West Macleod Residual Lands Area Structure Plan

Phase 2 – Explore: What We Did Report

June 2025

Project Overview

The Saatootsi (West Macleod Residual Lands) project will provide for the local area planning in the form of an Area Structure Plan (ASP) for 220 hectares (544 acres) in the City's southwest. The planning policy document will provide the vision, and core goals that will shape the future stages of development. It will guide land use patterns, transportation and utility networks and implement the broader planning objectives of the Municipal Development Plan, Calgary Transportation Plan & other relevant regional and city-wide policies and strategies.

This project will include the scoping and review of numerous technical reports and analysis evaluating everything from population and employment forecasts to archeology and biophysical inventory. It will identify lands of environmental significance, location of pathways, open spaces and streets, and how future residents will be able to move, relax and play. The outcome of this work will inform future growth strategies, identify the need for any capital investments and provide for a sequencing of development. A Land Use Concept will be developed to show where all the higher ordered elements of a complete community should locate. It will contain the approximate location and type of schools and neighbourhood activity centres.

Phase 2: EXPLORE

We engaged with Calgarians for Phase 2: EXPLORE at in-person events and online in Fall 2024.



Outcome

The Saatootsi (West Macleod Residual Lands) project team prepared two reports:

- ***What We Heard Report*** summarized the feedback we received through communication and engagement with the public during Phase 2: EXPLORE.
- ***What We Did Report*** (this report) is intended to demonstrate how feedback from Phase 2 was used to inform the draft vision, core goals and Land Use Concept for Phase 3: REFINE.

What We Heard

In Phase 2 we asked for feedback specifically on the draft Vision, draft Goals, and two draft Land Use Concept Plans:

- **Vision and Goals**

  Some participants told us that the plan's vision felt vague or didn't reflect their values. Others wanted more emphasis on environmental care and Indigenous presence.

- **Land Use and Concept Plan**

  There was strong support for two active "main streets," a central recreation area, and accessible pathways (from Draft Concept 1). We heard from some participants that elements like the "floating" or flexible commercial space in Draft Concept 2 should be better defined.

There were five general themes that emerged from the feedback we received during our public engagement in Phase 2:

- **Protecting Natural Areas**

  Participants told us they wanted to protect Pine Creek and nearby natural areas. Some said they did not want any development near these features at all.

- **Balancing Housing Types**

  Participants asked for more townhouses and low-rise homes. Many were concerned about tall buildings blocking views and there being too many of them.

- **Community Amenities**

  Participants asked for places to gather and play, like a recreation centre, splash park, dog park, and schools.

- **Mobility and Traffic Solutions**

  Participants were concerned about traffic on roads like 210 Avenue and Macleod Trail, citing better walkability, safer bike routes, and access to public transit in the future.

- **Infrastructure and Services**

  Participants questioned whether roads, schools, fire services, and utilities (like water and sewers) would be ready for growth in the Plan area.

What We Did

The themes that emerged from Phase 2 are listed in the table below, along with responses from the project team on how the feedback was used to inform the new Area Structure Plan. The text in the "What We Did" column is a direct response to feedback heard from public engagement during Phase 2.

What We Heard	What We Did	Rationale
Protecting Natural Areas	The draft plan protects Pine Creek and nearby wetlands through a dedicated green buffer. It also identifies an Environmental Open Space Study Area (EOSSA) that will require more environmental studies to be undertaken before development is allowed. These policies are supported by Traditional Indigenous Knowledge and The City of Calgary's environmental protection guidelines.	To honour the ecological and cultural importance of Pine Creek and ensure that future development respects the land, water, and wildlife, while following The City's environmental regulations.
Balancing Housing Types	The plan includes several areas for ground-oriented homes, with a mix of townhouses and low-rise buildings. Taller buildings are only allowed in areas that will be serviced by future public transit. We also added a policy that ensures no single type of housing can be the prevailing form within the plan area.	To make sure the neighbourhood includes a diversity in housing types, while protecting community character and views. These choices also align with The City's long-term goals for inclusive and well-designed communities.
More Community Amenities	The plan includes a site for a future recreation facility, three school sites, and a Community Association site. These sites are placed within walking distance of future residential areas connected by a pathway network. The plan aligns with The City's regulations for parks and schools and works undertaken with the school boards ensures that future needs are met.	To ensure the new community has the services and spaces it needs to thrive—especially for families, youth, and older adults—based on what we heard.
Mobility and Traffic Solutions	The plan will identify future phasing of access and egress routes as infrastructure is built. This includes walking and cycling paths, safe crossings over the railway and	To make it easier and safer for people to get around—whether they are walking, wheeling, driving, or taking transit. The draft plan reflect

