



September 11, 2020

Honorable Tracy Allard,

Minister of Municipal Affairs  
Office of the Minister  
Municipal Affairs  
132 Legislature Building  
10800 87 Ave  
Edmonton, AB T5K2B6

**RE: Notification to the Minister- Section 104 Municipal Government Act- Black Diamond and Turner valley Amalgamation**

Dear Minister Allard,

The Towns of Black Diamond and Turner Valley are presenting this letter to the Honorable Minister to formally notify that the two existing municipalities will be commencing negotiations with the intent to amalgamate. The prospect of amalgamation has been a matter of considerable discussion for many years, and formally explored in 1988, 1991, 2005 and most recently in 2017. As established in the most recent 2017 amalgamation feasibility study developed by both the Towns of Black Diamond and Turner Valley, the guiding principals have been defined as:

- Balancing service levels with long term cost;
- Joint decision making that is effective and adaptive and based on honesty and integrity; and,
- Developing and implementing policies that are fact based, action focused, and achievable within a realistic and feasible timeframe.

And the shared objectives are:

- Diversified and Resilient Economy: shared investment in strengthening the local economy;
- Integrated Policy Framework: aligning policies with shared growth objectives;
- Sustainable Service Delivery: more effective and efficient delivery of municipal services;
- Expanding Community Capacity: shared commitment to ongoing engagement with citizens; and
- Responsive Local Governance: long-term and prioritized land and infrastructure planning.



There has been agreement in principal that both towns are ready to take the next steps and forward the notice of intent to amalgamate. The Black Diamond annexation [order in Council 15/2020](#) allows for the contiguous boarder between the municipalities, which eases the process of defining the new municipal boundaries.

### TIMELINES

A timeline has been established to negotiate the mandatory items, as well as the some of the transitional items which are required. The timeline is as follows:

- September 15, 2020- Notification to the Minister of Municipal Affairs
- September 2020- August 2021- Negotiation of the mandatory and transitional matters required in the MGA.
- September 2021- Report submitted along with application to the Minister of Municipal Affairs
- Anticipated Order in Council June 2022
- Incorporation Date January 01, 2023.

### PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The public consultation requirements for amalgamation dictate that Turner Valley and Black Diamond jointly provide notice to all local authorities having jurisdiction to operate or provide services in our area. The preliminary list is as follows:

Foothills County  
Town of Okotoks  
Village of Longview  
Millarville  
Eden Valley  
Canada Post  
Town of High River  
Town of Nanton  
Foothills Regional Services Commission  
Foothills Cemetery Board  
Intermunicipal Committee  
Sheep River Regional Utility Corp  
Westend Regional Sewage Services Commission  
Sheep River Intermunicipal Library Board  
Alberta Health Services  
Foothills School Division  
ATCO  
Fortis  
RCMP  
Business Owners  
Developers with projects under way  
Westwinds Communities  
Community Futures Highwood  
Diamond Valley Chamber of Commerce  
Other stakeholders that may emerge during the process



The public consultation plan for the affected authorities and residents of both municipalities will be established with the assistance of a qualified facilitator and the full plan will be forthcoming to your office in the next couple of months. Due to the CoVid 19 pandemic, new ways of reaching out to the public will need to be put in place for public consultation, and additional time is required to develop that plan.

#### ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

To our knowledge, the Black Diamond/Turner Valley amalgamation will be the first voluntary amalgamation in the Province, and we are looking forward to the negotiations and completing this process. In doing so we are requesting the following support:

1. ICF Extension- That the Minister provides a time extension to the Intermunicipal Collaborative Framework (ICF) which is due in April of 2021 with our neighbouring rural municipality- Foothills County. As a red tape reduction strategy, only one ICF with the County of Foothills would be required after amalgamation of the two towns and it is our preference to not have to duplicate the effort. They have been made aware of this request and have no objections;
2. Policing Costs-- That the Minister consider consistency in the invoicing for the new police model, once the amalgamation is completed, with the applicable grants to be applied to the amalgamated community. In other words, that policing costs for our new municipality with a population over 5000 residents remain under the existing model for a period of five years post amalgamation to allow for a successful and predictable financial transition to a newly created municipality;
3. Deferral on Nomination Period- Changes to the Local Authorities Election Act deem the nomination period for the October 2021 municipal election commence on January 1, 2021. With the current January 1 nomination date, interested candidates may declare their candidacy early, and not be certain about which Council they are running for (old Town or newly amalgamated municipality). In the case of an expedient amalgamation negotiation process (ahead of schedule), our two communities may wish to utilize the 2021 election to elect our new Council if the timelines work. Keeping the nomination period as it was prior to this year (six weeks pre-election) allows our municipalities an outside chance at avoiding a byelection for our new municipality, the additional costs, confusion in the electorate, and anticipated decreased numbers of nominees (due to the short duration of a Council term prior to electing a new Council for the new municipality); and,
4. Funding Support- that the Minister provides our municipalities with the most financial support possible as we embark on this process. The funding programs available through the Province underpin the financial substantiation for amalgamation.



Our respective Councils look forward to a fruitful negotiation process and thank you for considering our requests.



His Worship Barry Crane  
Mayor  
Town of Turner Valley



Her Worship Ruth Goodwin  
Mayor  
Town of Black Diamond

cc. Linda Reynolds, Municipal Viability Advisor

