ROCKY VIEW COUNTY

WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

Aggregate Resource Plan

April 2025

PUBLIC **PARTICIPATION**

Aggregates, such as gravel, crushed stone, and sand, are raw materials extracted from pits and quarries. These resources are crucial for the construction of roads, buildings, and other essential infrastructure. As part of the Aggregate Resource Plan Project, Rocky View County is implementing a series of initiatives aimed at improving the management of aggregate operations.

To share these proposed initiatives and gather final public feedback, Rocky View County conducted a public engagement process from February 12 to March 23, 2025. The public was invited to review and comment on the following key areas:

- **Performance Standards**
- **Proactive Monitoring, Reporting and Enforcement by the County**
- **Application Requirements for Aggregate Development**
- **Improved Transparency and Communication**
- **Mandatory Stakeholder Engagement Process**
- **Location Criteria**
- **Third-party Review Process**

The engagement was hosted on the County's YourView platform, which received 813 views from 432 unique visitors, resulting in over 79 hours of total engagement time. A total of 166 survey responses were collected through the online platform.

In addition to the online engagement, four in-person sessions were held in Beiseker, at County Hall, in Bearspaw, and in Weedon. These sessions attracted a combined attendance of more than 100 participants. To promote the engagement, the County utilized a range of communication channels, including road signs, targeted social media posts, newspaper advertisements, the County e-newsletter, and direct emails to individuals who had previously expressed interest in aggregate-related issues.

1,401
Comments

166
Online surveys

100+
Open house attendees

EXECUTIVE **SUMMARY**

During the engagement process, several consistent themes emerged from participants, along with strong opinions regarding participants' current and historical concerns about aggregate extraction in Rocky View County.

GENERAL FEEDBACK

Many participants expressed general support for implementing the Aggregate Resource Project Initiatives, and throughout the engagement, there was a significant call for active and consistent enforcement of the proposed initiatives. A primary issue raised was the potential impact of aggregate extraction on nearby residential properties. Concerns included dust, noise, traffic, and perceived declines in property values. Many respondents felt that these activities conflicted with their expectations when choosing to live in the area, emphasizing a desire for their voices to be heard and for extraction operations to be kept away from residential zones.

Participants also noted feelings of fatigue and confusion related to multiple applications, appeals, and unclear decision-making processes. This pointed to a need for better communication and clarity in these processes. Lastly, many participants raised concerns about the potential impacts of extraction on local water resources, including the Bow River.

INDUSTRY FEEDBACK

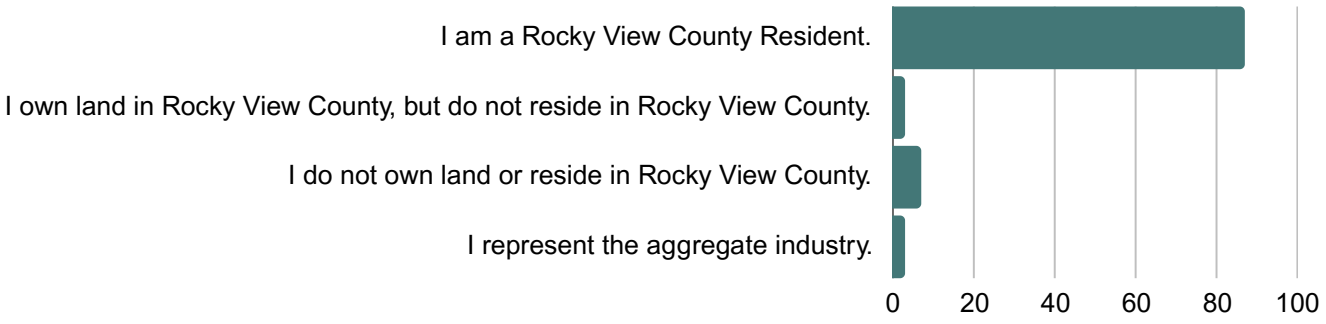
Some participants identified as members of the aggregate resource industry, both at the Open Houses and online. Many voiced frustrations over the proposed location criteria, as there was a strong sentiment that aggregate should be extracted before new development occurs and that gravel operations must go where the resource exists.

