



# FINAL REPORT

## Regional Governance Structuring Study

Submitted to:  
Town of Rocky Mountain House, Clearwater County,  
and Village of Caroline

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## Table of Contents

Table of Contents .....	1
1. Executive Summary.....	1
2. Introduction .....	3
3. Existing Socio-Economic Conditions .....	4
3.1    Regional Overview .....	4
3.1.1    Community Overview .....	4
3.1.2    Population Growth.....	5
3.1.3    Demographics .....	6
3.1.4    Economy and Employment .....	9
3.2    Regional Financial Comparisons.....	11
3.2.1    Tax Assessment Base.....	11
3.2.2    Taxation .....	17
3.2.3    Operating Revenues and Expenses.....	22
3.2.4    Debt Profile.....	28
4. Existing Municipal Services .....	30
4.1    Municipal Council and Legislative Services .....	30
4.2    Administration .....	31
4.2.1    Senior Management Team and Total Municipal Establishment .....	31
4.2.2    General Administration .....	32
4.3    Services.....	33
4.3.1    Roads & Transportation .....	34
4.3.2    Water & Wastewater.....	35
4.3.3    Solid Waste and Recyclables Management.....	36
4.3.4    Common Services .....	36
4.3.5    Recreation and Parks .....	37
4.3.6    Cemeteries .....	38
4.3.7    Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) .....	39
4.3.8    Disaster & Emergency Management Planning .....	39
4.3.9    Fire and Rescue Services .....	40
4.3.10    Policing .....	41
4.3.11    Municipal Enforcement.....	43
4.3.12    Land Use Planning & Development, Economic Development, and Agricultural Services .....	45
4.3.13    Culture, Libraries, Museums, Halls .....	45
4.4    Intermunicipal or Regional Initiatives.....	46
5. Public Engagement .....	54
5.1    Phase 1 Engagement.....	54
5.2    Phase 2 Engagement .....	56
6. Municipal Structuring .....	57
6.1    Municipal Government Act (MGA).....	57
6.2    Common Factors .....	57

6.3	Governance Principles .....	58
7.	Scenario Evaluation.....	59
7.1	Status Quo With Regional Cooperation .....	60
7.1.1	Municipal Status and Boundaries.....	60
7.1.2	Ward and Council Representation .....	60
7.1.3	Administration.....	60
7.1.4	Service Delivery.....	61
7.1.5	Relationships .....	61
7.1.6	Fiscal Considerations .....	61
7.1.7	Benefits and Drawbacks.....	62
7.2	Amalgamation of All Three Municipalities .....	65
7.2.1	Municipal Status and Boundaries.....	65
7.2.2	Ward and Council Representation .....	65
7.2.3	Administration.....	65
7.2.4	Service Delivery.....	66
7.2.5	Relationships .....	66
7.2.6	Fiscal Considerations .....	67
7.2.7	Benefits and Drawbacks.....	68
7.3	Amalgamation of County and Town .....	70
7.3.1	Municipal Status and Boundaries.....	70
7.3.2	Ward and Council Representation .....	71
7.3.3	Administration.....	71
7.3.4	Service Delivery.....	71
7.3.5	Relationships .....	72
7.3.6	Fiscal Considerations .....	72
7.3.7	Benefits and Drawbacks.....	73
7.4	Amalgamation of Village and County .....	75
7.4.1	Municipal Status and Boundaries.....	75
7.4.2	Ward and Council Representation .....	75
7.4.3	Administration.....	75
7.4.4	Service Delivery.....	76
7.4.5	Relationships .....	77
7.4.6	Fiscal Considerations .....	77
7.4.7	Benefits and Drawbacks.....	78
7.5	Dissolution of the Village .....	79
7.5.1	Benefits and Drawbacks.....	80
8.	Recommendation .....	81
8.1	Key Findings.....	81
8.2	Selection of the Preferred Recommendation .....	82
8.2.1	Status Quo.....	82
8.2.2	Amalgamation of All Three Municipalities .....	83
8.2.3	Amalgamation of County and Town .....	84
8.2.4	Amalgamation between the County and the Village ..	84

8.2.5	Dissolution of the Village .....	85
8.2.6	Preferred Option (i.e. Recommendation) .....	85
8.3	Implementation of Preferred Option (i.e. Recommendation).....	85
8.3.1	Step 1 Resolution #1 .....	85
8.3.2	Step 2 Notice to the Minister .....	86
8.3.3	Step 3 Negotiation & Engagement.....	86
8.3.4	Step 5 Preparation of the Application.....	86
8.3.5	Step 6 Resolution #2 .....	87
8.3.6	Step 7 Submission of the Application.....	87
8.3.7	Step 8 Order-in-Council.....	87
8.4	Timelines .....	87
9.	References .....	89

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3-1	Graph of Population Growth from 2001 through 2016 .....	6
Figure 3-2:	Clearwater County Population Distribution, 2016 .....	7
Figure 3-3:	Rocky Mountain House Population Distribution .....	8
Figure 3-4:	Caroline Population Distribution, 2016 .....	9
Figure 3-5	Percentage of Employment by NAICS, 2016 .....	10
Figure 3-6	Labour Force Participation Rates and Unemployment Rates, 2016.....	11
Figure 3-7	Change in Equalized Assessment Base Over Time (in 2019 equivalent dollars) .....	12
Figure 3-8	Share of Assessment Base, Clearwater County 2001 - 2019 <sup>1</sup> ..	13
Figure 3-9	Total Equalized Assessments per Capita, Municipal District of Clearwater County and Alberta Municipal District Average, 2001-2019 (in \$2019) .....	14
Figure 3-10	Share of Assessment Base, Rocky Mtn House and Alberta Town Average, 2001 - 2019 <sup>1</sup> .....	15
Figure 3-11	Total Equalized Assessments per Capita, Town of Rocky Mountain House and Alberta Town Average, 2001-2019 (in \$2019) .....	16
Figure 3-12	Share of Assessment Base, Caroline, and Alberta Village Average, 2001 - 2019 .....	17
Figure 3-13	Total Equalized Assessments per Capita, Village of Caroline and Alberta Village Average, 2001-2019.....	17
Figure 3-14	Change in Average Residential Tax Bill Over Time for Rocky Mountain House, Caroline, and Clearwater County.....	18
Figure 3-15	Change in Average Non-Residential Taxes Paid per \$1000 of Assessment Value Over Time for Rocky Mountain House, Caroline, and Clearwater County .....	19
Figure 3-16	Debt Limit and Total Current Debt, 2019.....	29
Figure 7-1	Service Provision under the Status Quo .....	61
Figure 7-2	Service Provision under a Single Municipal District .....	66
Figure 7-3	Service Provision under an Amalgamated County and Town....	72

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 Figure 7-4 Service Provision under an Amalgamated Village and County ..76

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 3-1	Population Growth from 2001 through 2016 .....	6
Table 3-2	Clearwater County 2019 Assessment Base.....	13
Table 3-3	Rocky Mountain House 2019 Assessment Base .....	15
Table 3-4	Caroline 2019 Assessment Base .....	16
Table 3-5	Average Residential Tax Bill, 2019 .....	18
Table 3-6	Clearwater County Tax Rate, 2019 .....	19
Table 3-7	Clearwater County Tax Bills in 2010 and 2019 (in \$2019).....	20
Table 3-8	Rocky Mountain House Tax Rates, 2019.....	20
Table 3-9	Rocky Mountain House Tax Bills in 2010 and 2019 (in \$2019) .21	21
Table 3-10	Caroline Tax Rates, 2019.....	21
Table 3-11	Caroline Tax Bills in 2010 and 2019 (in \$2019) .....	22
Table 3-12	2019 Per Capita Operating Revenue and Expense for RMH, Caroline, and Clearwater County .....	22
Table 3-13	Clearwater County: Top 10 2019 Operating Revenue Sources.23	23
Table 3-14	Clearwater County: Top 10 2019 Operating Expenses.....24	24
Table 3-15	Town of Rocky Mountain House: Summary of 2019 Operating Revenue .....	25
Table 3-16	Rocky Mountain House: Top 10 2019 Operating Expenses .....	26
Table 3-17	Village of Caroline: Summary of 2019 Operating Revenue .....	27
Table 3-18	Caroline: Top 10 2019 Operating Expenses .....	28
Table 4-1	Councils and Legislative Services .....	30
Table 4-2	Elected Officials by Population, 2016.....	31
Table 4-3	Senior Management Team.....	32
Table 4-4	Total Municipal Establishment.....	32
Table 4-5	General Administration .....	33
Table 4-6	Roads and Transportation .....	34
Table 4-7	Water & Wastewater.....	35
Table 4-8	Solid Waste Management .....	36
Table 4-9	Common Services .....	37
Table 4-10	Recreation and Parks .....	38
Table 4-11	Recreational Centres.....	38
Table 4-12	Cemeteries .....	39
Table 4-13	Clearwater Regional Family and Community Support Services (FCSS).....	39
Table 4-14	Disaster & Emergency Management Planning .....	40
Table 4-15	Clearwater Regional Fire Rescue Services (CRFRS).....	41
Table 4-16	Number of Calls Attended by Community in 2019 .....	41
Table 4-17	Number of Calls by Response Type in 2019.....	41
Table 4-18	Number of Fire Code Inspections in 2019.....	41
Table 4-19	RCMP Detachments.....	42
Table 4-20	Percentage of Calls for Service, 2019.....	43

Table 4-21	Municipal Enforcement .....	44
Table 4-22	Comparison of Policing and Municipal Enforcement, 2019.....	44
Table 4-23	Planning & Development, Economic / Agricultural Development .....	45
Table 4-24	Existing Agreements.....	48
Table 5-1	Key Engagement Themes .....	54
Table 5-2	Engagement Opportunities.....	56
Table 7-1	Benefits and Drawbacks of the Status Quo.....	63
Table 7-2	Benefits and Drawbacks of a Single New Municipality .....	68
Table 7-3	Benefits and Drawbacks of the County and Town Amalgamating .....	73
Table 7-4	Municipal Debt and the Impact of Clearwater County/Caroline Amalgamation.....	78
Table 7-5	Impact of County/Village Amalgamation on the Annual Operating Budget .....	78
Table 7-6	Benefits and Drawbacks of the Village and County Amalgamating.....	78
Table 7-7	Benefits and Drawbacks of the Dissolution of the Village .....	80
<b>APPENDICES</b>		
Appendix A – ISL Engagement Report .....		90

## 1. Executive Summary

The Village of Caroline, Clearwater County, and the Town of Rocky Mountain House are participating in a Regional Governance Study (the Study) to explore the most effective and efficient governance structure to support the region's growth and long-term prosperity for all citizens. The Study is being funded by a grant provided by the Province of Alberta.

Nichols Applied Management and ISL Engineering and Land Services Ltd. were hired to undertake the Study on behalf of the three participating municipalities. As part of the Study, the consultants have undertaken an independent analysis of existing services and agreements along with financial and operational information. The Study also included stakeholder engagement, including residents and leadership from each municipality, for their insight and feedback. A Steering Committee, comprised of the Mayors of the Village and Town, County Reeve, and Councillors and alternates from each municipality, was formed to provide direction and advice on the delivery of this Study.

The Study Team specifically considered the following five options for the region:

- Status Quo: No changes to the existing municipal types amongst the three municipalities.
- Amalgamation of all three municipalities into one new municipality.
- Amalgamation of the Village of Caroline and Clearwater County while the Town of Rocky Mountain House retains its existing status.
- Amalgamation of the Clearwater County and Town of Rocky Mountain House while the Village of Caroline retains its existing status.
- Dissolution of the Village of Caroline.

The study team further explored how these five structural options would impact existing municipal Status and boundaries, ward and council representation, administration, fiscal capacity, service delivery, and relationships, as well as other benefits and drawbacks.

During the engagement process, participants were asked to identify any concerns they have with existing services and programs being offered as well as to identify ideas to address the concerns they raised. Several key themes became apparent during this process. Prominent themes include:

- Concern regarding the poor relationship between the Town and County Councils a desire for improved collaboration between the municipalities.
- Inefficient offering of services, including high overhead costs or duplication of services between municipalities and the need for improvement to some services while other services that are being offered go unused.
- Concern about taking on the debt of other municipalities and/or the prospect of increased taxes.
- Lack of communication and engagement, leaving residents unaware of available services and programs, lack of clarity on how public input will influence this Study or other decisions.
- Feeling that everything is fine as it currently is and there should be no change to the existing governance structure.

The key findings of the study are as follows:

- Amalgamation is not a magic bullet. Research suggests that cost savings resulting from amalgamation are not absolute nor are they necessarily enduring.
- The County and Town are financially viable as individual municipalities.
- The expectations of residents in the Town and County with regards to taxation and service levels are profoundly different, likely making any coming together of the two quite challenging.
- The County and Town recently re-committed to regional collaboration with the signing of an Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework (ICF) in April of 2021.
- The Village and the County have developed a strong interdependent relationship as demonstrated by the joint adoption of the Caroline-Clearwater Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP) and the Caroline -Clearwater Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework (ICF) in 2019. These plans contemplate joint development and the County has already developed an industrial area within the Village boundary.
- The Village has a balanced and viable operating budget. However, due to its relatively small population and assessment it has, over time, developed a significant infrastructure deficit; which may lead to dissolution in the medium term without major development. The Town and County currently contribute a disproportionate amount to some regional agreements in order to support the Village.
- The cost of addressing the infrastructure deficit in the Village will likely increase over time.
- If the Village is faced with dissolution, it will be absorbed by the County at that time.

Accordingly, we recommend the amalgamation of the County and Village with the newly formed municipality continuing to pursue regional collaboration with the Town. Pursuing amalgamation between the Village and County now will reduce the financial burden to the County – as compared to waiting for dissolution and additional infrastructure degradation - and allow for negotiations to take place as the process unfolds. Subject to negotiation the County has the financial capacity to absorb the Village without significant adverse affects to residents. Both municipalities are likely to be well served by a more financially robust hub within the County.

Lastly, we note that a community is a social construct – it is more than lines on a map. A single municipality may be comprised of several communities just as several municipalities can make up one larger community. Just as the region has grown over time through the creation of new municipalities, the identity of the Village, County, and Town can be maintained throughout this process as they work together to provide their residents with the best regional governance model available.

## 2. Introduction

The Village of Caroline, Clearwater County, and the Town of Rocky Mountain House are participating in a Regional Governance Study (the Study) to explore the most effective and efficient governance structure to support the region's growth and long-term prosperity for all citizens. The Study is being funded by a grant provided by the Province of Alberta.

It is important to note that this Study is not an Amalgamation Study. Instead, the purpose of the Regional Governance Study is to review all options - including maintaining the status quo of keeping the three existing municipal government structures - in order to identify potential benefits, disadvantages and impacts of the options being explored.

Nichols Applied Management and ISL Engineering and Land Services Ltd. were hired to undertake the Study on behalf of the three participating municipalities. As part of the Study, the consultants have undertaken an independent analysis of existing services, agreements, and financial and operational information, engaging stakeholders, residents, and leadership of the partnering municipalities for their insight and feedback, and developing a recommendations report based on the key findings from the analysis and public engagement. A Steering Committee, comprised of the Mayors of the Village and Town, County Reeve, and Councillors and alternates from each municipality, has been formed to provide direction and advice on the delivery of this Study.

The three general options being explored for a new governance structure for Caroline, Clearwater County and Rocky Mountain House were set out by the communities themselves and include:

- Remain as three separate municipalities with regional cooperation (current structure);
- Amalgamate all three municipalities into a single municipal government; or
- Amalgamate Clearwater County and the Village of Caroline and develop regional cooperation agreements with the Town of Rocky Mountain House.

The balance of this report provides:

- an overview of the regional socio-economic conditions and the financial status of each municipality (section 3);
- an overview of existing municipal services in each of the three communities (section 4)
- a summary of the feedback received from the public (section 5);
- an overview of municipal restructuring (section 6);
- the evaluation of alternative governance structures (section 7); and
- our recommendations and next steps (section 8)

### 3. Existing Socio-Economic Conditions

#### 3.1 Regional Overview

Understanding the historical and prevailing socio-economic conditions in each of the three municipalities provides insight into the evolution towards the current state of the world as well as the outlook for each community. Accordingly, this section includes a brief description of each municipality and a discussion of population, demographics, and the local economy. Where possible, comparisons to each other and provincial averages are provided as a means of understanding a community's relative standing. It should be noted, however, that comparisons across municipalities along single dimensions (e.g. per capita expenditures) should not be contemplated in isolation as municipalities are complex organizations that respond in unique ways to the needs of their residents and business communities.

##### 3.1.1 Community Overview

###### 3.1.1.1 *Clearwater County*

The community known today as Clearwater County began life as Improvement District No. 10 in 1969 when the Province amalgamated several smaller Improvement Districts (No. 58, 65 and 69) into a single entity (AMA 2021a). The Municipal District (M.D.) of Clearwater No. 99 was established on January 1, 1985 before changing its name to Clearwater County in the year 2000.

The 11,947 residents of Clearwater County are represented by 7 Councillors (which includes an appointed Reeve) who are supported by an administration that consists of 114 Municipal full-time equivalent staff, including one Chief Administrative Officer and six Senior Managers.

The County is located in west central Alberta, Canada as part of Census Division No. 9 with western and southern borders that abut Banff and Jasper National Parks and a northern border that loosely follows the Brazeau river. The county has a land area (18,692 km<sup>2</sup>) that comprises nearly 99% of Division No. 9 while accounting for approximately half of the Division's population. Clearwater County surrounds the urban municipalities of Rocky Mountain House (home to the County's municipal offices), Caroline, and the Summer Village of Burnstick Lake, and is also home to five Hamlets: Alhambra, Condor, Leslieville, Nordegg, and Withrow. Highway 11 (David Thompson Highway) runs east to west and serves to connect Nordegg, Rocky Mountain House, Alhambra, and Condor with the City of Red Deer, which lies approximately 50 km east of the County boundary. The hamlets of Leslieville and Withrow can connect to Highway 11 via tertiary highways or range roads. Highway 22 (Cowboy Trail) runs north to south through Rocky Mountain House and Caroline and connects with the town of Drayton Valley, approximately 50 km north of the County boundary, and the Town of Sundre, approximately 15 km south of the County boundary. Burnstick Lake is located on a township road and the closest nearby town is Sundre.

###### 3.1.1.2 *Rocky Mountain House*

Rocky Mountain House was incorporated as a Town in 1939 as the community grew from being a Village that had first been established in 1913 (AMA 2021b). The 6,635 residents of the Town are represented by 6 Councillors and 1 Mayor, who are supported by an administration consisting of 62 full-time equivalent staff, including one Chief Administrative Officer and four Senior Managers.

The Town is within the boundaries of Clearwater County, located approximately 77 km west of the City of Red Deer at the confluence of the Clearwater and North Saskatchewan Rivers, and at the crossroads of Highway 22 and Highway 11. Covering 13.3 km<sup>2</sup>, the Town is the region's major population centre, comprising approximately one-third of Census Division No. 9's total population.

### 3.1.1.3 *Caroline*

Caroline was incorporated as a Village in 1935 on lands that had previously been a part of the Municipal District of Raven No. 57 (AMA 2021c). The 501 residents of the Village are represented by five Councillors (one of whom is appointed to serve as the Mayor) who are supported by an administration that consists of six full-time equivalent staff, including one Chief Administrative Officer.

The Village is located within the boundary of Clearwater County approximately 40 km south of Rocky Mountain House along Highway 22 and 80 km southwest of the City of Red Deer and covers an area of 2.0 km<sup>2</sup>. It has long served as an agricultural and commercial hub within the region and an important stop for tourists heading west along Highway 54 towards the attractions of the foothills and the mountains.

### 3.1.2 **Population Growth**

Population figures are available from federal census' conducted in years 2001, 2006, 2011, and 2016 (latest available). The data shows that, generally, population growth in the communities of Rocky Mountain House, Caroline, and Clearwater County have trailed the Province of Alberta as a whole (Table 3-1 and Figure 3-1). Both the County and the Village feature populations that are significantly older and with a higher percentage of male residents than the provincial averages, which indicates that future population growth would need to be driven by in-migration.

The oil and gas sector is one of the region's most significant employers, so at least some the local population change can be attributed to the cyclic nature of the industry and changing energy prices. However, it should be noted that regional population growth trailed that of the Province even when the oil and gas sector was benefitting from high energy prices. Overall, the region experienced moderate population growth from 2001 to 2011, followed by a population decline from 2011 to 2016. In contrast, the Province of Alberta's population has experienced a relatively consistent average annual growth rate (AAGR) of 2.1% since 2001. Specifically:

- the Town of Rocky Mountain House grew by approximately 11.7% from 2001 to 2011, but declined 4.3% in the following five-year period for a 15-year AAGR of 0.4%;
- the Village of Caroline shrunk by approximately 9.9% from 2001 to 2011, but grew 2.0% in the following five-year period for a 15-year AAGR of -0.6%; and
- Clearwater County grew by approximately 6.7% from 2001 to 2011 but declined 2.7% in the following five-year period for a 15-year AAGR of 0.3%.

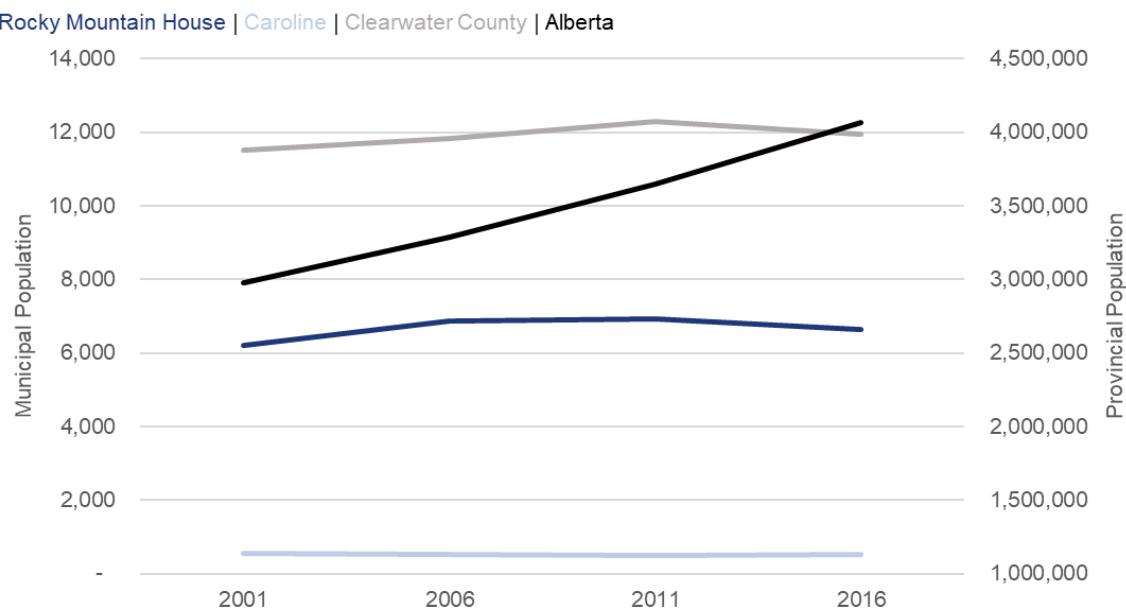
Table 3-1 Population Growth from 2001 through 2016

Community	2001	2006	2011	2016	AAGR <sup>1</sup> 2001-2016
Rocky Mountain House	6,210	6,875	6,935	6,635	0.4%
Caroline	555	515	500	510	-0.6%
Clearwater County	11,505	11,825	12,280	11,950	0.3%
Alberta	2,974,805	3,290,350	3,645,260	4,067,175	2.1%

1. Average Annual Growth Rate

Source: 2001 to 2016 Canadian Census Data

Figure 3-1 Graph of Population Growth from 2001 through 2016



Source: 2001 to 2016 Canadian Census Data

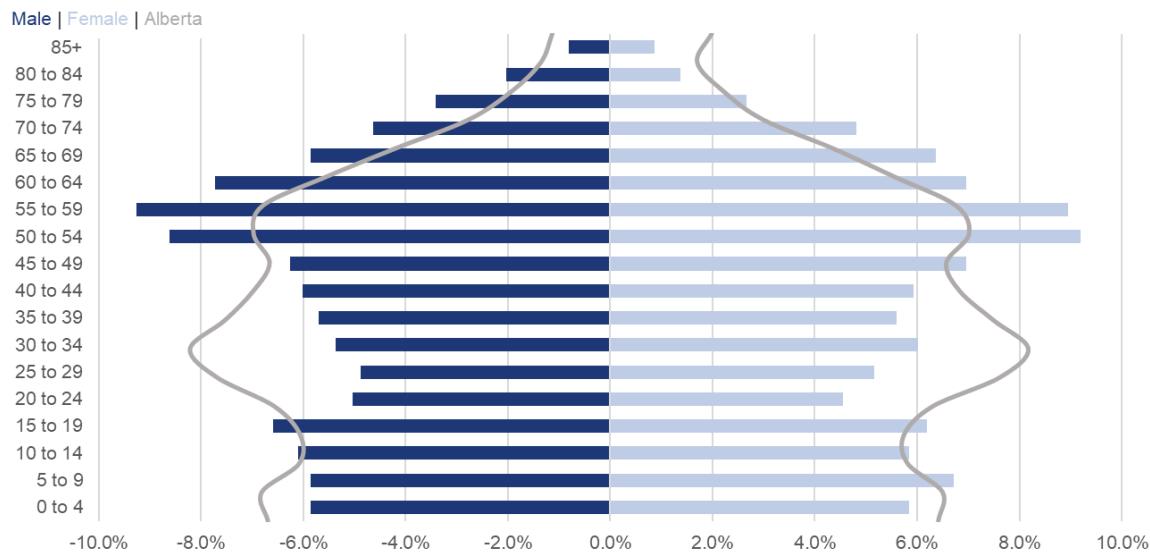
### 3.1.3 Demographics

#### 3.1.3.1 Clearwater County

The County features a predominantly rural population; in 2016 there were 1,013 independent farms operating in the County which contributes to the County's demographics differing substantially from the province overall. As shown in Figure 3-2, Clearwater County's population distribution results in an average age (41.1 years), which is substantially older than the province overall (37.8 years). Specifically, the County has:

- a proportionally greater number of residents between the ages of 50 and 80 compared to the province overall;
- proportionally more men (51.4%) in its population than the province overall (50.1%); and
- a considerable lack of women and men between the ages of 20 and 40 which suggest that future population growth would need to be driven primarily by in-migration as compared to natural (e.g. births) growth.

Figure 3-2: Clearwater County Population Distribution, 2016



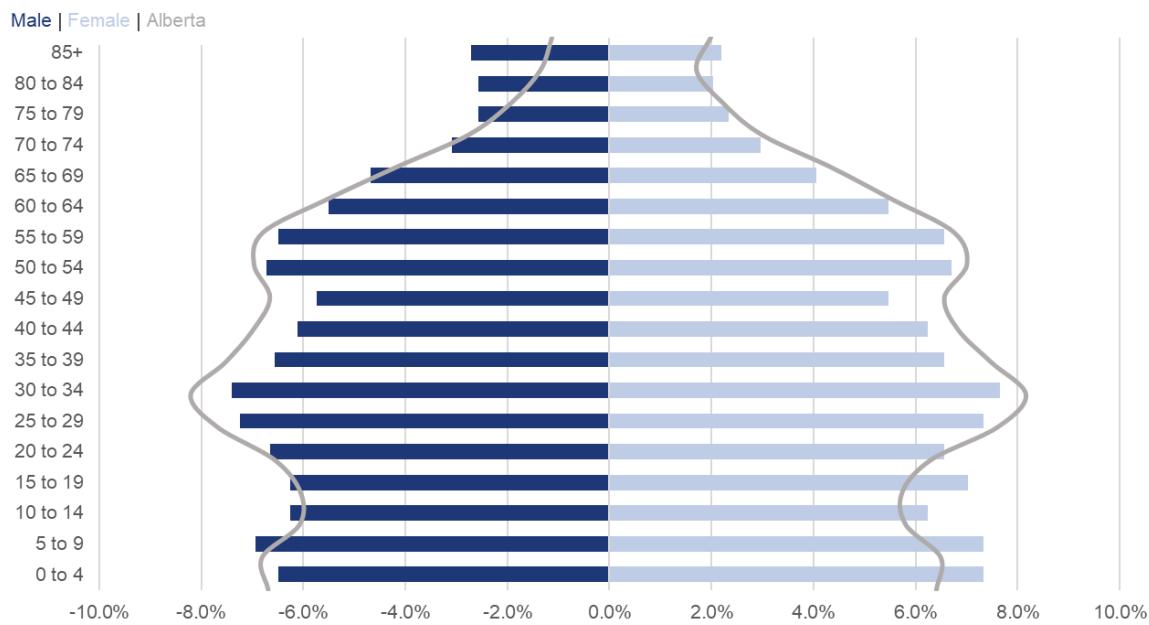
Source: Statistics Canada 2016 Census Profile

### 3.1.3.2 Town of Rocky Mountain House

The demographics of Rocky Mountain House are similar to those of the province overall. As shown in Figure 3-3, the Town's population distribution results in an average age (38.9 years) that differs only nominally from the province overall (37.8 years). Specifically, the Town has:

- proportionally greater men over the age of 80 and women under the age of 20 as compared to the province; and
- proportionally more women (51.9%) in its population than the province overall (49.9%).
- A relatively large percentage of females, especially young females, who will likely contribute to positive natural population growth provided the local economy is such that these young women remain in Town.

Figure 3-3: Rocky Mountain House Population Distribution



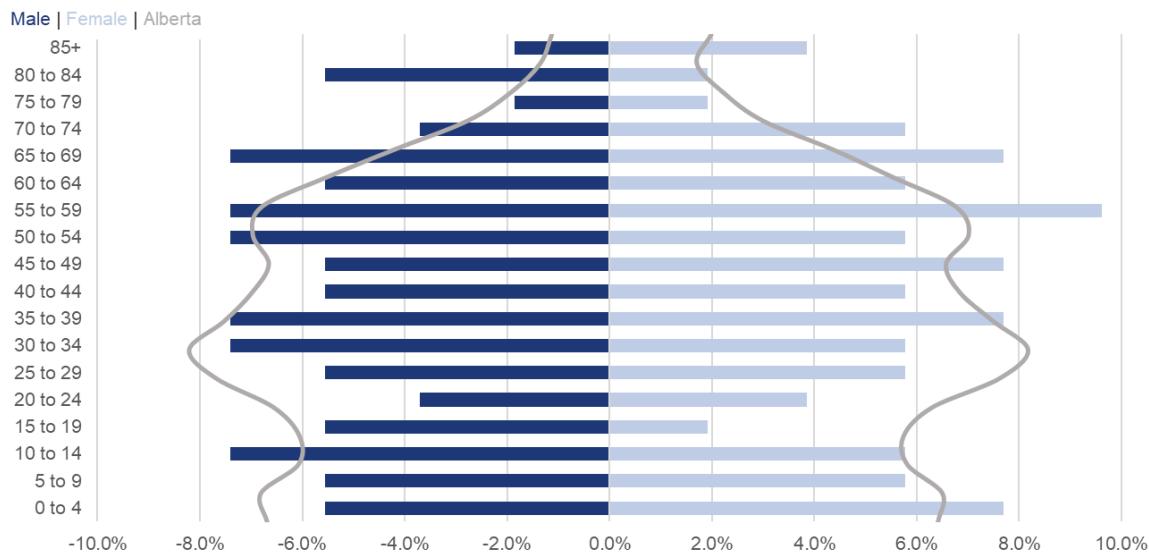
Source: Statistics Canada 2016 Census Profile

### 3.1.3.3 Village of Caroline

Caroline's relatively small population makes direct comparison of age-group populations challenging, but it is clear from Figure 3-4 that the demographics of Caroline differ from those of the province overall. The Village's average age (42.0 years) is older than the province overall (37.8 years) and features a higher proportion of males (52.0%) than the province (50.1%). Specifically, the Village has:

- proportionally fewer residents between the ages of 15 and 35 than the province overall; and
- proportionally more residents aged 65 or greater (21%) in its population than the province overall (12%).
- a relatively older and male-dominated population profile that will likely contribute to a natural rate of population growth that is not self-sustaining.

Figure 3-4: Caroline Population Distribution, 2016



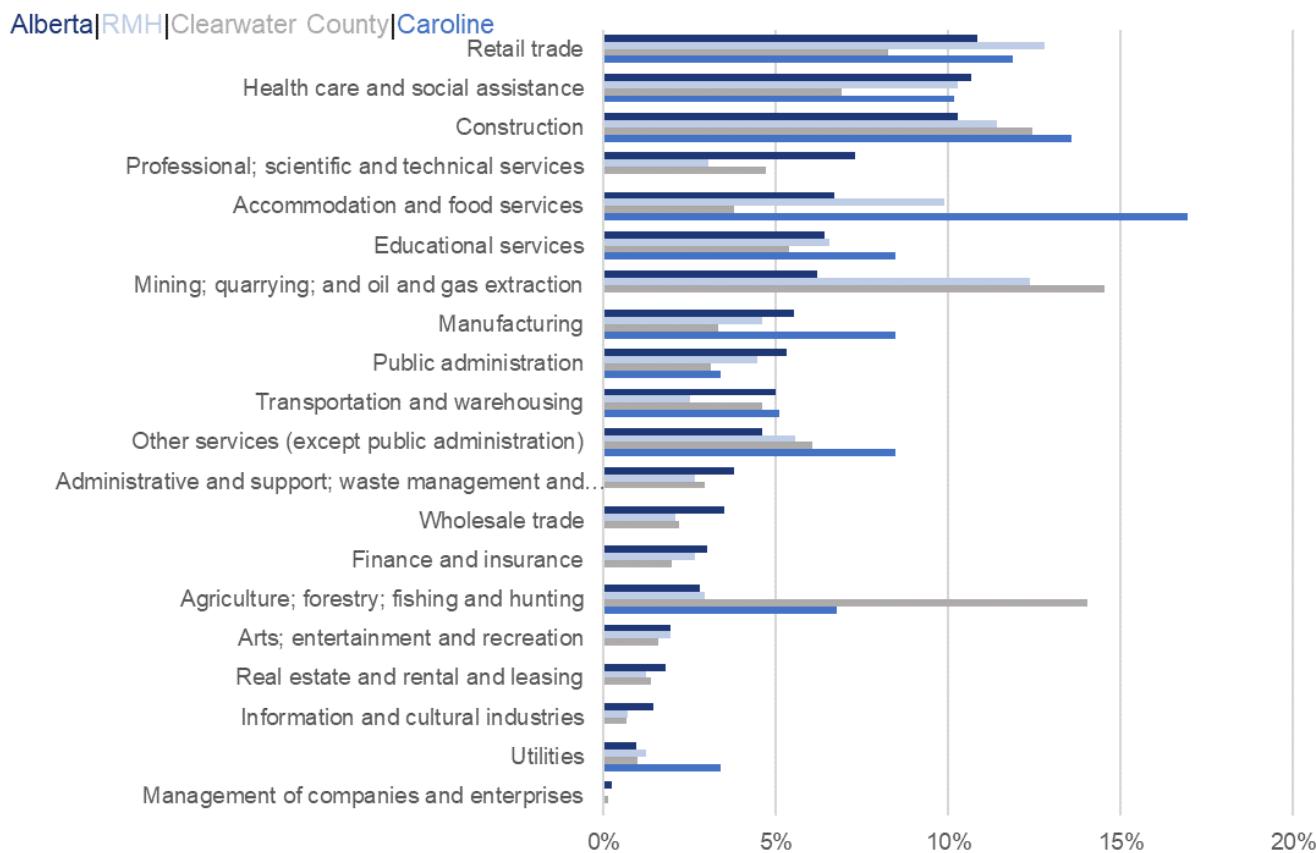
Source: Statistics Canada 2016 Census Profile

### 3.1.4 Economy and Employment

The region of Clearwater County, including Rocky Mountain House and Caroline, features extensive oil and gas sector activity and is located adjacent to the Rocky Mountains. As such, resource extraction and tourism-based industries provide a high proportion of regional employment compared to the province as a whole (Figure 3-5). Specifically:

- Rocky Mountain House residents see significantly higher levels of employment in mining; quarrying; and oil and gas extraction (12%) and accommodation and food services (10%) industries compared to the province overall (6% and 7% respectively).
- Caroline residents see significantly higher levels of employment in the accommodation and food services (17%) and Agriculture; forestry; fishing and hunting (7%) industries compared to the province overall (7% and 3% respectively).
- Clearwater County residents see significantly higher levels of employment in the mining; quarrying; and oil and gas extraction (15%) and Agriculture; forestry; fishing and hunting (14%) industries compared to the province overall (6% and 3% respectively).
- All three communities have proportionately less employment in the professional; scientific and technical services industry than what is seen for the province overall.

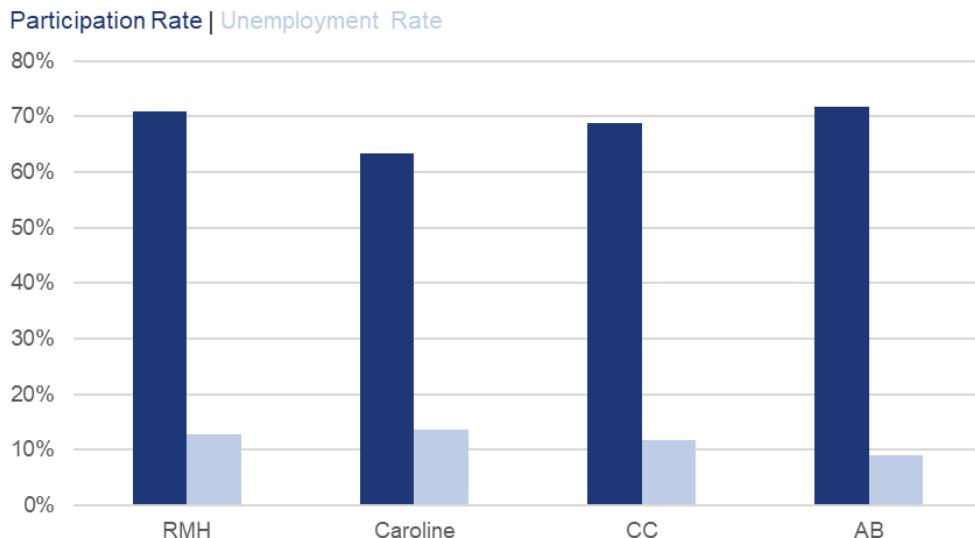
Figure 3-5 Percentage of Employment by NAICS, 2016



Source: Statistics Canada 2016 Census Profile

Due to the importance of the mining; quarrying; and oil and gas extraction industry in the region, muted activity in the oil and gas sector likely contributed to a relatively high 2016 unemployment rates for Clearwater County (12%), Rocky Mountain House (13%), and Caroline (14%) compared to Alberta as a whole (9%) (Figure 3-6). Both Clearwater County (69%) and Caroline (63%) also had a lower labour force participation rates than Alberta as a whole (72%), although this is likely driven by the relatively large proportion of retirement age individuals in the population.

Figure 3-6 Labour Force Participation Rates and Unemployment Rates, 2016



Source: Statistics Canada 2016 Census Profile

### 3.2 Regional Financial Comparisons

This section of the report is intended to provide a brief financial overview of Clearwater County, the Town of Rocky Mountain House, and the Village of Caroline. Key indicators include:

- the tax assessment base;
- average tax bills;
- municipal revenues;
- municipal expenditures; and
- debt.

Note that, in some instances, the Village, Town, and County are compared to each other or provincial average for similar municipalities. These comparisons are shown for illustrative purposes, not with the aim of supporting a normative evaluation of the municipality. Municipalities may vary from provincial averages or each other for a variety of reasons – for example, a large rural municipality may contain a disproportionately high number of bridges as compared to others. This could create a difference in infrastructure spending as compared to the average but is not indicative of managerial or political decisions.

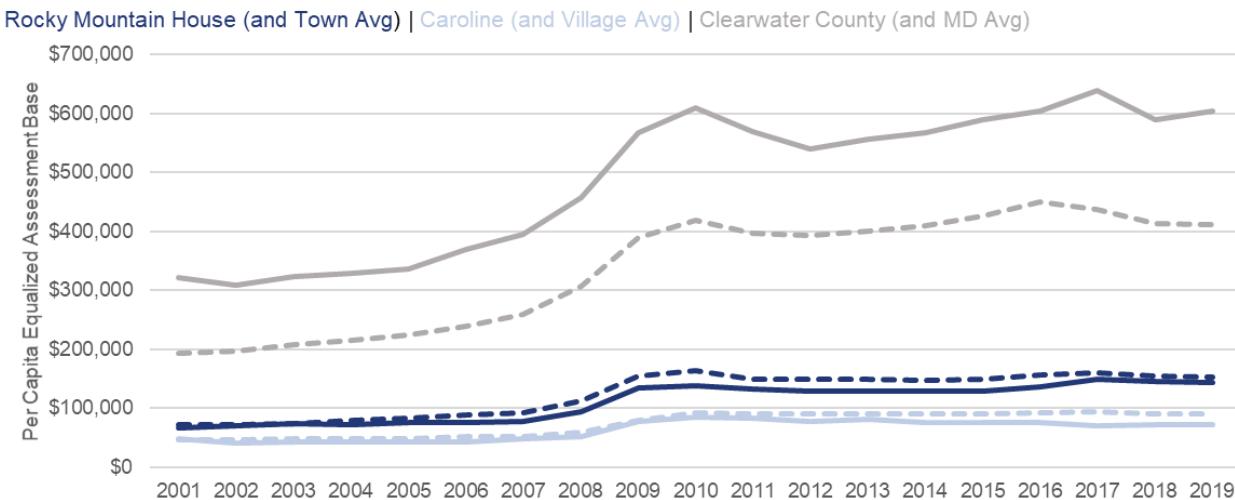
#### 3.2.1 Tax Assessment Base

A municipality's assessment base reflects the real assets available for taxation, and the composition of a community's assessment base can provide insight into the relative financial health of a municipal corporation. A comparatively large proportion of non-residential assessment is generally preferred as this assessment class typically consumes fewer municipal services than the taxes levied against them - the opposite is true for residential properties. Accordingly, a municipality with a large ratio of non-residential to residential assessment is typically considered to be more financially robust as compared to those communities with relatively smaller non-residential bases.