What We Heard	What We Did	Rationale
	busy roads, and future access to public transit. The road and pathway design follow The City's Complete Streets policy and the Calgary Transportation Plan.	current concerns while building toward a more connected future.
Infrastructure and Services	The plan includes a development phasing strategy so new development can only proceed when infrastructure is available. It also includes policies for utility servicing, school access, and emergency services. In many areas, the plan refers to The City's official standards and guidelines for water, road safety, snow clearing, and fire response.	To make sure new growth happens only when the necessary services are in place, and to assure the public that The City has clear policies and processes to manage these needs over time.
Vision and Goals	The vision and core goals were rewritten to highlight sustainability, inclusion, and stewardship of the land. They now reference protection of naturalized areas, walkable and connected design, and Indigenous values.	To make sure the plan's direction is clear —while aligning with The City's long-term vision
Land Use and Concept Plan	The final draft plan combines the most liked parts of earlier concepts. It articulates a clear approach for neighbourhood centres and an interim "Commercial Flex Area" that allows early-stage businesses to be established.	Updates to the Land Use concept plan align with Calgary's planning framework and aim to make the community welcoming, functional, and future-ready.

What We Didn't Do

The project team will use what we hear through Phases 1 and 2 of engagement to refine and finalize the vision, goals and concept options. It is important to note that participant feedback is one of several influences on the ASP design, along with technical studies, City policies, and best practices. Sometimes feedback is incompatible with one of more of the other design influences and as a result, there is feedback that we received that we are unable to incorporate into the ASP.

What We Heard	Why We Are Unable to Incorporate the Feedback
Do not allow any development near Pine Creek; turn it into a protected park.	While we are protecting Pine Creek through environmental buffers, ecological policies, and cultural recognition, we cannot prohibit all development. These are privately owned lands, and under Alberta's Municipal Government Act, The City cannot impose blanket restrictions that prevent all development without acquisition or compensation. The Area Structure Plan balances environmental stewardship with private landowner rights and long-term growth direction set in Calgary's plans.
Eliminate all tall buildings—keep everything low-rise.	We understand concerns about building heights and have limited taller buildings to specific, transit-supportive areas. However, eliminating all mid- and high-density housing would limit housing choice, reduce affordability, and result in inefficient land use. Calgary's long-term planning supports mixed housing for multi-generational living and inclusive, complete communities. Building heights and forms will be reviewed in more detail at the Outline Plan stage to ensure appropriate transitions.
Cancel the floating commercial area—it's not necessary.	Instead of removing this entirely, we revised and renamed it as a Commercial Flex Area with better guidance. This flexible space is designed to serve early residents with needed shops and services, then evolve into a walkable hub. Removing it would reduce walkability and delay basic amenities. Design rules and placement have been improved based on public feedback.
Build the recreation centre right away.	We recognize the value of a recreation centre, and the plan reserves land for a future civic facility. However, construction depends on city-wide funding decisions, community needs, and capital planning. At this time, there is no budget commitment, and the area lacks infrastructure to support such a facility. The plan ensures we're ready when the opportunity arises.
Do not allow development until all	We agree that infrastructure must be in place before homes are built, which is why the plan includes a phasing strategy tied to service delivery.

What We Heard	Why We Are Unable to Incorporate the Feedback
roads, schools, and utilities are in place.	However, it's important to note that development itself pays for roads, utilities, and amenities through developer contributions and levies. If infrastructure is built too early without development, it can tie up tax dollars unnecessarily. For that reason, planning and development proceed together, not one entirely before the other.
Design the neighbourhood for seniors only.	While we appreciate the desire for age-specific housing, The City cannot designate a community exclusively for seniors. Calgary's planning policies aim to create inclusive, multi-generational neighbourhoods. That said, the plan encourages senior-friendly housing types, walkable amenities, and health-focused design to support residents of all ages.
Add a new train station now or guarantee bus service.	Transit infrastructure is managed by Calgary Transit and requires population growth, budget allocation, and long-term ridership demand. We cannot commit to a train station or immediate service today, but the plan lays the groundwork by concentrating homes and services near potential transit routes and ensuring walkability to future stops.
Preserve all wetlands and natural areas exactly as they are.	While we are preserving high-value natural areas and requiring environmental studies, not all wetlands and natural lands meet the criteria for legal protection. Some areas may be developed if they are not eligible as Environmental Reserve under provincial regulations. That said, new development must include green buffers, tree retention where possible, and connections to the overall natural network.

Next steps

This report informs the project team's work to prepare for **Phase 3: Refine** from June 10 to June 24, 2025, where we will share a Draft ASP for public review.

The draft Saatootsi (West Macleod Residual Lands) ASP is tentatively scheduled to be presented to the Infrastructure and Planning Committee in July 2025, with a potential public hearing of Council later in 2025. These dates are subject to change, and final dates will be posted on the Saatootsi (West Macleod Residual Lands) ASP Engage Portal.

To stay up to date on project details, Committee and Council dates, please sign-up for email updates.