

# **ROCKY VIEW GRAVEL WATCH**

REVISED AGGREGATE RESOURCE  
PLAN (ARP)

**SUMMARY AND REVIEW**

# Background

- Residents have been lobbying for protection from gravel operations since early 1990s
- Need for gravel policy identified as part of Reeve's Task Force in 2011
  - Council agreed should develop policy that included "separation of residential development and operating pits"
- County Plan, approved in 2013
  - Support extraction of natural resources in a manner that **balances the needs** of residents, industry, and society
  - **Minimize adverse impacts** of aggregate resource extraction on existing residents, adjacent land uses, and the environment

# ARP Process to Date

- Preliminary open houses to obtain input on policy direction: spring – summer 2016
  - Uniform message from residents – significant setbacks are critically important
- Draft ARP – released December 2016 – second round of open houses
  - Heavily biased in favour of gravel industry
  - Completely inadequate setbacks
  - Unjustifiable infringement on property rights
  - Inadequate & ineffective performance standards
  - Weak monitoring & enforcement

# Response to Draft ARP

- Almost 2,000 recommendations – over 90% from residents
  - Higher response than any other County initiative
- 80% of residents – setbacks too small & should be to property line, not to house – peoples' yards should be theirs to use
  - Three-quarters of those recommended setbacks of at least 1,500 metres
- 60% of residents – infringement of property rights in favour of gravel industry wrong
- 30% of residents – explicit criticism of pro-industry bias

# Assessment of Revised ARP – the good news

- Not very much since very little has changed
  - A few minor improvements
- Largely fixed inconsistent, ambiguous and contradictory language throughout the ARP
- Might mean that performance standards will be enforceable

# Assessment of Revised ARP – the bad news

- Could go on all night
- Almost completely ignored all input from residents
- Still heavily biased in favour of gravel industry
- Continues to rely too heavily on performance standards
  - The most effective standards cannot mitigate all harm from gravel operations – need distance (setbacks) to do that

# Key Outstanding Issue – Lack of Monitoring & Enforcement Provisions

- Links back to the “good news” slide
- By cleaning up language, revised ARP has performance standards that *should* be enforceable
- Bad news is that “should” may or may not be realized
  - The revised ARP has no details on monitoring or enforcement
  - County promising to prepare these provisions later
- Serious shortcoming – effective monitoring & enforcement critical to make standards meaningful

# Key Outstanding Issue – Residential Setbacks

- No change for basic residential setbacks
  - 500 metres from nearest house (not based on property lines)
  - Ability to reduce to 100 metres with buy-in from property owners
- New setbacks in existing Area Structure Plans & Concept Schemes
  - 800 metre setback from quarter sections with > 20 residential parcels
  - Still 500 metres for quarter sections with < 20 residential parcels
- What does new ASP setback mean?
  - Scott pit in Bearspaw able to develop its NE quarter section into a 160-acre pit
  - Glendale pit in SE Division 9 will be able to expand into Bearspaw



# Key Outstanding Issues – Property Rights

- “Safeguarding the resource” still there – now called “managing the resource”
- Continues to give gravel priority over all other development
- Onus (and cost!) on landowner to demonstrate no viable gravel resources on land before alternative development even considered
- Serious bias in favour of gravel industry
  - Would have hoped County more concerned about safeguarding its residents

# Key Outstanding Issues – Built-in Industry Bias

Location criteria – “preference shall be given to”:

- Expansion of existing pits
- Sites located close to market
- Sites located close to provincial highways

These all push gravel pits into more highly populated areas

- Favours industry by minimizing operating and transportation costs
- And by maximizing resale value at end of pit’s life

**ARP should prefer sites that do not conflict with existing uses**

# Other Outstanding Issues – No changes

## Serious health impacts

- Workers at gravel pits must wear respirators, but children are expected to play in their yards less than 500 metres from operating pits



# Other Outstanding Issues – No changes

## Traffic safety impacts

- Gravel pits = massive increase in heavy truck traffic
  - Up to 500 trucks / day from large pits; 200 / day from smaller pits
- County roads not designed for this volume or type of traffic



# Other Outstanding Issues – No changes

## Water quality

- Gravel pits remove the filter that keeps our water clean
- Reclamation does not replace filter
- Revised ARP will still allow excavations below water table

# Other Outstanding Issues – No changes

## Quality of life

- People live in Rocky View to have cleaner air, quieter lifestyle, darker night skies than in a city
  - Gravel pits – open pit mining – seriously erode all of these
- Proximity to gravel pits has serious negative impact on property values

# Where Do We Go From Here?

## Basic choices

- Scrap ARP altogether and continue to fight each gravel application on stand-alone basis
- Lobby for a resident-focused ARP from our new Council

# Where Do We Go From Here – Scrap ARP?

## **Advantages**

- Residents would be better off with no ARP than with this ARP

## **Disadvantages**

- No certainty of where gravel would be permitted / not permitted
- Requires continual mobilization of residents to protect their interests



# Where Do We Go From Here – Resident-Focused ARP?

- Advantages / disadvantages the reverse of scrapping the ARP
  - Gravel needs to know where it can go - residents need to know where it cannot come
- Much more consistent with County policy guidance from Reeve's Task Force & from County Plan
- This ARP was previous Council's initiative – biased to gravel industry
  - New Councillors elected on platforms of accountability & transparency
  - This should make them more amenable to listening to and protecting their residents

# Next Steps

- Attend Open Houses – make your dissatisfaction heard
  - Monday, March 19th – Beiseker Community Hall
  - Wednesday, March 21st – Cochrane Ranche House
  - Thursday, March 22nd – Rockpointe Church
    - Remember that these all **start at 6:00 p.m.**
- Send in letter or written submission before April 13th
  - Form letters and key issue “cheat sheets” available tonight and on our new website – [www.rockyviewgravelwatch.com](http://www.rockyviewgravelwatch.com)
- Contact your local Councillor – let them know you are not happy

# Closing Thoughts

- County's responsibility is to represent and protect its residents, not the gravel industry
- Unacceptable to completely ignore overwhelming input from residents
- New Council can do better – elected because residents wanted change
- Lots of gravel in Rocky View – no need to extract it close to people
- Why promote an industry that provides only \$1 million / year to RVC, and imposes expensive damage to our roads?
- Why should County residents' health, safety and quality of life be sacrificed to provide Calgary with cheaper gravel?

# QUESTIONS?

Follow-up questions? Send us an email:

[rockyviewgravelwatch@gmail.com](mailto:rockyviewgravelwatch@gmail.com)

Check out our new website:

[www.rockyviewgravelwatch.com](http://www.rockyviewgravelwatch.com)

**This fight isn't free – please consider leaving a donation!**

**Thank you for your time!**