Figure 3-7 shows the changes to the assessment bases during the period 2001 to 2019 for each of Rocky Mountain House, Caroline, and Clearwater County (solid lines) as well as the average assessment base for all of Alberta's towns, villages, and municipal districts (dotted lines). The graph demonstrates two distinct periods for Alberta communities; a period of assessment base growth from 2001 to 2010, followed by a period of non-growth from 2011 to 2019. Highlights of the latter 2011 to 2019 non-growth period include:

- Rocky Mountain House's assessment base grew approximately 10%, while the average assessment base of all Alberta towns grew by approximately 2%.
- Caroline's assessment base decreased approximately 14%, while the average assessment base of all Alberta villages was relatively unchanged.
- Clearwater County's assessment base grew approximately 6%, while the average assessment base of all Alberta municipal districts grew by approximately 4%.

**Figure 3-7 Change in Equalized Assessment Base Over Time (in 2019 equivalent dollars)**



Source: Alberta Municipal Financial and Statistical Data.

### 3.2.1.1 Clearwater County's Assessment Base

Based on the 2019 Tax Bylaw, Clearwater County has established four classes of property for assessment purposes. These classes and the assessment base associated with each of them are highlighted in Table 3-2 and Table 3-3. The results show that the County is comprised of approximately:

- 26% residential or farm property;
- 49% non-residential property; and
- 25% machinery and equipment.

Table 3-2 Clearwater County 2019 Assessment Base

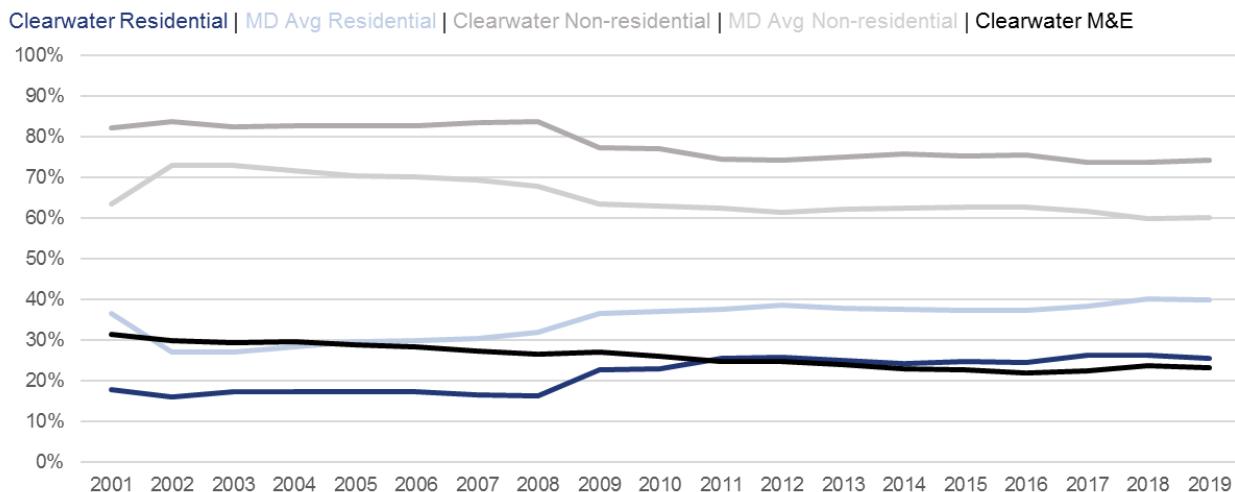
Assessment Class	Assessment Value	% of Assessment Base
Residential	\$ 1,759,921,140	24.9%
Non-Residential	\$ 3,473,074,640	49.1%
Farmland	\$ 57,695,330	0.8%
Machinery and Equipment	\$ 1,789,933,700	25.3%

Source: Clearwater County 2019 Tax Bylaw

As shown in Figure 3-8, the current state of Clearwater County's assessment base is the product of a prolonged shift in the relative value of both the non-residential and machinery & equipment base. Specifically:

- the proportion of the assessment base consisting of non-residential properties decreased from approximately 82% to 74% since 2001.
- The proportion of the assessment base consisting of machinery & equipment decreased from approximately 32% to 23% since 2001.

Figure 3-8 Share of Assessment Base, Clearwater County 2001 - 2019<sup>1</sup>

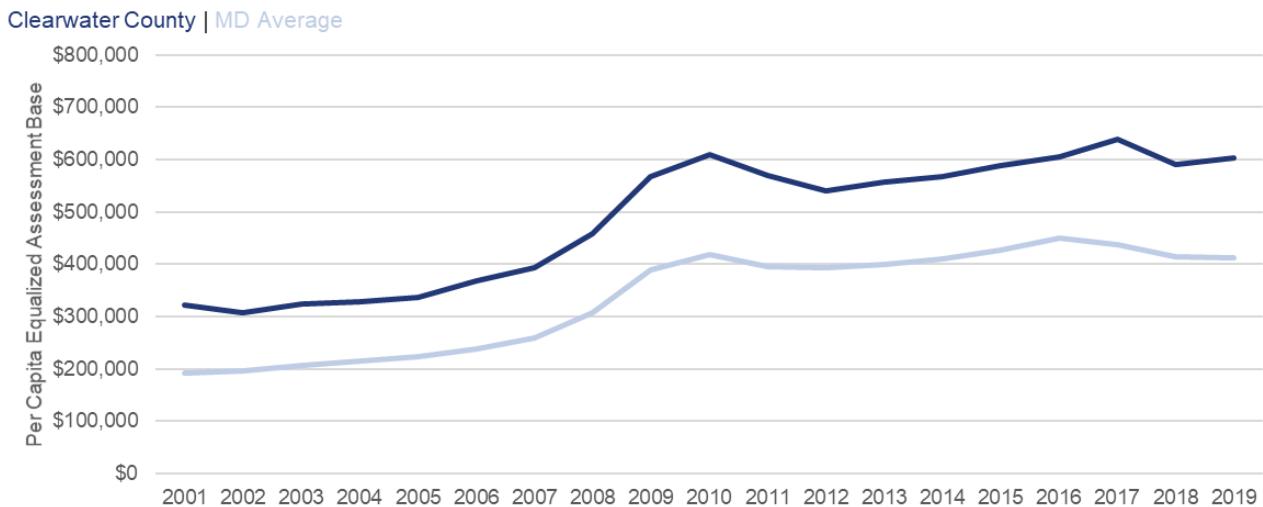


1 Non-residential includes linear property amounts and M&E, residential includes farm amounts.

Source: Tabulated by NAM from Alberta Municipal Financial and Statistical (MFIS) Data.

Figure 3-9 shows the changes to the per capita assessment base for the County and the average of all Alberta Municipal Districts during the 2001 to 2019 period. The graph clearly demonstrates that following a period of considerable assessment base growth (54%) from 2007 to 2010, the per capita assessment base of the County experienced more modest growth (5.9%) between 2011 to 2019. Clearwater County's total assessment per capita has consistently been above the average for all municipal districts in Alberta and that differential has steadily increased since 2001.

Figure 3-9 Total Equalized Assessments per Capita, Municipal District of Clearwater County and Alberta Municipal District Average, 2001-2019 (in \$2019)



Source: Tabulated by NAM from Alberta Municipal Financial and Statistical (MFIS) Data.

### 3.2.1.2 Rocky Mountain House's Assessment Base

Based on the 2019 Tax Bylaw, Rocky Mountain House has established nine classes of property for assessment purposes. These classes and the assessment base associated with each of them are highlighted in Table 3-3. The results show that the Town is comprised of approximately:

- 74% residential/farm property;
- 25% non-residential property; and
- less than 0.1% machinery and equipment.

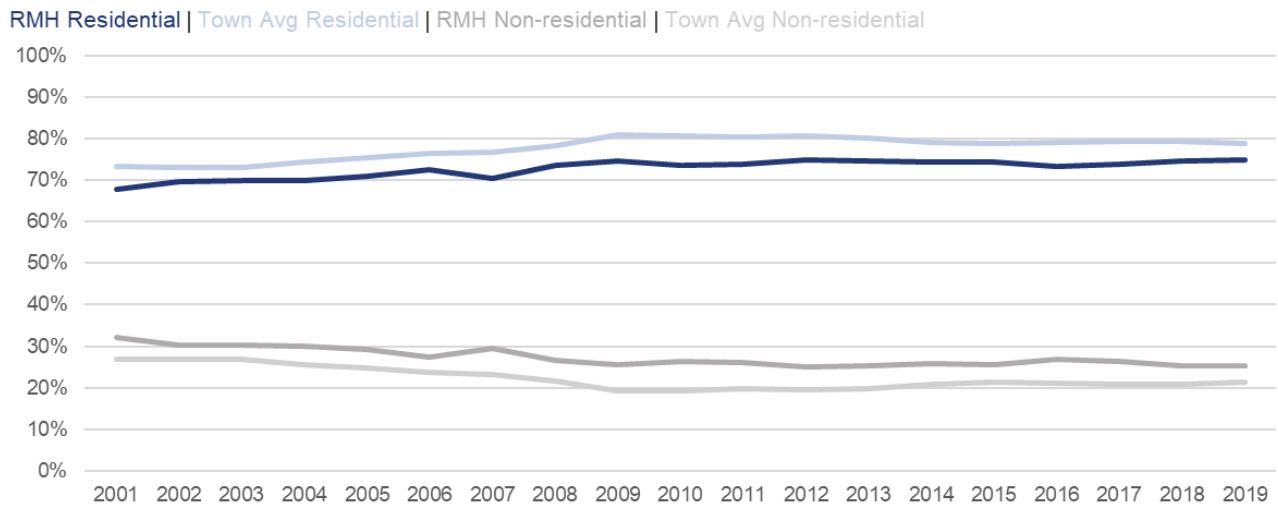
Table 3-3 Rocky Mountain House 2019 Assessment Base

Assessment Class	Assessment Value	% of Assessment Base
Residential Improved/Farm	\$ 671,624,420	72.9%
Residential Vacant	\$ 9,348,660	1.0%
Non-Residential - Commercial Improved	\$ 148,871,900	16.1%
Non-Residential - Commercial Vacant	\$ 5,560,650	0.6%
Non-Residential - Large Business	\$ 62,813,830	6.8%
Non-Residential - Large Business - Industrial and Linear	\$ 11,696,510	1.3%
Machinery and Equipment	\$ 190,730	0.0%
Provincial Grant in Lieu	\$ 9,980,140	1.1%
Municipal Exempt Properties	\$ 1,774,920	0.2%

Source: Rocky Mountain House 2019 Tax Bylaw

As shown in Figure 3-10 the current state of Rocky Mountain House's assessment base is the product of a prolonged shift in the relative value of the non-residential base. Specifically:

- The proportion of the assessment base consisting of non-residential properties decreased from approximately 32% to 25% since 2001.
- As compared to all towns in Alberta, Rocky Mountain House's assessment base has a nominally higher proportion of non-residential properties.

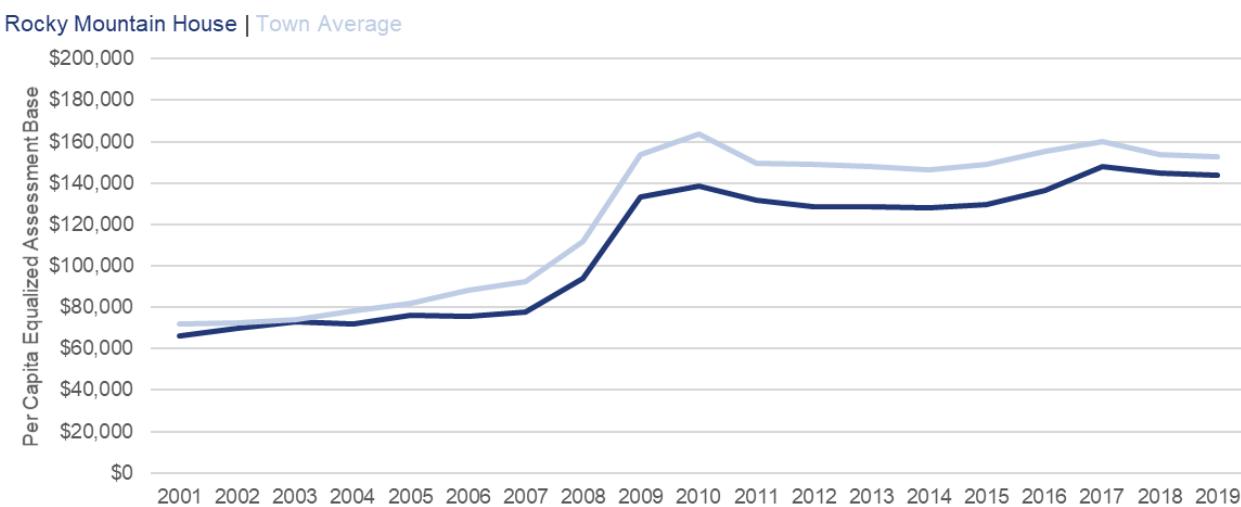
 Figure 3-10 Share of Assessment Base, Rocky Mtn House and Alberta Town Average, 2001 - 2019<sup>1</sup>


1 Non-residential includes M&E and linear property amounts.

Source: Tabulated by NAM from Alberta Municipal Financial and Statistical (MFIS) Data.

Figure 3-11 shows the changes to the per capita assessment base in the Town during the 2001 to 2019 period. The graph clearly demonstrates that following a period of considerable assessment base growth (78%) from 2007 to 2010, the per capita assessment base of the Town experienced a relatively smaller amount of growth (9.5%) from 2011 to 2019. Rocky Mountain House's total assessment per capita has consistently been above the average for all towns in Alberta, although the differential has decreased in the past three years.

**Figure 3-11 Total Equalized Assessments per Capita, Town of Rocky Mountain House and Alberta Town Average, 2001-2019 (in \$2019)**



Source: Alberta Municipal Financial and Statistical Data.

### 3.2.1.3 Village of Caroline's Assessment Base

Based on the 2019 Tax Bylaw, Caroline has just two classes of property, either residential or non-residential, for assessment purposes. The assessment base associated with each class is highlighted in Table 3-4 and show that the Village is comprised of approximately 76.5% residential property and 23.5% non-residential property.

**Table 3-4 Caroline 2019 Assessment Base**

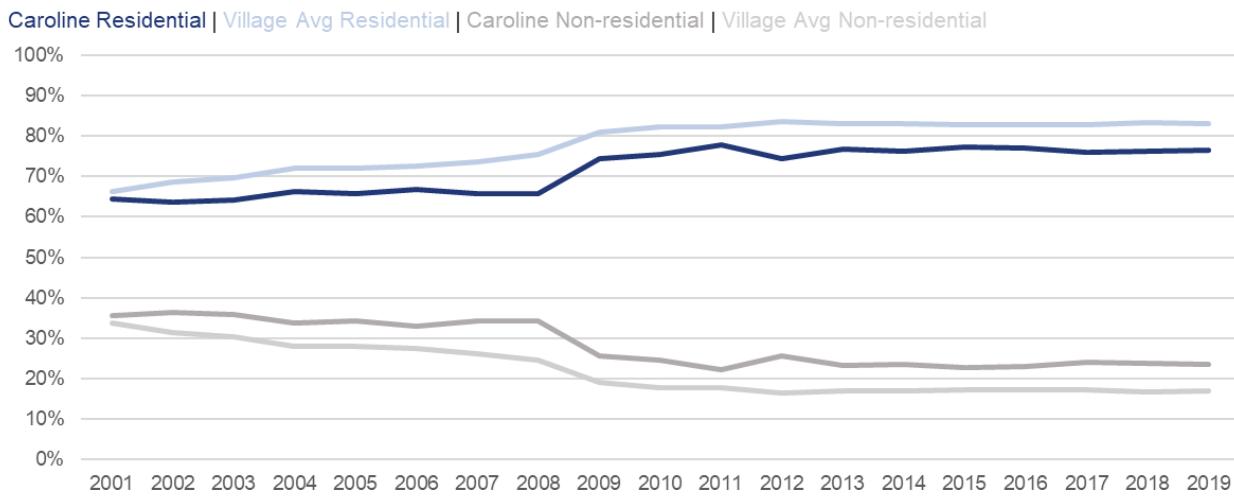
Assessment Class	Assessment Value	% of Assessment Base
Residential/Farmland	\$ 27,664,030	76.5%
Non-Residential	\$ 8,506,930	23.5%

Source: Caroline 2019 Tax Bylaw

As shown in Figure 3-12, the current state of Caroline's assessment base is the product of a prolonged shift in the relative value of the non-residential base. Specifically:

- The proportion of the assessment base consisting of non-residential properties decreased from approximately 36% to 23% since 2001.
- As compared to all villages in Alberta, Caroline's assessment base has a nominally higher proportion of non-residential properties.

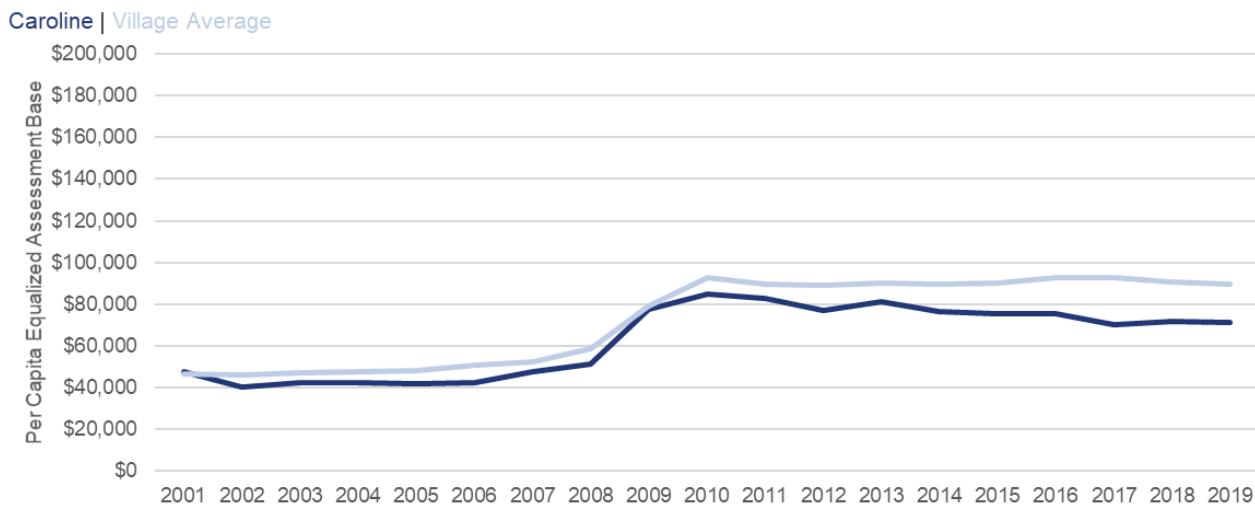
Figure 3-12 Share of Assessment Base, Caroline, and Alberta Village Average, 2001 - 2019



Source: Tabulated by NAM from Alberta Municipal Financial and Statistical (MFIS) Data.

Figure 3-13 shows the changes to the per capita assessment base in the Village during the 2001 to 2019 period. The graph clearly demonstrates that following a period of considerable assessment base growth (79%) from 2007 to 2010, the per capita assessment base of the Village dropped by 14% between 2011 to 2019. Caroline's total assessment base per capita has consistently been below the average for all villages in Alberta and that differential has increased over the past 10 years.

Figure 3-13 Total Equalized Assessments per Capita, Village of Caroline and Alberta Village Average, 2001-2019



Source: Alberta Municipal Financial and Statistical Data.

### 3.2.2 Taxation

The value of taxes collected is a function of both the assessment (property value) and the tax rate (mill rate applied to the property value). Thus, a community with a higher assessment base will typically require a lower tax rate to provide an equal set of services to its residents. Additionally, tax rates are set in order to balance municipal

revenues and expenditures and are therefore a function of spending decisions made by the community. A municipality offering a greater quantity and/or quality of services to its residents will generally require more revenues and higher tax rates. Table 3-5 shows the average residential property value, average residential tax bill, and tax per \$1,000 of assessment for residential properties in 2019 for Rocky Mountain House, Caroline, and Clearwater County.

Table 3-5 Average Residential Tax Bill, 2019

Community	Average Residential Unit Value	Average Residential Tax Bill <sup>1</sup>	Tax Per \$1000 Assessed Value: Non-Residential <sup>1</sup>
Rocky Mountain House	\$ 239,626	\$ 2,201	\$ 11.16
Caroline	\$ 116,280	\$ 1,530	\$ 15.02
Clearwater County	\$ 277,985	\$ 741	\$ 7.99

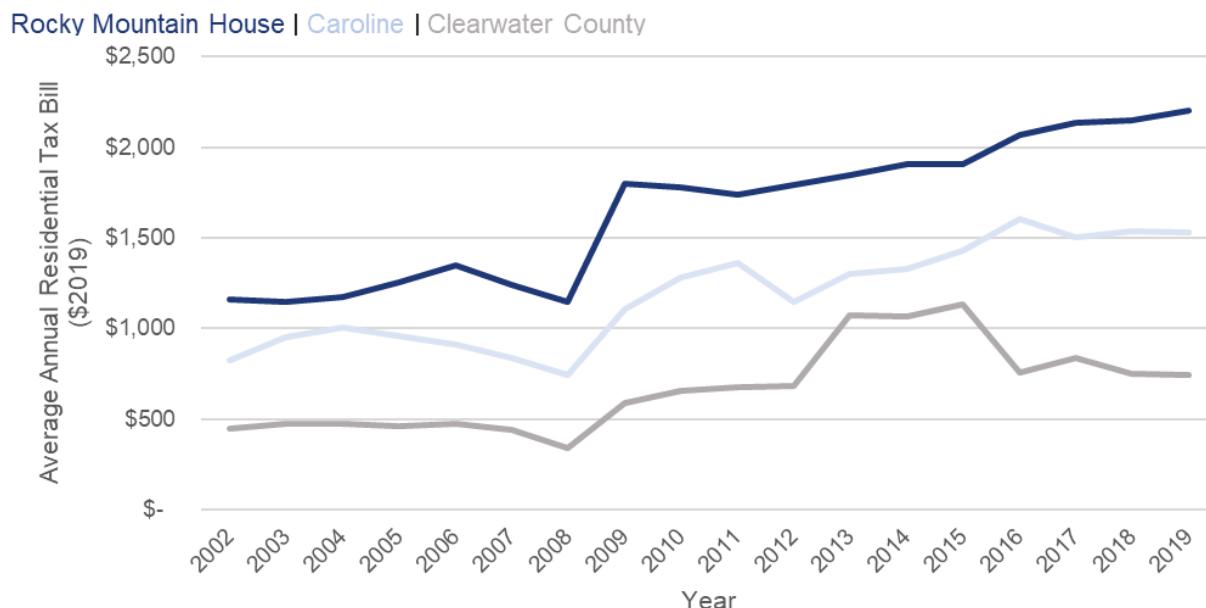
<sup>1</sup> Total presented here include general municipal taxes only and exclude levies such as education and senior's lodging amounts

Source: Calculated from 2019 Alberta Municipal Financial and Statistical Data

Figure 3-14 displays how the average residential tax bill has changed for Rocky Mountain House, Caroline, and Clearwater County from 2002 to 2019. Each municipality follows a similar pattern of relatively unchanged residential tax bills between 2002 and 2008, a substantial increase in 2009, and generally increasing tax bills from 2010 to 2019. Specifically:

- Rocky Mountain House's residential tax bill increased 23.8% between 2010 and 2019;
- Caroline's residential tax bill increased 27% between 2010 and 2019; and
- Clearwater County's residential tax bill increased 27% between 2010 and 2019.

Figure 3-14 Change in Average Residential Tax Bill Over Time for Rocky Mountain House, Caroline, and Clearwater County

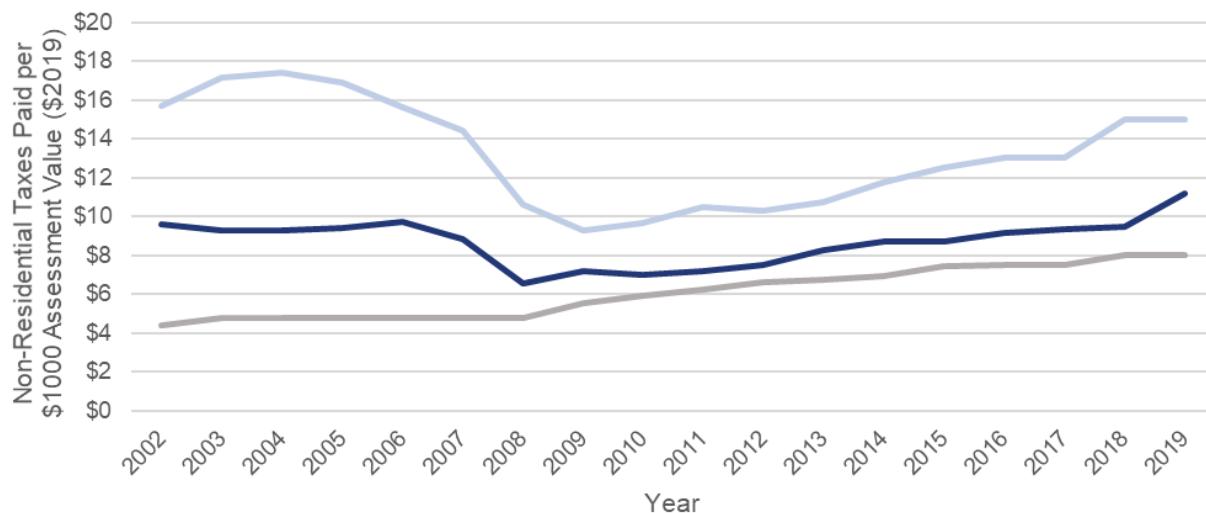


Source: Alberta Municipal Financial and Statistical Data.

Figure 3-15 displays how the average non-residential taxes paid per \$1,000 of assessment value has changed for Rocky Mountain House, Caroline, and Clearwater County from 2002 to 2019. Both the Town and Village saw significant decreases in non-residential tax rates between 2002 and 2009, then steady increases afterwards. The County's non-residential tax rates have steadily risen since 2002.

**Figure 3-15 Change in Average Non-Residential Taxes Paid per \$1000 of Assessment Value Over Time for Rocky Mountain House, Caroline, and Clearwater County**

Rocky Mountain House | Caroline | Clearwater County



Source: Alberta Municipal Financial and Statistical Data

The following sections of this report provide a more detailed analysis of the municipal tax rates for each community.

### 3.2.2.1 Clearwater County's Taxation

The tax rates applied by the County to the previously described assessment base (3.2.1.1) are summarized in Table 3-6. Not included in the table are the additional requisitions for education, senior's housing, or designated industrial property.

**Table 3-6 Clearwater County Tax Rate, 2019**

Assessment Class	2019 Tax Rate
Residential	2.6644
Non-Residential	7.9942
Farmland	4.3850
Machinery and Equipment	7.9942

Source: Municipal District of Clearwater County 2019 Tax Bylaw.

Table 3-7 illustrates the change in the average municipal taxes paid from 2010 through to 2019 in Clearwater County and the average of all Alberta municipal districts. The table shows that the residential tax bill in Clearwater

County has been increasing at roughly the same rate as the Alberta municipal district average. Conversely, the non-residential tax rate has risen by a substantially higher percentage than the average for municipal districts. However, the County's average residential tax bill remains 28% lower than municipal district average and its non-residential tax rate remains 41% lower than the municipal district average. Note that, although financial statements for the year 2020 are not available, the 2020 tax bylaw for the Municipal District shows that both residential and non-residential mill rates were unchanged from 2019, although a special lower non-residential rate was introduced for small businesses.

**Table 3-7** Clearwater County Tax Bills in 2010 and 2019 (in \$2019)

Municipality	2010	2019	% Change
<b>Clearwater County</b>			
Avg Residential Tax Bill <sup>1</sup>	\$ 656	\$ 741	12.9%
Non-res Taxes Paid per \$1000 Assessment	\$ 5.956	\$ 7.994	34.2%
<b>Municipal District Avg</b>			
Avg Residential Tax Bill <sup>1</sup>	\$ 910	\$ 1,034	13.7%
Non-res Taxes Paid per \$1000 Assessment	\$ 11.448	\$ 13.512	18.0%

<sup>1</sup> Total presented here include general municipal taxes only and exclude levies such as education and senior's lodging amounts  
 Source: Calculated from 2019 Alberta Municipal Financial and Statistical Data

### 3.2.2.2 Rocky Mountain House's Taxation

The tax rates applied by the Town to the previously described assessment base (3.2.1.2) are summarized in Table 3-8. Not included in the table are the additional requisitions for education, senior's housing, or designated industrial property.

**Table 3-8** Rocky Mountain House Tax Rates, 2019

Assessment Class	2019 Tax Rate
Residential Improved/Farm	9.1870
Residential Vacant	11.2270
Non-Residential - Commercial Improved	11.1640
Non-Residential - Commercial Vacant	14.1710
Non-Residential - Large Business	14.1710
Non-Residential - Large Business - Industrial and Linear	14.1710
Machinery and Equipment	14.1710
Provincial Grant in Lieu	11.1640
Municipal Exempt Properties	2.3730

Source: Town of Rocky Mountain House 2019 Tax Bylaw.

Table 3-9 illustrates the change in the average municipal taxes paid from 2010 through 2019 for the Town of Rocky Mountain House and the average of all Alberta towns. The table shows that tax bills in Rocky Mountain House have generally been increasing at a greater rate than the Alberta town average. As of 2019, the average residential tax bill in Rocky Mountain House was 28% greater than the town average. However, the non-residential tax rate remained 18% lower than the Alberta town average. Note that, although financial statements

for the year 2020 are not available, the 2020 tax bylaw for the Town shows a small increase (less than 1%) to both residential and non-residential mill rates.

Table 3-9 Rocky Mountain House Tax Bills in 2010 and 2019 (in \$2019)

Municipality	2010	2019	% Change
<b>Rocky Mountain House</b>			
Avg Residential Tax Bill <sup>1</sup>	\$ 1,779	\$ 2,201	23.8%
Non-res Taxes Paid per \$1000 Assessment	\$ 6.990	\$ 11.164	59.7%
<b>Town Avg</b>			
Avg Residential Tax Bill <sup>1</sup>	\$ 1,702	\$ 1,726	1.4%
Non-res Taxes Paid per \$1000 Assessment	12.568	13.589	8.1%

<sup>1</sup> Total presented here include general municipal taxes only and exclude levies such as education and senior's lodging amounts  
 Source: Calculated from 2019 Alberta Municipal Financial and Statistical Data

### 3.2.2.3 Caroline's Taxation

The tax rates applied by the Village to the previously described assessment base (3.2.1.3) are summarized in Table 3-10. Not included in the table are vacant land surcharges or the additional requisitions for education, senior's housing, or designated industrial property.

Table 3-10 Caroline Tax Rates, 2019

Assessment Class	2019 Tax Rate
Residential/Farm	13.1590
Non-Residential	15.0190

Source: Village of Caroline 2019 Tax Bylaw.

Table 3-11 illustrates the change in the average municipal taxes paid from 2010 through 2019 for the Village of Caroline and the average of all Alberta villages. The table shows that tax bills in Caroline have generally been increasing at a greater rate than the Alberta village average. As of 2019, Caroline's average residential tax bill was 10% greater than the village average. However, Caroline's non-residential rate remains 9% lower than the average village. Note that, although financial statements for the year 2020 are not available, the 2020 tax bylaw for the Village shows a 5% increase to both residential and non-residential tax rates.

Table 3-11 Caroline Tax Bills in 2010 and 2019 (in \$2019)

Municipality	2010	2019	% Change
<b>Caroline</b>			
Avg Residential Tax Bill <sup>1</sup>	\$ 1,281	\$ 1,530	19.4%
Non-res Taxes Paid per \$1000 Assessment	\$ 9.701	\$ 15.019	54.8%
<b>Village Avg</b>			
Avg Residential Tax Bill <sup>1</sup>	\$ 1,255	\$ 1,387	10.5%
Non-res Taxes Paid per \$1000 Assessment	\$ 15.352	\$ 16.532	7.7%

<sup>1</sup> Total presented here include general municipal taxes only and exclude levies such as education and senior's lodging amounts  
 Source: Calculated from 2019 Alberta Municipal Financial and Statistical Data

### 3.2.3 Operating Revenues and Expenses

A community's total operating revenues and expenditures are largely dependent upon its population base. Direct comparison of total dollars collected or spent often fails to provide real insight as communities with larger populations generally collect more in taxes and user fees but also spend more on providing services to its people. Similarly, rural municipalities often have much different types of infrastructure to maintain as compared to urban municipalities and differing service levels across municipalities affects expenditures as well. One method of providing a comparison is to present per capita figures so that we see the values per person. Table 3-12 highlights the 2019 per capita revenue and expenditure for Rocky Mountain House, Caroline, and Clearwater County.

Table 3-12 2019 Per Capita Operating Revenue and Expense for RMH, Caroline, and Clearwater County

Community	Revenue per Capita	Expenses per Capita
Rocky Mountain House	\$ 3,843	\$ 3,151
Alberta Town Avg	\$ 3,397	\$ 2,935
Caroline	\$ 2,185	\$ 3,507
Alberta Village Avg	\$ 3,493	\$ 2,937
Clearwater County	\$ 5,062	\$ 4,420
Alberta Municipal District Avg	\$ 4,972	\$ 4,385

Source: Alberta Municipal Financial and Statistical Data.

The following sections provide a more in-depth look at the 2019 operating budgets of Clearwater County, Rocky Mountain House, and Caroline.

### 3.2.3.1 Clearwater County Revenues

Table 3-13 itemizes the top 10 sources of revenue for the County in 2019 and shows that the assessment base described above combined to generate \$45,401,740 in property taxes for the County. Of that total tax revenue, approximately 10% was contributed by owners of residential properties whereas the remaining 90% was contributed primarily by non-residential properties. Approximately one-third of non-residential tax revenue was contributed by machinery and equipment owners.

The remaining \$15 million was generated largely through Provincial government transfers (\$5 million), the collection of user fees and the sales of goods (\$3 million), returns on investment (\$2 million), well drilling (\$2 million), and nominal collections from a range of other activities. Compared to its peers, Clearwater County:

- collected 75% of its revenue from municipal taxes, nominally higher than the 65% collected by Municipal Districts on average;
- received less in provincial government transfers (8%) than Municipal Districts on average (11%); and
- collected approximately 4 times the amount in well drilling fees (4%) than Municipal Districts on average (1%).

**Table 3-13 Clearwater County: Top 10 2019 Operating Revenue Sources**

Budget Item	2019 Amount (\$)	% of 2019 Budget	Average % of all Alberta MD's
Property (Net Municipal)	45,401,740	75.1%	64.5%
Provincial Government Conditional Transfers	4,516,843	7.5%	11.0%
Sales and User Charges	3,433,459	5.7%	7.0%
Returns on Investments	2,424,712	4.0%	2.8%
Well Drilling	2,256,295	3.7%	0.9%
Other Revenues	944,475	1.6%	1.8%
Penalties and Costs on Taxes	829,955	1.4%	1.1%
Fines	317,506	0.5%	0.2%
Rentals	258,225	0.4%	0.5%
Licenses and Permits	56,742	0.1%	0.8%
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>60,479,977</b>		

Source: Alberta Municipal Financial and Statistical Data.

### 3.2.3.2 Clearwater County Expenses

In 2019, Clearwater County had operating expenditures totaling \$52.8 million (Table 3-14). The single largest expenses related to roads (\$28.7 million), general administration (\$5.9 million), and waste management (\$2.7 million). In 2019, the County generated a considerable surplus of \$7.7 million. Compared to its peers, Clearwater County:

- Spent a greater percentage of its budget on roads (54%), waste management (5%), and the common and equipment pool (5%) than the average Alberta municipal district (45%, 2%, and 1% respectively); and
- spent less on general administration (11%) than the average Alberta municipal district (15%).

Table 3-14 Clearwater County: Top 10 2019 Operating Expenses

Budget Item	2019 Amount (\$)	% of 2019 Budget	Average % of all Alberta MD's
Roads, Streets, Walks, Lighting	28,657,004	54.3%	44.5%
General Administration	5,904,453	11.2%	15.0%
Waste Management	2,666,489	5.1%	2.3%
Common and Equipment Pool	2,579,877	4.9%	1.4%
Fire	2,437,549	4.6%	5.2%
Economic/Agricultural Development	2,401,030	4.5%	3.5%
Parks and Recreation	1,861,240	3.5%	5.0%
Land Use Planning	1,846,776	3.5%	2.5%
Other	977,287	1.9%	0.9%
Family and Community Support	849,192	1.6%	1.2%
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>52,800,055</b>		

Source: Alberta Municipal Financial and Statistical Data.

### 3.2.3.3 Rocky Mountain House Revenues

Table 3-15 itemizes the top 10 sources of revenue for the Town in 2019 and shows that the local assessment base described above combined to generate \$9,176,757 in property taxes for the Town. Of that total tax revenue, approximately 67% was contributed by owners of residential properties whereas the remaining 33% was contributed primarily by non-residential properties.

The remaining \$16 million was generated largely through the collection of user fees and the sales of goods (\$5 million), various forms of intergovernmental transfers (\$7 million), and nominal collections from a range of other activities. Note that the 2019 data include revenues of \$750,000 from a revenue sharing agreement with the County; this agreement has expired. Compared to the average revenue sources of all Alberta Towns, Rocky Mountain House:

- collected 36% of its revenue from municipal taxes, nominally higher than the 34% collected by Towns on average;
- generated less of its revenue from sales and user charges (20%) than Towns on average (27%); and
- collected more than double the amount in local government transfers (10%) than Towns on average (4.3%).

Table 3-15 Town of Rocky Mountain House: Summary of 2019 Operating Revenue

Budget Item	2019 Amount (\$)	% of 2019 Budget	Average % of all Alberta Towns
Property (Net Municipal)	9,176,757	36.0%	33.8%
Sales and User Charges	5,018,294	19.7%	26.8%
Provincial Government Conditional Transfers	3,566,056	14.0%	15.8%
Local Government Transfers	2,453,037	9.6%	4.3%
Provincial Government Unconditional Transfers	1,373,632	5.4%	2.1%
Franchise and Concession Contracts	1,194,236	4.7%	3.9%
Rentals	724,666	2.8%	2.3%
Other Revenues	632,800	2.5%	1.4%
Transfers from Local Boards and Agencies	453,815	1.8%	0.1%
Returns on Investments	304,185	1.2%	1.5%
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>25,498,744</b>		

Source: Alberta Municipal Financial and Statistical Data.

### 3.2.3.4 Rocky Mountain House Expenses

In 2019, the Town of Rocky Mountain House had operating expenditures totaling \$20.9 million (Table 3-16). The single largest expenses related to parks and recreation (\$4.6 million), general administration (\$2.2 million), and roads (\$2.2 million). In 2019, the Town generated a considerable surplus of \$4.5 million. Compared to its peers, Rocky Mountain House:

- Spent a greater percentage of its budget on parks and recreation (22%) and police (10%) than the average of all Alberta Towns (15% and 5% respectively); and
- spent less on roads, streets, walks, and lighting (11%) than the average Alberta Town (15%).

Table 3-16 Rocky Mountain House: Top 10 2019 Operating Expenses

Budget Item	2019 Amount (\$)	% of 2019 Budget	Average % of all Alberta Towns
Parks and Recreation	4,553,137	21.8%	15.3%
General Administration	2,230,063	10.7%	11.2%
Roads, Streets, Walks, Lighting	2,209,817	10.6%	14.5%
Police	2,099,014	10.0%	5.1%
Water Supply and Distribution	1,796,154	8.6%	10.9%
Waste Management	1,318,139	6.3%	5.1%
Common and Equipment Pool	1,201,250	5.7%	3.2%
Family and Community Support	881,226	4.2%	2.5%
Wastewater Treatment and Disposal	831,893	4.0%	6.9%
Subdivision Land and Development	630,473	3.0%	0.4%
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>20,909,020</b>		

Source: Alberta Municipal Financial and Statistical Data.

### 3.2.3.5 *Caroline Revenues*

Table 3-17 itemizes all 8 sources of revenue for the Village in 2019 and shows that the assessment base described above combined to generate \$506,934 in property taxes for the Village. Of that total tax revenue, approximately 70% was contributed by owners of residential properties whereas the remaining 30% was contributed primarily by non-residential properties. In its 2021 proposed budget, the Village administration states that it intends to keep the same level of taxation revenue for the coming year; as assessments are decreasing the mill rate will be increased to achieve this equilibrium.