Participants were wary of unchecked costs associated with new regulations, advocating for shared-cost models and transparent selection processes in the third-party review process. They called for more flexibility, less red tape in applications, and public education for residents about the realities of living near resource operations.

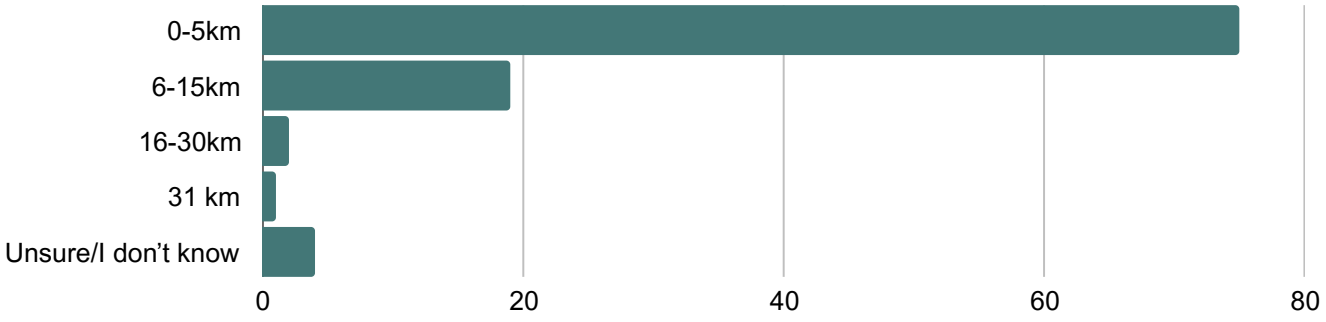
KEY FINDINGS: **BACKGROUND OF PARTICIPANTS**

Respondents who completed the survey online were asked a series of identifying questions. This page presents the responses to those questions.

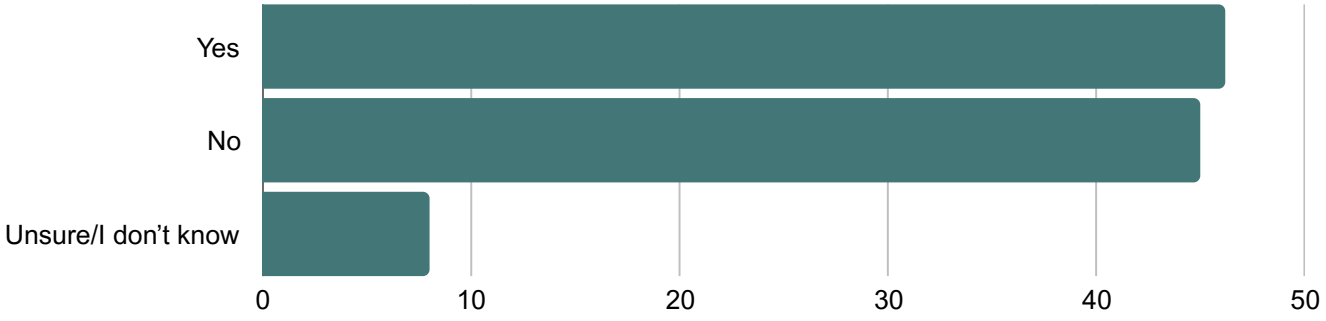
Q1: Please check what you identify with the most



Q2: How close is the nearest aggregate site to your property?



Q3: Do you live along a truck haul route?



KEY FINDINGS

Q4: How does aggregate extraction impact your life? A total of 188 comments were received.

NOISE, DUST AND TRAFFIC CONCERNS

Many respondents (61%) indicated that aggregate extraction negatively impacts their quality of life, primarily due to dust, noise, and traffic concerns, citing health-related effects from dust and noise disturbances and the perceived impact on property values. Traffic-related concerns were also frequently mentioned, including increased volumes of gravel trucks, unsafe driving behaviour, and windshield damage.

ENVIRONMENTAL

An additional 17% of respondents raised broader environmental concerns, such as the cumulative effects on air, water, soil, wildlife, and the health of residents.

Some respondents said they weren't affected by aggregate extraction, while others said they were in favour of it. A smaller group of respondents stressed the impact on their property and residents in the area.

