

Update on the Proposed Concrete Batch Plant in Cochrane - July-August, 2024

Background On April 17, 2024, the Cochrane Planning Commission approved a permit to allow Heidelberg Materials to build a concrete batch plant on the site of the gravel pit that they operate. The Concerned Citizens Group launched an appeal on May 16, 2024. On May 27, 2024 Heidelberg asked the Town to cancel the permit, effectively ending the appeal. However, **this issue is NOT over.** Heidelberg plans to engage residents and reapply for a new permit at a later date and the Concerned Citizens Group plans to be ready when this happens.

A Puzzling Development - The Proposed Rezoning of the Robinson Lands including the Gravel Pit

All of the communities in Cochrane are part of different Area Structure Plans (ASP's). Since 1994, the Robinson Lands have been part of the South Ridge Area Structure Plan. In early June, we learned that the Town received a request to move all 320 acres of the Robinson Lands, including the gravel pit from the South Ridge Area Structure Plan (SR-ASP) to the River Heights Area Structure Plan (RH-ASP).

Who made the request? B&A Planning Group

As per their website, B&A provides a range of planning services from land-use strategy to statutory and growth planning initiatives. They filed the request on behalf of John Robinson, Madlee Developments, and GDM Developments

Why now? It seems premature.

The Town says that the "Lands in the southernmost area have been extracted and are closer to being prepared for future development". It seems to us that there are a number of new communities in Cochrane that could be built out before the Robinson Lands get developed.

Why Move the Robinson Lands to a New Area Structure Plan? We are skeptical.

The Town says that the Southridge Area Structure Plan was originally written in 1994, so to avoid developing the lands under a very dated policy the Town proposes to add the Robinson Lands to the River Heights Plan.

But is this the only reason to move the Robinson Lands? We are not convinced.

While we do not profess to be experts in reading ASP's, there seems to be a number of differences between the two ASP's and a number of safeguards that were included in the original ASP that are omitted from the River Heights ASP.

Do these changes benefit Heidelberg Materials and make it easier for them to build a concrete batch plant? Maybe.

We hope to find answers in the FOIP documents that we just received.

A Few of the Differences Between the Two ASP's

South Ridge ASP (existing)	River Heights ASP (proposed)
There is a section on "Gravel Extraction" that outlines specific requirements for the ongoing operations.	Only discusses gravel hauling and briefly mentions "ongoing aggregate extraction". There is no/limited mention of ongoing operational commitments.
A number of environmental studies/reports are required prior to any development, as well as an impact assessment.	The ASP states that reports are complete, even though the gravel pit/impacts to the Bow River were not part of the RH-ASP at the time that they were commissioned.
Gravel extraction to serve construction wholly within the SR-ASP.	No similar restriction was identified.
No development permit shall be issued if gravel hauled outside of the Town's boundary unless Rocky View County approves.	No similar restriction was identified.
Concrete batch plant appeals, where water licenses are involved, can be referred to a Provincial Board.	It remains to be seen if an appeal of a development permit under the RH ASP would receive the same treatment by the Provincial appeal board, as it would under the SR ASP

In order to be prepared, the Core Team ;

- ❖ closely monitors any changes to the Heidelberg Materials development application (should they choose to reapply) and to the proposed changes to the Area Structure Plans
- ❖ engages local experts to prepare reports in readiness for another appeal and/or presentations to Council
- ❖ reviews FOIP documents as they are received (2 more batches expected)
- ❖ tracks responses from the Provincial and Federal Governments with respect to the drainage of tailing ponds into the Bow River

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