The remaining \$0.6 million was generated largely through the collection of user fees and the sales of goods (\$0.3 million) and provincial government transfers (\$0.2 million). Note that 2021 is the last official year of the Provincial Municipal Sustainability Initiative (MSI) and indications are that funding will be decreased in coming years.

Compared to the average revenue sources of all Alberta Villages, Caroline:

- collected 45% of its revenue from municipal taxes, nominally higher than the 29% collected by Villages on average;
- collected significantly more in unconditional provincial government transfers but significantly less in conditional transfers such that total provincial transfers accounted for 17% of Caroline revenue, compared to 23% for all Alberta Villages; and
- generated more from franchise and concession contracts (8%) than Villages on average (2%).

Table 3-17 Village of Caroline: Summary of 2019 Operating Revenue

Budget Item	2019 Amount (\$)	% of 2019 Budget	Average % of all Alberta Villages
Property (Net Municipal)	506,934	45.3%	29.3%
Sales and User Charges	290,885	26.0%	23.5%
Provincial Government Unconditional Transfers	167,187	14.9%	2.6%
Franchise and Concession Contracts	89,621	8.0%	2.5%
Provincial Government Conditional Transfers	24,369	2.2%	20.4%
Returns on Investments	14,155	1.3%	1.4%
Penalties and Costs on Taxes	13,724	1.2%	1.2%
Licenses and Permits	11,822	1.1%	0.2%
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>1,118,697</b>		

Source: Alberta Municipal Financial and Statistical Data.

### 3.2.3.6 Caroline Operating Expenses

In 2019, the Village of Caroline had operating expenditures totaling \$1.8 million (Table 3-18). The single largest expenses related to common and equipment pool (\$0.5 million), general administration (\$0.4 million), and waste management (\$0.2 million). In 2019, the Village generated a considerable deficit of \$0.7 million. Compared to its peers, Caroline:

- Spent a greater percentage of its budget on common and equipment pool (28%) and waste management (9%) than the average Alberta village (3% and 6% respectively); and
- spent less on water supply and distribution (9%) and roads (5%) than the average Alberta village (18% and 20% respectively).

Caroline's proposed 2021 budget document outlines that there is a significant infrastructure deficit, specifically citing an estimated \$3.8-\$11.1 million expense to upgrade its water and wastewater distributions systems. The document also states that significant road rehabilitation and resurfacing will be required, although no cost estimate is provided for this. In the past, the Village has relied almost entirely on Provincial and Federal funding to address areas of priority maintenance, but the deficit is beyond the financial capacity of the village and currently available funding.

Table 3-18 Caroline: Top 10 2019 Operating Expenses

Budget Item	2019 Amount (\$)	% of 2019 Budget	Average % of all Alberta Villages
Common and Equipment Pool	501,222	27.9%	3.3%
General Administration	393,714	21.9%	20.0%
Waste Management	167,543	9.3%	5.5%
Water Supply and Distribution	160,202	8.9%	17.6%
Parks and Recreation	151,483	8.4%	8.7%
Wastewater Treatment and Disposal	134,019	7.5%	5.6%
Roads, Streets, Walks, Lighting	89,215	5.0%	19.6%
Fire	81,821	4.6%	4.0%
Council and Other Legislative	49,854	2.8%	2.5%
Culture: Libraries, Museums, Halls	29,533	1.6%	2.1%
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>1,795,373</b>		

Source: Alberta Municipal Financial and Statistical Data

### 3.2.4 Debt Profile

The ability to take on debt is important for a municipality that needs to absorb large and/or unexpected expense, such as with new infrastructure or repairs. Thus, the community's debt limit (the amount of debt it is permitted to take on per the MGA) and current debt are indicative of its overall financial health.

Figure 3-16 shows the debt limit and current debt, as of the end 2019 (the most recently available public data), for Rocky Mountain House, Caroline, and Clearwater County as well as the average amounts for all Alberta towns, villages, and municipal districts. Specifically:

- Both Rocky Mountain House and Clearwater County possess debt limits that are 80% greater than average of all Alberta towns or municipal districts;
- Rocky Mountain House has utilized just 16% of its available debt, just half the percentage used by Alberta towns on average;
- Clearwater County has utilized just 3% of its available debt, approximately one-fifth the percentage amount used by Alberta municipal districts on average; and
- Caroline has a similar debt limit as other Alberta villages, but has utilized just 16% of that amount while the average Alberta village has utilized 20%.
- Village administration has noted in its proposed 2021 budget that the Village has significant borrowing capacity under provincial regulations, but the repayment of this debt would place a high burden on Caroline's relatively small tax base that is not expected to grow significantly in the near term.

Figure 3-16 Debt Limit and Total Current Debt, 2019

Community	Debt Limit (\$)	Total Debt (\$)	Debt as a % of Debt Limit
Rocky Mountain House	32,190,482	5,147,659	16%
Caroline	1,673,862	268,340	16%
Clearwater County	85,127,693	2,229,147	3%
All Alberta Towns Avg	17,852,831	5,741,580	32%
All Alberta Villages Avg	1,666,895	332,935	20%
All Alberta Municipal Districts Avg	47,347,408	6,999,023	15%

Source: Alberta Municipal Financial and Statistical Data.

## 4. Existing Municipal Services

The following section provides a high-level overview of 16 municipal services within each municipality and includes expenditure information collected from the Government of Alberta's Municipal Financial and Statistical Information for fiscal year 2019; as well as position information, which was derived from compiling the Alberta Municipal Affairs Municipal Profile 2019, information from interviews with senior managers, and consultation with a municipality's organizational chart, where available (AMA 2021a;AMA 2021b;AMA 2021c; AMFIS 2019).

### 4.1 Municipal Council and Legislative Services

A Municipal Council is the governing body of a municipal corporation in Alberta. Councils have been given legislative and administrative powers to make decisions for a community through passing a bylaw or resolution.

Each Municipal Council also has some legislative support to address the coordination of Council meetings and committees; create agendas and minutes, track follow-up action items for Council, provide procedural advice in meetings, and supports to municipal bylaw and policy development. Legislative services responsibilities may also include coordination of municipal elections and by-elections, census exercises, FOIP requirements as well as coordination of Subdivision & Development Appeal Board. Records Management may be handled in part by Legislative Services in conjunction with or by another internal service with an administrative clerk. Apart from the Chief Administrative Officer, these activities may also be supported by the CAO's Executive Assistant, Legislative Clerks, and or Administrative Assistants. The County, Town, and Village each have a Municipal Council.

- The Council for Clearwater County consists of 7 Councillors (which includes an appointed Reeve). Each County Councillor represents one of the seven electoral divisions within the County's boundaries. The total expenditures for County Council and Legislative Services are \$552,001.00;
- In the Town of Rocky Mountain House, Council consists of 6 Councillors and 1 Mayor. Each Town Councillor is elected at-large to represent the entire Town. In other words, the Town does not utilize a ward, division, or district system. The total expenditures for Town Council and Legislative Services are \$352,170.00; and
- The Village of Caroline consists of 5 Councillors elected at-large to represent the entire Village. One Councillor amongst the five is appointed to serve as the Mayor. The total expenditures for the Village Council and Legislative Services are \$49,854.00

In all, there are 20 elected municipal officials for roughly 19,094 (MFIS) or 19,999 (Census) individuals residing in this area. Table 4-1 shows the number of municipal officials and legislative resources per municipality and Table 4-2, which follows, presents representation by population and per capita expenses for municipal elected officials by municipality.

**Table 4-1 Councils and Legislative Services**

Council Information	Clearwater County	Town of Rocky Mountain House	Village of Caroline
Councillors	7	6	4
Mayor / Reeve	1 Reeve (Appointed)	1 Mayor	1 Mayor (Appointed)
Legislative Services	1.35 FTE	1.3 FTE	See General Admin

Table 4-2 Elected Officials by Population, 2016

Municipality	Clearwater County	Town of Rocky Mountain House	Village of Caroline
Number of Elected Officials	7	7	5
Population per Official	1,707	948	102
Expenditures per Official	\$78,857	\$50,310	\$9,971
Expenditures per Capita	\$46.19	\$53.08	\$97.75

## 4.2 Administration

The County, Town, and Village have separate Administrative structures reporting up through a respective Chief Administrative Officer (CAO).

### 4.2.1 Senior Management Team and Total Municipal Establishment

The CAO is the senior executive responsible for managing the municipal corporation, ensures the execution of Council's priorities as well as municipal policies and programs. In most municipal organizations, the CAO is supported by some senior managers or directors that aid in operational decision-making to ensure the efficient and effective use of the available personnel and/or other resources.

- The Administration of Clearwater County consists of six senior managers currently, six departments (which includes Emergency & Legislative Services, Public Works Operations, Public Works Infrastructure, Agriculture & Community Services, Planning and Development, and Corporate Services), and roughly 114 municipal full-time equivalent positions.
- The Administration of the Town of Rocky Mountain House consists of four senior managers currently, four departments (which includes Engineering & Operations, Recreation & Community Services, Planning and Development, and Corporate Services) and roughly 62 municipal full-time equivalent positions.
- The Administration of the Village of Caroline consists of up to six municipal full-time equivalent positions. These positions are fulfilling functions under corporate services and public works areas.

In all, there are 182 municipal full-time equivalents employed in the region. Table 4-3 displays the Senior Management Team and Table 4-4 shows the total establishment across the three municipalities.

**Table 4-3 Senior Management Team**

Administration Information	Clearwater County	Town of Rocky Mountain House	Village of Caroline
Chief Administrative Officer	1	1	1
Senior Management / Directors	6	4	n/a
Departments	6	4	n/a

**Table 4-4 Total Municipal Establishment**

Administration Information	Clearwater County	Town of Rocky Mountain House	Village of Caroline
Total Municipal FTEs	114	62	6

#### 4.2.2 General Administration

Each municipality has resources that are, to some degree, engaged in the standard suite of internal services also known as shared services or corporate services. These services assist each municipal corporation in meeting their respective legislative requirements and supporting the municipality with the execution of various public services, programs, and initiatives. These services include, but are not limited to:

- Financial services address accounts receivable, accounts payable, tax and utility notices/payments, as well as inventory and asset management. They also handle a range of financial/corporate queries, lead the budgeting process, and provide a variety of reporting including, but not limited to monthly operating reports, quarterly Council reports, the Annual Report, and the Financial Statements.
- Assessment Services address property tax assessment complaints and queries, maintains the municipal tax assessment roll and updates, as well as handles property reviews, reports, and appeal hearings within municipal boundaries.
- Records Management ensures that records across the municipal organization are kept, accessible, and disposed of in accordance with the current legal requirements. This includes municipal records that are both physical and electronic. Sometime these administrative services are handled in conjunction with legislative services.
- Information Technology (I.T.) address hardware needs such as computers, laptops, or other devices; software installations; and provide I.T. troubleshooting support within the municipal corporation. Some municipal I.T. resources may also be engaged in community infrastructure broadband initiatives beyond the municipal corporation requirements.
- Human Resources address recruitment, hiring and terminations, pay and benefits, employee assistance, performance reviews, and some health and safety activities.
- Geographical Information Systems (GIS) address municipal mapping, spatial analytics, and geospatial information. These services provide location-based information to support decision making in a municipal

corporation. A few examples of areas that commonly require some GIS services are planning and development, public work or infrastructure management systems, and assessment and taxation.

- Communications assist with communicating with the public and with municipal employees. Services may include corporate messages or updates directed toward municipal staff at-large, producing periodic newsletters for the public, supporting municipal engagement requirements, and or responding media queries, as needed.

Most of these activities are addressed primarily by municipal employees with some selected use of contracted services. Resources associated with internal services in each municipality are itemized under Table 4-5.

**Table 4-5 General Administration**

Service Area	Clearwater County	Town of Rocky Mountain House	Village of Caroline
Financial Services	8 FTEs	6.9 FTEs	
Records Management	1 FTE	0.3 FTE	
Human Resources	2.4 FTEs	0.5 FTE	2 FTEs
GIS	2 FTEs	Contracted Services	
Communications	2 FTEs	1 FTE	
Assessment Services	2 FTEs 1 Contractor	1 Contractor	0.5 Contractor
Information Technology	4 FTEs	1.3 Municipal FTEs + Contracted Services	Contracted Services

Expenditures for services under General Administration are:

- \$5,904,453 in the County;
- \$2,230,063 in the Town; and
- \$393,714 in the Village.

### 4.3 Services

Each municipality delivers a set of services to residents within their respective municipal boundaries. Residents pay for these municipal services through municipal property taxes, utility rates, and some user fees (e.g. for services where those directly using a service are charged). This section provides a detailed breakdown of key service areas in each municipality. Note that intermunicipal or regional cost-sharing initiatives are addressed in section 4.4.

#### 4.3.1 Roads & Transportation

The municipal transportation network often accounts for a major component of municipal resources and budgets. Each municipality constructs, repairs, maintains (including snow removal, dust suppression, spring cleaning, etc.), and regularly inspects roadways and other transportation related assets within their municipal boundaries. This also includes the provision of roadway lighting or streetlights.

- The Clearwater County has 2,240 kilometers (1,900 kilometers of gravel and 347 kilometers of paved surfaces) of roadway and 175 bridges and culverts.
- The Town of Rocky Mountain House has 61 kilometers of roadway (5 kilometers of gravel and 56 kilometers of paved). In addition, the Town is the managing partner of the Rocky Mountain House Airport.
- The Village has approximately 8 kilometers of roads (2 kilometers of gravel and 6 kilometers of paved surfaced) and 7.5 kilometers of alleyways. Major road rehabilitation is still needed in some areas of the Village (e.g. 48<sup>th</sup> Street Reconstruction).

An additional transportation asset in the region is the Rocky Mountain House Airport. This facility is jointly owned and funded by the Town and County. Built in 1977, the facility is located 5.6 km north northeast of Rocky Mountain House. The airport is a licensed 5,000 ft (1,524 m) runway, with the existing runway surface extending 6,000 ft (1,828 m) over a gravel base. The terminal is open 24 hours a day, self-serve aviation fuel and a courtesy car are available 24 hours a day. Private and commercial rotary and fixed-wing operators are located on site. The airport is a bomber base for Alberta Forestry (Alberta Environment and Parks), and serves as a point of call for commercial, corporate, and general aviation.

In the County and the Town, most roadway maintenance activities are addressed by municipal employees; while there is a hybrid of municipal employees and contracting resources engaged for transportation related capital projects. In the Village, both maintenance and capital projects need to involve contracting. Table 4-6 presents the resources associated with Roads and Transportation services in each municipality.

**Table 4-6 Roads and Transportation**

Service Area	Clearwater County	Town of Rocky Mountain House	Village of Caroline
Roads	18 FTEs 5 Contracted Graders Seasonal, as needed	6 FTEs 3 PT/Casual/Seasonal	2.5 FTEs
Airport	0 FTE	1 FTE	0 FTE

Expenditures for these services are:

- \$28,695,380 by the County;
- \$2,461,686 by the Town; and
- \$89,215 by the Village.

#### 4.3.2 Water & Wastewater

Clearwater County, the Town of Rocky Mountain House, and the Village each operate, repair, inspect, maintain, and arrange for flushing of their own water and wastewater facilities.

- There are only 2.0 kilometers of water mains attributed to Clearwater County's water system. As such, most residents in Clearwater County use groundwater from wells located on their own property. The piped mains are located in the townsite of Nordegg. Here water is chlorinated, filtered, and then pumped to a County water reservoir, which has a capacity to hold 1,746,280 liters or 461,318 gallons. Business and cottage owners can also obtain potable water from Nordegg's water filling station. Wastewater services in the County includes three communal sewer systems within the Hamlets of Leslieville, Condor, and Nordegg as well as the associated lift stations lagoons located outside the hamlets. The wastewater system in the County consists of 16.0 kilometers of wastewater mains. Waste services costs are incorporated into County taxes.
- The Town of Rocky Mountain House has a piped distribution system in place for water and sewer, operates a water treatment plant, and a lagoon. The water system in Town consists of 51.92 kilometers of water mains. Resources also address all fire hydrant maintenance in the Town. The wastewater system in Town consists of 52.93 kilometers of wastewater mains. The Town also has a stormwater system which consists of 20.08 kilometers of storm drainage mains. The Town has a user-pay model with a goal of achieving full cost-recovery on utilities.
- The Village of Caroline has two wells, a pump centre, sewer/wastewater treatment facility, and a lagoon. Resources also address all fire hydrant maintenance in the Village. The water system in the Village consists of 6.0 kilometers of water mains. The wastewater system in the Village also consists of 6.0 kilometers of wastewater mains. Residents have an option of flat or metered rates for water. Note: The water and wastewater distribution systems are both in need of major upgrades within the Village. Cost estimates in 2018 posed several solutions, which ranged from \$3.8 Million to \$11.1 Million in expenses. The Village does not have the financial resources to undertake these upgrades.

Most activities are addressed by municipal employees in the County and Town. In the Village, most activities need to involve contracting. Table 4-7 highlights the Water & Wastewater resources in each municipality.

**Table 4-7 Water & Wastewater**

Service Area	Clearwater County	Town of Rocky Mountain House	Village of Caroline
Water Supply, Wastewater Treatment & Disposal, Stormwater Drainage	4 FTEs 1 Contractor (major jobs)	6 FTEs	See section 4.3.1

Expenditures for these services are:

- \$749,072 by the County;
- \$2,743,621 by the Town; and
- \$298,030 by the Village.

#### 4.3.3 Solid Waste and Recyclables Management

Each municipality manages the collection, recycling, composting, and disposal of household waste from their communities. Prior to January 2021, all three municipalities collectively addressed these services as a part of a joint committee of the County, Town and Village known as the Rocky Mountain Regional Solid Waste Authority (RMRSWA), which has since dissolved. Solid Waste Management services are presently under review / transition within each municipality.

- County residents dispose of garbage and deposit of recyclable materials at transfer stations located through the County and the landfill. The resources/units involved are reorganizing further to the transition from a regional service to a single County service at this time. The assets under this area include fleet (i.e. transport trailers, heavy equipment dozers, etc.), 10 independent transfer stations, and the landfill in the County. A Resident Identification Card system is anticipated to be implemented in 2021 to support residential access to the landfill and transfer stations.
- The Town residents receive weekly curbside residential garbage collection two days a week, with services provided by a private contractor. The Town also operates the Rocky Mountain House Eco Centre, which is accessible to residents to dispose of recyclable materials five days a week. The Town's Commercial waste collection program ended in November 2020 and commercial entities arrange for their own services through the private sector. The closest landfill is the one operated by Clearwater County.
- Residents in the Village of Caroline receive weekly residential garbage collection, three days a week through a private contractor. Residents can also dispose of garbage and deposit recyclable materials at the transfer station located closest to Caroline or take larger loads to the landfill in Clearwater County.

This service area is still under review. At the time of the study, most activities in the County were addressed by municipal employees. In the Town and Village, most activities were being addressed by contracted services. Table 4-8 shows resources in each municipality as identified in February 2021.

**Table 4-8 Solid Waste Management**

Service Area	Clearwater County	Town of Rocky Mountain House	Village of Caroline
Garbage and Recycling Collection and Disposal Services	10 FTEs	1 FTE + Contracted Services	Contracted Services

Expenditures related to Solid Waste Management are:

- \$2,666,489 by the County;
- \$1,318,139 by the Town; and
- \$167,543 by the Village.

#### 4.3.4 Common Services

Clearwater County, Town of Rocky Mountain House, and Village of Caroline address a range of maintenance activities in each municipality. These services often cross municipal departments or business areas (i.e. public works, infrastructure, recreation and parks, agricultural, etc.). Common services may include but are not limited to the care or maintenance of grass, trees, weeds and other vegetation, sidewalks, boulevards, trails, reclamation

activities post municipal construction, signage, heavy equipment, apparatus or gear, and municipal fleet including fire and protective services vehicles, and building or facility management including janitorial or custodial services. In the County, common services activities also include the operation of 16 gravel pits.

In the County and the Town, most activities are addressed by municipal employees. In the Village, most activities involve some amount of contracting. Again, these services and the resources attached to these services' crossover to other public works and recreation related areas. Table 4-9 roughly identifies resources focused on these types of services in each municipality.

**Table 4-9 Common Services**

Service Area	Clearwater County	Town of Rocky Mountain House	Village of Caroline
Maintenance, Equipment, Fleet, Facility Management	10 FTEs 15 PT/ Casual/ Seasonal	16 FTEs Contracted Seasonal	See section 4.3.1

Expenditures for these services are captured under Common & Equipment Pool:

- \$2,579,877 by the County;
- \$1,201,250 by the Town; and
- \$501,222 by the Village.

#### 4.3.5 Recreation and Parks

Each municipality provides for some recreational infrastructure and amenities for residents to pursue outdoor and/or indoor activities. Specifically:

- Clearwater County has 5 parks, 5 community playgrounds, 18 community halls, 15 Ball Diamonds, 2 Rodeo Grounds, 1 Indoor Arena and Curling Rink, 15 outdoor skating arenas, 4 Campgrounds / 1 Picnic Area, Trails 500 kilometers (Combination of Maintained and Unmaintained), Canoe Launch, 2 Boat Docks, skateboard parks, and outdoor tennis courts.
- The Town of Rocky Mountain House has 22 parks and community playgrounds, 1 outdoor ice rink, 1 Oval, North Saskatchewan River Park Rodeo Grounds, 17 kilometers paved walking trails, 14 kilometers of gravel walking trail (into the County), 5 ball diamonds, 2 football fields, and 15 Stall Municipal Campground. The Town also owns the Christenson Sports & Wellness Centre as well as the Credit Union Co-op Aquatic Centre.
- The Village of Caroline has 1 outdoor rink, the Kurt Browning Indoor Arena, several parks, and playgrounds with 7-8 Structures, natural area and trails covering approximately 2 kilometers, 3 ball diamonds (one managed by the school and two others managed by the Agricultural Society), 1 Football Field (also managed by the school), 3 halls (one managed by the municipality, one managed by the Legion, and one managed under the Church). The RV Park and building has recently been closed.

Most of these recreational and parks services are addressed by municipal employees with minimal contracting. Table 4-10 presents resources addressing Recreation & Parks across municipalities, while Table 4-11 presents resources specifically associated with the Recreational Centres in Town.

**Table 4-10 Recreation and Parks**

Service Area	Clearwater County	Town of Rocky Mountain House	Village of Caroline
Parks, Trails, Fields, Sites, Arena	1.5 FTEs	8 FTEs 10 PT/ Casual/ Seasonal	See section 4.3.1

Residents in the County, Town, and Village also have equal access to the two major recreational facilities based in the region: Credit Union Co-op Aquatic Centre and Christenson Sports & Wellness Centre. The County and Town shares recreational funding on a fifty-fifty basis. Ninety per cent of the Village of Caroline's recreation funding is provided by the County. User fees are also charged at these facilities. The managing partner (and owner) of these two major recreational facilities is the Town of Rocky Mountain House.

**Table 4-11 Recreational Centres**

Service Area	Clearwater County	Town of Rocky Mountain House	Village of Caroline
Credit Union Co-op Aquatic Centre	See Rocky Mountain House	4 FTEs 20 PT/ Casual/ Seasonal	See Rocky Mountain House
Christenson Sports & Wellness Centre Fitness Centre	See Rocky Mountain House	5 FTEs incl. Guest Services 3 Contracted FTEs (Instructors) 3 PT/ Casual/ Seasonal	See Rocky Mountain House

Expenditures for these services are

- \$1,861,240 by the County;
- \$4,553,137 by the Town; and
- \$151,483 by the Village.

#### 4.3.6 Cemeteries

The County, Town, and Village each provide for a cemetery. Municipal cemeteries can be managed by local government resources directly or may be managed by another service provider (including volunteers) on behalf of a municipality. Cemeteries services may include, but are not limited to site access, burials, cremations, care of buildings and amenities on site, maintenance, or cleanup of grounds (i.e. esthetic issues such as weeds or other vegetation maintenance), and basic monitoring of cemetery sites. Note: Cemeteries can also be owned and operated by religious organizations or affiliates and in some cases operate as private businesses.

- The County has 16 cemeteries sites located within its boundaries. These are rural cemeteries which are smaller scale operations that have been maintained primarily by volunteers through a cemetery association.
- The Town has 1 cemetery with 168 plots located in Town limits.
- The Village has 1 cemetery with 250 plots located in the Village limits.

Table 4-12 presents the resourcing associated with provision of cemetery space and /or services.

**Table 4-12 Cemeteries**

Service Area	Clearwater County	Town of Rocky Mountain House	Village of Caroline
Cemeteries	0.43 FTE + Volunteer Support	1 FTE	See section 4.3.1

Expenditures for these services are:

- Total expenditures for the Clearwater County are not identified in fiscal year 2019, fiscal year 2018 states \$100;
- \$30,426 by the Town; and
- \$15,503 by the Village.

#### 4.3.7 Family and Community Support Services (FCSS)

Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) supports a range of preventative community social programs and services that promote and enhance well-being among individuals and families in communities. FCSS is an 80/20 funding partnership between the Government of Alberta and participating municipalities. Funding is allocated to municipalities who can operate their own FCSS programs and services directly, and/or provide grants to community agencies or groups to deliver these types of programs and services locally.

The County, Town, and Village pool their funding allocations under the Clearwater Regional Family & Community Support Services program. This entity is housed and managed by the Town of Rocky Mountain House and the program is housed in the Posthouse building located in Town. A Board of Directors approves funding requests from local community groups who deliver approved services in community. Table 4-13 indicates the resources engaging with Clearwater Regional FCSS program.

**Table 4-13 Clearwater Regional Family and Community Support Services (FCSS)**

Service Area	Clearwater County	Town of Rocky Mountain House	Village of Caroline
FCSS	0.3 FTE	2 FTEs	See section 4.2.2

For the County and the Village, there are minimal resources engaged to support the regional arrangement, primarily interactions are related to communication and reporting purposes. Expenditures related to these programs and services are:

- \$849,192 by the County;
- \$881,226 by the Town; and
- \$4,491 by the Village.

#### 4.3.8 Disaster & Emergency Management Planning

Each municipality is responsible for addressing emergency management and disaster planning for their communities. These activities can include but are not limited to development and exercise of emergency plans for

municipal infrastructure, assets and any essential services; training for any municipal resources needing to be engaged in emergency responses, provision of public awareness municipal emergency programs, coordination with the first responders (i.e. Fire, Ambulance, and Police) and other emergency management bodies in the broader area.

In addition to or in place of local planning, a regional entity can also support municipalities with these planning services. In February 2021, a new Joint Emergency Management Agreement was reached between Clearwater County, the Village of Caroline, and the Summer Village of Burnstick Lake for the management of large-scale disasters and includes mitigation, responding and recovering strategies for large scale events. The Town of Rocky Mountain House is in progress on negotiating mutual aid agreements with neighbouring municipalities to support emergency planning needs. These agreements are anticipated to be in place by 2022. Prior to February 2021, all three municipalities were part of Clearwater Regional Emergency Management Agency, which has since dissolved.

All three municipalities address planning requirements through municipal employees (see Table 4-14).

**Table 4-14 Disaster & Emergency Management Planning**

Service Area	Clearwater County	Town of Rocky Mountain House	Village of Caroline
Emergency Planning	0.45 FTE	0.1 FTE	0.1 FTE

Expenditures for these services are:

- \$125,189 by the County;
- Not identified in fiscal year 2018 or 2019 by the Town; and
- Total expenditures for the Village of Caroline are -\$3,478.

#### 4.3.9 Fire and Rescue Services

Fire and rescue services for all three municipalities are addressed through a regional entity that is housed and managed by Clearwater County. The Clearwater Regional Fire Rescue Services (CRFRS) provides fire and rescue coverage over an area of 18,682 km<sup>2</sup> with an overall population of 20,000. The Service is described as a composite fire service where on-call firefighters respond from their home base and/ or assigned station.

Specifically:

- In Clearwater County, there are approximately 35 firefighters that are deployed out of Station 10 (Leslieville), Station 50 (Nordegg), or Station 20 (Condor). These stations are maintained by the County.
- In the Town of Rocky Mountain House, there are approximately 30 firefighters that operate out of Station 60. This station is maintained by the Town.
- In the Village of Caroline, there are approximately 15 firefighters that operate out of Station 30. This station is maintained by the Village.

CRFRS assets include fleet, equipment/apparatus/gear, 5 Fire Stations / Halls, and approximately 80 Paid-On Call firefighters. There are 6.45 FTEs associated with managing or administering the regional entity including the Fire Chief, 2 Deputy Chiefs and an Assistant Chief, which are the full-time resources managing the service. For the Town and the Village, there are no municipal resources engaged to support the CRFRS directly. The dispatch

services supporting this service are provided through a contract with Red Deer 911 Emergency Communications Centre. Table 4-15 indicates the municipal and on-call paid resources associated with CRFRS.

**Table 4-15 Clearwater Regional Fire Rescue Services (CRFRS)**

Service Area	Clearwater County	Town of Rocky Mountain House	Village of Caroline
CRFRS Station 60	0	30 On-Call Paid	0
CRFRS Station 30	0	0	15 On-Call Paid
CRFRS Station 10, 50, 20	35 On-Call Paid	0	0
CRFRS HQ/ Managing/ Admin	6.45 FTEs	0	0

Calls for Fire and Rescue service are presented in Table 4-16 through Table 4-18 below.

**Table 4-16 Number of Calls Attended by Community in 2019**

Service Area	Clearwater County	Town of Rocky Mountain House	Village of Caroline	Other
CRFRS (All Stations)	331	139	15	5

**Table 4-17 Number of Calls by Response Type in 2019**

Service Area	Fire	Rescue	Medical	Public Service
CRFRS (All Stations)	118	132	105	135

**Table 4-18 Number of Fire Code Inspections in 2019**

Service Area	Clearwater County	Town of Rocky Mountain House	Village of Caroline
Fire Code Inspections	51	11	1

Expenditures related to fire and rescue provision are:

- \$2,437,549 by the County;
- \$558,296 by the Town; and
- \$81,821 by the Village.

#### 4.3.10 Policing

Policing services in the three municipalities are provided by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) through either a Provincial or Municipal Police Service Agreement. RCMP services include responding to 911 calls and investigating criminal activity (e.g. property damage, traffic infractions, child protection, homicides, drug-trafficking,

fraud); patrolling a jurisdiction and maintaining order in public gatherings; enforcing laws (e.g. issuing citations, making arrests); providing administrative services including criminal records checks and issuing police certificates; handling non-emergency complaints; and participating in crime prevention or public safety awareness initiatives. Two notable service agreements relate to policing in the region, they are:

- A Provincial Police Service Agreement between the Province of Alberta and the RCMP provides policing services for area and communities in Clearwater County. Rocky Mountain House, Sundre, Rimbey, Innisfail, and Breton are the primary RCMP detachments that address policing across a portion of the County's jurisdiction. This agreement also includes policing coverage for the Village of Caroline. The closest detachments to the Village are Sundre and Rocky Mountain House.
- A Municipal Police Service Agreement between the Town of Rocky Mountain House and the RCMP provides policing services within the Town's limits. The primary detachment that addresses policing in the Town is Rocky Mountain House.

Further to the above contracts, the County and the Town contribute to funding administrative support and School Resource Officers<sup>1</sup> positions in Rocky Mountain House Detachment. These expenditures are shared and presented under the municipal policing agreement for the Town of Rocky Mountain House (see Table 4-24).

Resourcing information for three of the five detachments in the region are presented in Table 4-19 below.

**Table 4-19 RCMP Detachments**

RCMP Detachment	Provincial Police Service Agreement	Municipal Police Service Agreement	First Nation Tripartite Agreements with Suncillo and O' Chiese	Totals per Detachment
Rocky Mountain House Detachment	17 Officers (FTEs) 4 Provincial Civilian/ Admin FTEs	14 Officers (FTEs) 2 School Resource Officers (RMH / CC*) 5 Admin FTEs (RMH/CC*)	4 Officers (FTEs)	35 Officers 2 School Resource Officers 4 Provincial Civ/Admin 5 Municipal Admin
Sundre Detachment	8 Officers (FTEs) 2 Provincial Civilian/ Admin FTEs 0 Municipal Admin FTE	0	0	8 Officers 2 Provincial Civ/Admin 0 Municipal Admin
Rimbey Detachment	8 Officers (FTEs) 2 Provincial Civilian/ Admin FTEs 1 Municipal Admin FTE (Paid for by Rimbey)	0	0	8 Officers 2 Provincial Civilian 1 Municipal Admin

<sup>1</sup> School Resource Officers for Wild Rose School Division.

\* See Table 4-24 for funding explanation.

RCMP calls for service are presented under Table 4-20 below.

**Table 4-20 Percentage of Calls for Service, 2019**

RCMP Detachment	Clearwater County	Town of Rocky Mountain House	Village of Caroline
Rocky Mountain House	61%	39%	
Sundre	15%	0	
Rimbey	5%	0	
Breton	2%	0	
Innisfail	1%	0	

Expenditures<sup>2</sup> for policing services are:

- \$680,247 by the County;
- \$2,099,014 by the Town; and
- \$0 by the Village.

#### 4.3.11 Municipal Enforcement

In addition to policing, communities can also invest in municipal enforcement resources to enhance safety and enforcement in their communities.

Municipal enforcement resources enforce municipal bylaws, provincial statutes, and a limited number of Criminal Code matters within municipal boundaries. Municipal Enforcement Teams are most often comprised of Bylaw Officers and/or Community Peace Officers that respond to complaints in community and often have proactive mandates to address community priorities such as traffic safety, garbage issues, etc. within a municipal jurisdiction.

Clearwater County and the Town of Rocky Mountain House each have a dedicated municipal enforcement team comprised of Community Peace Officers. The County has 4 Community Peace Officers, while the Town has 3 Community Peace Officers. The Village does not have any dedicated municipal enforcement resources and relies on a member of the Administrative Team (i.e. CAO, CAO's Executive Assistant, or Public Works Supervisor) to respond when possible. In addition, animal control issues for the County and Village are addressed by the same external contractor. While in Town, animal control response also falls under the mandate of their municipal

<sup>2</sup> Prior to 2020, provincial policing contracts for rural communities were solely funded through a 70-30 cost sharing arrangement between the Province and the Federal government. An amendment in the Alberta policing funding model took effect in 2020 in which communities with under 5,000 people began contributing 10% towards the cost of policing their communities. Urban communities with over 5,000 people have been and continue to be responsible for paying for their own policing expenditures.

enforcement team. Table 4-21 below shows resources associated with Municipal Enforcement in each municipality.

**Table 4-21 Municipal Enforcement**

Service Area	Clearwater County	Town of Rocky Mountain House	Village of Caroline
Community Peace Officers	4 FTEs	3 FTEs	0
Animal Control Resources	1 Contractor	0	1 Contractor
Other - Admin Support	1.45 FTE	0	0.3 FTE

Municipal enforcement activities are addressed by municipal employees. Animal Control issues involve contracted services for two of the municipalities. Expenditures for these services are:

- \$737,008 Clearwater County (2021 estimate);
- Town of Rocky Mountain House are \$442,417 by the Town; and
- Village are \$8,613 by the Village.

Table 4-22 provides a side-by-side comparison of policing and municipal enforcement expenditures in the region and includes some municipal comparators (AMFIS 2019).

**Table 4-22 Comparison of Policing and Municipal Enforcement, 2019**

Municipality	Population	Police (\$)	Bylaws Enforcement (\$)	Cost per Capita (\$)	Total Expense (\$)	% of Expenses
Rocky Mountain House	6,635	2,099,014	442,417	383	20,909,020	12.2%
Caroline	512	-	8,613	17	1,795,373	0.5%
Clearwater County	11,947	680,247	-	57	52,800,055	1.3%
Town Average	4,406	650,465	194,034	111	12,797,357	6.6%
Village Average	431	4,571	6,917	21	1,249,614	0.9%
Municipal District Average	7,565	136,123	452,513	64	32,843,462	1.8%
<b>Other Similar Sized Counties</b>						
County of Grande Prairie	22,502	-	3,443,213	153	110,916,567	3.1%
Red Deer County	19,541	-	1,332,587	68	79,140,676	1.7%
Sturgeon County	20,506	-	1,566,689	76	64,910,527	2.4%
<b>Other Similar Sized Towns</b>						
High River	14,052	2,012,730	381,219	170	36,574,107	6.5%
Stony Plain	17,842	4,247,663	775,871	282	45,726,331	11.0%

Sylvan Lake	14,816	2,922,065	970,528	263	42,452,330	9.2%
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#### 4.3.12 Land Use Planning & Development, Economic Development, and Agricultural Services

Land use planning and development activities include land use planning and rezoning, development licensing and permitting, coordination of the local subdivision and development appeals, leasing or selling municipal property, and economic development matters including tourism and commerce related events.

Clearwater County also supports a suite of services further to its relationship with the Agricultural Service Board (ASB). This includes initiatives such as but are not limited to: Awards and Events, Weed Control, Custom Spraying, Pest Control, Equipment Rental, and Environment initiatives (i.e. Water and Landcare). The County is involved in the management of these services which are housed under the County's Agricultural and Community Services Department.

All three municipalities engage a planning contractor to some degree to support land use matters. In the County, most services are addressed by municipal employees with minimal contracting. For the Town and Village, planning services are addressed by contractors (see Table 4-23).

**Table 4-23 Planning & Development, Economic / Agricultural Development**

Service Area	Clearwater County	Town of Rocky Mountain House	Village of Caroline
Planning, Zoning, SDAB, Heritage, Licensing and Permitting	8 FTEs +Minimal Contracted Services	3 FTEs (Development Officers) + Planning Contracted Services	Contracted Services
Agricultural	4.5 FTEs + Contracted Seasonal	N/A	N/A
Economic Development	1 FTE	1 FTE	0 FTE

Expenditures related to these programs and services are:

- \$4,247,806 by the County.
- \$1,083,393 by the Town; and
- \$7,829 by the Village.

#### 4.3.13 Culture, Libraries, Museums, Halls

Each municipality provides some supports and/or funding to other entities in communities that offer initiatives, programs, and or services under the category of Culture, Library, Museum, and Halls. The main recipients of supports and/or funding include, but are not limited to:

##### **Parkland Regional Library System**

There are three public libraries in the region that are a part of the Parkland Regional Library system.

- The Nordegg Public Library receives funding from Clearwater County. The County is not involved in operating this Library - this is an outlet library governed and managed by a "The friends of the library" society a committee of volunteers under the Nordegg Community Association.

- Rocky Mountain House Public Library receives funding from the Town of Rocky Mountain House and Clearwater County. Neither municipality is involved in operating this Library; instead, this library is governed and managed by a municipally appointed board made up of trustees from the Town and the County. The Town owns and maintains the building that this Library is housed in. The Town also support this entity with administrative functions such as payroll, benefits, and annual budgeting.
- The Caroline Public Library receives funding from the Village of Caroline and Clearwater County. Neither municipality is involved in operating this Library; instead, this library is governed and managed by appointed trustees from the Village of Caroline which includes one Councillor from Clearwater County. The Village also supports this entity with administrative functions such as payroll, benefits, and annual budgeting.

## Museums

There are three museums in the region.

- Rocky Mountain House Museum receives funding from the Town of Rocky Mountain House and Clearwater County. This entity is managed by the Rocky Mountain House Reunion Historical Society. Neither municipality is involved in operating the Museum. The Museum is also in partnership with Rocky Mountain House and District Chamber of Commerce who operate the Visitor Centre located within the Museum.
- The Wheels of Time Museum receives funding from the Village of Caroline and Clearwater County. This museum is governed and managed by the Caroline and District Historical Society. The Village also provides janitorial services to this organization. Neither municipality is involved in operating the Museum.
- Nordegg Historical Site and the Brazeau Collieries Museum receives management support and funding from Clearwater County. The society provides for a museum, café, and gift shop out of the Nordegg Heritage Centre building and offers guided tours of the historical Brazeau Collieries industrial mine site. The County has been involved in the management of the site with advice from the Clearwater County Heritage Board for over eighteen years.

Again, there are no municipal resources directly involved in the operations of these types of initiatives, programs, or services. The municipalities only provide funding or some type of in-kind / administrative support. Expenditures related to these entities are:

- \$448,848 by the County.
- \$561,121 by the Town; and
- \$29,533 by the Village.

## 4.4 Intermunicipal or Regional Initiatives

The County, Town, and Village have a long history of cooperation and collaboration within the region. On September 13, 2013, these communities formalized their understanding and commitment to cooperation by signing an Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework (ICF) agreement, entitled Stronger Together. Since then and further to provincially instituted legislation, the municipalities have updated their previous ICF with the following:

- An Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework (ICF) between the Village of Caroline and the Clearwater County was approved in April 2019.
- An Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework (ICF) between Clearwater County and the Town of Rocky Mountain House was approved in April 2021.

Along with the ICF, the Village and the County have adopted the 2019 Caroline-Clearwater Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP). These plans contemplate joint development between the Village and the County. The County has already developed an industrial area within the Village boundary.

In addition to formalized arrangements, the municipalities undertake some in-kind activities at the working level where there are no formal agreements or compensation exchanged. This support to each other is provided under a “good neighbour” policy.

A summary of the current agreements between Clearwater County, Town of Rocky Mountain House, and/or the Village of Caroline are presented in Table 4-24. This information was collected from interviews with members of the senior management teams and consultation with agreements, where available. Note: Some agreements noted below involve other partners or a municipality not a part of this study.

