

2022 Capital Budget Amendment – Wetland Replacement Program Uncas Project**Report Purpose**

To amend the 2022 Capital Budget to increase the scope of the Wetland Replacement Program Uncas Project to include costs associated with construction activities.

Recommendation

THAT an amendment to 2022 Capital Budget to increase the scope of the Wetland Replacement Program Uncas Project in the amount of \$200,000 (from \$94,400 to \$294,400) to be funded by Alberta Environment and Parks, be approved.

Our Prioritized Strategic Goals

Goal 2 - Manage, invest and plan for sustainable municipal infrastructure

Goal 4 - Ensure effective stewardship of water, land, air and energy resources

Goal 5 - Foster collaboration through regional, community and governmental partnerships

Report

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Total
Expenditure by Year	\$254,500	\$10,700	\$10,700	\$9,250	\$9,250	\$294,400

The Alberta Wetland Replacement Program (WRP) aims to re-establish wetlands in partnership with Albertans by providing resources for collaborative restoration projects across the province.

Since signing the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) in September 2020, an internal WRP Committee has been initiated. The WRP Committee has identified a list of projects on County-owned land that meet the intent of the WRP while also providing drainage relief for the surrounding landscape and resiliency within the infrastructure. Education and awareness opportunities have also been identified as priorities for these project sites.

Four project sites have been approved by Council for the initial period of the MOU (2020-2023). Site visits have been completed by the WRP Committee in coordination with AEP as part of the pre-proposal process. The County has a signed contract with Associated Environmental to complete the consulting services related to the designing, tendering, constructing, monitoring, and maintaining of the project. A separate contract is required for the actual construction aspects of the project, which will be covered by the budget amendment. Once the project is approved by AEP, a Service Agreement will be signed. Approved projects are 100% funded by AEP. The Service Agreement will outline payment amounts and a payment schedule which is based on deliverables and milestones.

Uncas was prioritized for 2022 because it has the opportunity to provide drainage relief for the surrounding landscape, infrastructure and residents by increasing the storage capacity and resiliency of the system; increase biodiversity through the development of different types of wetlands; demonstrate how a naturally appearing and functioning wetland can be restored without high-maintenance water control structures; partner with the Beaver Hills

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Biosphere Reserve Association on additional education, awareness and engagement opportunities; and provide additional education opportunities through the Uncas School and the University of Alberta Faculty of Extension course in wetland restoration.

In 2021, \$33,000 was approved in the operating budget for the Wetland Replacement Program Uncas Project. On February 10, 2022, the CAO approved an additional \$61,400 and the project was reclassified to capital, bringing the total for design and consulting to \$94,400.

The County will be accessing funding from AEP to cover the full amount of consulting and construction fees. Although there is no bottom-line impact to the County, the consulting and construction fees must be incurred by the County prior to accessing AEP funding. As such, this capital budget amendment is requesting the authority to spend an additional \$200,000 in construction fees (which will be offset by an additional \$200,000 in funding from AEP). The current project budget is \$94,400 for design and consulting; this will bring the total project budget to \$294,400.

Council and Committee History

June 15, 2021	Council approved: THAT the four proposed project sites, Uncas, Galloway Park, Silver Birch Hills, and Busenius Estates, be approved for site visits and pre-proposal work in the Wetland Replacement Program.
September 8, 2020	Council approved: THAT the Memorandum of Understanding, as set out in Enclosure 2 of the September 8, 2020 Planning and Development Services Report, be approved; and THAT a requirement for Council approval of each proposal project be added to the process.
March 3, 2020	Council approved SER-009-041 Conservation of Biological Diversity

Other Impacts

Policy: n/a

Legislative/Legal: Memorandum of Understanding

Financial/Budget: The proposed funding is from Alberta Environment and Parks (subject to provincial approval of the Wetland Replacement Program Uncas Project proposal), and there should not be any cost impact to the County. The County will need to manage cashflow implications that result from timing differences between the submittal of invoices and cash outflows to the consultant and/or contractors.

Interdepartmental: Corporate Finance, Legislative and Legal Services, Planning and Development Services, Recreation, Parks and Culture, Transportation Planning and Engineering, Transportation and Agriculture Services, Utilities

Master Plan/Framework: Environmental Framework