



ALBERTA
ENVIRONMENT AND PARKS

*Office of the Minister
MLA, Lethbridge-West*

FEB 09 2018

His Worship Barry Morishita, Mayor
City of Brooks
President, AUMA
300, 8616 – 51 Avenue
Edmonton AB T6E 6E6
bmorishita@brooks.ca

Dear Mayor Morishita:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association's "Resolution 2017.B12 – Regional Trail Linkages between Urban Municipalities." I welcome the opportunity to provide the following information.

Environment and Parks continues to invest in non-motorized trails, which encourages more Albertans to be active on a regular basis. This initiative helps the environment, reduces transportation costs and alleviates the pressures on our health care system in the long-term. We also recognize the significant benefits trails and active transportation provide to an individual's physical and mental well-being, the socio-economic sustainability provided to communities, and the benefits related to the health of our precious ecosystems.

Through the regional planning process, the benefits of trails are translated into land-use decision-making. Both the South Saskatchewan and Lower Athabasca regional plans support the development of trail networks that meet the needs and desired experiences of Albertans and visitors. Additionally, both plans commit to the development of regional trail plans, which could support the identification of desirable connections between communities as active transportation corridors. These trail plans would potentially include the identification of primary municipal trail linkages; however, the plans have not committed funding to their construction and maintenance. No regional trail plans have been drafted yet.

For further information regarding the regional planning process, including the latest developments for the Red Deer Region and involvement in the process, please visit www.landuse.alberta.ca. The specific initiatives being considered will help to determine which departments should be involved in further planning, as well as the applicability and requirements concerning future funding through the Treasury or specific strategies, such as the Climate Leadership Plan or Community and Regional Economic Support program.

While we acknowledge the significant benefits outdoor recreation and physical activities play in the health and well-being of Albertans, our department also recognizes the safety concerns the association has raised regarding non-motorized commuters on major roadways. Outside of public lands, however, the planning, development, ownership and responsibility for pathways and trails falls under the jurisdiction of the respective municipality. The municipalities listed in the resolution you provided fall under the Land Use Framework's Red Deer Regional Plan, which has yet to be initiated. As such, no regional trail plans or commitments have been made for this area to date.

In the interim, affected municipalities may want to consider initiating an inter-municipal planning process to advance community linkages. Environment and Parks would be pleased to provide support and expertise. For further information, please contact Ms. Manda Wilde, Recreation and Planning Lead, Land and Environmental Planning (South), in our Edmonton office. Ms. Wilde can be reached at 780-643-6479 (dial 310-0000 for a toll-free connection), or at manda.wilde@gov.ab.ca.

Thank you again for your letter. Environment and Parks looks forward to working collaboratively with municipalities and Transportation, and Culture and Tourism to identify the opportunities and requirements for active transportation linkages as part of the regional trail planning process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shannon Phillips', written in a cursive style.

Shannon Phillips
Minister

cc: Manda Wilde
Environment and Parks