Table 4-24 Existing Agreements

Service / Function	Type or Title of Agreement	Entity	Managing Partner	Participating Municipalities	Funding Formula and Notes
Transportation	Airport Operating and Management Agreement Dated August 13, 2013	Intermunicipal Rocky Mountain House Airport Commission	Rocky Mountain House	Town of Rocky Mountain House Clearwater County	Airport and assets are in the Town's name. This asset is jointly owned and funded by both municipalities.
Emergency Management	Inter-municipal Regional Fire Rescue Services Agreement dated April 1, 2020 and previously June 28, 2017	Intermunicipal Clearwater Regional Fire Rescue Services (CRFRS)	Clearwater County	Clearwater County Town of Rocky Mountain House Village of Caroline	CRFRS' operational costs are shared as follows: County 75.75 % Town 23.25 % Village 1%
	Joint Emergency Management Agreement: Forthcoming 2021	Intermunicipal	Clearwater County	Clearwater County Village of Caroline Summer Village of Burnstick Lake	This agreement was recently negotiated between Clearwater County, Village of Caroline, and Summer Village of Burnstick Lake. Approval pending.
	Mutual Aid Agreements: Forthcoming 2022	Intermunicipal	Rocky Mountain House	Rocky Mountain House Clearwater County Village of Caroline	Rocky Mountain House is engaged in negotiating mutual aid agreements with all neighbouring municipalities. Agreements pending

Service / Function	Type or Title of Agreement	Entity	Managing Partner	Participating Municipalities	Funding Formula and Notes
	Municipal Policing	Intermunicipal	Rocky Mountain House	Clearwater County Town of Rocky Mountain House	Clearwater County provides funding for 2.5 of total 5 Clerks through Town's RCMP contract and contribution to RCMP based on the Provincial Police Funding Model.
Recreation	Recreation District Agreement dated February 10, 2009	Municipal Entity Town of Rocky Mountain House	Rocky Mountain House	Clearwater County Town of Rocky Mountain House Village of Caroline	<p>Funding Agreements for Credit Union Co-op Aquatic Centre and the Christenson Sports &amp; Wellness Centre Fitness Centre.</p> <p>The County and Town shares recreational funding on a 50-50 basis.</p> <p>Ninety per cent of the Village of Caroline's recreation funding is provided by the County.</p> <p>Administrative expenses are split:</p> <p>Town 75%</p> <p>County 25%.</p>
	Rocky Mountain Public Library Agreement dated January 1, 2019	Regional Entity Parkland Regional Library System	Rocky Library municipally appointed board	Rocky Mountain House Clearwater County	<p>Funding agreement for annual operating costs paid by the Town and County on a 50-50 basis.</p> <p>Annual building maintenance costs are shared 50-50 between the Town and County.</p> <p>Each municipality responsible for own requisition.</p> <p>Property is owned by the Town.</p>
	Museum Operations Board dated January 1, 2019	The Rocky Mountain House Museum Board	The Rocky Mountain House Reunion	Clearwater County	Funding agreement for annual operating costs paid by the Town and County on a 50-50 basis. Request for

Service / Function	Type or Title of Agreement	Entity	Managing Partner	Participating Municipalities	Funding Formula and Notes
			Historical Society	Town of Rocky Mountain House	<p>funds is based on the net operating expenditures.</p> <p>Property is owned by the Town. The building is owned by the Rocky Mountain House Reunion Historical Society.</p>
Solid Waste	Regional Solid Waste Services Agreement Effective date January 1, 2021	Intermunicipal	Clearwater County	Clearwater County	Key Points: The County will operate the Clearwater Regional Landfill and all rural transfer stations.
	See also related agreements for Closed Municipal Landfill, Closed Industrial Cells, and Net Asset Distribution			Town of Rocky Mountain House	The County and Town are responsible for transporting their own solid waste to a landfill (Clearwater or other).
	Closed Municipal Landfill Cost Sharing and Liability Agreement Effective date January 1, 2021			Village of Caroline	Town will operate the Rocky Eco Centre.
	Closed Industrial Cells Cost Sharing and Liability Agreement Effective date January 1, 2021	Municipal Entity Clearwater County	Clearwater County	Clearwater County Town of Rocky Mountain House	<p>Formula is based on the 2016 census population numbers:</p> <p>County 64 %</p> <p>Town 36%.</p> <p>Formula: Municipal allocation proportion X closed municipal landfill maintenance fees</p>
		Municipal Entity Clearwater County	Clearwater County	Clearwater County Town of Rocky Mountain House Village of Caroline	<p>Formula is based on the 2016 census population numbers:</p> <p>County 62.5%</p> <p>Town 34.5%</p> <p>Village 3%.</p> <p>Formula: Municipal allocation proportion X closed industrial cells maintenance fees</p>

Service / Function	Type or Title of Agreement	Entity	Managing Partner	Participating Municipalities	Funding Formula and Notes
	Net Asset Distribution Agreement Effective date January 1, 2021	Municipal Entity Clearwater County	Clearwater County	Clearwater County Town of Rocky Mountain House Village of Caroline	Distribution Net Assets: County 65.3% Town 33.13% Village 1.84%. Residual Transactions: County 66 % Town 34%. Severance cost for Town: 33.13%
Other Services / Functions	Seniors Lodge: Westview Lodge / Independent living facilities in Rocky Mountain House, Leslieville, and Caroline.	Rocky Seniors Housing Council	Rocky Seniors Housing Council	Clearwater County Town of Rocky Mountain House	Provision of affordable seniors housing. Taxpayer support for municipal contribution
	Family and Community Support Services Agreement dated May 24, 2016	Regional Entity Clearwater Regional FCSS Program	Town of Rocky Mountain House	Clearwater County Town of Rocky Mountain House Village of Caroline	80/20 Provincial - Municipal Funding Arrangement. Per capita allocations from the three municipalities are pooled and distributed through the regional entity.
	FCSS Community Services Advisory Board Bylaw (2018/33V) dated November 9, 2018	Regional Entity Clearwater Regional FCSS Program	Town of Rocky Mountain House	Clearwater County Town of Rocky Mountain House Village of Caroline	Establishment of the FCSS Community Services Advisory Board
	Community Services Support Agreement dated January 1, 2021	Intermunicipal	Intermunicipal Collaboration Committee	Clearwater County Town of Rocky Mountain House	Annual Transfer for Tax Exempt Properties and Facilities. Formula: Town Service Property Tax – County Service Property Tax x 32.5% Town Assessment Value/ Service Property Tax: \$200,977,010.00/\$2,048,522.00

Service / Function	Type or Title of Agreement	Entity	Managing Partner	Participating Municipalities	Funding Formula and Notes
					<p>County Assessment Value/ Service Property Tax: \$107,209,450.00/\$797,310.00 County population in close proximity to Town limits= 32.5%</p>
	<p>Rocky Mountain House/Clearwater County Health Professions Engagement Team Terms of Reference dated</p>	<p>Rocky Mountain House and District Chamber of Commerce (Sub-Committee)</p>	<p>Rocky Mountain House and District Chamber of Commerce</p>	<p>Clearwater County Town of Rocky Mountain House</p>	<p>The Committee shall apply to each the Town and County for annual funding assistance in September of each year to support the work of the Committee. No funding formula noted.</p>
	<p>School Resource Officers Agreement dated September 1, 2008</p>	<p>Wildrose School Division RCMP</p>	<p>School Resource Officer Steering Committee</p>	<p>Clearwater County Town of Rocky Mountain House</p>	<p>The County and Town roughly shares 50-50 in the funding agreement for 2 School Resources Officers for Wildrose School Division through Town's RCMP contract. This program has funding provided by the Federal and Provincial governments.</p> <p>Formula: The County's share for the in-Town's services are 33.33%; the County's share for the in-County's services are: 66.67%; the Town's share for the in-Town's services are: 33.33%; and the per capita costs will be shared equally between rural and urban Schools.</p>
	<p>Economic Development Information and Advice</p>	<p>Central Alberta Economic Partnership</p>	<p>Central Alberta Economic Partnership</p>	<p>Clearwater County Town of Rocky</p>	<p>Relating to investment opportunities, promotions, and marketing in coordination with other groups. Taxpayer support for per capita requisition.</p>

Service / Function	Type or Title of Agreement	Entity	Managing Partner	Participating Municipalities	Funding Formula and Notes
				Mountain House	

## 5. Public Engagement

### 5.1 Phase 1 Engagement

At the outset of this Study, the Consulting Team undertook round of engagement intended to:

- share general information on the study process;
- describe the different governance structures that exist in Alberta;
- gather ideas from residents and ratepayers about what key information they would like to learn more about to help them better understand the differences between the governance structure options, as well as the potential benefits, disadvantages, and impacts to residents by the potential options.

A report regarding the results of this engagement is attached as appendix A.

Participants were asked to identify any concerns they have with existing services and programs being offered as well as to identify ideas to address the concerns they raised. The ideas for addressing concerns reflect the various proposed solutions by participants for their concerns but note that some participants had differing ideas for how to solve similar concerns. Table 5-1 provides a summary of key concerns raised and potential solutions.

**Table 5-1 Key Engagement Themes**

Key Themes	Participant Concern	Participant Idea for Addressing Their Concern
Municipal Relations	There are currently poor relationships between the Councils of the Town and County and participants indicated a desire for improved collaboration between the municipalities.	The Town should remain as its own municipality as it exists currently. If anything, only the County and Village should amalgamate.
	Concerns that the County would have to take on any debts that the other municipalities may have if the municipalities amalgamate.	The Councils need to commit to improving their relationships and working together to create a more collaborative region.
Services	Services are being duplicated by each municipality which increases costs (specifically the waste and recycling services).	Amalgamation should occur between Clearwater County and the Village of Caroline only.
	Some services are unused or too expensive.	Do not change the current governance structure.
	Services or resources need to be improved for families, seniors, waste and recycling, road maintenance, policing and enforcement, and development.	Services should be shared for more efficient use of tax dollars and to help ensure a higher quality of services provided to all residents.
	Existing overhead and costs are high.	Unused or overly expensive services should be discontinued or reduced.
		A review how current services are being delivered regionally should be undertaken and asses if there are opportunities for cost savings and operational efficiencies.
		Amalgamation between the Town of Rocky Mountain House, Clearwater County and the Village of Caroline would lower costs.

Key Themes	Participant Concern	Participant Idea for Addressing Their Concern
Financial (tax, overhead, budget, etc.)		Amalgamation between Clearwater County and the Village of Caroline only would lower costs.
		The County should only be spending money on Town services that County residents are using.
		The priority areas for spending for both the Town and County should be re-evaluated.
	The County and Village will have to take on any debt the Town may have from previous spending decisions.	Amalgamation should occur between Clearwater County and the Village of Caroline only.
		Do not change the current governance structure.
	That taxes could increase.	It must be confirmed that there will be actual cost savings before amalgamation occurs
		Do not change the current governance structure
	Residents are unaware of the services, programs, and engagement opportunities available to residents.	There needs to be more open and transparent communication to residents including off-line and print communications and engagement for those who may not be able to access the internet or have poor internet connections.
	More opportunities for engagement are needed on projects in the region (including this one) and it needs to be clear if and how public input will influence decisions being made.	There needs to be more robust communications and engagement opportunities for projects in the region and engagement early on in projects.  Councils also need to commit to a level of influence for public input and clearly communicate the level of influence to participants.
No concerns or support 'as is'	No changes are needed	Do not change the current governance structure.

## 5.2 Phase 2 Engagement

Following the completion of the report, the Consulting Team undertook a second round of engagement to share the key findings and recommendations with the residents and stakeholders of Caroline, Rocky Mountain House, Nordegg, and Leslieville as well as gather feedback.

Table 5-2 provides a summary of the engagement opportunities for residents and stakeholders during phase 2.

**Table 5-2 Engagement Opportunities**

Engagement Type	Purpose	Dates	Audience
Project Website	To share information about the study process and provide one location for residents of three municipalities to stay up to date on the project	February 8 to present	1933 unique visitors as of September 7
In-person Information Sessions	To share key findings and recommendations of the Study and gather feedback from residents and stakeholders	July 28 • Caroline • Rocky Mountain House  August 25 • Nordegg • Leslieville	July 28 - Attendees • Caroline: 32 • Rocky Mountain House: 29  August 25 - Attendees • Nordegg: 18 • Leslieville: 3
Survey (online, paper copies provided at in-person sessions)	To collect feedback and questions from residents, ratepayers, and stakeholders of all three municipalities	July 28 – August 25, 2021	29 Responses

Overall, the key themes that emerged during the second phase of engagement are:

- The amalgamation of the Village and County has the potential to have positive impacts by reducing duplication of services and making operations more cost effective.
- Some respondents were unsure/hesitant about how this change could impact their communities in the long term, and felt they needed more information.
- A few respondents were worried about the amalgamation negatively impacting taxes, level of service, and job security.

A report regarding the results of this engagement is attached as appendix A.

## 6. Municipal Structuring

### 6.1 Municipal Government Act (MGA)

In Alberta, the topic of municipal structuring is addressed under Part 4 of the Municipal Government Act (MGA) and includes the initial establishment of a new municipality and the dissolution of an existing municipality.

Specifically:

- Creating a new municipality is known as municipal formation or municipal incorporation.
- Dissolution is where an existing municipality ceases to operate. This type of restructuring is most often triggered when a municipality is no longer viable such as when it cannot: balance municipal revenues with required expenditures, fill vacancies on council; or finds that the community can be more effectively or efficiently operated as part of another neighbouring municipality. Prior to initiating a dissolution, a municipality must undergo a viability review.

In addition to establishing and dissolving, there are three other options available to municipal governments (GOA 2021a). These include:

- Changing municipal type to another municipal status (e.g. Hamlet, Village, County / MD, Town, City or Specialized Municipality). In most cases, this type of restructuring is often related to changes in the size of the population and political representation in an existing community.
- Adjusting municipal borders through the annexation of land. Annexation is commonly pursued when a municipality seeks additional land to accommodate growth. It should be noted that municipalities without contiguous borders who are interested in restructuring are typically directed toward this process to acquire a common boundary. An annexation process is facilitated through the Municipal Government Board.
- Merging (also known as amalgamating) is where two or more existing neighbouring municipalities are combined into one new municipality. This typically involves municipalities that have contiguous (or common) boundaries. Amalgamations can be initiated by municipalities or through the direction of the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

A few additional notes regarding the current suite of municipal structuring and restructuring options. First, although provincial legislation still allows for formation of a new municipality; the province has not approved the creation of a new one since 2001. Related to formation of municipalities, community identity is often tightly intertwined with the creation and existence of a legal municipal corporation. It is important to keep in mind that community identity can be established or maintained in all the different forms of local government. A single municipality may be comprised of several communities just as several municipalities can make up one larger community – a municipality is spatially delineated whereas a community is a social construct. Understanding and sensitivity needs to be shown toward community identity when one or more municipal corporations are exploring restructuring. Finally, although provincial legislation still enables one municipality to initiate an amalgamation process on other municipalities without prior engagement; over the last 25 years the province has only approved an amalgamation application where support from all municipalities involved has been demonstrated (GOA 2021a; GOA 2016).

### 6.2 Common Factors

Many communities undergo structural changes over their history, indeed, as noted in section 3.1, structural change has previously occurred throughout the region. There can be one or several factors that initiates an unincorporated community, an existing municipality, or a group of municipalities to explore alternatives to the existing set up or structure(s). Common reasons to engage in this discussion include, but are not limited to the need to address:

- changing economic factors (i.e. stagnation, decline, or growth in population and labour market, etc.);
- changing needs of residents and communities (local and regional);
- a need for greater political, administrative, or operational efficiency or effectiveness; this includes when regional collaboration is no longer deemed as efficient or to support local municipal governance effective (i.e. when collaboration becomes too big and cumbersome);
- severe deficiencies in the fiscal viability of a municipal corporation; and/or
- provincial initiated legislative reforms.

### 6.3 Governance Principles

In addition to the above, there is another set of considerations that may trigger discussions on a given municipal model. All levels of government are expected to adhere to the key governance principles involving the provision of:

- representation by population;
- a taxpayer's (or ratepayer's) right to representation;
- the public is best served when government is established closest to the people; and
- the three E's - equity, effectiveness, and efficiency in government.

When these principles can no longer be reasonably meet by a given model, it may also spur communities and municipal corporations into a discussion on restructuring (RMA 2015; GOA 2021a).



## 7. Scenario Evaluation

As previously noted, there are several structural and restructuring options available under the legislation (GOA 2020a; GOA 2020b). Further to the purpose of the study, the public engagement, discussions with the respective members of Council, and senior management teams; the study team found five structural options to be the most frequently queried about or relevant to the current conditions in the region. They are:

- Status Quo: No changes to the existing municipal types amongst the three municipalities.
- Amalgamation of all three municipalities into one new municipality.
- Amalgamation of the Village of Caroline and Clearwater County while the Town of Rocky Mountain House retains its existing status.
- Amalgamation of the Clearwater County and Town of Rocky Mountain House while the Village of Caroline retains its existing status.
- Dissolution of the Village of Caroline.

Forming additional municipalities in the region, altering the municipal status of only one municipality to another status, or pursuing an annexation were three scenarios ruled out at this time further to comments in Sections 6.1 and 6.2, as well as the general lack of interest expressed in these options.

The study team further considered how these five structural options impact the follows:

- Municipal Status and Boundaries
- Ward and Council Representation
- Administration
- Fiscal Capacity
- Service Delivery
- Relationships
- Other Benefits and Drawbacks

It should be noted that amalgamations are the product of a negotiation between municipalities and the structure of the resulting municipality will result in specific options for key activities such as taxation. Accordingly, the balance of the report describes the general direction and magnitude of changes anticipated under a set of assumptions with respect to a newly formed municipality.



## 7.1 Status Quo With Regional Cooperation

The status quo plus regional cooperation model reflects the current state of the municipalities as outlined under Section 3.1.1 and Section 4. This option does not involve any changes or transition, which is due in large part to the recently signed ICF (April 2021) which has set the municipalities back on a path of regional collaboration.

### 7.1.1 Municipal Status and Boundaries

Caroline, Clearwater, and Rocky Mountain House each retain their existing municipal status, boundaries, and population as described under Section 3.1.1, respectively a Village, a County (Municipal District), and a Town.

### 7.1.2 Ward and Council Representation

Voters in each municipality will continue to elect their separate Municipal Councils as described under Section 4.1 to represent them through the electoral systems (at-large, divisions, wards, or districts) within each set of boundaries.

### 7.1.3 Administration

Each municipality retains the current set up of a Chief Administrative Officer, Administration, and Departments (where applicable) as described under Section 4.2 to support their separate municipal governance and operations.



### 7.1.4 Service Delivery

As shown in Figure 7-1, municipal services in each municipality are provisioned through the existing local options and have been outlined previously under Sections 4.2 and 4.3. Shared services or regional provision of service where the municipalities have already reached an agreement to work together or pool resources will continue. The municipalities would explore new service delivery relationships when desired through the Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks.

**Figure 7-1 Service Provision under the Status Quo**



### 7.1.5 Relationships

The level of cooperation and type of collaboration between the three municipalities was recently re-affirmed through an Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework. The current set of agreements between the municipalities are outlined under Section 4.4.

### 7.1.6 Fiscal Considerations

Any financial considerations are best understood within the context of existing municipal finances; these are outlined below for Clearwater County, Rocky Mountain House, and Caroline.

- Clearwater County – The County has a long-term trend of low population growth with a small population decline between the last two censuses. As well, the local demographics suggest that, without significant in-migration, the population will likely continue to decline in the near to medium term. However, the County features a strong assessment base that is 46% higher on a per-capita basis and receives a larger proportion from non-residential properties than the average municipal district, along with lower-than-average mill rates. Clearwater County has also typically had a significant operating budget surplus each year and possesses an

accumulated surplus of over \$437 million, 11% higher than the average municipal district on a per-capita basis. Finally, the County has utilized just 3% of its allowable debt limit. This all suggests that the County is in a healthy financial position and has the capacity to withstand short-term population decline or financial challenges.

- **Rocky Mountain House** - The Town has a long-term trend of low population growth and local demographics suggest that continued low, stable growth is likely for the near to medium term. Compared to other Alberta towns, Rocky Mountain House's assessment base has been growing at a relatively high rate, although it remains 6% lower than average on a per-capita basis. However, it does collect a larger proportion of its taxes from non-residential properties than the average town. Rocky Mountain House has had an operating budget surplus each of the past five years and possesses an accumulated surplus of over \$100 million, 2% higher than the average town on a per-capita basis. The Town has also utilized just 16% of its allowable debt limit, while the Alberta town average is 32%. This all suggests that the Town is in a healthy financial position and has the capacity to withstand short-term financial challenges.
- **Caroline** - The Village has a long-term trend of negative population growth and local demographics suggest that population decline is likely to continue in the near to medium term. Although Caroline does receive a relatively high proportion of its property taxes from non-residential properties, its overall per-capita assessment base has declined 14% since 2011 while other Alberta villages have remained relatively stable. Caroline has been consistently operating with a budget shortfall when it did not receive sufficient provincial transfer payments. In its proposed 2021 budget, the Village states a fiscal plan that can maintain current service levels without further increases to municipal property taxes. However, the proposed budget is unable to fund many important capital projects and is not sustainable without increased revenue through taxation or assessment growth. Over the medium to longer term, without provincial grants or funding, Caroline will likely continue to incur budget shortfalls if it maintains current levels of services and infrastructure.

**Initial Costs of Change** – No significant expenses are expected if the municipalities maintain their current structure.

**Long-term Costs or Benefits** – While the concept of status quo implies no major changes, this option does present increased financial risk to Clearwater County. As outlined above, the Village of Caroline faces a significant infrastructure deficit, including required upgrades to the water and wastewater systems estimated to cost between \$3.8 million and \$11.1 million, and it lacks the financial capacity to address this deficit. If repairs/upgrades are not addressed now, the cost to do so will likely rise in the future as the infrastructure continues to degrade. Without intervention, the Village likely faces dissolution within the next 5-10 years, at which point it would be absorbed by Clearwater County who would then be responsible for the increased infrastructure costs. Additionally, under the status quo, both the County and the Town pay a disproportionately high amount of some shared expenses. For example, Caroline pays for just 1% of regional emergency management costs despite having 3% of the population and currently has 90% of its recreation funding paid by the County. The Town and County would continue supporting the Village under the status quo.

#### 7.1.7 Benefits and Drawbacks

Senior managers within each municipality were engaged by the Study Team to explore the potential benefits and drawbacks of the status quo scenario. Table 7-1 provides a summary of those discussions. Note that this feedback was collected prior to the new ICF being agreed to.

Table 7-1 Benefits and Drawbacks of the Status Quo

Benefits, Opportunities, and/or Advantages	Drawbacks, Barriers, and/or Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residents are accustomed to the status quo.</li> <li>• The communities provide different types of services (roads, recreation, water, wastewater, etc). This reflects the taxation levels and the lifestyle settings (i.e. urban, rural) under the status quo.</li> <li>• Resources in each municipality are familiar with their existing infrastructure and have the skills and expertise to address their services and assets under the current structure.</li> <li>• Close history of partnership between the municipalities. Good working level relationships exist between many areas in each municipality. Resources already help each other out when it makes sense to do so.</li> <li>• Agreements that benefit all communities have widespread support.</li> <li>• Most agreements are presently structured as tripartite agreements allowing for some differentiation as needed.</li> <li>• Collaboration can be accomplished under the Status Quo.</li> <li>• Areas of cooperation to still consider:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Water Distribution (one plant with branches out to areas)</li> <li>○ Wastewater /Sanitary sewer (same opportunity as water)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal agreements will still be needed under the Status Quo.</li> <li>• Need to revisit all the current agreements.           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Too many issues with current suite of “collaborative services”. Not really providing joint or “regional services”. All parties are paying, but only one party makes the decisions on the service.</li> <li>○ Under Fire and Waste, the regional service delivery concept has become too large and too expensive.</li> <li>○ Under Recreation, concerns that the funding model under agreement isn’t working or designed for a “regional” asset.</li> <li>○ The Village is not able to contribute their actual share of the various agreements they participate in – they pay less than 1%.</li> <li>○ Interpreting the various agreements over time becomes a challenge.</li> <li>○ Not all the current agreements have a dispute resolution process embedded within them right now.</li> <li>○ Municipalities have trouble getting all the information from the managing partner in a timely manner.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Economic Development and Tourism would be better served under a regional or single entity.</li> <li>• Would like to have more input and more collaboration than the status quo allows for on major systems and facilities in the region.</li> <li>• In terms of collaboration, the Councils are far away from having the same goals.</li> <li>• The current approach to addressing service collaboration at the governance table (i.e. thru three Municipal Councils) is a challenge.</li> </ul>



Benefits, Opportunities, and/or Advantages	Drawbacks, Barriers, and/or Disadvantages
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time and effort will continue to be required from Members of Council and Administrations toward servicing numerous formal cooperation agreements. These resources and their effort could be better put toward other interests such as pursuing growth opportunities in the region.</li> <li>• The municipalities spend a lot of time and effort invoicing each other and reconciling those invoices.</li> <li>• The Village doesn't have the resources or the tax base to support services to residents, offers very few services for the level of taxation rate, and struggles to build up the required funds for infrastructure projects in their own community.</li> <li>• Letting Village infrastructure and systems continue to degrade will be more expensive in the long run. Plus, there are safety considerations to account for in terms of the existing state of the Village's infrastructure / services.</li> <li>• The County and the Town will continue to need to prop up the Village with fiscal, administrative, and other in-kind supports to avoid the Village falling into a potential dissolution.</li> </ul>

## 7.2 Amalgamation of All Three Municipalities

The amalgamation of all three municipalities into a new single municipality in the region is an alternative to maintaining the status quo. There are two options available for amalgamation of all three municipalities:

- The formation of a new county (municipal district) that includes the current Town and Village as hamlets.
- The formation of a specialized municipality with the former Town constituting the urban service area and the village likely representing a rural residential node.

The most notable difference between the two structures is the ability of a specialized municipality to allow for rural and larger urban communities to coexist through, for example, the setting of differential mill rates across rural districts and urban centres than may reflect different levels of service or other unique features.

Given the size of the Town and differential in services between the Town and County, a specialized municipality and would likely be the most reasonable structure if the two pursued amalgamation.

### 7.2.1 Municipal Status and Boundaries

Under this governance approach Caroline, Clearwater, and Rocky Mountain House would not retain their existing municipal status and boundaries. Instead, a new municipal status, assumed here to be a specialized municipality as noted above, would be put forward replacing all three existing municipalities. This new municipality would have a population of roughly 19,094 and cover a total municipal area of 18,707.3 km<sup>2</sup>.

### 7.2.2 Ward and Council Representation

Voters would elect a single municipal council to represent them based a new set of electoral wards, divisions, or districts best determined by following a Ward Boundary Review for the new total municipal area. Best practice would be to ensure that the population of the newly formed municipality was evenly distributed across each ward in order to ensure equal representation. The most common number of wards in a county (municipal district) is seven. Wards in a county can vary widely from four to eleven; while wards in the six existing specialized municipalities vary from seven to eleven. A reeve is typically the chief elected official of a county, though the municipality can choose to use the title of mayor. In a specialized municipality, the title of the chief elected official depends on the type of specialized municipality formed.

If amalgamation occurs mid-term, an interim council would be created to serve until the next municipal election.

### 7.2.3 Administration

The administrative staff from the three former municipalities would be consolidated into a single administration with a single Chief Administrative Officer appointed.

All existing municipal staff automatically become a part of the new municipality.

A transition team comprised of personnel from the Village, County and Town as well as an external contractor would address consolidation of all resources and municipal systems, including the municipal main offices. In addition, this team would spearhead the reconciliation of departments, policies, bylaws, and service levels to serve a new single municipality in the local government form of a municipal district or specialized municipality.



## 7.2.4 Service Delivery

Figure 7-2 shows one presentation of municipal services combined from the three former municipalities. Any previously shared or regionalized services between the former municipalities would transition back to being managed and owned by a single municipality. This figure best represents the initial state post amalgamation as previously mentioned, all existing municipal staff automatically become a part of the new municipality.

Resources are tied to the service types and service levels in a municipality. After consolidation, the new municipality will need to evaluate its suite of services to ensure the best use of pooled resources and/or any necessary contracting services locally. Any potential reductions would occur over time and through attrition versus workforce reduction.

**Figure 7-2 Service Provision under a Single Municipal District**

General Administration and Internal Services	Consolidate roughly 28 FTEs, 2.5 Contractors, and re-negotiate any internal contracted IT services.
Roads and Transportation	Consolidate roughly 27.5 FTEs, seasonal staff, 5 Grading Contractors, all assets, and services.
Water and Wastewater	Consolidate roughly 10 FTEs and re-negotiate any contracted if services (if still required).
Solid Waste and Recyclables	Consolidate roughly 11 FTEs and re-negotiate contracts for garbage collection services.
Common Services	Consolidate roughly 26 FTEs, 15 plus PT/casual/ seasonal staff, all assets, and services.
Recreation and Parks	Consolidate roughly 9.5 FTEs, 10 PT/casual/ seasonal staff, all assets, services and 2 facilities with an additional 9 FTEs, 3 Contractors, 23 PT/casual/ seasonal staff.
Cemeteries	Consolidate roughly 1.43 FTEs, plus assess for volunteer support.
Family and Community Support Services (FCSS)	Consolidate roughly 2.3 FTEs. Regional service to dissolve. Area transitions back to being managed by a new single municipal owner.
Disaster and Emergency Management Planning	Consolidate roughly 1.55 FTEs and all EM planning services to transition to a new single municipal owner.
Fire and Rescue Services	Composite service remains with 6.45 FTEs and 80 Paid On-call Firefighters. The “regional” service dissolves. All services transition back to being managed by a new single municipal owner.
Policing	One police board for the new single municipal owner. Covering all 5 local detachments in the region.
Municipal Enforcement	Consolidate roughly 7 Community Peace Officers, 1.75 FTEs, and re-negotiate Animal Control Contract .
Land-Use / Ec Dev/ Agriculture	Consolidate roughly 11 P&D resources, 2 Ec .Dev Officers, 4.5 Agriculture FTEs, and re-negotiate or dissolve contracts for external planning services.
Culture, Libraries, Museums, Halls	Funding allocations managed by the new single municipal owner.

## 7.2.5 Relationships

The new single municipal district or specialized municipality would determine the level of cooperation and collaboration with the municipalities bordering it through negotiation and govern these relationships by formal and informal agreements. There would be no need for any administrative, cooperation, or funding agreements, formal or informal, between the former Village, County, or Town for service provision or otherwise.

## 7.2.6 Fiscal Considerations

**Initial Costs of Change** – Initial costs of amalgamating all three municipalities into a single entity will likely be highest of the available options. There is a belief that amalgamation will simply result in immediate large staffing reductions because multiple organizations are merged into one, but this is not always the case. Municipal staff are associated with the services provided to the community, so staff savings cannot be determined until the overall level of service has been defined through negotiation. There may be potential cost savings associated with eliminating duplications, but this cannot be realized until the new municipality has evaluated servicing and staff requirements. Meanwhile, additional time and resources are often required as existing processes and systems are changed and merged together.

**Long-term Costs or Benefits** – Amalgamation provides opportunity for long-term cost savings along two key dimensions.

The first is a reduction in legislative and general administration costs from merging three entities into one. Each municipality currently has its own legislative council and mayor that costs nearly \$1 million combined (Clearwater County spent \$550,000, Rocky Mountain House \$350,000, and Caroline \$50,000)<sup>3</sup>. They also operate each with their own separate CAO, at salaries of approximately \$250,000, \$200,000, and \$42,500 (contracted service) per year, and there is significant overlap in both the service departments operated by the existing municipalities and the senior managers who run those departments. Although these personnel would initially be retained, attrition through eventual retirements and transfers would likely lead to a reduction in management costs. In sum, if the new municipality reduced the size of its council to 9 legislative representatives at a cost of \$79,000 each (the rates currently applicable to the County), a single CAO position at an assumed salary of \$250,000, and there is one senior manager for each of six service departments (eliminating three duplicate positions) with an assumed salary of \$140,000, the total potential savings could be in the order of \$900,000 per year.

- The second savings aspect would be through service delivery. Offering services to a larger, singular entity provides an opportunity to capture efficiencies and find effective methods to lower costs. However, as the amalgamation would be subject to negotiation and result in a specialized municipality, there will be considerable pressure to maintain current levels of service – minimizing the possibility that large savings will be realized. If efficiencies were able to result in a 5% reduction in general administration costs, this would save the new municipality an additional \$425,000 per year.

Historic analysis of amalgamations has revealed that administrative costs have increased over time, which indicates that cost savings are not absolute with Amalgamation (BDTV 2017). Indeed, research on the matter suggests that "[c]osts generally increase after amalgamation, largely due a harmonization of costs and wages, and increases in service-efficiency remain elusive. The transitional costs after amalgamation are often quite high and, in some cases, reduce or even eliminate any anticipated immediate cost savings (Miljan)." Continual and consistent level of service reviews as part of the evolution of the new municipality could be used as a tool to manage costs.

Absorbing the Village of Caroline will add an existing multi-million-dollar infrastructure liability to the newly created municipality. However, the Town and County's combined financial health and relatively small size of the Village suggests that the debt will have a relatively small impact on overall finances. If the entire \$11.1 million water and

<sup>3</sup> Costs based on 2019 MFIS data

wastewater system upgrade expense were taken on as debt by the new municipality, it would require 15.8% of that municipality's allowable debt limit, nominally more than the typical 14.8% utilized by the average municipal district. If, instead, the new municipality paid for this liability from its annual operating budget, it could pay the expense with 13% of its annual operating revenues. While the infrastructure liability is significant, the Town and County appear to have the fiscal capacity to absorb this cost without significant hardship. Also, as noted above, addressing this liability in a timely manner is likely preferable to waiting for dissolution when costs may have increased.

In sum, the long-term financial benefits of a three-way amalgamation are unclear. However, the structure of a specialized municipality and associated negotiation process is unlikely to yield substantial changes in the relative tax and service expenditure ratio for the Town and County, minimizing the probability of large savings. There is historic evidence to suggest that in the absence of routine and rigorous service reviews, early savings in administration may not persist.

#### 7.2.7 Benefits and Drawbacks

Senior managers within each municipality were engaged by the Study Team to explore the potential benefits and drawbacks of this amalgamation scenario. Table 7-2 provides a summary of those discussions.

**Table 7-2 Benefits and Drawbacks of a Single New Municipality**

Benefits, Opportunities, and/or Advantages	Drawbacks, Barriers, and/or Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The communities are already so intertwined now. Each one has numerous agreements with the other. It's to the point that it now makes sense to consider amalgamation.</li> <li>• More cooperation at the working level than the Councillors are aware of. Plenty of informal interdepartmental relationships between the municipalities. Some examples include:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Town flushes the sewer lines in the hamlets. In turn, the County mixes the Town's salt and sand mixture requirements.</li> <li>○ The County's Weed Officer (County's Ag Services) handles the Town's annual weed inspections with no compensation. This has been a good neighbour partnership for many years between them.</li> <li>○ The RMH and the County Municipal Enforcement Officers help each other out regularly and especially during Tourism season.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Municipal boundaries are arbitrary lines that don't represent the business or trading area of the region. An amalgamated municipality will provide</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Town and County are viable municipalities well into the future.</li> <li>• Don't see operational redundancies between the three municipalities which each describe their operations as lean. The workload that exists in each municipality doesn't go away with an amalgamation. The new municipality will need to pool all the existing resources at minimum.</li> <li>• Transition would be very hard. Issues under transition are:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Each municipality has their own way of doing things i.e. there are different approaches to the same tasks; similar but different systems, workflows, reporting structures, resourcing, bylaws, policies, and service levels. Need to reconcile these matters.</li> <li>○ Different expectations and standards between an urban and rural setting.</li> <li>○ Sees a need to maintain separate tax classes for rural and urban residents.</li> <li>○ Employees are worried about losing their job or status in a new municipal structure.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Benefits, Opportunities, and/or Advantages	Drawbacks, Barriers, and/or Disadvantages
<p>more consistent and reliable services to the trading area served.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better access as one municipality to provincial funds / grants for infrastructure that utilized per capita calculations.</li> <li>• Better coordination streamlined public works and infrastructure processes under one municipality.</li> <li>• True pooling of resources and development of shared priorities for one municipality.</li> <li>• One municipality in the region would be simpler and there would be efficiencies / benefits in having:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ One Council vs three governing Councils. The number of Councillors in the region is huge from a per capita perspective. A new council made up of seven Councillors would still have room to grow given the current regional population.</li> <li>○ one set of internal services and operational departments (i.e. administration) vs three administrations.</li> <li>○ One set of boards and committees (each municipality has their own set presently).</li> <li>○ Governance and administrative decision-making would become more streamlined under one municipality.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Initially an amalgamation would difficult. Eventually, it would create a regionally identity over time.</li> <li>• The province is reducing MSI funding to municipalities, pooling resources in the region is the best way forward for residents.</li> <li>• There are several tax-exempt properties in the Town that service the whole region. The Town calculates to this to be ~ \$1.5M annually in waived property tax for things such as schools, churches, non-profits. These costs would be better shared under an amalgamation scenario.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Additional supervisory and training expectations will be required.</li> <li>○ A critical infrastructure assessment will be needed for all assets.</li> <li>• Don't think this scale of amalgamation is in the horizon for the foreseeable future.</li> <li>• Concerned about the:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ amount of time and effort that would be spent on maintenance and upgrades to the urban areas over the rural areas.</li> <li>○ how much a new municipality would be willing to spend toward an urban centre.</li> <li>○ the tax rates disproportionately increasing for rural residents under this amalgamation scenario.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The County is not in need of support from its neighbours.</li> </ul>

Benefits, Opportunities, and/or Advantages	Drawbacks, Barriers, and/or Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There could be infrastructure trade-offs between the County and the Town that benefit the region.</li> <li>• Areas of cooperation under status quo also play out under as improved service delivery under amalgamation           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Consider establishing a true municipal Library system in the region, apart from Parkland Library System.</li> <li>○ Emergency Management would be better addressed under one entity as emergency issues cross borders.</li> <li>○ Water and wastewater could be better coordinated under one entity. A water distribution could be achieved with the one plant and main branches out to most areas. Wastewater / Sanitary sewer would provide similar opportunity as water. The province pays for 90% of a regional alliance for these services.</li> <li>○ Under one municipality, policing costs would be better distributed and more transparent for residents. Communication with policing would more accurately reflect how this type of service operates under this scenario.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Economic Development and Tourism would be better served under a single entity.</li> </ul>	

## 7.3 Amalgamation of County and Town

The amalgamation of Clearwater County and Rocky Mountain House was also examined by the Study Team. As noted in the previous section, a specialized municipality is likely the most reasonable structure for the newly amalgamated entity.

### 7.3.1 Municipal Status and Boundaries

Under this scenario, Clearwater County and Rocky Mountain House would not retain their existing municipal status and boundaries. A municipal status for the new area of a Municipal District or Specialized Municipality, with an accompanying new name, and geographic boundaries. This alternate municipality would have a population of roughly 18,582 and cover a total municipal area of 18,705 km<sup>2</sup>.



### 7.3.2 Ward and Council Representation

Voters in the County and the Town would elect a single municipal council to represent them based on a new set of electoral wards, divisions, or districts determined by a Ward Boundary Review. The most common number of wards in a county (municipal district) is seven. Wards in a county can vary widely from four to eleven; while wards in the six specialized municipalities vary from seven to eleven. A reeve is typically the chief elected official of a county, though the municipality can choose to use the title of mayor. In a specialized municipality, the title of the chief elected official depends on the type of specialized municipality formed.

If amalgamation occurs mid-term, an interim council would be created to serve until the next municipal election.

### 7.3.3 Administration

The administrative staff from the two former municipalities would be consolidated into a single administration with a single Chief Administrative Officer appointed.

A transition team comprised of the personnel from the County and Town as well as an external contractor would address consolidation of all resources and municipal systems, including municipal main offices. In addition, this team would spearhead the reconciliation of departments, policies, bylaws, and service levels to serve a new single Municipal District or Specialized Municipality.

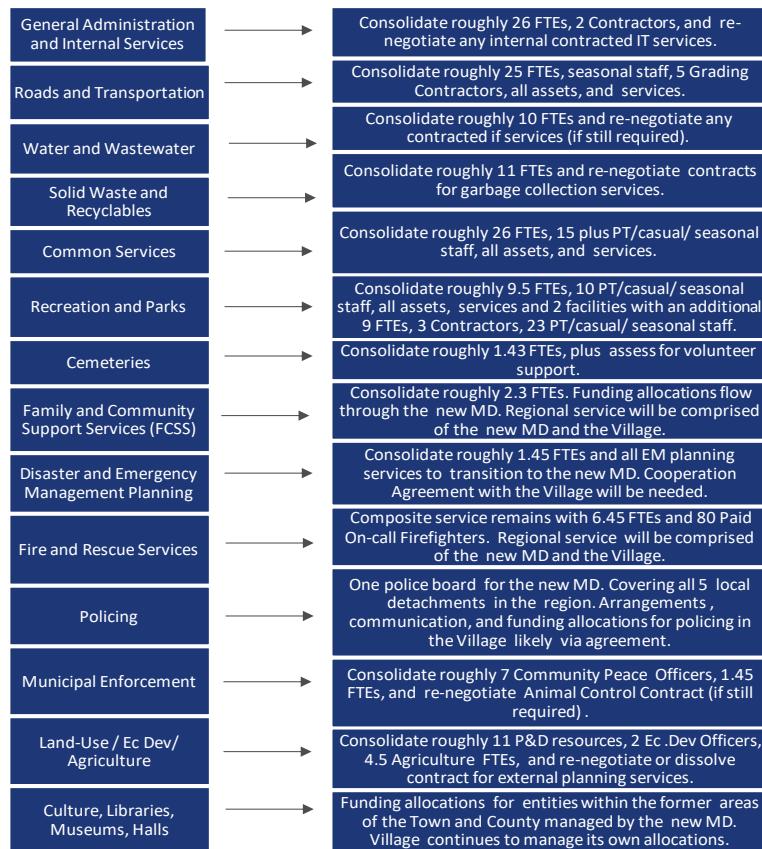
### 7.3.4 Service Delivery

This scenario involves the two larger and well-established municipalities. The service provision presented under Figure 7-3 below is very similar to Figure 7-1. Shared or regionalized services where the Town and County was named as partners would need to be adjusted. These services would likely still be structured the same way. For example, services such as Fire and Rescue will still require an arrangement to be made with the Village. This figure best represents the initial state post amalgamation. As previously mentioned, all existing municipal staff automatically become a part of the new municipality.

