholders

Concern Raised	Response
Impact of Annexation on Property Taxes	See <b>Table 8.4</b> for a detailed response. The Annexation Agreement reflects a reasonable transition of assessment and taxation for parcels within the negotiated annexation areas. The triggering events also align with recent annexation agreements and decisions.
Levels of Services to Support Projected Growth	The City will provide the same level of service to the annexed areas as it does to existing City residents.
Impact of Development on Wagner Natural Area	Any City long range and development planning will provide for sensitive development of lands within the probable Wagner Natural Area recharge area, potentially using a similar policy framework as set out in Parkland County's Acheson Industrial Area Structure Plan.
Rail Separation	The lands to be annexed will initially have arterial road access from Highway 16A and necessitate crossings of the CN main line in four locations (Pioneer Road, Century Road, Golden Spike Road and Campsite Road). The City continues to work with CN to mitigate any negative impacts these existing crossings have on access to the south side of Spruce Grove. The future upgrade of Highway 628 by the provincial government will provide improved access to Spruce Grove from the south.





Concern Raised	Response
Development of Industrial Land	As with the future development of industrial land within the City's boundary, the future development of any of the annexed lands for industrial purposes will need to meet the standards for industrial development within the City's LUB and will need to mitigate any potential negative impacts to adjacent lands.

## 8.5 Mitigation of Outstanding Concerns

As there is no known opposition to the proposed annexation since the City and County agreed to the negotiated annexation areas, there are no known outstanding concerns requiring mitigation.