Resources are tied to the service types and service levels in a municipality. After consolidation, the new municipality will need to evaluate its suite of services to ensure the best use of pooled resources and/or any necessary contracting services locally. Potential reductions would most likely occur over time and through attrition versus workforce reduction.



Figure 7-3 Service Provision under an Amalgamated County and Town



### 7.3.5 Relationships

There would be no need for any administrative, cooperation, or funding agreements, formal or informal, between the former County and Town for service provision or otherwise. The level of cooperation and collaboration between the new Municipal District/Specialized Municipality and the Village of Caroline would continue to be determined through negotiation and governed by formal and informal agreements.

### 7.3.6 Fiscal Considerations

**Initial Costs of Change** – The costs of amalgamating the County and Town into a single entity will be greater than maintaining the status quo. There is a belief that amalgamation will simply result in immediate large staffing reductions because multiple organizations are merged into one, but this is not always the case. Municipal staff are associated with the services provided to the community, so staff savings cannot be determined until the overall level of service has been defined. There may be potential cost savings associated with eliminating duplications, but this cannot be realized until the new municipality has evaluated servicing and staff requirements. Meanwhile, additional time and resources are often required as existing processes are changed and merged into new processes.

**Long-term Costs or Benefits** – Amalgamation provides opportunity for long-term cost savings in two key dimensions.

- The first is a reduction in legislative and general administration costs from merging the two entities into one. Clearwater County currently has its own legislative council and mayor that costs nearly \$550,000 per year while Rocky Mountain House also has its own legislative council and mayor that costs nearly \$350,000 per year<sup>4</sup>. Although the newly formed entity may have a council that is larger than any current single council, a reduction in annual costs is likely. The new municipality would also operate with a single CAO position, providing additional cost savings.
- There is also significant overlap in the service departments operated by the County and the Town and the senior managers who run those departments. Although these personnel would initially be retained, attrition through eventual retirements and transfers would likely lead to a reduction in management costs. In sum, if the new municipality reduced the size of its council to 9 legislative representatives at a cost of \$79,000 each (the rates currently applicable to the County), a single CAO position at an assumed salary of \$250,000, and there is one senior manager for each of six service departments (eliminating three duplicate positions) with an assumed salary of \$140,000, the total potential savings could be in the order of \$800,000 per year.
- The second savings aspect would be through service delivery. Offering services to a larger, singular entity provides an opportunity to capture efficiencies and find effective methods to lower costs. However, as the amalgamation would be subject to negotiation and result in a specialized municipality, there will be considerable pressure to maintain current levels of service – minimizing the possibility that large savings will be realized. If efficiencies were able to result in a 5% reduction in general administration costs, this would save the new municipality an additional \$405,000 per year.

In sum, the long-term financial benefits of an amalgamation between the Town and County are unclear. The structure of a specialized municipality and associated negotiation process is unlikely to yield substantial changes in the relative tax and service expenditure ratio for the Town and County, minimizing the probability of large savings. Also, as noted in section 7.2.6, maintaining cost-savings may be problematic.

The Village of Caroline, which is not amalgamated in this scenario, will likely continue to experience an infrastructure deficit. Although the Village has a proposed budget that balances revenues and expenditures over the next five years, no funds will likely be available for major capital projects. If the Village does eventually dissolve, the financial liability absorbed by the newly formed amalgamated municipality will likely be above the estimate (\$11.1 million) today.

### 7.3.7 Benefits and Drawbacks

Senior managers within each municipality were engaged by the Study Team to explore the potential benefits and drawbacks of this scenario. Table 7-3 provides a summary of those discussions.

**Table 7-3 Benefits and Drawbacks of the County and Town Amalgamating**

Benefits, Opportunities, and/or Advantages	Drawbacks, Barriers, and/or Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The same potential benefits, opportunities, and advantages outlined under Table 7-1 were made for this amalgamation scenario between the County and the Town.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The same potential basic drawbacks, disadvantages, and/or barriers outlined under Table 7-1 were made for this amalgamation scenario between the County and the Town.</li> </ul>

<sup>4</sup> Costs based on 2019 MFIS data

Benefits, Opportunities, and/or Advantages	Drawbacks, Barriers, and/or Disadvantages
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In addition, these considerations were shared specifically under this scenario:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ An amalgamation without the Village doesn't make much sense as the potential benefits of an amalgamation are not as great.</li> <li>○ The restructured municipality in this case would still be supporting Caroline in some way as the Village would be in no better position to pay their representative share under collaboration of services.</li> <li>○ These two municipalities have different priorities right now.</li> <li>○ The Town has some debt that is a concern to some.</li> <li>○ Both communities would experience some potential loss of identity and loss of representation.</li> <li>○ There will still be a need to have agreements with the Village.</li> <li>○ The new municipality comprised of the former County and the Town will continue to need to prop up the Village with fiscal, administrative, and other in-kind supports to avoid the Village falling into a potential dissolution.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



## 7.4 Amalgamation of Village and County

The amalgamation of the Village of Caroline and Clearwater County is another alternative to maintaining the status quo. In this scenario, the Village would be absorbed as a hamlet in the County whereas the Town of Rocky Mountain House would continue to exist as a separate municipality with its own Municipal Council, administrative staff, and municipal systems.

### 7.4.1 Municipal Status and Boundaries

In this case, the Village of Caroline gives up its status as a village and reverts to a hamlet in Clearwater County. The boundaries of the hamlet are expected to be identical the Village presently and fall within the greater boundaries of the County. No municipal name change to Clearwater County would be required and Caroline would join Leslieville, Condor, and Nordegg as another hamlet or urban service area within the County. The new population count for the County would be roughly 12,459 with a new total municipal area of 18,694 km<sup>2</sup>.

### 7.4.2 Ward and Council Representation

The Village of Caroline would no longer have its own municipal council. Instead, voters of Caroline would elect a member of council as a part of Clearwater County. The seven electoral divisions for the County would be adjusted to include the area of Caroline. As the area of Caroline aligns closely to one or two existing electoral divisions within the County; a full Ward Boundary Review of the County would not likely be necessary to incorporate the Village into the existing electoral division system. Caroline residents would most likely see one representative under one division.

If amalgamation occurs mid-term, an interim council would be created to serve until the next municipal election.

### 7.4.3 Administration

There would no longer be a separate Chief Administrative Officer for Caroline. The administrative staff from the Village would be consolidated into Clearwater County and Caroline's municipal office could be retained for all residents to access for payments or queries.

A transition team comprised of personnel from the County and Village would address consolidation of all resources and municipal systems. An external contractor may still be desired for this team. This team would reconcile the Village's policies, bylaws, and service levels to primarily align with what is in place in the County.



#### 7.4.4 Service Delivery

The County becomes responsible for the delivery of municipal programs and services in the Hamlet of Caroline. Shared or regionalized services where the Village was named as the third partner would need to be adjusted.

These services would likely still be structured the same way. For example, services such Fire and Rescue will still require an arrangement to be made with the Town. The service information presented under Figure 7-4 below represents what is to be taken into the County upon a merger and represents the initial state post amalgamation. As previously mentioned, all existing municipal staff automatically become a part of the new municipality.

After consolidation, the County will need to evaluate the suite of services involving the Hamlet to ensure the best use of pooled resources and/or any necessary contracting services. Under this scenario, an improvement to service delivery in Caroline is anticipated as the Hamlet will have access to more resources and services as a part of the County.

**Figure 7-4 Service Provision under an Amalgamated Village and County**

General Administration and Internal Services	Consolidate 2 FTEs, 0.5 Contractor, and re-negotiate any internal contracted IT services
Roads and Transportation	Consolidate roughly 2.5 FTEs, seasonal staff, all assets, and services.
Water and Wastewater	All assets and services transfer as-is to Clearwater County.
Solid Waste and Recyclables	Transition Village garbage collection services to the Clearwater County. Re-negotiate contracted services (if still required).
Common Services	All assets and services transfer as-is to the Clearwater County.
Recreation and Parks	All assets and services transfer as-is to the Clearwater County.
Cemeteries	1 Cemetery with services transfers as-is to the Clearwater County.
Family and Community Support Services (FCSS)	Regional service will be comprised of the Clearwater County and the Town.
Disaster and Emergency Management Planning	All disaster and EM planning responsibilities transfer to Clearwater County.
Fire and Rescue Services	Composite service remains with 6.45 FTEs and 80 Paid On-call Firefighters. Station 15 transfer to Clearwater County. Regional service will be comprised of Clearwater County and the Town.
Policing	Arrangements, communication, and funding allocations for policing shift to the Clearwater County.
Municipal Enforcement	Re-negotiate Animal Control Contract.
Land-Use / Ec Dev/ Agriculture	Re-negotiate planning services contract (if still required).
Culture, Libraries, Museums, Halls	Funding allocations shift to Clearwater County.

#### 7.4.5 Relationships

There would be no need for any administrative, cooperation, or funding agreements, formal or informal, between the County and the former Village for service provision or otherwise. Any existing agreements involving the Village would have to be reviewed and adjusted to reflect the change in governance to Clearwater County. The level of cooperation and collaboration between the County (which now accounts for the hamlet), the Town, or other neighbouring municipalities would continue to be determined through negotiation and governed by formal and informal agreements.

#### 7.4.6 Fiscal Considerations

**Initial Costs of Change** – The cost of amalgamating the County and Village into a single entity will be a greater cost than maintaining the status quo. There may be potential cost savings associated with eliminating duplications, but this cannot be realized until the new municipality has evaluated servicing and staff requirements. Meanwhile, additional time and resources are often required as existing processes are changed and merged into new processes.

**Long-term Costs or Benefits** – Amalgamation provides opportunity for long-term cost savings in two key dimensions. The first is a reduction in legislative and general administration costs from merging the two entities into one. Clearwater County currently has its own legislative council and mayor that costs nearly \$550,000 per year while Caroline also has its own legislative council and mayor that costs nearly \$50,000 per year<sup>5</sup>. Although the newly formed entity may have a council that is larger than any current single council, a small annual savings may be realized. The new municipality would also operate with one CAO, avoiding the contracted cost of approximately \$42,500 currently being paid by the Village. There is also significant overlap in the service departments operated by each separate municipality. Amalgamating may provide for small administrative savings and allow the termination of service contracts currently used for provision of some Village services.

The second savings aspect would be through service delivery. Offering services to a larger, singular entity provides an opportunity to capture efficiencies and find effective methods to lower costs. In sum, if improved efficiencies facilitated a reduction in Village general administration costs, this could save in the order of \$40,000 per year. However, as noted in section 7.2.6, finding and maintaining cost-savings related to efficiency may be problematic.

Absorbing the Village of Caroline will add additional debt to Clearwater County, along with an existing multi-million-dollar infrastructure liability. However, due to the financial health of Clearwater County and relatively small size of the Village of Caroline, the County appears to have ample fiscal capacity to manage the amalgamation of the two municipalities when coupled with the additional revenues that will come from the former village.

Table 7-4 outlines current debt levels and shows that, as a result of amalgamation, Clearwater County's total debt as a percentage of allowable debt and total debt service costs (the annual cost to pay for the debt) as a percentage of the allowable limit, would increase by just 0.3% each and remain well below the average for Alberta municipal districts.

<sup>5</sup> Costs based on 2019 MFIS data

**Table 7-4 Municipal Debt and the Impact of Clearwater County/Caroline Amalgamation**

Community	Debt Limit (\$)	Total Debt (\$)	Debt as a % of Debt Limit	Debt Service Limit (\$)	Total Debt Service Costs (\$)	Debt Service Costs as a % of Debt Service Limit
Caroline	1,673,862	268,340	16.0%	278,997	44,021	15.8%
Clearwater County	85,127,693	2,229,147	2.6%	14,187,949	455,617	3.2%
Combined	86,242,907	2,497,487	2.9%	14,373,838	499,638	3.5%

\*Based on 2019 MFIS values

Similarly, the amalgamation would have only a nominal effect on the County's annual operating budget (Table 7-5). Based on current Caroline assessment values and County tax rates, amalgamation is estimated to increase County revenues by \$746,000 (1.2%) and increase expenses by \$1,094,479 (3.4%), resulting in an approximate net budget impact of \$348,000 (0.6% of total budget) for the County.

**Table 7-5 Impact of County/Village Amalgamation on the Annual Operating Budget**

Community	Operating Revenue	Operating Expenses	Net Surplus
Caroline	\$ 746,000	\$ 1,094,479	\$ - 348,479
Clearwater County	\$ 60,479,977	\$ 52,800,055	\$ 7,679,922
Combined	\$ 61,226,242	\$ 54,595,428	\$ 7,331,443

\*Based on 2019 County MFIS values and Caroline's proposed 2021 operating budget

Although the potential \$11.1 million expense to upgrade Village infrastructure is substantial, financing the amount with debt would bring total County debt to 16% of its allowable limit (in line with the average Alberta Municipal District debt/debt limit ratio of 15%) and add roughly \$500,000 in interest costs per year.

Alternatively, spreading the infrastructure deficit expense over three years would increase the County's \$35 million in annual infrastructure spending by less than 10% and still allow a net revenue surplus. Amalgamation does not appear to materially impact the annual budget of Clearwater County.

#### 7.4.7 Benefits and Drawbacks

Senior managers within each municipality were engaged by the Study Team to explore the potential benefits and drawbacks of the amalgamation of the Village and County scenario. Table 7-6 provides a summary of those discussions.

**Table 7-6 Benefits and Drawbacks of the Village and County Amalgamating**

Benefits, Opportunities, and/or Advantages	Drawbacks, Barriers, and/or Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Close history of partnership between the Village and the County. The Village has come to the County for assistance on several occasions over the years. Especially, when there hasn't been a CAO. There is often some level of ongoing support offered to the Village.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Village will lose its independence and the current level of political representation i.e. council members.</li> </ul>

Benefits, Opportunities, and/or Advantages	Drawbacks, Barriers, and/or Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better ability to fund and address all infrastructure matters in the community as a part of the County. The Village infrastructure systems would be upgraded in more a reasonable time as a part of the County. There could be trade-offs that benefit the Village and the County. For example, there are industrial land lots and commercial lots (10 Highway corridor) in the Village Area. Presently, the Village's water and waste services, etc. are not up to snuff to support the desired use of land or any development.</li> <li>• The County and the Village have similar types of infrastructure and services for the most part, making an amalgamation scenario more straightforward and less daunting.</li> <li>• Staff from Caroline would be of value in the County. The Village office could be maintained for transition and beyond for rural citizens to access for certain services or payments.</li> <li>• The County already has a number of small communities within its boundaries. So, this pairing makes the most sense. Other hamlets have preserved their identity as a part of the County. This scenario has more positives going for it over the other amalgamation scenarios.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Village has an infrastructure debt. A critical infrastructure assessment will be needed for all assets.</li> <li>• County would have to adjust the next ten-year capital planning cycle to address some of the Village's infrastructure such as roads and wastewater.</li> <li>• To add more geographic area and another hamlet to a municipality adds to infrastructure / public works activities and expenditures in County operations. This will have to be balanced with remote regions of the County that have already expressed they would like more of these types of services in their communities.</li> <li>• There will still be a need to have agreements with the Town if the County and Caroline were to pursue a restructuring.</li> </ul>

## 7.5 Dissolution of the Village

The final scenario examined by the Study Team involves the dissolution of the Village of Caroline into the County. In general, the dissolution process is driven by Municipal Affairs and undertaken when a community is no longer financially sustainable. Prior to initiating a dissolution, a municipality must undergo a viability review and requires a majority vote from the electorate to proceed to the Minister of Municipal Affairs for consideration.

The Village has advised that dissolution is unlikely to occur in the immediate term (i.e. within the next five years). However, there are concerns that this scenario may be before the community within ten-years time. For that reason, this scenario is being presented as a part of this study.

The outcome of this scenario is highly similar to the previously discussed amalgamation of the Village and County with the following exceptions:

- Unlike an amalgamation, the Village will likely have less negotiating power during this process as dissolution is generally an indicator that a municipality is otherwise without options. Accordingly, discussions with respect to services, taxation, etc. may be less balanced than under a voluntary amalgamation.



- The infrastructure deficit will likely have increased during the time that elapses between the writing of this study and dissolution. Accordingly, the financial burden placed on the County will likely be greater than it is today.

Under this scenario, the Village ceases to operate as a separate municipality with its own Municipal Council, administrative staff, and municipal systems. Similar to amalgamation, post dissolution Caroline would be governed by Clearwater County.

#### 7.5.1 Benefits and Drawbacks

Senior managers within each municipality were engaged by the Study Team to explore the potential benefits and drawbacks of the dissolution scenario. Table 7-7 provides a summary of those discussions.

**Table 7-7 Benefits and Drawbacks of the Dissolution of the Village**

Benefits, Opportunities, and/or Advantages	Drawbacks, Barriers, and/or Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many of the same potential benefits, opportunities, and advantages as outlined under Table 7-6 were noted for a dissolution scenario.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many of the same potential drawbacks, disadvantages, and/or barriers as outlined under Table 7-6 were noted for a dissolution scenario.</li> <li>• In addition, these considerations were highlighted specifically under this scenario:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Dissolving the municipality is not desirable.</li> <li>○ There are safety considerations to account for residents in terms of the existing state of the Village's infrastructure / services.</li> <li>○ Letting the Village's infrastructure and systems continue to degrade will be more expensive in the long run to the absorbing municipality.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



## 8. Recommendation

### 8.1 Key Findings

Municipal corporations evolve just as communities evolve. Changes in community demographics, the economy, local expectations, legislation, or the organization's ability to continue to meet with fundamental governance principals may lead to discussion of the alternative forms of local government. The review of the current characteristics and conditions of the municipalities in this region identifies these key findings:

- The demographic make-up of the three municipal jurisdictions differ:
  - The County is predominantly rural setting that has experienced a modest positive growth over the long run despite a small population decline between the last two censuses. Future growth will likely be driven by in-migration to the region.
  - The Town is predominantly an urban setting that is experiencing stable growth and is likely to continue to see stable growth for the near to medium term. Overall, the Town also has a long-term trend of low population growth.
  - The Village is a small urban setting that has seen a few new residents come to reside in the area in recent years. The population is anticipated to decline in the near to medium term and with that, the Village is not likely to have enough population to remain a self-sustaining community. Overall, the Village has a long-term trend of slow negative population growth.
- The municipal corporations of the County and the Town are financially healthy and stable organizations that have the capacity to raise revenues and borrow, if necessary. These two entities have:
  - access to the necessary resources and grants to sustain the current inventory of municipal assets and services to their respective residents;
  - an assessment base that is in better position than the provincial average municipal district or town, respectively;
  - taxes that are commensurate with the type of services provided to their ratepayers; and
  - accrued little or no infrastructure deficits.
- The municipal corporation of the Village can address regular operational needs but can no longer adequately address the community's capital needs. This entity has:
  - challenges maintaining and accessing the necessary resources and grants to sustain the current inventory of municipal assets and services to residents;
  - a consistently below average assessment base per capita in comparison to all other villages in Alberta.
  - relatively high taxes for the type of services provided to ratepayers; and
  - has a considerable amount of infrastructure deficit.

Overall, the key finding is that the municipal corporations of the County and Town are able to withstand the current conditions and some shifting responsibilities within the status quo, efficiently and effectively, if so desired. While, the Village is no longer in as sustainable or healthy position, as in the past. Shifting municipal responsibilities and socio-economic conditions (such as funding of police services, declining assessment base, and lack of substantial population growth) further hinder this specific municipal corporation's ability to seek out a sustainable fiscal path

forward. Without a marked change in the composition of the community or an influx of provincial grants within the next five years, the municipal corporation of the Village of Caroline is likely on the path to dissolution in the near future at which point the cost to the County will likely exceed those that would be incurred in the near term.

It must be noted that present condition of the Village is not the fault of staff or elected representatives. The reality of small urban communities in Alberta has been shifting for some time and will continue to do so. Many small communities struggle to maintain a population or economic base as young people are often drawn away to pursue higher education and employment opportunities. Joining with the County will allow the residents of Caroline to continue to live in their community and adhere to the values and identity they hold dear.

## 8.2 Selection of the Preferred Recommendation

There is no single ideal form of local government in Alberta. Instead, each form permitted under the MGA provides some benefits and has some limitations. Councils must weigh the trade-offs for their communities when exploring the restructuring options. The study team selected five options to present in response to the key findings, the public engagement, and discussions with members of Councils as well as senior management teams:

- Status Quo: No changes to the existing municipal types amongst the three municipalities.
- Amalgamation of all three municipalities into one new municipality.
- Amalgamation of the Village of Caroline and Clearwater County while the Town of Rocky Mountain House retains its existing status.
- Amalgamation of the Clearwater County and Town of Rocky Mountain House while the Village of Caroline retains its existing status.
- Dissolution of the Village of Caroline.

This section of the report provides a brief situational recap of these options from the Study Team's perspective:

### 8.2.1 Status Quo

Maintaining the status quo plus regional cooperation appeals to many stakeholders in the region. This is the "business as usual" approach and does not involve any changes to the three existing municipal corporations.

Two out of the three municipalities, the County, and the Town, are in good positions to continue to carry on serving their communities under this model. While, the third municipality in the region, the Village of Caroline, has been struggling. The Village's infrastructure deficit (i.e. roads, water, wastewater, etcetera) exceeds the municipal corporation's capacity to address these matters, which are affecting the quality of life of residents and visitors in the Village. Further to this, the challenges facing the Village already impact the County and the Town. Both municipalities are already providing support to the Village beyond a "good neighbour" policy.

All three municipalities are engaged in inter-municipal relationships, funding partnerships, and/or regional collaboration within the region. These opportunities can assist with establishing more coordination and achieve economies of scale under service delivery. However, these arrangements are most effective when existing municipalities are looking to enhance or develop similar types of services and have the resources to pool together.

While the concept of status quo implies no major changes, this option does present several concerns:

- Without a marked change or influx of funds, the Village appears to be on a path to dissolution within the decade. For the absorbing municipality, which will be the County, the cost to repair and upgrade the essential services (i.e. water and sewer) for residents in this area will likely only increase in the future.

- The neighbouring municipalities of the County and Town will need to go on supporting the Village with resources for select municipal functions and/or funding exemptions for the current suite of agreements. As mentioned in section 4.3, both the County and the Town pay a disproportionately high amount of some shared expenses with Caroline paying just 1% of regional emergency management costs despite having 3% of the population and currently has 90% of its recreation funding paid for by the County.
- The Village has been actively seeking solutions to the lack of financial capacity to address services. However, without some assurance or a better chance of accessing higher amounts of revenue and/or provincial grants; the municipal corporation is unable to do so and has expressed that they would like assistance through a governance solution versus standing by and watching the community decline and deteriorate.
- Even with inter-municipal or cooperation arrangements, improvements and/or efficiencies gained through this type of support is not enough to *offset the issues* facing the Village.

### 8.2.2 Amalgamation of All Three Municipalities

The option most often talked about in the region is the amalgamation of all three municipalities into a new single municipality. This governance scenario offers a solution to address the needs of residents and the municipal corporation in Caroline. There would be less governance conflicts within the region and no need to expend time and effort towards agreement, Inter-municipal or otherwise, within the region

As noted in other amalgamation studies, the benefits of an amalgamation are most often realized when municipalities are close to (or seeking to) operate as a single community to achieve a number of shared objectives for residents. Amalgamations allow for streamlined decision-making, policies, bylaws, and processes; as well as reduce internal municipal impediments to coordination. In addition, as service delivery at the local level evolves and residents' expectations indicate an interest in more services or for services to extend beyond municipal boundaries, amalgamations become more appealing to support these types of objectives.

There is a preconceived notion that amalgamations benefit communities through cost savings. Rarely, does an amalgamation realize any substantial savings for communities in the short term as there are front-end transition costs associated with merging municipalities into a single entity. However, communities can realize some long-term savings. In this instance, there are some long-term savings expected for legislative and general administration services upon merging the three entities into one. In terms of the provision of municipal services, these activities are tied to population size, municipal setting (i.e. rural / urban), and municipal geography. If there is considerable pressure to maintain current levels and types of service in an amalgamation, there is minimal chance that large savings will be realized.

The concept of an amalgamation of all three municipalities presents these challenges at this time:

- This option will likely be the highest cost scenario presented for consideration.
- The communities appear to have different priorities currently. It is not clear if there are enough shared operational objectives or a shared vision between them to consider operating as a single municipality at this time.
- There are concerns about service types and levels between rural and urban settings under an amalgamation.
- The benefits that can be realized from this option are longer-term (i.e. 20+ years) in the making.
- This scale of amalgamation is significant. The process will take many years to unfold and require a dedicated level of commitment by the three municipalities to prepare the application for amalgamation. In all likelihood, this process will take more than one municipal term to prepare and provide the submission.

- Although, this scenario can address the issues in Caroline; this scenario will take years to achieve and there is, at least, one other less involved option available.

### 8.2.3 Amalgamation of County and Town

Another, far less likely, scenario is an option focused specifically on the County and the Town. Under this scenario the Village would continue to exist as a separate municipality with its own Municipal Council, administrative staff, and municipal systems. In large part, this scenario was raised in response to concerns surrounding the relationship between the two larger municipalities in the region and the Village's infrastructure deficit.

Comments as previously outlined under Section 8.2.2 equally apply to an amalgamation option between the Town and the County. In addition, the costs of amalgamating the County and Town into a single entity will be greater than maintaining the status quo and only slightly less than an amalgamation of all three municipalities.

The most significant downside to this option is that it does not recognize or improve the situation for residents in the Village. Ultimately, it still requires ongoing support to be provided to the Village by a newly formed municipality made up of the former County and Town. Therefore, this new municipality would still be paying more of the shared expenses with Caroline despite the Village having 3% of the population in the region.

### 8.2.4 Amalgamation between the County and the Village

Of the five scenarios, an amalgamation of the Village of Caroline and Clearwater County is the most promising option to pursue. In this scenario, the Village would be absorbed as a hamlet in the County whereas the Town of Rocky Mountain House would continue to exist as a separate municipality with its own Municipal Council, administrative staff, and municipal systems. The County and Town would continue working together through the intermunicipal relationship.

The general amalgamation comments outlined under Section 8.2.2 remain true. However, in this instance, the Village's circumstances result in a *different type of discussion*. Add to this, when this scenario is positioned against the status quo, there are number of benefits that come out above the other options:

- This is a much smaller scale amalgamation. The Village and County have a close working level relationship and the County has a good understanding of the situation and services in the Village already. The negotiation and application process for this amalgamation will likely be the simplest and fastest to execute compared to the other scenarios.
- The cost of amalgamating the County and Village into a single entity is likely still a greater cost than maintaining the status quo in the short term. Having said that, the County would no longer have to pay for shared services for Caroline through Tripartite agreements and the financial assessment suggests that amalgamation would have only a nominal effect on the County's annual operating budget.
- The County is in a position to more efficiently and effectively administer municipal services to this area.
- This amalgamation scenario appears to benefit Caroline, the County, and even the Town. As the Town (along with the County) will cease having to cover for the shared expenses of Caroline through the Tripartite arrangements.
- The Village recognizes its infrastructure needs already exceeds the municipal corporation's capacity to address these matters. Even if this amalgamation takes time to achieve, the County will be able to address the Village's infrastructure issues faster, as a part of a future amalgamated County.

- The County is the adjacent governing body that would be absorbing Caroline in the event of a dissolution. An amalgamation allows the Village to access more municipal resources sooner, while allowing the County to begin to address the infrastructure deficit and liabilities before these costs begin to increase significantly.

#### 8.2.5 Dissolution of the Village

Further to section 7.5, dissolution of a municipal corporation is not a scenario most communities want to end up in. To remain on their own, the Village will have to tackle their infrastructure issues within the current “municipal toolbox”, including entertaining additional tax increases to the existing residents. Given that the Village already has relatively high taxes, this seems highly unpalatable.

In addition, to avoid a dissolution in the near future, the neighbouring municipalities of the County and Town will need to go beyond their current levels of support to the Village. If the Village does not find reasonable ways to address its infrastructure challenges during this period, the County will be faced dealing with those issues at likely increased costs at the time of a future dissolution. As previously mentioned, the County is the adjacent governing body that would be absorbing Caroline in the event of a future dissolution.

There may be sentiments that the community and the surrounding communities should “wait and see”. However, local governments are facing more and increasingly complex responsibilities. If municipal revenue sources are limited, stagnant, or declining; minor shifts in responsibilities or socio-economic conditions can quickly exceed a municipality’s capacity to respond and to do so while trying to maintain delivery of the basic municipal services.

#### 8.2.6 Preferred Option (i.e. Recommendation)

In sum:

- The County and Town are financially viable as individual municipalities.
- The expectations of residents in the Town and County with regards to taxation and service levels are profoundly different.
- The County and Town recently re-committed to regional collaboration.
- The Village, through no fault of its own, has a sizeable infrastructure deficit and is likely on the path towards dissolution in the medium term.
- The cost of addressing the infrastructure deficit in the Village will likely increase over time.

Accordingly, we recommend the amalgamation of the County and Village with the newly formed municipality continuing to pursue regional collaboration with the Town.

### 8.3 Implementation of Preferred Option (i.e. Recommendation)

Amalgamations are outlined under Part 4 Division 5 of the Municipal Government Act (MGA). In the event that the municipalities decide to pursue this type of restructuring, Section 103.4 Initiation by Municipal Authority applies and sets out the next steps as the following:

#### 8.3.1 Step 1 Resolution #1

A resolution must be passed by each participating municipality. This resolution can be passed by Councils separately or through a joint meeting of the Councils. The resolution must indicate that the parties will give notice to the Minister of their intention to engage in a negotiation to pursuant to a voluntary amalgamation application.

### 8.3.2 Step 2 Notice to the Minister

Issue a notice (preferably joint notice) to the Minister. This notice must reference:

- the resolution(s);
- provide a reason(s) why the municipalities would like to consider a voluntary amalgamation; and
- confirm a plan to include public engagement with residents and local authorities (e.g. school divisions, regional commissions, public health) will take place further to negotiations.

### 8.3.3 Step 3 Negotiation & Engagement

The County and the Village must engage in direct negotiations. Negotiations must be conducted in good faith and the Minister must be kept regularly informed of the progress of the negotiations. The negotiation step also includes the need to conduct broad engagement that includes the residents, property owners, and the local public authorities operating within the County and the Village.

### 8.3.4 Step 5 Preparation of the Application

The application to the Minister takes the form of a report. Following completion of the negotiations, the County and the Village must prepare a report that includes all matters agreed upon, any matters on which there is no agreement between them; a description of the public consultation process involved in the negotiations, and a summary of the views expressed during the public consultation processes. The report must be signed by the County and the Village.

This section provides an overview of the key items that are required to be negotiated and put forward as a part of the application to initiate an amalgamation.

#### 8.3.4.1 *Municipal Name, Status, and Boundaries*

In this case, the application is not proposing a municipal name change as a part of the amalgamation. Confirm the status of the amalgamated municipality is to retain a Municipal District status that meets the threshold as outlined in the MGA as a MD with a population that exceeds 1,000 and where most buildings are on parcels smaller than 1,850 square metres. The application must include a legal land description outlining the boundaries of the new municipality along its outer perimeter and any exclusions that may exist.

#### 8.3.4.2 *Ward and Council Representation*

In this instance, confirm that there is no change to the total number of Councillors or the desired status of the Chief Elected Official and present a geographic description of how the existing seven electoral divisions for the County would be adjusted to include the area / representation of Caroline.

#### 8.3.4.3 *Location of the Municipal Office*

For this proposal, confirm that there are no changes to the location of the County's primary municipal office. Until all municipal assets and staffing resources have been evaluated, the County could simply retain the Village office as satellite office until a thorough needs assessment has determined what the long-term needs are for satellite spaces in the hamlet of Caroline.

#### 8.3.4.4 *Proposed Incorporation Date*

A proposed incorporation date for the amalgamation should be identified as part of the application or one will be determined by the Minister following consideration of the application.

#### 8.3.4.5 *Interim leadership and election*

The municipalities must confirm when the amalgamation will be incorporated relative (e.g. before or after) to the next municipal election or planned by-election. They must also indicate if there is a proposed change to the individual fulfilling the role of Chief Administrative Officer (unless a recruitment process for this position is already planned for this period) who will be tasked with leading the transition.

If incorporation takes effect mid-term, an interim council would be created to serve until the next municipal election.

#### 8.3.4.6 *Fiscal Transitions*

Each municipality must conduct a financial audit prior to the amalgamation. Any differential tax treatments on parcels of land, local improvement levies, or other types of alternative tax treatments in areas will need to be identified as a part of the application.

#### 8.3.4.7 *Labour Transitions*

The application confirms that existing municipal staff of the County remain, and all existing staff of the Village automatically become a part of the County, upon incorporation.

#### 8.3.4.8 *Administrative Transitions*

All existing policies, bylaws, and emergency plans of the County and Village will continue to remain in existence until the new amalgamated County either repeals or replaces any current policies, bylaws, or plans.

The municipalities can work to reconcile these items prior to submitting the application to the Minister or provide for this provision to do so upon amalgamation.

### 8.3.5 Step 6 Resolution #2

Each municipality must pass a second resolution to approve the negotiated application. This resolution can be passed by Councils separately or through a joint meeting of the Councils. The resolution must indicate that the parties have approved the negotiation application and request the Minister approve a voluntary amalgamation between the County and the Village.

### 8.3.6 Step 7 Submission of the Application

The municipalities must submit the report and a copy of the approving resolution to the Minister for review and consideration as well. The report must also be forwarded to all affected local authorities at this time.

### 8.3.7 Step 8 Order-in-Council

On the recommendation of the Minister, Cabinet may, through an Order-in-Council, amalgamate two or more municipal authorities. Note: The MGA does not expressly state that a public hearing is required for an amalgamation application. However, as outlined in MGA Section 488(1)(e) the Lieutenant Governor in Council may refer any matter to the Municipal Government Board (MGB) for recommendations. If a proposed amalgamation is referred to the MGB, it could result in a public hearing process.

## 8.4 Timelines

Restructuring municipalities is a process that requires an application and takes time to complete. It cannot be stressed enough that an amalgamation is a negotiated process between two or more municipalities and the pace of the process is driven at the onset by the participating municipalities (i.e. starting with the resolution until the

submission of the application). Following careful review and consideration of application, the Minister presents the proposal to Cabinet, where a decision to approve or reject the application is made. The process could span multiple years, depending upon the prevailing sense of urgency in both municipalities and resources available to support the initiative.

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## Appendix A – ISL Engagement Report



# REGIONAL GOVERNANCE STUDY



Phase 1  
Engagement Summary

April 2021





# Introduction

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The Village of Caroline, Clearwater County, and the Town of Rocky Mountain House are participating in a Regional Governance Study to explore the most effective and efficient governance structure to support the region's growth and long-term prosperity for all citizens. The municipalities are committed to searching for common goals and a common vision to best serve the region and citizen input will be an important part of the Study process. The Study is being funded by a grant provided by the Province of Alberta.

It is important to note that this Study is not an Amalgamation Study. Instead, the purpose of the Regional Governance Study is to review all options, including maintaining the status quo of keeping the three existing municipal government structures, in order to identify potential benefits, disadvantages and impacts of the options being explored.

Nichols Applied Management and ISL Engineering and Land Services Ltd. were hired to undertake the Study on behalf of the three participating municipalities. As part of the study, the consultants are undertaking an independent analysis of existing services, agreements and financial and operational information, engaging stakeholders, residents and leadership of the partnering municipalities for their insight and feedback, and developing a recommendations report based on the key findings from the analysis and public engagement. A Steering Committee, comprised of the Village and Town Mayors, County Reeve and Councillors, and an alternate from each municipality, has been formed to provide direction and advice on the delivery of this Study. The three general options being explored for a new governance structure for Caroline, Clearwater County and Rocky Mountain House include:

1. Remain as three separate municipalities with regional cooperation (current structure);
2. Amalgamate all three municipalities into a single municipal government; or
3. Amalgamate Clearwater County and the Village of Caroline and develop regional cooperation agreements with the Town of Rocky Mountain House.

This summary represents an overview of the feedback shared by residents and stakeholders only and does not represent views and perspectives of the project team or participating municipalities. It describes the engagement process and insight from the first phase of public engagement. Input received was summarized into key themes detailed below that reflect the diversity and frequency of comments received. The time spent by residents and stakeholders in reviewing information, attending the Live Session, providing input and connecting with the project team was greatly appreciated.

# Phase 1 Public Engagement

The purpose of this first phase of engagement was to share general information on the study process, describe the different governance structures that exist in Alberta and gather ideas from residents and ratepayers about what key information they would like to learn more about to help them better understand the differences between the governance structure options, as well as the potential benefits, disadvantages and impacts to residents by the potential options.

A project website was launched to provide a location for residents and stakeholders of all municipalities to visit and learn more about the project. A media release was distributed the week of February 8/21 to announce the initiation of the project and promote the upcoming engagement opportunities. Additional communications to promote the project and engagement included:

- Advertisements in the Western Star and Mountaineer newspapers
  - The Clearwater County's Taxpayer Association also took out an advertisement in the Western Star that included a copy of the survey
- Facebook and Twitter posts by the three municipalities

Several different opportunities were provided for citizens to learn more about the project and share their perspectives and concerns:

Engagement Type	Purpose	Dates	Audience
<b>Project Website</b>	To share information about the study process and provide one location for residents of three municipalities to stay up to date on the project	February 8 to present	1209 unique visitors as of March 25
<b>Virtual Open House</b>	To share information learned to date, including background information	February 16 to March 10, 2021	208 unique visitors
<b>Survey (online and paper copies)</b>	To collect feedback and questions from residents, ratepayers and stakeholders of all three municipalities	February 16 to March 10, 2021	223 responses
<b>Online Learning Session and Live Q&amp;A</b>	To provide an overview of the study process and answer questions from attendees	February 17, 2021 at 6 PM	31 attendees, excluding Council and Administration from all three municipalities



# Overall Themes

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Based on what we heard in Phase 1, the following are themes that prevailed overall through the feedback provided by residents and stakeholders in this phase.

- Participants shared that the current poor municipal relations are preventing the Town of Rocky Mountain House and Clearwater County from serving their residents to the best of their ability and participants indicated a desire for improved collaboration between the municipalities
- Participants raised concerns about duplication of services that are causing inefficient delivery and use of budgets
- Participants suggested that engagement and communication processes need to be improved to ensure that residents are aware of and have influence on projects and how decisions are being made
- Participants also shared that they would like more information on the benefits and impacts of the different regional governance structures

# Key Themes by Topic Area

Key themes were developed based on the diversity and frequency of feedback received.

## Concerns and Ideas

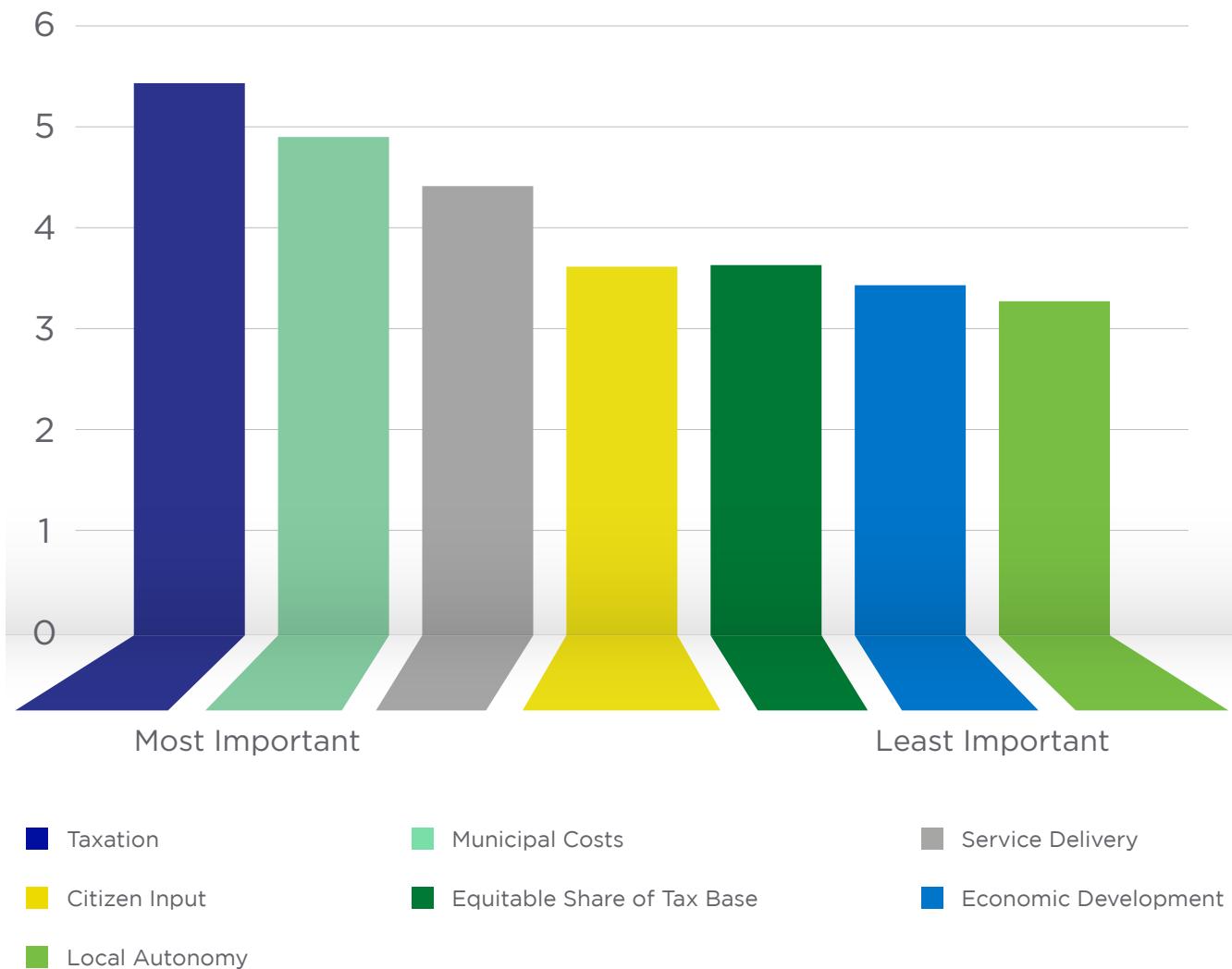
Participants were asked to identify key concerns, if any, they have with existing services and programs being offered as well as to identify ideas to address the concerns they raised. The ideas for addressing concerns reflect the various proposed solutions by participants for their concerns but note that some participants had differing ideas for how to solve similar concerns. The following is a summary of key concerns raised and potential ideas to address.

Key Theme	Participants' Key Concerns	Participants' Ideas for Addressing Their Concerns
Municipal Relations	There are currently poor relationships between the Councils of the Town and County and participants indicated a desire for improved collaboration between the municipalities	The Town should remain as its own municipality as it exists currently. If anything, only the County and Village should amalgamate
		The Councils need to commit to improving their relationships and working together to create a more collaborative region
	Concerns that the County would have to take on any debts that the other municipalities may have if the municipalities amalgamate	Amalgamation should occur between Clearwater County and the Village of Caroline only
		Do not change the current governance structure
Services	Services are being duplicated by each municipality which increases costs (specifically the waste and recycling services)	Services should be shared for more efficient use of tax dollars and to help ensure a higher quality of services provided to all residents
	Some services are unused or too expensive	Unused or overly expensive services should be discontinued or reduced
	Services or resources need to be improved for families, seniors, waste and recycling, road maintenance, policing and enforcement, and development	A review how current services are being delivered regionally should be undertaken and assess if there are opportunities for cost savings and operational efficiencies

Key Theme	Participants' Key Concerns	Participants' Ideas for Addressing Their Concerns
Financial (Tax, overhead, budget, etc.)	Existing overhead and costs are high	Amalgamation between the Town of Rocky Mountain House, Clearwater County and the Village of Caroline would lower costs
		Amalgamation between Clearwater County and the Village of Caroline only would lower costs
		The County should only be spending money on Town services that County residents are using
		The priority areas for spending for both the Town and County should be re-evaluated
	The County and Village will have to take on any debt the Town may have from previous spending decisions	Amalgamation should occur between Clearwater County and the Village of Caroline only
	That taxes could increase	Do not change the current governance structure
	Residents are unaware of the services, programs and engagement opportunities available to residents	It must be confirmed that there will be actual cost savings before amalgamation occurs
Engagement and Communications		Do not change the current governance structure
	More opportunities for engagement are needed on projects in the region (including this one) and it needs to be clear if and how public input will influence decisions being made	There needs to be more open and transparent communication to residents including off-line and print communications and engagement for those who may not be able to access the internet or have poor internet connections
No concerns or support as is	No changes are needed	There needs to be more robust communications and engagement opportunities for projects in the region and engagement early on in projects
		Councils also need to commit to a level of influence for public input and clearly communicate the level of influence to participants
		Do not change the current governance structure

## Considerations in Exploring Different Governance Options

Participants were asked to rank the importance of different considerations when exploring governance structure options. The seven answer options were weighted to calculate a standardized score where the highest score represents the most important consideration based on how participants ranked each of the different considerations. While none of the elements were dismissed outright as being important, Taxation, Municipal Costs and Service Delivery were ranked as the three most important elements to consider as the governance options are being reviewed.



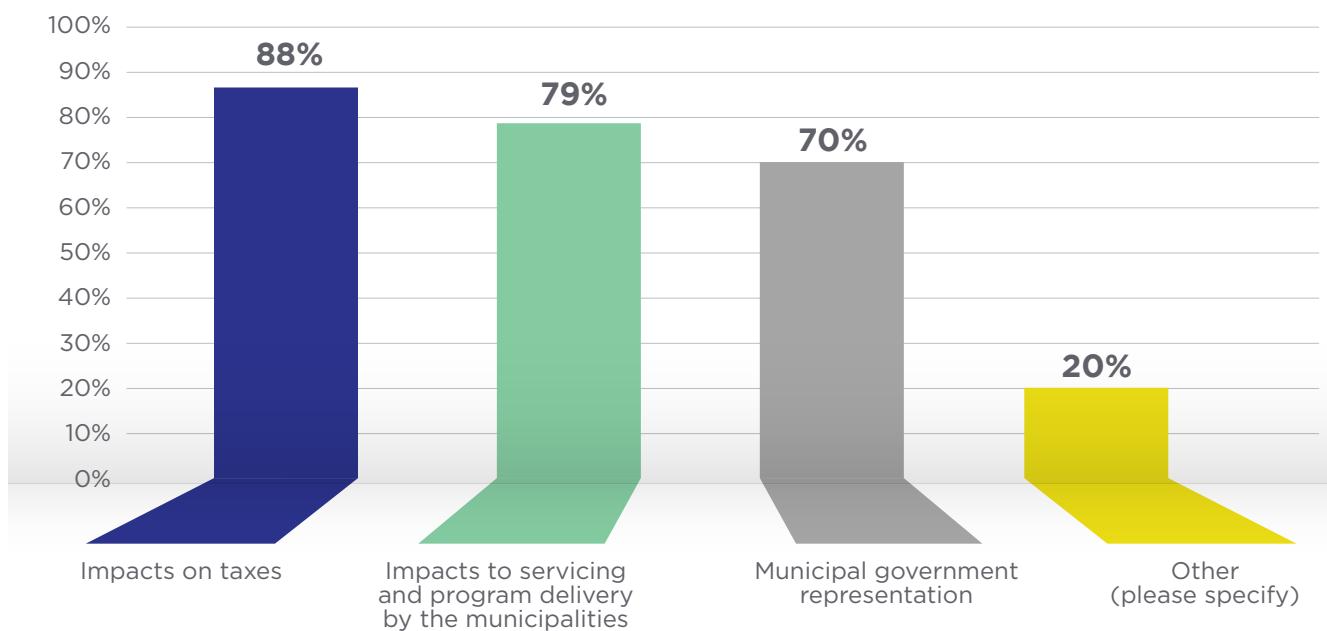


Participants also had the opportunity to describe other considerations they thought were important:

- Transparent and accountable engagement and communications with residents
- Land-use planning
- Bylaw and enforcement
- Maintaining agricultural land
- Environmental protections
- Representation: how is each area going to be represented to ensure region specific (rural vs urban) issues are considered
- Taxes: Concerned about increase in taxes
- Collaboration between the different municipal areas to ensure unity of the region
- Services: Efficiencies such as cost and implementation of services and programs

## Information Needed

Participants were also asked what type of information they would like to learn more about to be better informed about the different governance options being explored.



*Note: The graph total exceeds 100% as participants were able to select more than one answer option.*

## Other Information Needed:

- List of benefits vs the impacts
- Potential job loss for administrations
- Will the County absorb the Town's debt?
- How will spending and budgets be determined and allocated?
- How will this impact bylaw and enforcement?
- Council structure, representation and elections
  - How will conflicts be managed to ensure one area does not have more power over the other?
- Level of public influence on this decision
- Funding and incentives
- What is the driver for this project?
- How will this impact services including ensuring duplication is eliminated and what will happen to the library?

## Questions

Lastly, participants were asked to share what questions they currently have about the Study process. These questions shared will help inform the analyses that will be completed as part of the review of the benefits and disadvantages of the potential options.

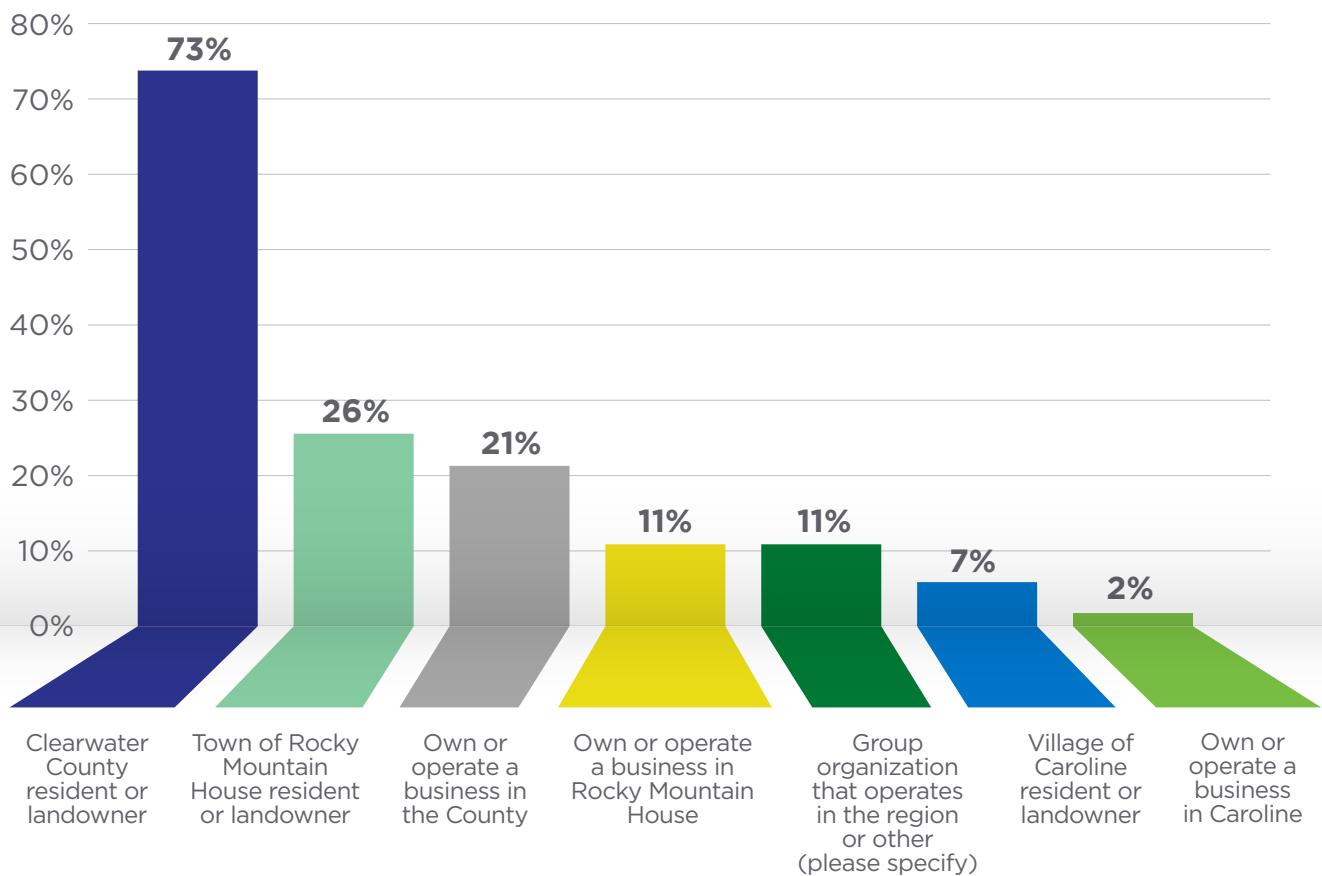
- What cost-savings will there be?
- What efficiencies can be explored to make the region run more efficiently to eliminate the current issues with the duplication of services, costs and municipal divide?
  - Such as the waste and recycling service
- How will this impact employment for the Town, County and Village staff?
- What are the timelines for amalgamation?
- Can you provide examples of other regions which have experienced amalgamation, including the benefits and impacts they experienced?
- Can you provide more details on each option?
- How would development approvals change?

- How would you ensure there is a fair division of access to services vs costs to residents?
- What would the transition process look like?
- How will this impact funding for local amenities, such as the library, recreation, the airport?
- How will this impact or support growth to businesses?
- How will this impact taxes?
- How would Council be structured?
  - How will conflict be managed?
  - How many seats would each region get?
  - How will you ensure equal representation of each area?
- What is driving this process? Why now?
  - Some distrust for the timing of the process when in-person engagement is not possible
- How will the decision be made?
  - Do the municipalities involved have a say?
  - Do residents have a say?
  - Will it be voted on?
  - How will public input impact the decision?
  - Will public feedback be shared with the public after each phase of engagement?
  - A desire for a transparent engagement process that reaches as many residents as possible with more print communication

## Engagement Tactics

The engagement tactics used and valued the most were the virtual open house, online survey and live Q&A session. Though some believed that the online engagement opportunities were good and appropriate for the current global COVID-19 environment, some believed that the project should include in-person engagement, particularly as the internet connection for those who live in the County can be poor. Some participants also wanted more offline/ print communications and engagement options to ensure that more residents were aware and engaged in the project.

## About You



*Note: The graph total exceeds 100% as participants were able to select more than one answer option.*

Group or organization that operates in the region or other:

- Farm or agricultural society, non-profit organization, staff from a County organization, homeschool group, retired, new County resident, economic development group or chamber of commerce, Pine Hills Golf Course, Town school staff, staff from a Town organization, sports groups, community league or association, parent with kids who go to school in the Town.



## Next Steps

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The feedback provided through the live virtual session and survey will be used to inform the review of the different governance options being explored. The analyses, benefits and disadvantages of the different options will be shared with residents, ratepayers and stakeholders during the second engagement phase, anticipated to occur in May 2021.





# APPENDIX A

## Verbatim Feedback

# Survey Feedback

The following section includes the feedback received through the survey, live session and emailed feedback. All submissions are presented as shared; they have not been corrected for spelling, grammar, or fact checking.



## **What concerns, if any, do you have now with your current government structure and how programs and services are being delivered?**

- Not really any at this point except for the garbage collection that was local & is now paying for trucking to Reddeer for sorting of recyclables, a waste of time & money.
- Increased taxes, lower property values.
- No concerns. Seems to be run well.
- Why can't all parties work together it's no wonder that you do not get any new investors in town or county.
- Decisions are made without public input. Why can you not work together within the present format?
- For the last 10 years we have lived on an acreage off of a small, gravel township road. Of all the places we have lived, we have never seen such a wonderful grader and road maintenance system.
- NOT HAVING the info needed to make qualified comments, decisions, questions OR the time required to absorb and do the same.

- It is concerning that the 3 governing structures are considering amalgamation. These 3 municipalities all have such different needs.
- I ABHOR WASTE - of money, resources and time. I have a business that does work for Town of Rocky and landowners in Clearwater County. I see millions of dollars - Taxpayer dollars - spent on duplication, especially of IRON. I see money spent on ??? trucks, paving equipment, excavating equipment, snow removal equipment, etc. Couldn't the municipalities share the equipment and operators ??? better still, utilize the many contractors in the area. Also, jointly establish a regional waste management and recycling system that serves all members in the area and share the cost. We can't afford the "pissing matches" between Town of Rocky & Clearwater County.

- I am very concerned about amalgamation with the town as they could not come to a reasonable decision with the rodeo board plus going ahead and setting up their own transfer & recycling station. Now there existing one site there fenced off of no use to anyone plus the fees charged to use the sites will make people dump there garbage elsewhere.
- Disgust with the handling of rodeo grounds and waste transfer site. Can't work together on either of these. How can they on anything else. Transfer site was all set up convenient and worked so well. Get it back in use concerned about fairness with tax & we have already contributed from county.
- "County Member" No concerns with how county delivers services at present but town does not seem willing to work with county to provide any kind of services.
- No concerns with current structure.
- Generally O.k. Possibly some services now done by the county could be let out to private contractors.
- We have too much overhead.
- I don't have concerns with the county operation. I do have concerns with how the town is run. Not fiscally responsible (ie; out of money with one of the highest town tax rates) & implementing impractical & unwanted programs (ie: main street "beautification")
- I do have concerns regarding regional governance. I feel that Clearwater County has been bullied into this study by the Town of Rocky Mountain House. Clearwater County is already involved in a potential amalgamation with the Village of Caroline. Why isn't the Town of Rocky Mountain House willing to wait until one process is finished before forcing this study upon the county and the village? Does the Town of Rocky Mountain House have a spending problem and sees potential solutions through amalgamation with the county? I have a few concerns with Clearwater County governance at the present, but the County seems willing to listen to concerned residents. I feel the taxpayer dollars are being squandered because of actions of the administration and Councilors of the Town of Rocky Mountain House e.g. the town eco recycle facility and the waste collection site that was a joint operation between the town and the county. Progressive green ideology by town has resulted in a common facility being shut down and now resulting in two separate facilities. I want no part of regional governance involving the Town of Rocky Mountain House.
- None - it is great the way it is.
- None
- Too many inept & incompetent staff only there to collect pay cheque -Too many duplicate services - Too much business to friends
- My husband and I have no interest in the county amalgamating with the Town. We have heard the town has been in financial difficulties in the past (not sure where they are at now)

- Keep the Status Quo. - My concern is CC will be saddled with the multitude of poor decisions the town has made for years.
- I have no concerns right now, current government structure works good. Rural & urban residents have different lifestyle and needs therefore government structures should stay separate.
- Keep county separate from town the way it is at present.
- None
- More public input. In the past the county has made big money decisions (land acquisition by airport & spending in Nordegg) with public knowledge.
- It's all good, but some had concerns about county spending on land (??? quarter) firehalls & Nordegg development.
- We do not want all 3 municipalities to amalgamate together. The town needs to stay separate from the county. We need to spend tax money wisely. We all know the town & county spend more than they need to.
- No Concerns! I have outstanding service from Clearwater County and want to keep it that way.
- No concerns.
- No concern.

- We do not want all 3 municipalities to amalgamate together. It's ridiculous to even plan to do that. The town doesn't know how to manage money at all. Their spending in the last several years is completely out of control.
- NO MORE LOCKDOWNS!!!
- The county needs to stay separate from the town or we in the county will suffer.
- I do not have any major concerns with the current county system of government. Please leave it as it.
- I have no concerns with the way things are handled right now.
- Duplication of services and other possible inefficiencies, ie. could engineering, road crews, facility workers be shared?
- We do not need 3 separate Councils and administrations to govern and administer programs for approximately 20,000 people. The Council's, particularly the Town and County, concerned more in being seen as right than in leading and serving the individuals and businesses in the broader community. The Village of Caroline is not financially viable in the long term, given the state of its water, wastewater and road infrastructure. The Village of Caroline's tax rate is too high and it is an impediment to attracting industrial and commercial business to the community notwithstanding the availability of quality industrial and commercial lands with direct access to a provincial highway
- Breaking with county on major services eg RCMP, waste services

- In general, the county should not be in the business of doing business. Virtually all were to should be contracted out to professional contractors.
- Duplication of administration, county occupying multiple buildings in town taking tax revenues away from town. County paying for large percentage of town programs.
- Friction between municipalities over regional services
- Lack of cooperation between County and Town Councils (and administration). Duplication of efforts to serve the same population as there is significant cross-over between town and county activities.
- Municipalities not working together leads to inefficient use of time and resources.
- No complaints with County gov. structure. Village of Caroline is over-represented. No opinion on Town Council structure. Only concern with County service is the allowance of non-residents dumping garbage at our transfer sites.
- Ensuring accountability and fiscal responsibility. Better understanding the joint, cost shared services with the municipalities through the various agreements and how it relates to the budget and % of funding to the % of services used by each municipality.
- The current government structure is fine. However, it appears the County tax payers are paying far more than they should be for the services they utilize in Town. Eg 50% of operations for recreation when probably the utilization is from County residents is closer to 20%. Same goes for all services, eg Library, museum, FCSS etc.

- We feel that county council should be making any and all decisions regarding county matters
- We feel that county council should be making all decisions regarding county matters.
- Current structure is good although the county contributes to much already to the town. The town should stay on their own. I'm okay with amalgamation of the village & they can become another hamlet.



- We should stay with the status quo.
- What I have noticed is that the Town of Rocky and Village of Caroline have recreation as their biggest focus and where the money seems to go. The county has a huge bill on Fire and Fire Stations. Priorities are out of whack at taxpayer expense. The town is not easy to work with ie; Rodeo grounds, waste station that was just shutdown.
- There is not an equitable share of expenses between county/town. County has to be convinced that cost sharing town services that their citizens also use is their responsibility. The only option Rocky has is to annex land & develop their own revenue stream.

- I do have concerns regarding regional governance. I feel that Clearwater County has been bullied into this study by the town of Rocky Mountain House. Clearwater County is already involved in a potential amalgamation with the village of Caroline. Why isn't the town of Rocky Mountain House willing to wait until one process is finished before forcing this study upon the county and the village? Does the town of Rocky Mountain House have a spending problem and sees potential solutions through amalgamation with the county. I have a few concerns with Clearwater County governance at the present but the County seems willing to listen to concerned residents. I feel that taxpayer dollars are being squandered because of actions of the administration and Councillors of the town of Rocky Mountain House e.g. the town eco recycle facility and the waste collection site that was a joint operation between the town and the county. Progressive green ideology by town has resulted in a common facility being shut down and now resulting in two separate facilities. I want no part of regional governance involving the town of Rocky Mountain House.
- We all pay enough taxes that we should have more than enough money to complete projects so much has been spent foolishly.
- None at this time. Would prefer that things remain the same. Although would have no problem with the village of Caroline & county amalgamating.
- How much money would end up being wasted by town improvements? There would still be too much given to the town with nor little regards to county residents.
- it seems like we are beginning to get more communication and interaction with our councilor, but still a disconnect between us and county staff. County staff seem to be the ones making decisions that affect us, but it feels like these are done with out considering the desire of the public. Project's get tendered but their dose not appear to be a system of accountability, if something goes wrong it is blamed on the contractor but the contractor is not held to fixing it. It appears like this lack of accountability may reach further into the county culture.
- I think the having separate recycling programs is a waste - I believe having one central place for both town & county is more cost efficient.
- Major friction between town and county, seems this is costing unnecessary money. Town seems to want a bigger share of county money and more control over it.
- We have bureaucratic overload and government needs to be scaled back.
- We are happy with our current government structure except for the County & Town issue regarding the solid waste and recycling services.
- Taxes have increased but services have decreased. Groceries etc., have tripled in price but my income has not.
- None

- Nordegg is currently managed from a remote location without appropriate representation at the council or administration level. The needs of a tourism town are quite different from those of the rest of the county.
- We have a lack of communication and trust between the groups involved. Fighting about all sorts of items from Rodeo grounds, road maintenance, garbage, etc.
- Inefficiency of current structure, related to having town and county being separate entities. Petty arguments and discrepancies that are unnecessary and damaging to our town and county reputation, as well as deleterious related to getting work done well, efficaciously, cost-efficiently.
- Some expenditures too costly, but overall our tax dollars are used well.
- No specific concerns with the structure, more with the county's ability to work with the town on items of interest to both parties
- Infighting and inefficiencies between town of RMH and County. Expensive duplication of administration a waste of taxpayers money
- More costs, less services
- I feel like county residents support the town but the town is shutting county residents out.
- None

- I have been happy with what I perceived to be cooperation between the town and county with facilities such as sports, the rodeo grounds and waste management. I was surprised to learn I have been misguided. The separation of the transfer station and new provider is not as user friendly as the previous drop off point.
- none
- None
- Have no concerns with current government structure, and have been pleased with Clearwater Counties fiscal responsibility over the years.



- I do not have any concerns with the current government structure and I am pleased with the programs and services currently delivered by the county.
- My concerns are numerous. - Councils complete lack of concern for residential property values is obvious. - A prominent local businessman has complete control of all county councilors, and creative ideas are dismissed in favour of advancing his business interests.
- The decisions about service provision and funding seem to be misaligned. Intermunicipal services don't appear to be managed efficiently

- There is evidence already that congenial relationships do not exist between the County and the Town of Rocky Mountain House. For example, the waste disposal is a clear failure for the two municipalities to work together. There are many more examples of partial or complete failures. b. Using the example of a. above, it would be Utopic to believe that amalgamating the two would alleviate this type of conflict. c. From personal discussions with friends and associates, typically Town residents feel the County does not pay a reasonable share for the use of town public facilities. Typically, County residents feel Town residents use County roads, recreational facilities, and the vast County landbase.
- I am not comfortable with what the Town is doing. I am supportive of the County's approach.
- I am pleased with our County and what they are doing. I am very concerned with the direction that the Town is taking. I do not agree with it at all.
- I think it is unproductive to have duplication of services, such as waste/sewage disposal and garbage recycling. It doesn't make sense financially for there to be separate facilities for such a small population. I am also concerned about being asked whether I am from the town or county. Update internet services to rural residents. This is ridiculous.
- I have no major concerns, other than it terrifies me to think that the county, town and village could amalgamate into one unit....NO THANKS
- We live at the edge of county so we have little communication from government and it is usually after the fact. Poor police coverage.
- None
- No concerns.
- Lack of transparency Municipal development plan would like to see more options for subdividing land.
- The biggest concern is how the county and rocky do not seem to even try to get along and make things work which leads to poorly delivered services such as waste management.
- Extremely concerned about amalgamation.
- As symbiotic entities, the Town and the County are unable to set aside their individual priorities and egos to accomplish what is best for the area.
- Road maintenance has been an issue, particularly last spring.
- Currently I feel that the different area of government do not work together, and that a lot of emphasis is put on the Town, and Village; but very little programs and services are offered to County residents.
- None
- There is inadequate recycling and waste disposal in the Leslieville/Condor area with limited opening hours. The cost of sewage is going up at a dreadful rate that is not justifiable compared to the income of people. We are earning less and paying a great deal more for services.

- I am happy with the way things are
- That the town and county need to share and work together
- I feel like the current government bodies feel like they have to tell people how to live and breathe.
- I have no concerns - regional interests are better served with each municipality having a separation between urban and rural - this is most effective. They can work together in some areas with well thought out written agreements.



- Overall, none
- The town & county can't get along. If they were amalgamated it would be better. County residents already contribute to many town services & recreation items. Neither the town or county can attract business or industry maybe together they could do better.
- The current structure I believe is sufficient for our needs.
- Need clear concise printed information on all.

- We felt the current structure was effective however the Village of Caroline may benefit by being amalgamated with the country. Agreements and cost sharing of amenities has worked well in the past.
- There are ABSOLUTELY NO CONCERNS with our current government structure. Our Clearwater County is operated in a very fiscally responsible and efficient manner. We contribute VERY GENEROUSLY to numerous programs and services shared by the County, the town of Rocky and the Village of Caroline. We are very concerned with the possible amalgamation with the town as it seems a one-sided benefit to steal our reserves.
- I think it should stay the same.
- I am concerned that the provincial government is not funding municipalities so that they do not go after funding in other municipalities. The province needs to step up when urban municipalities need more funding.
- None
- I like how it is now
- Concerned about the lack of shared services and the town continuing to remove itself from shared agreements with the county.
- Lack of cooperation between Councils. Wasted time and money on service duplication and the unnecessary layer of government with committees and advisory boards for any of the shared services.
- Not enough notice is given to people to give input into decisions

- Too many duplicated services and it currently seems like the town and county cannot agree on anything. We need to work together, not against each other.
- Waste Stations, having this split out between Town & County.
- None
- The Town of Rocky Mountain House would like to amalgamate to take the reserves from the Clearwater County who has been fiscally responsible and the Town of Rocky Mountain House has not. This makes me as a county resident with a rental property in the Town fear for the tax dollars paid to be given to The Town who is not responsible and has proven this on many occasions. The airport terminal building Dean Krause the CAO of the Town of Rocky Mountain House stated that the money would come to build the new terminal from the Town's emergency fund. That is an inappropriate use of an emergency fund and the residents of the town do not know that they would be pulling from this fund as it's not stated in the minutes which are not posted publicly on the website. When this is not made public knowledge that leads me to believe the town is hiding a lot more and can not be trusted with our finances.
- Regionalization is not going to work if all the councils continue to be unproductive. Programs and services could be regionalized but, just like Regional Waste that was a fail.
- I am concerned that the current government structures are spending more than they need to on separate services and infrastructures.
- The councilors for both the town of Rocky Mountain House and Clearwater County are basically acting like kindergarten children fighting over a toy. Nothing can be gained until these people learn to act like the adults they are supposed to be, and until such time as that happens, or that they are replaced, it will not matter what the outcome of this survey is.
- There seem to be a lot of duplication of services and just duplication in general. streamlining that to benefit the area as a whole, saving taxpayers money. As an example the latest debacle with the waste transfer site, that could have easily be done more effectively if it was for the area and not just the town. I can only imagine this crosses over to other areas as well.
- As a Rocky town resident it has become apparent that the County and Town cannot work together efficiently. To many arguments are being dragged out and they all resort to bashing on social media. Waste disposal, policing, industrial development and shared facilities seem to be the biggest sticking points.
- That there is a lot of Double spending for services.
- Well, I think that if all three zones cannot agree on garbage disposal, and if they continually argue on that, I don't think I can trust them to work together to better the people they work for.

- I am a very content county resident. Our councillors are doing a great job and we do not think there would be any benefit for the 3 municipalities to merge together. Why did the Town of Rocky Mountain House request this study? And why was one option the Regional amalgamation? So much time is and will be wasted in this study of taxes for amalgamation with the town and county. Was this discussed with both councils? I think the waste management that was handled this past year between the Town and the County shows that a municipal amalgamation will not be in the best interest for the County or its residents. The waste management contract ended March 31, 2020. Wasn't the Town and County to get together in Dec 2020 to work out a waste agreement??? From what I understand the Eco Centre & design recommendation report was subsequently accepted by Council on Dec 15, 2020. Opening of the Eco centre Jan 15, 2021 left the County scrambling to set up a transfer station in the County. I would just like to know where the Cooperation was with this project? This is just a prime example of why this amalgamation would not be feasible. The transfer centre that was in town that was used by everyone was a great set up with ample room to add a composting area. Doesn't this tell you that these two municipalities are not ready to cooperate or amalgamate.
- Turf war, not enough collaboration
- As a Clearwater resident I don't know if I want a part of RMH's willingness to pay for shiny things, whether or not they can afford them.
- Disparity in the ways that the three jurisdictions manage money. RMH tax and spend, Clearwater frugality, Caroline survival.
- I am concerned that the Town and County are not working in the best interest of the citizens.
- We would like to keep the way our current governance structured in the Clearwater County.
- Seems to be conflict between the current administrations, which is creating inconvenience to the residents as well as duplication of services and increased or new costs.
- The inability of leaders to develop working relations and respect. The continued fight to the one holding the bigger stick is hurting everyone. The regional partnerships are failing directly related to the CAO of Clearwater counties in ability to lead. This combined with a constant bias attacks coming from the town has resulted in a system synapse with failures and arguments. Social media argument between councilors is an embarrassment to everyone and neither side has held their councilors accountable. The first step in this process is leadership from the mayor and the reeve. Then each council needs to hold their respective CAO accountable for the actions of their staff. The structure with mature and reasonable leaders would be highly functioning, however the down turn in economy and previous failures of councils have not been owned by the parties responsible, instead a blame game has become more prevalent. Nothing should move forward until after the election, as the mistrust in all councils has grown exceedingly.

- Town taxes are extremely high for the services provided. The garbage should be handled by one entity. It makes no sense to separate the collection. There are numerous efficiencies being mismanaged because of petty personnel conflicts and egos. The fire service is a mess from ill egos and poor leadership/ direction from the top.
- Concerns of sustainability with increased costs. Economies of scale could be achieved if municipalities work together instead of separately.
- Perhaps pooling resources would improve services. Reducing each body of government, to one could save on some expenses
- I don't understand why everyone can't work together to make things more cost efficient. And why there is so much red tape for new developments and businesses coming into the communities.
- The inability for all sides to come to agreements on how services can be combined.
- I have no concerns with the current structure
- Costs are going up and the services are still the same. If there is only one governing body would the Village of Caroline even get a say on what happens to its citizens?
- Public needs to be made more aware of the issues at hand
- As a business owner in Rocky, but a resident of the county, I have no say in decisions made in town. Total amalgamation would remove this.

- I'm not sure but the ways he's going there gonna lose the election
- To much spending not enough listening to constituents
- Where is the growth of infrastructure? Council isn't very transparent
- The only means I know if is on Facebook
- We seem to be paying a lot in taxes for what we receive it seems over the past few years everything is going up in cost , water, garbage pic up and carrying charges for electric and natural gas.
- The proposition to combine all 3 municipalities is daunting. Amalgamations are not easy, even under ideal circumstances. This be done one step at a time. Caroline should be a given under circumstances, Rocky on the other hand may be sometime down the road. not now though
- Could get more stuff in for kids, that may not be into sports.
- Too many duplications of programs and services, and very slow processes
- Too small of a population and tax base in the Village for self governance
- More communication would be appreciated, and more access to our government reps.
- I believe that the village of Caroline does not have educated leaders. I believe these people are "doing their best" but that is not good enough in my opinion.

- There seems to be a lack of coordination and/or cooperation on things like waste management, recreation facilities and industrial development
- The Village of Caroline does not have a very transparent governing method. The website is not very informative and it is almost impossible to get a hold of Village office staff. Caroline would likely benefit from being better managed. However, I agree with Caroline's decision to keep to mostly unique, local businesses (no chains).
- Stop the waste of money on fibre optics.
- none
- it is hard to find things
- Inefficient use of resources increase costs to all. People are being taxed beyond an acceptable level. The different municipalities do not seem to share common goals or values. Rocky Mountain House's council doesn't seem to be able to get along with the other municipalities and previous agreements have been tossed seemingly with little regard give to the long term effects of these actions. The councils for Clearwater County and Caroline appear more fiscally responsible. I would have a great concern that Rocky Mountain House's council would be a financial drain on the other two municipalities.
- too much being spent on administration
- Town of Rocky & County councils behave in an adversarial manner that results in poor decisions and territorialism. There is excessive duplication of infrastructure, admin and services. We have too much government for a population of about 20,000.
- Rising costs and lowering services
- I feel the current state of the government structures allow for a lot of holes in programs and costings of services to the people in the region of Clearwater (town of rocky/Clearwater country/Caroline) to be affected in a negative way that doesn't benefit the general public. They may have benefits to some select few but don't work well or efficiently for the overall populous.
- None
- Not all counselors are on the same page Wasteful spending in some country departments Town and county not getting along for areas greater good
- The original Working Together agreement was the mandate of all 3 municipalities to work collaboratively on various agreements. Now the agreements have basically been dismantled and caused all sorts of distrust, animosity towards all 3 councils. Representation within our region should not be primarily about population. You only have to look at our Federal Gov't and the centralist attitude of distribution of wealth and services.
- I feel town and county don't often work together. Govt needs to see us as a whole area supporting each other
- The town of Rocky only want the opinion of town residents and not the country for years
- Those head honchos at Clearwater county need to be fired. They have made a joke out of our West Country with their own person visions that don't fit what people are looking for. That's why those empty lots have sat vacant for over a decade. Wasted money including heavy duty salaries. It's terrible.

- It is a shame to have lost the central Waste Transfer site in town. I was at one of the rural sites yesterday and not all recycled materials are accepted, we ended up putting the unrecycled items in the garbage bins. I feel this is such a step backwards. I also feel the collapse of the Regional Waste agreement shows everyone that the two councils are unable to work together, therefore there should not be an amalgamation of the Town and County.
- The town doesn't do anything more than the status quo and wastes money on things that the residents don't want or need. They have poor delivery of programs, due to to high employee turnover.
- The Town of Rocky Mountain House has a very high tax rate. When we bought our house we were surprised at the outrageous amount for our annual property taxes. I feel like they spend there money unwisely and are not looking at the right areas. It is like a kid at the candy store.
- I like the current structure. Not to happy about the current garbage situation though
- The town and county are very divided. They are unable to work together on many fronts, the garbage / dump situation being an example of a recent one.
- The town of Rocky seems to take pleasure for some reason in NOT wanting to be a good partner with the County. There was a great Stronger Together initiative that the town just doesn't want to honor or participate in.

- Concerns about the fighting that seems to be going on. They are separate and have separate needs, but they should work together better.
- Caroline has a problem with allocating money where it is needed and is going to run its self into bankruptcy if we don't change something soon. The town of Rocky is just greedy and thinks this is the best way for the town to profit they don't care about anything else and they will bankrupt the county with their greed.
- The relationship between the County and Town makes everything a challenge. I also think the Town is managed so poorly. There is no consistency, except for poor financial decisions and throwing fellow Councillors and Administration under the bus. Its embarrassing. The Town preaches they haven't raised taxes, but they are blatantly lying. The Council is honestly just embarrassing, they are all lacking education and proper decision making abilities.
- I wonder who truly holds the power? Elected officials, administrators or the people? What does it take to change program and service delivery? Does policy match reality?
- No concerns.
- Lack of cooperation between the 2 resulting in the duplication of services i.e landfills and/or one paying more than an equitable share. i.e policing.
- Only to look for ways to reduce the costs of delivering those services.

- The inability of town and county councils to get along is a huge problem. They need to work together to serve all residents.
- Duplication and inefficiency that comes with two separate municipalities trying to govern an integrated community.
- I am concerned about how the three governments get along. We have lost emergency services agreements, waste agreements as well as so much progress that had been made by previous partnerships. The three governments have not had a tri-council meeting in at least three years. That is not conducive to partnerships or agreements.
- No concerns with current government for Clearwater County or its services.
- I am satisfied with services
- There has been a lot of fighting recently. The County has been difficult and are cancelling joint programs. They are not easy to work with and don't readily share funds.
- Too many councilors making things difficult depending on where you live in the Region. One whole County Council representing everyone in Rocky, Caroline or other areas in the county would be far more efficient and fair to everyone.
- That business owners can't vote for town councilors if they live in the County and vice versa.
- Because of the spread of the county, there does not seem to be adequate resources offered for young families, and connecting. Not much engagement with current councillors.
- The town of RMH's ability to work with the county and its opinion that it could circumvent the county to start this process when it was clear the county had no interest. Not a good partner and not acting in good faith.
- Garbage services.
- No Concerns
- Town of RMH and Clearwater County appear to be having difficulty working together.
- So far so good. On the slow side but change doesn't seem to go over well in these parts.
- Town and county do not cooperate effectively
- There is far too much room for personal issues to get in the way or even guide the process of collaboration. There is not enough public understanding of how shared services are funded, and that alone is detrimental to the overall provision of shared services because it allows for the VERY misinformed narrative that the Town is broke and the County pays for everything.
- Duplication all over the place, too many politics. No long term plans
- Being able to see the Town & County working together in a more efficient, co-operative way. Making more sound decisions for the ratepayers and keeping them in the loop.
- Significant administrative duplication is occurring; costs increases and duplication of initiatives appears that each entity is empire building
- The size of government has gotten too big. We need to reduce the size of all departments by at least 30% to start.



## If you have concerns, what ideas do you have to address them?

- Our service was better a few years ago than it is now. I have been a resident for 16 years.
- Unknown
- Why cannot mail info out so that all will know what's going on.
- Not everyone uses electronic media... ie; facebook, twitter. Use all avenues ie; newsletters, paper, radio, mail. Perhaps put the community needs ahead of personalities and personal agendas.
- More information and progressive services regarding recycling.
- More information: More time: results that show it's worth the effort.
- There cannot be fair discussion when all 3 different municipalities have to run as one body. Q. How much financial contributions from the town were invested in the county?
- Establish a board of elected members (town and county - representation by population) to review what other regional governance has done (we can't afford to reinvent the wheel), "cherry pick" the best ideas and make recommendations - voter or by taxpayers.

- This idea of the town saying the rural people use the facilities without paying is not true and I believe the county faces a lot more expenses than the town. Keeping up the roads, replacing and building bridges etc., amalgamation would be governed unfairly. The rural residents pay taxes to support Westview Lodge, fire department, policing, health centres, sports etc.
- Whole councils on both sides (county & town) need replaced vote. Vote! Virtual meetings don't work for rural communities. Need survey sent out for input (like this). Should have had input on transfer site issue before it closed.
- Looks like the only solution would be to have changes in council members who want to work with each other instead of against us.
- N/A
- Would need cost comparisons for purchase of equipment, staff cost to operate equipment, benefits etc. to private contractors
- Everyone I know has lost their job or like myself took a 40% pay cut. Why not anyone involved with town/county staff/workers.
- My concern is that I wish the town & county to continue to be separate entities.

- I believe that the status quo should be maintained regarding governance between the town of Rocky Mountain House and Clearwater County. This will avoid urban - rural division even further. Urban needs and priorities differ in many ways from rural needs and priorities. I believe that Clearwater County pays at least its fair share if not more for joint needs and enrichments within the Town of Rocky Mountain House. Does the town play fair - not always? Look at the North Saskatchewan River Park and the Rocky Mountain House Agricultural Society and Stampede board. The town is money hungry with greeds exceeding needs. That is not cooperation. The wastewater and sewage lagoons are another example. The list goes on and on. I feel that this forced study by the Town of Rocky Mountain House regarding regional governance and amalgamation with Clearwater County and the Village of Caroline is like a hostile takeover in the business world. At present there are distinct examples of a lack of cooperation between the Town of Rocky Mountain House and Clearwater County that in turn are leading to added costs to the taxpayers - the joint waste collection side in the town is no more. The facility that was used by both town and county residents now must be dismantled because the maybe the town has a progressive green ideology now and built the Rocky Eco centre that county residents must pay to utilize. Clearwater County is now forced to create a temporary site at an added expense that is no longer convenient for rural residents. How is this a wise use of taxpayer dollars? I feel that many unforeseen difficulties that lie ahead and will result in bitter feelings and higher taxation rates. Rural and urban needs have many variances. The argument can be made that there are fewer duplication of services but at what cost to rural residents?
- 1. One of the main reasons that a town or village is formed is due to the economies of scale that are available to keep cost of services lower than if they had to be provided separately. This includes water, sewer and utilities etc. 2. There is a perception (by Rocky residents) that the Clearwater county has a LOT of money and that it should be used to help subsidize services for the town residents. Before the Rocky residents get Envious, they need to realize that Clearwater County residents provide ALL their own Services. The county does not help pay the cost for its residents in any way. 3. Before there can be any discussions about amalgamation, the town and Village will need to reimburse County residents for the Capital Cost of each of our Water Wells, our Septic systems, and our Power and Natural Gas lines. 4. Once the Town and Village agree to #3, we will gladly amalgamate provided the town and village also agree to all future maintenance on our water and sewer systems! And that they also drive out to each of our farms to pick up garbage! 5. Urban residents look at us and are envious of the rural "Linear" assets and would be a share of that Tax revenue. Well we drive through the Urban areas and see a lot of "Vertical" assets that obviously generate a lot of tax revenue. Maybe we would like a share of that also! 6. Please leave things the way they are. Do Not waste any more money con Consultants to study this issue. If the Town or Village can't manage themselves and declare bankruptcy, we will just provide an administrator to oversee the cutting of services until the books balance (including the cost of that administrator) so it is better that they get on with managing themselves now!
- None

- Privatize services x 5 yr contracts. Fire all staff & start over with new, younger, competent staff who are NOT on Government dole.
- Also, we have heard there is a lot of friction between the two. We do not want our taxes to go up. We pay a lot for an acreage under 5 acres. We are responsible for taking our garbage, recycling in, well, septic fields, etc. all at our own expense.
- My concern is with the Town of RMH wanting the CC reserves that have been set aside for years to maintain the rural infrastructure that all Albertans use.
- No concerns.
- Amalgamating with the Town of Rocky would be a big mistake. We are concerned with the town councilors decision making that discourage any growth due to their lack of foresight & costs in making decisions.
- I want the county to stay separate from the town.
- Public meetings and/or social media.
- - More consultation with public. - Town has proven they are hard to get along with, best to amalgamate with Caroline.
- It would be good if the town & county boards could actually get along. The country does so much for the town already. It seems to me that the town needs to respect the county a whole lot more.

- The town has (including people on social media & the mountaineer) “throw blame at the county for the dissolution of the garbage disposal, when they started the proposal to abandon it. Obviously they can’t get along when the town is so disagreeable.
- Status Quo (amalgamate with Caroline)
- Status Quo (leave as is or amalgamate with Caroline)
- I believe that Clearwater County and the Town of Caroline may be able to do business together.
- If we amalgamate with the town, we in the county will suffer. The people currently running the town are incompetent to say the least. They want the county money because they have wasted their own.
- Do not have any more delines with the Town of Rocky Mtn. House. Do not join with the Town of Rocky Mtn. House.
- What concerns me is why is the town pushing this issue, when the other 2 parties are clearly not interested. Remember - once their in there, it will be impossible to get them out. I small a rat. Dead against this amalgamation. No Need Bait
- \* To relax the land use By-law to allow for more industry (commercial) to set up a neighbourhood watch committee to look after the maintenance of parks and their area. This would reduce recreation costs.
- I feel the process that has be started will potentially address these concerns

- The Councils should amalgamate the three municipalities. There should be one 7 or 9 member Council providing governance for the Rocky/Clearwater/Caroline community. Six or eight members being elected on a ward system providing representation consistent with the Local Authorities Election Act's provisions, with the Chief Elected Official being elected at large.
- Learn to get along; work together, act responsibly for the best interests of the people instead of your personal agenda
- Virtually all movement to the Caroline area are to acreages outside of village limits. Caroline will not grab w it's tax base with this competition



- Run facilities as if they were your own business. Look at inefficiencies and address them.
- Regional visions and goals
- I support the amalgamation of town and county into a single municipality.
- Not certain how to address this
- Village should join County to streamline services and cut down administrative costs. Theoretically should work for Town too, but many hurdles to jump for that to happen. Fees should be charged to non-residents at transfer sites.

- Clearer communications regarding budget especially regarding shared services and related budget funding % from each municipality and actual utilization of that service by each municipality compared to the % of funding.
- A utilization study should be conducted to get an actual head count of the number of Town residents versus # of County residents that utilizes services where the costs are covered jointly. Just thinking each municipality should pay for their usage (seems a fair way of splitting costs).
- The county has run the municipality without the towns input for years, why change now???
- Concern county contributes too much financially towards town operations. Eg Recreation. I believe "head counts" should be done as to # of country versus # of town residents use facilities & financial contributions match percentage used.
- The county needs to allocate some of the Fire costs on to the Town/village. Everything needs to stay the same. If the county amalgamates it will only be taking on the towns debt and fund all their projects that seem to focus around recreation. The video "One Small Town will Change the World"(found on YouTube) has a lot of great ideas for communities. I would suggest all should watch it. Taxes are too high.
- Joint use agreements should be outlined & agreed upon provincially. So counties know up front what their share of perceived county expenses will be each year.

- I believe that the status quo should be maintained regarding governance between the town of Rocky Mountain House and Clearwater County. This will avoid urban - rural division even further. Urban needs and priorities differ in many ways from rural needs and priorities. I believe that Clearwater County pays at least its fair share if not more for joint needs and enrichments within the town of Rocky Mountain House. Does the town play fair - not always? Look at the North Saskatchewan River Park and the Rocky Mountain House Agricultural Society and Stampede board. The town is money hungry with greeds exceeding needs. That is not cooperation. The waste water and sewage lagoons are another example. The list goes on and on.
- Have many concerns the dump was one of them! If these spoiled children couldn't make that work what makes them think the three would work together.
- Option #4 and leave town to come up with their own money.
- Maybe addressing it on a work culture level?
- Not sure if this comment belongs here but I think the county fibre optic plan is too expensive & wireless communication will be better & at less cost than fibre optics.
- Reduce redundancies and red tape in administration and services.
- We are one of the many that do not have access to internet access in our area. Need all information printed in all local newspapers as well as mailouts are needed. A large mention in all local newspapers when before mailouts are to be sent out. Preserve AgLand. Any and all issues, decisions MUST have decisions made by individuals that have knowledge of the issues - not just have a position that allows a vote. Example: subdivisions and the use of good land needed for food etc. If you have never farmed what does book learning only teach you about real life!
- I prefer the status quo. Do not amalgamate even reduce # of councilors down and necessary staff.
- A Nordegg based councillor is needed to represent the residents of this area. At the administration level we need a stronger presence within the community at the senior staff level. This could be through relocating some of the office positions to be based in Nordegg. Lastly, we need to consider tourism in the same way we address agriculture as being core to this area.
- In my opinion there needs to be one group in charge. Have proper representation from all areas. Develop a proper plan for the future Clearwater County, Caroline and Rocky
- Amalgamation of Town of RMH and Clearwater County. I have less strong feelings about the direction Caroline should take-- I defer to those residents on this.
- Continue to keep finances in check

- I don't have any ideas on how to help this
- Amalgamation
- Look at pay scale rises over the last 10 years
- Amalgamation
- Keep Clearwater County independent
- This survey is a good start. Traditionally town hall meetings are poorly attended. With vivid, you cannot set up information booths.
- N/A
- No concerns.
- I am greatly concerned about a potential amalgamation of the county with the town of Rocky Mountain House. I believe an amalgamation would not be beneficial to either town or county residents as the needs and interests of each are too disparate and would be best met by separate government bodies as is currently the case.
- - Our county has ignored urban flight and the potential our well positioned region. - Our councilors have dropped the ball in taking advantage of a decentralized economy and workforce. - Fire them all and amalgamate with new people and vision.
- Develop appropriate management agreements and council oversight
- a. Residents need to see that multiple municipalities is currently too redundant and clearly duplicitous with no additional value. If it were so simple, all residents would be in favor of amalgamation or single municipality. b. The most likely value of amalgamation would be joining administrative and operational delivery of staff and assets. It should be expected that the current total of people and assets should be, or must show, a reduction overall. It cannot be expected that joining the people and assets would be 50% of the total but theoretically somewhat around 75% of the total. This would likely be the simplest part of an amalgamation. c. The most difficult challenge of any amalgamation would be in decision making. A process would need to be developed to clearly show how decisions would be made in an amalgamated municipality compared to current. Specifically, what criterial would go into decisions, for: i. Dollar value ii. Improvement value iii. Consequences of proceeding iv. Consequences of not proceeding v. More transparency d. Current more open joint meetings (as compared to in-camera meetings) to help all residents identify why decisions are not more congenial now. This would likely identify where the problems are now and determine how they could be resolved or where differences between the three municipalities cannot be resolved. e. Joint community venture funding has been shown for County contributions. What has the Town or Village contributed to the County in return, for public facilities or infrastructure?

- The Garbage Disposal issue is a current one. Everything was going well and then the Town and County could not agree. Instead of working together, they are now doing their own thing. I perceive that this was because the Town's goals are different than the County's. This is a very poor precedent for the possibility of working together under one umbrella. Governing Urban spaces versus Rural spaces are two different focuses and should not be put together.
- Amalgamate services where ever it is possible to do so. Purchasing for a larger number reduces costs, so work together to purchase services, equipment etc and save money. I worked in the oil and gas sector for many years, and multiple companies will even work together to increase numbers and reduce costs. I believe there are some personal conflicts between the Town of RMH and the County which need to be eliminated for the purpose of working together. There is no tolerance for personal conflicts to prevent progress. I believe the town of Rocky and the County should amalgamate. I am not as familiar with the issues of Caroline.
- The county should continue to manage county affairs. The town of Rocky is run by a group of completely incompetent individuals who have no real respect or knowledge of county needs...they showed this with the recent waste debacle.
- More communication from the councilor for the area. Stop the catch and release of criminals.
- Clearwater County needs to be more transparent. MPD I emailed in a letter in favour of 4th option to subdivide. Not all county residents land is agricultural but current policy's make it difficult for land owners to subdivide
- Hold an election and get new council members who will hopefully act like mature adults.
- Keep the communities separate
- Amalgamation is a worthwhile effort and may be in the best interests of the area.
- Send out a supervisor about a complaint to determine how bad the situation is and how it can be repaired. And then follow-up to make sure the repairs actually worked.
- I understand the area of the County is large but there needs to be more emphasis on programs and services that help the County Residents.
- None
- Stop raising costs without public forums to address objections and justify increases. If you raise costs, change services to clarify the need for the increase.
- I do not think the town and County should have one governing body. There are too many differences.
- Bring them to council
- Governments need to stay focused on the day to day running of their respective areas and stop trying to impose values and ethics on their constituents.

- They work together with well thought out written agreements in some mutually beneficial alliances that are not forced on them by provincial government.
- Only that there are opportunities to express the concerns.
- The county has wasted huge money on empty industrial parks, 2 firehalls 10km apart. They continue to dump money into Nordegg. A lot of that money could have been used better.
- The concern I have is the change between the Town and the County municipalities. We used to be stronger together and work together but since the oct elections, our new councils cannot get along and they have separated needed things like waste. I believe an amalgamation is entirely the WRONG move right now. The Town has zero ability to know what a county resident/business requires and I honestly think they want the reserves from the county as they cannot handle their own finances properly
- Education for all. What does your country provide for tax papers. Written mailed information.
- We have noted conflicting perspectives recently that have come to light between the town & county. To have ongoing input from the general public regarding these issues may provide guidance for future major decisions. Town and rural priorities can prove to be very different.
- STOP ANY THOUGHTS/ACTION TOWARD AMALGAMATION WITH THE TOWN!!
- No more acreages than 2 to a quarter
- The province steps up and the rural municipalities work positively with their neighbors.
- Concerned about MDP, increased parcels/quarter
- None
- The Clearwater County and Town should join and have one government for the entire area.
- One single local government whereas all services are just departments. It is the effective and efficient way to run an organization be it private or public.
- Facebook information. Advertising in both local papers
- I agree fully with amalgamation of the three municipalities.
- why the current one we has by UFA why they couldn't keep this active either town taking it over the county take it over. Just another building that gets money dumped into and then it just turns into a waste of tax dollars
- When MLA Jason Nixon offered to sit down with the mayor Tammy Burke and County Reeve Cammie Laird with a mediator to visit the current issues and lack of resolution the Town of Rocky Mountain House denied the meeting. There needs to be resolution between the Town council, CAO and mayor working with the Clearwater County. The residents are the ones suffering when they can't separate their differences and build a working relationship. Mediation should be the next step.
- Urban and rural residents have very different needs and wants. Communication would have to be open to address all concerns. Also the concern that the County taxes would rise to the amount that Town residents pay.

- I am of the opinion that it would be in the best interests of all that the three governments amalgamate.
- Election recall?
- Review duplication, approach things as how they can benefit the area as a whole not town vs. County. more collaboration, less division, cost effectiveness
- I would love to see ONE council with good representation that can look ahead to what is best for the whole area. Not just push forward their own agendas. Our town is slowly dying and there seems to be no desire to attract industries (tourism , manufacturing, etc) or develop areas in the town that will attract people to move here.
- Unify services, use common infrastructure to eliminate rising costs on residents
- I am concerned with taxes, where they go if all three zones are amalgamated. Are the rural properties going to get the same protection, garbage facilities, etc. as the towns?!
- N/A
- I think the October election will alleviate my concerns
- I would be willing to amalgamate if our Councils would all be willing to learn from each other.
- One government with a long-term agreement (25years) to bring tax rates together by attrition. (Don't reduce RMH rates to county rates until town debt has amortized)

- We as Clearwater County stay as we are, taxes, roads etc. The Clearwater Council is in place to do this.
- Amalgamate the three administrations to eliminate duplicity. I feel there is no way around it. Or bring in a third party to evaluate duplicated services and create a plan to benefit all residents; leave council out of it.
- The biggest issues are systematic, real time spent on relation development and trust needs to occur after the next election. The next step is developing a clear vision for the region before moving on any items. There has been large external issues happening, example; Bighorn park, coal mines, COVID 19 The these have torn the communities apart and the leaders have failed to recognize this and respond. The failure to develop clear guidance for the community, and develop perspectives that promote unity. Clearwater County needs a new CAO and the Town of Rocky needs to control the attitudes of councilors in public. Both municipalities have created horrible cultures and the results of this come out during the regional agreements. The Fire service is a joke, the wastes was destructive and destabilized the region, The continued fighting will and has chased investment out.
- With one governing body, there are less egos to get in the way. All the money, resources and knowledge can be pooled together.
- Amalgamation.

- The council, governing body would have to be fairly divided by population. See considerable problems with egos and power trips.
- Sometimes things aren't about who can make the most money but about how to work together
- Amalgamation
- Public Forum or even a virtual forum in the evening when people are more likely to attend.
- Social media such as where this survey was found "Caroline and area news"
- Taxes and spending are going to be a huge issue, and having two bodies go different directions will not help. Fiscal restraint is the only path forward.
- Step back and get more community input
- No concerns
- I don't know if there would be a cost saving if we amalgamated with the county
- as above one step at a time, Caroline first work through that one, There will more wrinkles in the Rocky issue, then on a Shar Pei pup.
- Getting ideas from the kids, see what they want.
- Eliminate duplications which would automatically speed up processes
- amalgamation with the county is fine but not if Rocky is part of the package. Rocky will be too demanding and will not want to allow any development in or around the village. The village will become a ghost town if rocky is part of the program. They will consume all of the tax revenue.
- Have the governing bodies be easier to access, have staff available to answer emails and phone calls. Or even provide a phone app for communication purposes.
- I believe amalgamation between the Village and the County would make it viable to hire educated leaders
- Things like waste management should be done cooperatively to give better service for less cost. Amalgamation of the 3 municipalities would be the most cost effective way of doing that. One council to make decisions, even distribution of costs for citizens
- The village of Caroline website should display more information on what the Village is working on, current public engagement, decision documentation etc. The office should be easier to reach.
- Put the funds toward building towers to supplement Telus, Rogers, etc. They are still going to be in the area anyway.
- make it easier for people to look them and if no computer then make a flyers for people
- Any amalgamation should be between Clearwater County and Caroline only. Rocky Mountain House council has shown that they are unable show fiscal restraint or work with the other councils.
- Caroline should fall under the county like Leslieville and Condor. ...Nordegg
- Amalgamate into a 'Specialized Municipality' would be best.
- County and village amalgamation

- I think the councils from all 3 regions have to step back and take a birds eye view of where our area is headed. They need to work to focus on what's best for the region and how can we maximize our efficiencies from waste services, infrastructure, social programs, public services, etc.
- None
- Common goal regional collaborating
- If amalgamation is to work in this new era and beyond, a centralist attitude of governing will NOT work. A paradigm shift is required. Presently, all 3 municipalities are at odds with each other and has made governing the region dysfunctional and expensive for taxpayers
- Combining town and county
- Town of Rocky Mountain House has enough means to stand alone and does not need the county's cash to be profitable! The town Mayor and councillors are not informed and so lack of common sense with funds
- Have an open forum with people that live in this region. There is always a hidden agenda and that's created a huge mistrust factor.
- No amalgamation between the Town of Rocky Mountain House and Clearwater County!
- Not sure what the best solution is, I think a shuffle of staff or maybe some 3rd party training/resources. Who knows.
- There are various ways to fix these issues. Non essential spending should stop and just look at areas where money is needed. Like for example, when the regional waste structure was being revised, rather than implementing a new organics program they could have saved their residents that money in there rates each year and wait until the economy was better as a lot of people are struggling and with no work.
- Vote in a new Mayor and Council
- I like that the County contributes to Town and Village programs. I don't like that the Town seems to always want more money from the County.
- Leave the town of Rocky as is they have enough potential for growth and tax revenue that they can be self substantiate.
- I think the Town needs a new Council (thankfully its election year), but more than that they are flat broke. The County should absolve the Town and remove Town Council. One or two Councillors is sufficient for Town residents to be represented.
- Knowing the answers will allow me to more efficiently dialogue with proper person / level to politely and respectfully understand the issue and be part of the solution.
- na

- Forward thinking and stop the territorial mindset. Joint services can be a benefit to all taxpayers by reducing cost and quality service. For example the landfill, which was centrally located for easy access for town and county.
- Find innovative ways to improve efficiencies.
- Perhaps a moderator at joint meetings would be productive.
- Full amalgamation in a timely manner.
- I suppose an election and electing people who are interested in working together. If the current governments could have gotten together and worked on some of these shared agreements, I don't feel the agreements would have been "torn apart" as they seem to have been.
- I am only concerned with amalgamating with rocky. In the rural, we have been under served for years being fiscally prudent and building up reserves.
- Amalgamation would certainly help. IT is one service area. Councils working together and sharing resources. County needs to stop fighting. In particular Reeve Laird has been difficult and others as well
- amalgamation
- Amalgamation of the Town and County would address this.
- Status quo
- Reduced fees for bins
- N/A
- Amalgamation may improve this.
- It would be nice to see more things happening on Main St. It seems those who own buildings don't want to renovate or rent at reasonable rates. It is refreshing to see new stores and businesses but the same buildings seem to be constantly for rent.
- Clean house . empty both councils
- I believe the region would be better served under one government.
- council need to focus on governance and long term goals. Stay off social media
- To be able to see the Town & County working together in a professional manner and stop fighting against each other if they can not come together to put an agreement together for over a year makes people wonder if they can or will be able to work together.
- Integrate administration and other logistical items that are used/ shared by al users
- Terminating all agreements within the municipalities and reducing all deptments by 30%. And contract out at least 50% of all County deptments. they seem to be alot of wasted spending and added cost to us the rate payer

**Please describe other considerations for governance structures that are important to you?**

- Service Delivery - I'm sure it will lessen. None of the above.
- My recommendation would be Option #3 "Dissolution of Village"
- We don't want to be saddled with past debts as municipal. We don't also want to be taxed the same as town!

- These are all very important, hard to put one ahead of another.
- Because there are often uneven numbers of representatives, I foresee potential conflict about where the tie breaker is. Would rural or urban have the greater number of representatives? Right now the county has seen a significant reduction in revenue flow. I do not want increased taxes and a reduction of services because of differing opinions as to what the basic needs and services should be.
- At this moment we don't have an issue with amalgamating with Caroline unless there is going to be an increase in taxes.



- Not interested in exploring another option with RMH - Our rural urban divide is to far apart - Current town council has no interest in understanding how rural works.
- I am concerned about taking on the costs to support areas that are not economically viable which were previously left to their own methods

- The concept of "local autonomy" is a red herring. I believe that, broadly, the area residents and businesses believe that this is one community. The fear mongering around "loss of autonomy" and "paying for the other municipalities poor decisions" are misplaced concepts. Rural residents are dependent on the goods, services and programs provided through the urban centres. The challenges around decreasing municipal grant funding, aging infrastructure, the demands on local and provincial services related to aging populations are more critical issues that are not being acknowledged or planned for while the current elected officials focus on maintaining the governance status quo
- Overall collaboration and effective leadership amongst each equal partner
- Concerns about significantly different perspectives and priorities between the citizens of the town and the county.
- Identifying rural versus urban needs
- None come to mind.
- None
- Ensuring accountability and transparency.
- Last question # 3 - 'Equitable share of Tax Base ..... is difficult to understand. I do not want my taxes to go to the Town or any other municipality. I want my tax dollars to stay in the County. I rarely utilize any service in the Town. The Town really gets a huge benefit from having such a generous neighbour (too generous) in my opinion

- Each municipality should contribute to the “pot” the percentage they use.
- How much or more staff needed. AS NEEDED?
- It would have been more fair to show the town contributions in your chart (prev. page). What about the North Sask. Park? Do you not contribute to that?
- I feel that this forced study by the town of Rocky Mountain House regarding regional governance and amalgamation with Clearwater County and the village of Caroline is like a hostile takeover in the business world. At present there are distinct examples of a lack of cooperation between the town of Rocky Mountain House and Clearwater County that in turn are leading to added costs to the taxpayers - the joint waste collection site in the town is no more. That facility that was used by both town and county residents now must be dismantled because the maybe the town has a progressive green ideology now and built the Rocky Eco center that county residents must pay to utilize. Clearwater County is now forced to create a temporary site at an added expense that is no longer convenient for rural residents. How is this a wise use of taxpayer dollars? I feel that there many unforeseen difficulties that lie ahead and will result in bitter feelings and higher taxation rates. Rural and urban needs have many variances. The argument can be made that there are fewer duplication of services but at what cost to rural residents?
- The Town will bankrupt the county as years of money mismanagement has show.
- How can we work to an efficient government system, where things get done well, with good public communication, with exemplary stewardship.
- (6) How do we stop the waste of taxpayer dollars and down taxes before we go broke or ghost town.
- Poorly structured question. This could have been made easier to evaluate! They all are important at various times and on various levels!!!
- Town versus County needs from government are so different and each will be competing for services.
- Cohesive regional development plan instead of infighting and turf wars between municipal government I am tired of conflicts between Town of RMH and County. Decisions made are not in the best interests of citizens
- Having a voice large enough to represent rural/town
- None
- Rural residents put money into the town economy. This is a positive thing.
- How will the agricultural community have any input when the county gets absorbed by the town? We have trouble enough already with that as it is! You can NOT use the same governance over a county as a town, the needs are COMPLETELY different!
- Information on impacts on taxes, impacts to servicing and program delivery, and municipal government representation needed.
- 1. Fire all local politicians and start again with new municipal regional structure.

- Taxes are most important. I own land in other counties and Clearwater taxes are by FAR the most expensive. If other counties can operate their budgets on much less, than CW county can certainly learn to budget better. STOP tax raises.
- Agriculture preservation and environmental protection
- That there will be fiscal responsibility, that we won't be responsible for the towns debt and irresponsible governance of funds and I don't need my taxes going any higher. I want our area to grow and thrive. Not scare business away and certainly not be fighting with other groups like the town vs the rodeo group. We just separated with the regional waste department- how many more millions will be spent
- I don't believe that what the town purposes is in the best interest of anyone but themselves.
- They work together
- There are typically very different concerns for urbanites as opposed to rural folks. To combine governance of the two creates struggles as to where the priorities are. Rather than restructure the whole thing why not focus on better cooperation between the councils. After all they are supposed to be adults, which means to me they should be able to respect differing views and work together for the common good. There should be a huge effort to make sure all constituents are being heard before any changes are made...Huge.
- County keeps resources for their citizens first.

- 1. Attitude of town residents toward the County and what goes on in the county. Eg. County has more money, but what we do here is less important. 2. Quite often regionalization leads to channelling everything to a central location to save money - is this going to happen here? 3. The role of volunteers and volunteer groups in the county, how many of the facilities we have here exist because of volunteer engagement and the amount of money brought into the community through fundraising, corporate donations, working casinos etc.
- Reduction in duplication of services 1-office, payroll dept etc.
- that our municipalities get a long and make decisions for the benefit of the citizens and NOT for their own agenda
- It is important that our rural municipality retain its tax base to ensure that cleaning up after these companies leave can be done.
- Increased Taxes
- All persons in the region have an economic impact on the area so all are equally impacted and should be represented accordingly.
- Concern that regionalization will leave many municipal employees without a job.
- I feel that service delivery and programs would be more cost effective if shared. Also, because we are not large in population, we would be more powerful regarding economic development if we were all one government.

- Why there is little work for the next generation. The older need to accept the youth and their role to keep the economy moving forward
- Specific plan for locations and amalgamations of capital assets (town hall, roads departments, etc.), and plans for staffing.
- The town is urban and the county is rural and there is a big difference.... the town of Rocky Mt. House doesn't have any Ideal of what the Clearwater County people deal with and we have saved and paid for many other structures beyond the County to also help the Town, but we do not want to join in GOVERENCE ....THANKYOU! IF THE TOWN OF ROCKY MT. HOUSE IS IN DEDIT....MAYBE THEY SHOULD TAKE A HARD LOOK AT THEM SELVES AND MANAGER THERE FINANCE.
- The current structure of voting by numbers doesn't work in a vastly different county. The failure to recognize the cookie cutter management, purchasing and leadership is the leading failure by all involved. The area is large and vastly different. There is agricultural based to the east, small town in the middle and remote to the north, which is industrial based. Finally to the west we tourism based expansion, the failure to recognize this will destroy all growth and thus voting needs to based on relevant need not population.
- Working together as a region. We need each other.
- I am a renter so would like to see taxes go down cause if they keep raising, I will be homeless as I won't be able to afford my rent.
- Government is terrible at economic development, and they need to stop throwing money and staff at the issue. Just cut the taxes and the spending, and let business happen.
- I would like to see about getting a seniors lodge or a facility that could house all needs.of.our seniors.
- Ability to differentiate between urban and rural when making policies
- letting Caroline have a large enough amount of the taxes because we have a huge county residential base so it is important that we can expand the supports such as a seniors development. Most of our rural residents do not even like going to Rocky any more let alone live in their seniors homes.
- Municipal land planning
- Getting better EMS in this area (out of Caroline). Other areas have seen huge improvements, in close proximity. This area has great need and it needs to be addressed.
- That the municipal structure reflect (and promote) that we are one community.
- That one was hard! Would police be up in the top 10?
- None
- Whom is managing partner of regional efforts. Town debt
- Buying power for equipment. Eliminate duplication of services. Overall emphasis on regional development for the entire region, not just the largest center. (ex: Canada doesn't focus on outer region development)
- Town will ruin and bankruptcy the county residents

- No amalgamation with the Town, County tax payers don't need to pay for their mismanagement.
- County residents being almost double town residents and "running" the town due to voting strength
- The County already contributes funds to many services in Town. I think an amalgamation is just the Town trying to get more funding of its own services. They are allowed to say no.
- As a county residence, I would like to have a say in Rocky decisions as that is my primary community.
- How are the very different needs of rural and urban municipalities addressed equally
- Trust. Can we trust our potential partner
- None are important. Just amalgamate. The current structure is costing us economic growth and inhibiting our community in all ways. We don't have time to wait.
- Partnerships for efficient service delivery or complimentary services (not redundant delivery)
- n/a
- Shared services, tourism and economic development, larger organization would attract and retain professional staff, larger lobbying abilities, stop wasting time of staff with negotiations and fighting

- As a county resident on the far end of the county, I rarely go into the town of rocky, how will i get value for taxes. I would rather pay a user fee if I go into town and use the rec facilities. How will roads be classified and prioritized for repairs and snow clearing..
- should town residents be concerned that we are outnumbered by county resident. ergo, will the "county" representation have the controlling interest in the region and decisions for the "town" will be made by the majority of county residents.
- Na
- Na
- Efficiency of service delivery and the ability to evolve those services to the benefit of the region.
- Holding our council accountable for their decisions and ensuring that the rate payers are in the know. If big changes are being made the public should have input and a choice of where their tax dollars are going.
- Lower taxes
- Pure representation will be lost I believe the urban rural relationships. will be ruined if this amalgamation takes place.

## What information do you need to know to better understand the differences between the governance structure options being explored? ('Other' Category)

- There has been no information.
- Unfair representation by several bodies to govern and managing.
- What happens to the Clearwater County reserves that rural residents have helped build through taxes already paid and wisely managed by Clearwater County administration? I see further rural urban conflict with governance and services to be provided. What is going to happen with our taxation? Because of Covid, information sharing and gathering has been highly impacted. Rural residents are often faced with connectivity issues or do not participate period in online activities such as this survey or virtual open houses. This is really not the time for a realistic information gathering and sharing of information. Why can this not be paused until open house formats maybe held that would be more fair to all residents. Often one idea triggers another with open in person forums. Possibly that is the reason for the timing of this study in the first place so there is very limited input - strategic skewing of the results. I and most rural residents prefer live - in person question and answer sessions. This in my opinion has not been a fair information gathering process because many seniors do not have or use a computer. That does not mean they are not interested. They most certainly are. We all pay taxes and should be entitled to a fair and equitable information session.
- Grants & incentives ventures

- What is most critical is the articulation of a vision of what a new municipal government would look like. A new regional government has various "tools" such as local improvement taxes to address concerns about inequities in service delivery or paying for services someone does not receive. The Councils need to honestly identify that there are ways for the community to be governed fairly and equitability.
- How will priority of spending be determined and what would council structure look like
- With a municipal election happening in 2021, will this mean doubling up on election costs in the near future?
- Because there are often uneven numbers of representatives, I foresee potential conflict about where the tie breaker is. Would rural or urban have the greater number of representatives? Right now the county has seen a significant reduction in revenue flow. I do not want increased taxes and a reduction of services because of differing opinions as to what the basic needs and services should be.
- how policy and goventence will direct staff to serve well
- impact on taxes our biggest concern
- land rights and by laws applicable
- How much power do we have to stop amalgamation.
- Unforeseen/potentially overlooked concerns
- How this will affect Agriculture
- - Will a "mill rate" address variations in tax obligations? - New regional electoral boundaries

- why did this process start - what was the impelled this study
- Why are we even exploring this avenue??? It is just going to be messy. Just get along.
- Who will oversee the organization to ensure it's done efficiently and their are no duplication of services.
- Benefits to the area



- DECISION MAKING, PEOPLE'S JOBS, FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS
- Forecasted implementation costs, Human & social
- authorities
- The library
- allocation of services throughout the county.
- These are all 'red herring' issues that politicians use as scare tactics.
- What's going to happen with town debt

- How could this region reflect how the rest of the country should be governed, not the same worn out, outdated, corrupt system that is overmanaged.
- Would the Town keep their debts or would the County tax payers have to pay for them?
- revenue sharing
- Voting boundaries and representation
- What is the benefit to a County resident?
- What advantage would a restructure give?
- specific examples of other municipalities that have changed governance structures and what the pros/cons actually ended up being
- How to back out of the arrangement
- None. Just amalgamate.
- local improvement taxes for differences in service levels - ie water/wastewater, curb and gutter in urban
- any and all potential impact to the county
- Better definitions between the different scenarios as some have the exact same definitions with different titles.
- How this was even allowed to proceed without a plebiscite your negotiating in bad faith.

**What questions do you have for us or what information would you like to learn more about to be better informed about the Regional Governance Study and the different options being explored?**

- I don't see the need for any of this. Larger government is never better.
- Where will further public consultation take place?
- Would be nice to have more info as I talked to over a dozen people town and county and they knew nothing about this at all and not everyone has internet or facebook.
- - Who initiated the amalgamation  
- What is cost saving - How is population represented - How it affects giants & funding
- Why not enough time to respond? Do you assume that there's nothing else important in our lives - paper dated 03 Mar - you want survey delivered by 10th Mar.
- Ho and when (if ever) are we going to get the results of this survey? Will we just be getting the results of question #3 or will we also get some of the concerns and ideas expressed in questions #1 and #2? Who will be compiling the results of this survey? ONLY "Nichols Applied Management" or???
- I am quite concerned about the Alberta Government having the final say. I'm hoping the peoples concerned will have a bearing on the decision.
- What happens to money already in each area! Is it pooled? Do the town get the most benefit from it? What is the pros of the county amalgamating? What about fair representation in this?

- I believe we should stay status quo as in Option #1
- Both the county and town seem to be top heavy with some positions. Why if at all are some of these positions needed for operations of this size.
- If the town & county can't agree on anything now.... you think you will later? I'm not responsible living in the county with the towns very poor decisions. And we don't need more bureaucrats.
- I do not want this amalgamation to occur. I am concerned about increased taxes in the county without increased services.
- See spread sheet with all plans.
- How is this going to effect us?
- - How is it that the urban RMH feels it has the right to drive a study that both CC & Caroline objected to - Why is it RMH includes all the rural CC residents in its trading area conversation. Many from the North & East of CC never frequent RMH or its services.
- My understanding is the town is after the county's healthy reserves that has taken the county years to achieve, and is also my understanding the town is trying to do a money grab from the county - Is this tru?
- We need itemized lists of the areas that present structures & services this would be effected/taken away or cost us as a county vs amalgamation with town or Village of Caroline.
- Be fair, Nordegg gets it's "lions" share.
- Transparency & public input
- Can we follow Wheatland County's example when it comes to lockdowns?

- Why would we need to change from the current system that works well for most of the county.
- Current platform is working well
- As a County resident I am concerned that the County Council is not open to the regional governance concept. When the regional study was announced, then Reeve Hoven, was quoted in the Mountaineer saying something along the line of: "Our residents have indicated that they are not supportive of regional governance". I don't recall the County asking its residents that question. I believe that County Councilors may have spoken with individual friends and area residents whose comments supported Councilor biases. As a County taxpayer, my question to County Councilors is "are you able to consider the regional governance concept with a view to the long-term needs (10+ years) of the region. As an area resident, I ask the same question of the Town and Village Councillors.
- I can understand the needs for caroline to strike a deal with the county, I would think the town of Rocky would have an ample tax base and would want to be separate with its own governing body. Please explain
- Impact on representation. Impact on taxes. Impact on funding for village of Caroline such as library and Hub.
- Why does province force these discussions or introduce conflict over finding models

- Municipal representation How will this effect services in each municipality? If one of the amalgamation options is to happen will it be in place for the next election or will it cost taxpayers to have another municipal election prior to 2024?
- None.
- What weight is placed on this survey relative to the options as presented? When would the provincial government mandate amalgamation? What implications does amalgamation have on municipal reserves?
- Why did the Town insist on this study when the Village and County did not want it at this time? Is it true this is an attempt at a money grab from the Town? Does the Town not realize they are not the hub? Do they not realize the County has 5 hamlets to take care of?
- Will any changes come down to a public vote??
- Why is the Town being so disrespectful & non supportive to the county & villages wishes to explore amalgamation in "smaller steps" that being (Village & County study 1st)
- What needs to be looked at to lower property taxes it is getting to the point of moving to a different area. Hwy 22 South of Rocky at the Prairie Creek are had road maintenance and is worse than before. I don't see taxpayer money being spent wisely because these repairs in that stretch of highway would have cost us the taxpayer a lot of money and right at Prairie Creek we now have a bump, deep bump.

- How can we be assured that town concerns will be heard when Regional governance will be predominantly county residents.
- What happens to the Clearwater County reserves that rural residents have helped build through taxes already paid and wisely managed by Clearwater County administration? I see further rural urban conflict just with governance and services to be provided. What is going to happen with our taxation?
- Would a 3 way amalgamation affect us provincially? Cons & Benefits.
- Keep the recycle bins at the coop for county residents.
- Thanks for putting this survey on the back of the Westren Star, it initiated my participation in this survey
- Perhaps list the services provided it is associated cost per household ie; airport/# of households
- Very concerned that an amalgamation would result in county voices being overruled by “more powerful” town voices that representation would not be equal.
- What efficiencies and policies are being explored to make the county run more efficiently, feasibly and self sustaining?
- Out of the three municipalities mentioned (county, village and town) what is the number of voting population of each?
- Why do we even need a municipal gov. when we get little. All we need is a business office & a few services.
- Why was this not delivered as a letter to landowners/residents? That way due diligence would be done from municipal perspective. This “survey” makes a huge assumption that a) people receive it b) they are informed c) that they even complete it!!! This is a poor attempt at public engagement for such a serious issue. As taxpayers we are entitled to better and respectful regard. Page 1: It is sadly ironic this part one page also contains the obituary of a great champion of this region - and all Albertans - Ty Lund. He earned our trust as a respectful politician & real statesman. Wonder what he would have to say about all this?
- How will this impact decisions to support the growth we are seeing in Nordegg?
- How will the decision be made, ultimately? To what extent will the decision be made by citizens versus Councils?
- How one government can possibly fairly provide for best interests of such diverse needs.
- None
- Who gave you the mandate to do this? Rocky will Dominate. Will not be voting for you again
- How this will positively affect the county, what good will it do for us who live in the county, that is if there are any?? and how this will impact agriculture in the county!!
- None
- What is the timeline for implementation, how are regional services affected, what efficiencies are planned

- Theoretically, I believe a single municipality makes sense and could be a good idea. Realistically, I believe this would lead to a negative sum for all County residents in the short term and in the long term. I believe if I lived in the Town I would feel the same for the county, but would probably be in favor as benefits would increase for the Town in every way. Having friends and relatives who live in Town the truth is obvious that taxes are much higher in Town than in the County. This should be obvious, as in the County we fully purchase, operate maintain, and replace our own sewage disposal, water (well) supply, garbage removal, etc. Recognizing the obvious property tax differences it seems to me that Town residents pay much more in taxes for less comparable service. This would negate any benefits for County residents to join into an amalgamated municipality. In our current and foreseeable future, our tax revenues are being greatly reduced locally as well as provincially, and unbelievably federally. On top of this many residents of all three municipalities are unemployed, under-employed, in the throes of bankruptcy or great debt, which all leads to greater stress on families and communities. Unless the three parties can show a reduction in debt, a reduction in costs, and/or an increase in new revenue (not property or personal taxes), these financial issues must remain the highest priority in these decisions. Perhaps a survey made up by a third party could find what priority differences (economic, taxation, future desires) exist between each of the municipalities to determine if differences are comparable or significantly different.

- As a county resident I would be concerned that regional governance would lead to more government involvement....I want less government, at every level.
- Will individual people have a say in which option is chosen? Will urban interests out weight rural interests? Will my community be the region?
- I am not in favour, But how would this impact the county? How would the county and town cooperate and what would the tax implications be
- I would like to understand the cost savings, the impact on staff levels of both municipalities and the effect on my personal taxes.
- Governance and decision making, particularly if there are different priorities for the town and the county.
- How this would work going forward as the different governments have not been able to successfully work together, so how would this help?
- I really do not understand the need for this. I feel like the county is doing an excellent job for its residents and I do not see any advantages to joining with the town of Rocky
- Why is this being considered? Are there any financial or service-related advantages? This is unclear.
- I would really like to know why the Mayor and her councillors feel the need to do this without anyone else on board.
- Why the infighting

- Why is the province funding this study? Waste of money.
- How would the people in the county living near other centres (Rimbey, Sundre) be affected?
- Who will decide in the end which option will be chosen.
- How can an amalgamation actually be successful if the Town and County are at such odds ?
- It seems wasteful to have 2 studies funded which portrays a divided stance from the beginning. The best interests of all three parties will be required in order to meet the needs of the citizens of this area, we all love to call home.
- Why is this being investigated/ pushed forward when Covid restricts the opportunity for open, in-person meetings?? The “powers that be” have an utter incomplete understanding with restrictions for public engagement due to rural connectivity problems.
- Why is regional governance focusing on the needs of the urban centers first and what happens when rural citizens do not access any of the urban municipalities for services.
- Examples of other jurisdictions that have dealt with similar situation.
- Pros and cons of one government.
- More financial information such as assessment per capita and municipal employees per capita with comparisons to other municipalities. And how this would look for each option.
- What will the cost of jobs be (how many positions would be cut as a result of amalgamation)
- what happens if the village and county merge together and how it would effect your taxes
- Does the study know the break down of tax dollars spent? The Town of Rocky Mountain House has been emailed several times and failed to respond. What is the cost to decommission the old waste transfer site located in the Town of Rocky Mountain House as well as soil sample testing cost and what will that empty lot become after the results, in hopes it doesn't cost more after soil testing. Was is fiscally responsible to open a new waste transfer site when we have one already within the town and decommission of that lot costs the taxpayers as well as set up of the new eco center? What is the reason the town sent county recycling bins located behind Co-op out of Town when it only benefits the residents? The eco center has been over filling with cardboard now, this is in fact not eco friendly it would appear to be more of a dispute the Town has with the County, again only hurting the residents when they can not work together. Have you looked into the Airport agreement. The Town has denied meetings with Clearwater County and refuses to address the letters of support for the Clearwater County to take over as administrative partner of The Rocky Airport. How will amalgamation solve this issue, the leaseholders at the Rocky Airport have been in turmoil and the Town of Rocky Mountain House refuses to do anything to help. If the Town and County can not get along now, then how would joining them make this situation any better? The town has allegations of illegally firing employees and improper use of funds, this would then be put on the County reserves to pay for these mistakes as well as the upgrade to the Water Treatment Plant, located in the Town of Rocky Mountain House. No county resident wants our tax dollars spent on something the Town has failed to budget for, neglected or down right done illegally. Do you have access to all of this information, to take it into account on our behalf?

- Cost savings of regionalization.
- What do you feel are the drawbacks with amalgamating? Do the existing governments really believe that the recent changes to waste management are an improvement for local citizens?
- Is there any resources that can be shared that can outline the successes and failures of these type of amalgamations? Knowing the good and the bad is important to understand how we all fit as part of the solution.
- Would there be representation by population, ie. since more people live in the County would there be more Councillors from the County on the Council?
- Is it possible to bring tax rates together slowly (over a 25 period)?
- THIS SHOULD BE A VOTE ON PAPER AT THE POLLS.....!!! SO EVERY ONE HAS A TRUE OPINION. NOT A FLY BY OF THE WAY THIS SURVEY BEING DONE....
- Please provide clarification or definitions. I had to look up the difference between 'single municipality district', and 'single specialized municipality'. Presenting the information in terms the general public will understand will get more input and engagement from residents.
- Can the development of recall bylaws be added to help bring in true management as the leaders are failing everyone

- What is the town hiding? Why are they acting bigger than they actually are? Why are they mismanaging money? How come the town council gave themselves raises during this economic down turn? Why is the county wasting millions of dollars on an internet project when wireless satellite internet is already available anywhere?
- Transparency throughout the process.
- Why are we considering this and which government level is driving this forward at this time?
- I do know that this had been proposed before and was voted down. So what is different now?
- There has not been a description presented for public to read in recent years
- Why are we as citizens getting pushed to the brink and no one is doing any thing about
- How does it impact our library!
- Would like to have the results of the county and village so we can get a feel on how they feel about it
- Representation, local funding
- How will the area, representatives be divided up.
- maybe representation on a new council should not be based on population but on taxation and revenue

- I would like to know more about community growth, with the oil being a large lease payer. What are plans in the future to attract more business to the area? And citizen welfare and protection, can we increase the police presence in this community?
- ? cost savings
- Do each of the different municipalities have an equal voice at the table? This should be of top priority. The village's, the county's and the town's tax payers concerns should be considered equally. As a Village resident I see Caroline as the economic centre of the southern part of the county. Many county residents consider the Village 'home' yet we don't benefit the same way as Rocky Mountain House does. That certainly needs to change.
- Is Nichols the same firm that was engaged in mediation between the Town of Rocky and the County? If so, you should have a better sense of the acrimony and dysfunction between the councils than you let on at the open house.
- Development approval. What sort of projects can go where, who has the final word
- How did we get to this point? What option works best for the entire region as a whole?
- None
- I will not support a amalgamation of the town and county. I will support the dissolution or amalgamation with village and county. This feedback timeline isn't that much time and you guys hired to do the study aren't doing all you could go let everyone know about it. Small ads in the paper don't cut it. Don't you know by now internet in the country isn't great. Older people don't have computer skills and social media
- How is the study reaching ALL residents? How can the Study grab the attention of the citizens? What I've seen so far is very humdrum, boring, non-stimulating approach.
- Will this mean a loss of jobs for the current employees of these municipalities. Will one municipality have more control over the other impacting the two different types of communities. How can you even join together when each area has different needs.
- How do you propose to make this successful when you can't work together now?
- Is the towns finances in such bad shape they are willing to sell us out to get the counties revenues to save the town?
- How does each municipality compare for its taxation and expenses? Is one more efficient than the others?
- Can the County absolve the Town?

- Can you provide examples of other municipalities that have gone through these type of changes - and what the actual pros/cons ended up being. Are you able to provide actual council representation figures (ie how large of council and how many from each current municipality) prior to “choosing a governance structure” or would that be one of the “details to be determined after the fact?”



- It would be interesting to hear the concerns of others and how they are addressed within this study. I guess just keeping us updated with the process.
- We need to have a good understanding of the processes, benefits and impacts
- How soon could amalgamation happen?
- I would like to know the impact on taxes, representation and decreasing duplication of services.

- Services in rural and urban area are not the same, nor should they be. I think the distinction that is missing is services and assets (infrastructure) How would a detailed service listing/infrastructure be provided to the public and elected officials in order to understand the comparisons? There is not an apples to apples comparison for municipalities. The suggestion of ‘combined revenues’ is not fair or equitable, as rural municipalities have different infrastructure than urban. Rural municipalities have larger road networks, more bridges and more municipal services across a larger geographic area. Those assets require maintenance and repair, generally related to industrial use to which taxes are collected. Sharing rural oil and gas/industrial revenue with urban area with no infrastructure makes no sense, as urban infrastructure is not impacted (as roads in urban areas travelled by industry are highways funded and maintained by the province).
- I would like fiscal prove of any success stories of amalgamation in AB
- research waste management contract, airport, recreation agreements, these are all at risk right now. What will you do if Town wants to amalgamate and the County refuses? Right now they are against it.

- What cost benefits will there be to the county based on an amalgamation? How will this affect employment of county workers, and town workers, will more people lose their jobs? Looking after things such as gravel roads in the county is quite a bit different than roads in a town, how will this be prioritized and planned for? The town and county have different needs and concerns how will these be balanced come budget time?
- no further information. Maintain status quo. The town is a bad partner in the area and the county should not be bullied into amalgamation because the town is broke and want access to the counties resources and tax base. The Stronger together initiative would be fine if the town would a decent partner and work for what's best for the region not just their short sighted self serving political agendas. IE The Central Alberta economic development group council opted out of.
- Better definition of different scenarios
- How important is it for all three municipal to buy into this process? Will the outcome be impacted if one or more chooses to not fully participate?
- What will be the cost to citizens to amalgamate? Why is amalgamation needed when cooperation between the groups has worked in the past?
- Why are we exploring this without a mandate from the county residents.

**To help us improve future engagement opportunities, please provide your thoughts on the tools used for this round of engagement (e.g. virtual open house tool, live Q and A session, online survey).**

- virtual open house worked well
- Due to other commitments, I was unable to participate in the Q&A session. I appreciate the information available through the virtual open house and the opportunity to submit my thoughts through the online survey.
- This survey (if followed) was closed before I knew about it. Communication needs to improve. This never once has been 'coffee shop talk' and it should be. Not sure how it's been missed
- Public engagement was poor
- The public engagement was very poor. Online engagement should not be taking the place of in person engagement. It was also difficult to find this survey online.
- Sufficient information was available for those with enough interest to be engaged.
- Good job, may suggest exploring additional avenues to engage more residents. Understand that is hard to do with pandemic.
- None.
- With poor or limited connectivity in the region it is important to have in person meetings and open houses.
- I like the virtual open house, with the Q&A. Online survey are better in my opinion then having to drop/mail forms
- This was not a good survey. Questions unclear and difficult to access on the website.

- Because of Covid, information sharing and gathering has been highly impacted. Rural residents are often faced with connectivity issues or do not participate period in online activities such as this survey or virtual open houses. This is really not the time for a realistic information gathering and sharing of information. Why can this not be paused until open house formats maybe held that would be more fair to all residents. Often one idea triggers another with open in person forums. Possibly that is the reason for the timing of this study in the first place so there is very limited input - strategic skewing of the results. I and most rural residents prefer live in person question and answer sessions. This in my opinion has not been a fair information gathering process because many seniors do not have or use a computer. That does not mean they are not interested. They most certainly are. We all pay taxes and should be entitled to a fair and equitable information session.
- borad 5 was the most informative of the open house tool, I did not take the time for the Q and R
- The tools being utilized are good considering the limitations around Covid. It would be nice to see Clearwater County stand up to Government overreach as Wheatland County did!! We are losing people, jobs and our sanity with these draconian measures!
- Online survey, website
- Good variety of opportunity for engagement and input.

- Surveys are a good start. Live Q and A would be most beneficial and necessary for such an important issue. There are a lot of people unable to participate in virtual. The more tools that are used, the more opportunity for everyone to be involved
- No questions
- This survey was hard to find and poorly executed
- I like online surveys. They can be done at anytime as I can not always attend meetings
- I am happy with the opportunities presented in these covid times.
- In person meetings when we get the chance! Also surveys in big bold letters/ pages in the community newspapers so it cannot be ignored
- Was difficult to find survey as little information is on either website. Make the links easier to find.
- I appreciate the printed information in the Western Star and Mountaineer. Online information is very helpful during Covid.
- Need to use a well publicized event.... Preferably a live event. Not a survey on the back of a newspaper without clear messaging that there is an online way to the form. Many people will miss this.
- They are good, but I need to know about them before they happen.
- Open house, written explanations and a vote

- Not enough public awareness to the situation & repercussions of the proposed changes.
- I'm thankful that I have been able to have a say.
- Virtual open house
- Unfortunately we find ourselves in a situation where discussion and information are hampered by the current pandemic. I feel it would be wise to put this whole discussion on the back burner until it can be addressed in a more normal environment. There needs to be vigorous review of any and all options before anything is changed. Review by the constituents.
- The virtual session did not offer a chance for participants to engage in a meaningful way. You could not see who was there - county councillors were identified but not the town - no transparency.
- My internet service is not good enough for open houses. The online survey is good. Maybe posting things on the website or in the local papers.
- I found the virtual open house to be biased towards regional governance and not towards separate responsible governance of each municipality by elected officials.
- Live q&a session
- Survey questions need to be cleared and better defined.
- Virtual open house was very good.
- Virtual open house did not work for us
- Live q &a
- only accessed online survey.
- I thought the priorities question was a little confusing.
- So far I am happy with the process, the virtual open house and q&a was informative, I look forward to seeing more info in May.
- During the last year I have found that it is harder to find out what is happening in our areas. Resorting to social media and local radio ads seems to be the only methods left. The town paper (Mountaineer) has so little info anymore due to the influx of social media it seems to have lost its effect.
- This survey was difficult to find online.
- This survey was too hard to find online. It should be in the banner of the County web page and Facebook page.
- WAIT TILL WE HAVE OPEN MEETINGS AND HAVE PUBLIC VOTE ON PAPER .....(AFTER COV-IT)
- Need in person at locations at remote community halls as internet is limited and hard to access for many people
- They need to post the findings of these surveys in total to be transparent. The public already doesn't trust them because of their poor choices and not owning up to them and making it right. They have more of a "deal with it" kind of attitude.
- Online survey
- Only became aware in Feb 24 Mountaineer. But I'm not sure how to make people aware. ?
- Should be able to view or understand who is participating in virtual open houses.
- Virtual forum

- Live is good but eliminates a majority of people. Anything on internet eliminates many of the most important people we should be listening to = the elderly.
- try to make the URL shorter in the future
- Online surveys, virtual open house meetings
- On line survey not sure I would be able to figure out how to do anything virtual
- it needs to be live Q&A It needs to be understood by everyone, all 3 are ok if done in conjunction with each other
- I don't agree as there are many seniors that don't have internet, how are they to have their say if they can't attend. That has been my biggest concern with many things in caroline.
- Tools used so far have been adequate and informational
- on line is good, open house is better but has to be in person.
- All of the above, even print ads. Remember there are still a lot of functioning seniors that still want their voices heard and maybe have some good ideas. And they need a source to communicate, but they are not tech savvy.
- online survey
- All good

- Was never made aware of the open house. The County and Village need to improve their notification methods so residents are given proper heads up so they can participate. Do not depend on social media. You still need to advertise the old fashioned way.
- info is scarce currently
- make it easier to find
- Survey was a little confusing at first but once I found it it was fine.
- Neither the virtual open house or this survey offer any meaningful opportunity for input or expression of opinions. I know it is early in the processes but it has all been very superficial so far. I'll be looking for more substantive dialog in the next steps.
- All the virtual stuff and online surveys are good to get the word spread that things are happening but live Q&A's should be held and major junctures
- I wasn't able to attend the virtual open house but given the circumstances feel it's a good way to get large amount of engagement. This survey is a way in which I can voice my concerns and allow for some transparency which I liked. If you could give access to a recording of the town hall/Q and A that would be helpful.
- Survey wasn't set up that well. You had to go digging for it. Older people don't have computer access. Internet isn't good for most areas of the country. You can sure tell that you guys were hired by the town.

- Due to the lockdowns and minimal IN person interaction, the consultants of this study have their hands tied. It would appear that the study is utilizing ALL communication tools it can during a lockdown.
- Survey is great option
- online survey
- online survey is great, live Q and A is great, but needs to be in person sessions. I do think that would bring a more diverse crowd, than the online stuff.
- This worked pretty well
- Make this an election issue.
- More background information up front about the 3 municipalities would be good. Comparison to municipalities of similar sizes for revenues and expenses would be good.
- It's a useful tool and will help gather a collective sample of information from all parties that should be a useful tool if used correctly.
- All good, variety is essential not only in gaining feedback but in sharing throughout the process.
- Virtual open house tool and online survey was good. Would like to see multiple live Q and A sessions. The survey asked for concerns about current structure - would like to have had the same question asked for concerns for the possible structures.
- Unfortunate that open houses may not be an option, but the zoom tool works fine and does give some anonymity, especially for those hesitant to speak publicly.
- With COVID this is about the only way. It is difficult to get the word out to enough people so that they sign in.
- I like the zoom meetings with Q and A.
- While the focus on community engagement is important, a few negative voices continue to dominate the discussions. This holds us back. Sometimes the right decision is not the most popular. Move forward and amalgamate.
- Good.
- Virtual open house was fantastic and live Q & A appreciated. More sessions with more attendees would be preferred. 40 attendees for population of 20K is 0.2% or less than 1% of the population. More input needed. Phone survey? Mail survey?
- I would like to see those who are participating and how many
- Any online or virtual tool is efficient and good to use
- Due to the towns self serving political agenda and sad state of money issues, due in large part to the towns determination to do all it can to NOT promote growth or development in town, this will end up being and expensive and long walk for a short drink of water. I pray the county residents and those who really want change in town will vote this down and vote out the current administration.
- Appropriate with Covid restrictions
- Great idea during a pandemic
- This survey is good.
- Methods that reach more citizens (virtual open house= only around 40 people attended).
- Terrible
- On line survey.
- Maybe come to the people before you decide to start something and waste tax dollars.

# Live Session Questions

- How many people have registered for this session tonight?
- How many other regions in our province or others provinces have successfully amalgamated in the past 20 years? And what was the overall success?
- Why is the town retaining current status presented as “most likely scenario”?
- What is the benefit to the citizens of the Clearwater County to have joint municipalities.
- There has it seems to me a discord with communication
- How many have been successful
- I arrived late, will the recording be available to watch later?
- “How much advertising was done to let the public know about this session. Seems the individuals I spoke with did not know about this zoom meeting.”
- please ignore as I was not ready to submit yet.
- Why can we not see all participants of this meeting?
- Please put the link to the survey in the chat or Q&A box so we can give our input
- Even with high cooperation, isn’t that an argument FOR amalgamation of greater regionalization? In the name of progress and efficiency?
- how can we expect any amalgamation actually work when the councils between the town and county are at more odds than they have ever been? As a citizen I feel like I’m being held for ransom in some respects to regional shared services
- Will a Regional Municipality have a different relationship with the province that is different than each individual entity? Specifically with regard to Resource development, tourism development and environmental protection.



- Are questions in the online Information Gathering Survey specific to taxpayers' respective government structure specifically, or all three?
- What benefits to amalgamation has the provincial government communicated to the public in general?
- Would existing loans or debentures from one municipality become a liability for all citizens of amalgamated municipalities?

- Do tax rates/millrates generally change after amalgamation?
- In general, is cooperation or animosity between parties, a group tendency or effected by lone individuals
- Can you please explain that these munis have been “at odds” in the past. They have worked their way through it. Decisions being made today will have huge benefits/disadvantages for future generations.
- If linear taxes drop drastically for the county, how will that affect the town?
- What is the future potential of combined revenue and granting opportunities?
- Is it one person one vote or would the smaller communities have equal/veto votes?
- How long will the study take, and will there be more Q&A open houses or webinars?
- How long does voluntary Amalgamation take (in general)?
- What other forms of regional equalization other than amalgamation have been successfully attempted?
- Will we have to change our names?
- Back to linear tax. The larger urban centres have been eyeing this revenue sources for many years and been lobbying for a bigger piece of the pie. Could an amalgamation give us a stronger case to keep it.
- Can you clarify how this decision will actually be made?
- Many county residents do not use any services in either town or village.
- Will this mean that the county will have to pay a more equitable share of policing?
- Services in rural and urban area are not the same, nor should they be. I think there is distinction missing besides services focus, which is assets (infrastructure, roads etc)... from the comments earlier please explain where the ‘more money’ will come from as municipalities did not increase taxes in 2021?
- Will surveys be sent out to all residents?
- When it comes to police funding, the province has already mandated all rural municipalities to pay their portion for police services



- I would like to see a couple more of these presentation before May....40 people from our county and town is not a good number to base this on. There needs to be a lot more people heard from.
- What tools are in the box to deal with the potential scenario where one municipality digs in their heels and refuses to engage in the study?

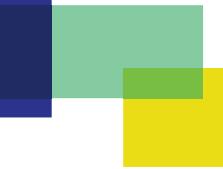
- What is the cost of this study?
- Will a Regional Municipality have a different relationship with the province that is different than each individual entity? Specifically with regard to Resource development, tourism development and environmental protection.
- This study is described as an 'informal' process and any output / recommendations will not be binding. If we want the to achieve amalgamation would it be best to use the MGA provision of a petition?
- Please do explore where the collaboration between town and county is currently at, a neutral party is key
- What do town residents get out of this? What will be the benefits to the county? What is the benefit to Caroline?
- Will this bring more money to our community for infrastructure? roads and highways?
- What will those debts cause for taxpayers? How will those be divided up?
- Do county members currently pay the equal amount for schools? hospital? as they utilize both services in the town?
- What would be some of the bigger differences positive or negative for the business community, both in the town and in the county?
- How will elected officials be divided up to support the town county and village

# Email Feedback

- What impact on the tax rates for residents are anticipated, or will the cost savings from political duplication be significant? How will a region be divided into districts? What criteria will be used?
- I'm not sure where we've met, but thanks to (removed) I was able to get your contact information.
- As a resident of Clearwater County I am very concerned about any possibility of municipal amalgamation. In addition, I am concerned with the lack of readily available, unbiased information to the public and the reliance on virtual meetings for information. It is absolutely crucial that open, in-person meetings be held as a very large percentage of the rural population either have inadequate broadband connectivity or lack the skill set to participate. Consequently, with your current method of public engagement you are jeopardizing the democratic rights of a significant number of Clearwater County residents. While I can appreciate the limitations put forth by Covid, I also feel that there is no urgency with this matter and it could certainly be delayed to allow for equal input opportunities. Furthermore, I was just on the County's website and tried to read the seven "boards" that are part of the information being presented at the meeting tonight. Even after enlarging the boards to the allowable extent, they were very unclear and difficult to read...another negative for relying on this method of informing the public. In conclusion, I trust, that as a consultant for this process you will re-evaluate the public engagement process you have put forth.

It is absolutely necessary to understand, appreciate, and acknowledge the rural limitations of such a strongly technologically oriented process. All residents of the affected area deserve equal opportunity for information gathering and input. I trust you will work to ensure that right is upheld. I welcome any comments you might have and look forward to your response.

- I am writing today with my concerns about the lack of democracy in this country, and more specifically province and clearwater county and municipality of Rocky Mountain house. When will us people have a voice in what our local governments do? Why were us county and town residents not consulted on this supposed amalgamation? Who is really the one wanting this to go through? What agenda is being pushed by whom? Why are so many things being pushed by the town and county at such "unprecedented" times? Why are agendas being pushed without the public's knowledge of what their plans are? Why arent we being informed on how this will affect our businesses and our taxes, etc.? The town and county couldnt even get along over the transfer station operations... how are they going to work together for other projects???? If amalgamation goes through, then do we the people get to fire all current councillors and elect all new ones for the new government? If so, then this might be a good thing, if not then i oppose it completely. I want democracy back, not this elected dictatorship we have at all levels of government.



I feel a big decision such as amalgamation should not take place while we are under lockdown and restrictions and a so called state of emergency (which is bs by the way). If i cant see my gramma, why is it ok for our govts to make such drastic decisions when the public cant be present to have a say? I never followed politics until recently or hardly voted as i see it all as a corrupt failing system at all levels. However, i have had enough of our local governments shinanigans that i am paying attention now and wish you all fired and that people who are compassionate and who actually care about humanity to take up the positions. The county voting is a joke with most divisions only having one person to vote for.... why vote? Cant say iv ever voted at a county level, and although having a business in town, im not allowed to vote there either, so i have no choice or no say, therefore essentially no vote.... The town has a track record of dying business and the county has a track record of ridiculous land purchases.... both governments have failed us at a local level and continue to do so. You all need to be fired and the people can elect councillors who actually care and aren't just about ego and greed. Lastly, i would like to state my concern about the 5G installation in our town and county, again without citizens consent or knowledge. Just snuck in during lockdown almost a year ago and started putting towers up! This technology is untested, unnecessary, and unsafe for mammals health... go do some research of frequency and you may gain an understanding of how we are letting these big corps such as bell and telus radiate us beyond reason.

Fiber optics is a good alternative, but its not what the corps and feds want as they want surveillance on all of us. They want total control of the human species. We are not free at all, and if you think we are, you are living in a false reality.

- I'm sorry I didn't see your survey until tonight. In case you can't read the attachment of the survey in the paper, I have concerns with the fiscal management of the town and with the impractical and unpopular projects that they approve (ie the main street "beautification project". My concern is that I would like the town and the county to continue to be separate entities.
- Thank you for responding to my call yesterday. As we discussed I am very concerned about the above information piece and would ask that you forward this email to county administrators and council members. I was aware of the ongoing discussions between the three municipalities and that it had implications for all residents and taxpayers. The wrap around contained some useful information but I was surprised to see statements such as "Regional amalgamation would most likely increase taxes or reduce services to County residents; decision making difficulties; governing body make up, etc." These statements without some evidence or examples from other jurisdictions were worrisome to say the least, and surprising to me that the counties would publish this information as such. As I thought about it I wondered who really owned the piece and as it turns out it came from the Taxpayers Association.

- I have no objection to the Clearwater County Taxpayers Association expressing their opinion and putting forward information. But in this case co-opting the logos from the three municipalities infers this publication belonged to them or at the very least was a joint initiative. It is misleading and confusing and even alarming. Therefore I am hoping that the three municipalities take steps to clarify this publications so all residents have access to clear and balanced information and are able to make an informed decision. Thank you for your consideration of this matter
- Thank you for sending me this document. I have a bit of a tremor in my right hand so sometimes my writing is pretty shitty. I am very concerned about the government of Alberta and especially Clearwater County. I have lived and worked in the medical profession in many different countries thus have many areas to compare to. When I come to the County or Provincial office I observe inept staff who are only there to collect a paycheck. I see duplication of services throughout the county, staff driving around in new vehicles and doing nothing, the County purchasing property for a new office which is not needed and many more things. I own property near Leslieville which has the Blueberry Creek running through it. This is beautiful pasture land with the creek providing water for cattle, home for birds and other animals as well as serenity for myself and family. A few years ago the County blew up the beaver dam on my property....WITHOUT NOTIFYING OR EVEN ASKING ME WHAT IMPACT THIS WOULD HAVE ON MY ANIMALS. Now the creek is almost dry and cannot provide enough water for the livestock and birds. We are going to be in a drought situation....talk about abuse of nature and the environment.



- I have grave concerns about the amalgamation of the three counties where most of the funds will be siphoned off to preferred areas. Please contact me via email as I am currently not in Canada.

# REGIONAL GOVERNANCE STUDY



Phase 2  
Engagement Summary

September 2021





# Introduction

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The Village of Caroline, Clearwater County, and the Town of Rocky Mountain House secured Nichols Applied Management and ISL Engineering and Land Services Ltd. to undertake a Regional Governance Study (the Study). The purpose of the Study was to explore the most effective and efficient governance structure to support the region's growth and long-term prosperity for all citizens. The municipalities have been committed to searching for common goals and a common vision to best serve the region. Funding for the Study was provided by a grant from the Province of Alberta.

It is important to note that the Study was not an Amalgamation Study. Instead, the purpose of the Study was to review all options, including maintaining the status quo of keeping the three existing municipal government structures, to identify the potential benefits, disadvantages, and impacts of the different governance options being explored.

During the first phase of engagement for the Study, residents from all three municipalities had opportunities to learn more about the study process and provide their perspectives on what was important to consider and ask questions they had about the Study. Key themes that emerged from the first phase of engagement were used to inform the review and analysis of the different governance options.

This summary represents an overview of the feedback shared by residents and stakeholders only and does not represent views and perspectives of the project team or participating municipalities. It describes the engagement process and insight from the second phase of public engagement. Input received has been summarized and detailed below and is reflective of the diversity and frequency of comments received. The time spent by residents and stakeholders in reviewing information, attending the Information Sessions, providing input, and connecting with the project team throughout the entire Study process was greatly appreciated.

# Phase 2 Public Engagement

The purpose of the second phase of engagement was to share the key findings and recommendations of the completed Study and gather feedback from stakeholders and residents. The following is an overview of the engagement which was undertaken.

## Advertising

The project website which was first launched when the Study was initiated in early 2021, and was used as a central location for residents and stakeholders of all three municipalities to visit and learn more about the project. A media release for the second phase of engagement was shared on July 19/21 to announce the release of the draft Recommendations Report and upcoming engagement opportunities. Additional communications to promote the project and engagement included:

- Advertisements in the Western Star and Mountaineer newspapers (recurring over the course of engagement)
- Facebook and Twitter posts by the three municipalities
- Postcards handed out at in-person events advertising upcoming engagement and encouraging participants to complete the survey

## Engagement Opportunities

The second phase of engagement offered several opportunities for residents and stakeholders to learn more about the project and share their perspectives and concerns. These included:

Engagement Type	Purpose	Dates	Audience
Project Website	To share information about the study process and provide one location for residents of three municipalities to stay up to date on the project	February 8 to present	1933 unique visitors as of September 7
In-person Information Sessions	To share key findings and recommendations of the Study and gather feedback from residents and stakeholders	July 28, 2021 • Caroline • Rocky Mountain House August 23, 2021 • Nordegg • Leslieville	July 28, 2021 • Caroline – 32 attendees • Rocky Mountain House – 29 attendees August 23, 2021 • Nordegg – 18 attendees • Leslieville – 3 attendees
Survey (online, paper copies provided at in-person sessions)	To collect feedback and questions from residents, ratepayers, and stakeholders of all three municipalities	July 28 – August 25, 2021	29 Responses



# Overall Themes

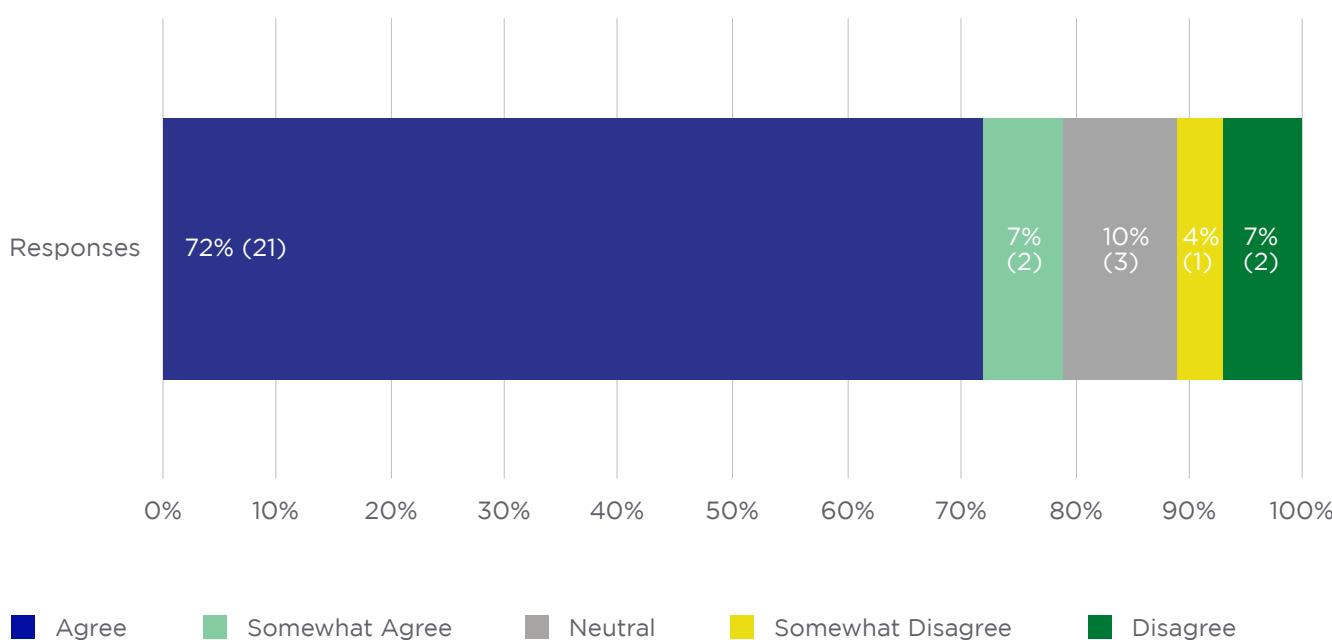
The following are key themes that emerged based on the feedback provided by residents and stakeholders during the second phase of engagement:

- The amalgamation of the Village and County has the potential to have positive impacts by reducing duplication of services and making operations more cost effective.
- Some respondents were unsure/hesitant about how this change could impact their communities in the long term, and felt they needed more information.
- A few respondents were worried about the amalgamation negatively impacting taxes, level of service, and job security.

# Detailed Feedback

## Level of Agreement for Amalgamation between the Village of Caroline and Clearwater County

Total Responses: 29



## Explain your answer

Total Responses: 28

### Agree/Somewhat Agree

- Those who agreed (72%) or somewhat agreed (7%) that the Village and County should amalgamate shared the following:
  - The amalgamation of the Village and County has the potential to make delivery of public services more efficient by avoiding the unnecessary duplication of services.
  - The Village has experienced high taxes relative to the services and amenities available, infrastructure is in need of costly upgrades, and there are financial concerns in general. Amalgamating with the County could help to alleviate some of these stresses and make operations and upgrades more financially viable.
  - Amalgamation could have positive impacts on Caroline given its small population.
  - There are still things that need to be negotiated/explored further, but this would be a positive step.

### Neutral

- Those who were neutral about the amalgamation (10%) indicated that they were unsure of how these changes might impact their communities in the long-term.

### Somewhat Disagree/Disagree

- Those who indicated that they somewhat disagreed (4%) or disagreed (7%) that the Village and County should amalgamate felt that it was not the best decision for the Village and County, and that amalgamation could negatively impact taxes, level of service, and connectivity to citizens.

## Additional Comments

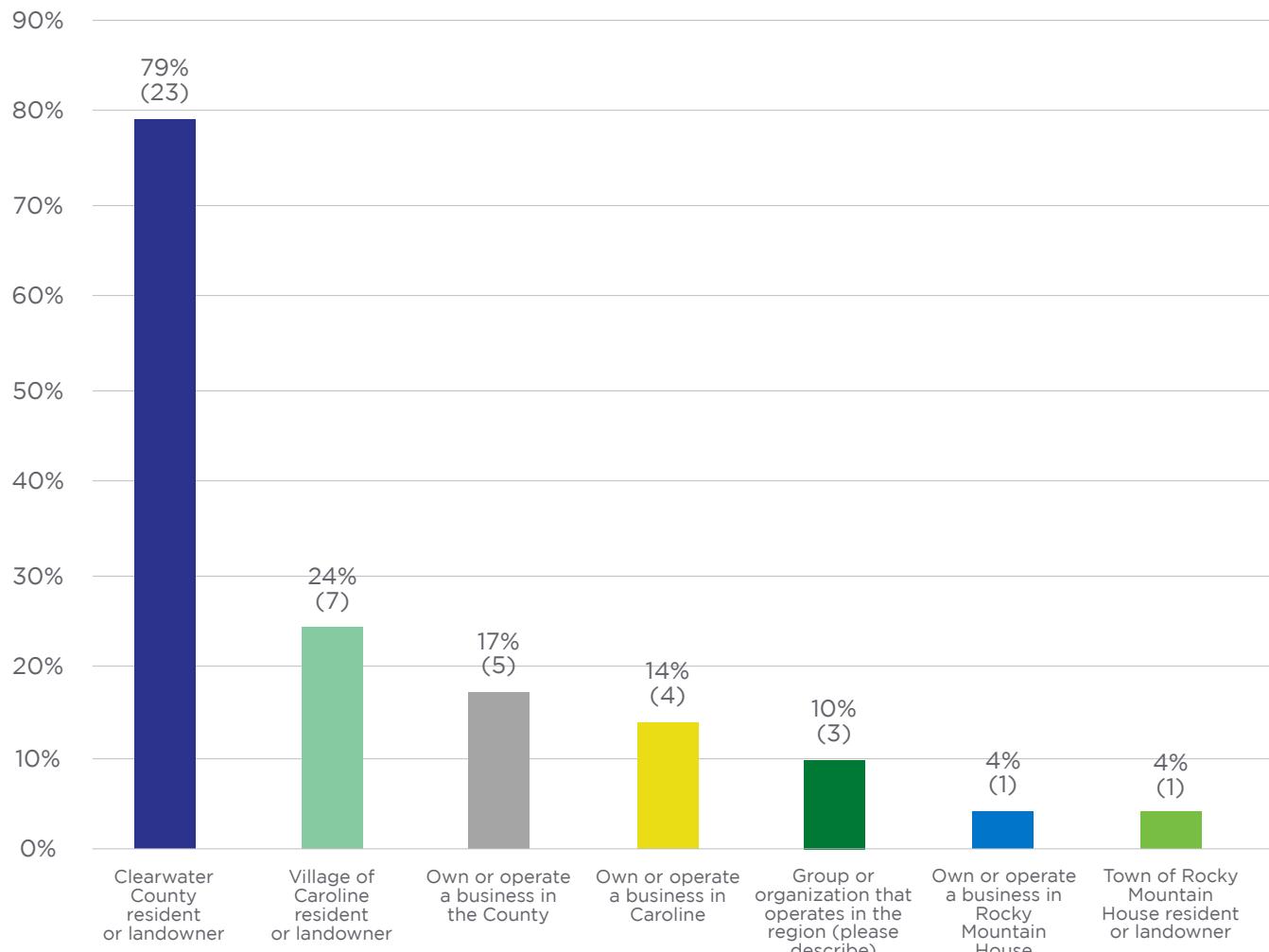
Total Responses: 18

- Disagreements between the municipal governments have negative impacts on the region; cooperation and amalgamation will have a positive impact.
- It will be important to share a detailed breakdown of cost savings as the report doesn't outline the actual long-term changes to costs, as saving have not yet been determined.
- Amalgamation has the potential for many positive benefits, helps the Village and County to plan for the future, and will create efficiencies.
- There are concerns that amalgamation could result in job-losses.



## About You

Total Responses: 29



### Group or organization that operations in the region or other:

- Members of community associations.

# Next Steps

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The feedback received as part of the Online Survey and In-Person Information Sessions will be provided to the Study Steering Committee, which will then be shared with each Council. After the Steering Committee concludes that the Study is ready to be presented for approvals a vote by each Council will take place (i.e., a vote to accept the report and its recommendation or a vote accept the report but reject the recommendation etc.). Should the Village and County decide to pursue amalgamation, the Municipal Government Act sets out the next steps that both municipalities need to undertake, which would include additional technical studies and engagement with residents.



# APPENDIX A

## Verbatim Feedback



# Regional Governance Study Recommendations Report Survey

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The following section includes the feedback received through the survey (both through hard copies in-person and online). All submissions are presented as shared; they have not been corrected for spelling, grammar, or fact checking.

**No decisions have been made and prior to moving forward with any changes, additional studies, analyses, and negotiations would be required. Based on the information that is currently known and available, what is your level of support for the recommendation that the Village and County amalgamate? Please explain your answer.**

- The long term impacts are difficult to know. The province seems to place low income people in Caroline. That is not a good population base to support the Village. Should CWC residents support that? What are the potential general upside to amalgamation.
- Over time, it would be better to have single entity. It will help eliminate duplicate, committees, services etc., Would make it simpler as a single entity to deal with provincial government.
- Don't see the benefit to the Country.
- Need more information, seems a bit empty on future plans and growth.
- It would be advantageous to amalgamate the Village into the County prior to the Village getting into financial trouble or lose good governance.
- The economic analysis by the consultants supports this, but it seems an amalgamation is essential to prevent further degradation of facilities and services in Caroline.
- Pros 1. Avoid bureaucratic duplication 2. Optimize services Cons: 1. Improper centralization could result in an administration that loses contact with the citizens 2. Challenge to balance equity in spending.
- How will this Nordegg?
- Caroline does not have the population so sustain an independent governance, it makes more sense to be part of the county such as Leslieville and Condor etc
- Would love to see the Village grow even at a small cost to county residence. If our village grows we all benefit from it.

- Many changes and upgrades are required with town residents not being able to support capital costs, taxes are high now.
- The Village needs help financially.
- Shared resources would benefit both municipalities.
- Time to move forward.
- There are and have been many partnership opportunities enjoyed by CC & VR over many years. Upon review of the findings, it would appear to be the next logical step to see CC & VC amalgamate.
- Nil
- The sooner the better for the Village.
- Many services are already done in collaboration. There is an opportunity for continued & better support if Clearwater & Village amalgamate.
- The Village cannot afford to pay for upgrades. Dissolution seems inevitable - voluntary amalgamation will be win/win.
  - The infrastructure advantages.
  - The possibilities for expansion of facilities.
- There are numerous issues that will have to be negotiated to the liking of the County & Village.
- The Village is no longer financially sustainable.
- Caroline has struggled for many years with the upkeep and maintenance of its infrastructure and has incredibly high taxes for the amenities that are available.
- Better stewardship of citizen taxes and time will result from integrated services under one governance umbrella.
- Amalgamating as I understand what has been submitted would help the communities involved in a planned growth path
- From my research on other areas it would result in higher taxes, lower rates of service, lower staff morale
- The Village and its residents will have better advantages with the amalgamation.
- There is no need for three bodies of governance with today's technology. It's a waste of energy, time and money
- It's a good fit for each other



## Do you have any comments on the contents of the Recommendations Report or additional information that would help the municipalities in making decisions about the next steps?

- Some missing information on the boards that I got answers from a private individual.
- Slow down online is not effective.
- If the majority of participants recommend one of the r options. Proceed with the recommendation
- Caroline municipal staff should for the most part be given assurances of continued employment after amalgamation. Caroline's municipal leadership should be lauded for the difficult job of maintaining this small municipality as the population has shrunk a bit and costs have risen.
- "The devil is in the details" It is reasonable to expect cost savings however these need to be identified in as real numbers as possible and stewarded too. I have seen corporate amalgamations and the savings are often short term. Ok. Mea Culpe. It is in the detailed report.
- No
- Make amalgamation happen, larger base for forward advancement for all, at hopefully economic positive benefits to all involved.
- CC & VC should start the next steps in amalgamation as soon as possible with the intent to complete the process prior to the 2025 municipal election.
- Nil
- With duplication of services and cost of governance amalgamation makes the most sense.
- Very well executed.
- Forward thinking, open minded & willing to compromise.
- It's about time.
- Caroline has so much potential to expand and grow in ways like Canmore as the last stop before the west country. With the proper leadership and guidance, Caroline will have its chance again to grow into the unique place it was meant to. This brings many desired amenities and employment opportunities to the area, as well as students, teachers and professionals.
- The paralyzing rift between Clearwater County and the Town of RMH must be addressed. Time and taxes are wasted through duplications and overlaps and mediating the ongoing disagreements. This region will only truly be stronger, efficient and productive with one governance council for all three jurisdictions.
- None at this time
- No
- As a county resident near Caroline I'm a supporter of amalgamation



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