> *I follow many trucks. Which means my window is hit often.*

KEY FINDINGS: **PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR AGGREGATE DEVELOPMENT**

Acoustics

The County is proposing new requirements to manage and reduce noise from aggregate operations, aiming to lessen the noise impacts on nearby communities and sensitive areas.

- Operators shall develop a Noise Mitigation Plan to outline strategies that best fit a specific site, minimize noise, and comply with established noise thresholds within the Performance Standards.
- Operators shall conduct Noise Impact Assessments to demonstrate the effectiveness of the proposed noise mitigation efforts.
- Operators must submit a Noise Monitoring Plan. Depending on the location, a Noise Monitoring Plan may be required to be conducted continuously or intermittently.
- Operators will be required to submit noise monitoring reports to the County.

Question: What else would you like the County to consider when implementing acoustics standards? A total of 86 comments were received.

COMPLIANCE & MONITORING

Nearly half of respondents (48%) emphasized the importance of compliance monitoring. They expressed the need for transparency through annual reporting, active monitoring (preferably conducted by a third party), and timely enforcement of any non-compliance issues.

NOISE LEVELS & HOURS OF OPERATION

A further 20% of respondents raised concerns about noise levels and the hours of operation at aggregate sites. Many emphasized the importance of limiting operational hours and reducing cumulative noise generated by multiple pieces of loud machinery running simultaneously.

PROXIMITY & MITIGATION MEASURES

In addition, 19% of respondents highlighted the need for proximity and mitigation measures, particularly regarding the distance between aggregate extraction activities and residential areas. They called for enhanced mitigation measures such as sound attenuation techniques, increased setbacks, and considerations for wind speed.

KEY FINDINGS: **PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR AGGREGATE DEVELOPMENT**

Air Quality

The County is proposing new requirements to protect air quality and minimize the environmental impacts of aggregate operations.

- Operators must create an Emissions Mitigation Plan detailing actions to limit emissions released into the atmosphere.
- Operators will conduct an Air Quality Impact Assessment to show how their mitigation measures will ensure compliance with air quality standards set out in the Performance Standards.
- Operators must submit an Air Quality Monitoring Plan. Depending on the location, air quality monitoring may be required to be conducted continuously or intermittently.
- Operators will be required to submit air quality monitoring reports to the County.

Question: What else would you like the County to consider when implementing air quality standards? A total of 79 comments were received.

FREQUENT MONITORING & ENFORCEMENT

A significant portion of respondents (44%) emphasized the need for more frequent monitoring and stronger enforcement of regulations. Respondents called for monitoring to be both regular and unscheduled and include day-to-day factors such as wind speeds. Additionally, respondents emphasized the importance of pausing or shutting down operations not in compliance.

HIGHER STANDARDS

Furthermore, 20% of respondents advocated for the implementation of higher standards for both testing and monitoring due to potential health risks associated with aggregate extraction. This includes testing related to the cumulative impacts of silica, air quality, and groundwater.

RESIDENTIAL & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Concerns about residential and environmental impacts were noted by 16% of respondents, urging the County to consider how operations affect nearby communities and ecosystems.

A smaller portion (9%) asked the County to consider independent and impartial monitoring to build trust.

KEY FINDINGS: **PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR AGGREGATE DEVELOPMENT**

Traffic Safety

The County is introducing new measures to reduce traffic impacts from aggregate development on communities.

- Operators must conduct a Traffic Impact Assessment to quantify the increased traffic levels due to the proposed development along haul routes.
- The Traffic Impact Assessment shall demonstrate that the proposed haul routes and site access points are appropriate for the aggregate development.
- Operators shall be required to create a Traffic Management Plan to detail the measures that will be implemented to ensure the continued safe use of roadways and to prevent debris from being left on roads.

Question: What else would you like the County to consider when implementing traffic safety standards? A total of 94 comments were received.

GOVERNANCE

Governance was the most frequently mentioned theme, with 38% of respondents emphasizing the need for stronger accountability and enforcement, particularly around non-compliance by gravel truck operators. Many called for more visible and consistent monitoring efforts.

PROACTIVE INFRASTRUCTURE & TRAFFIC PLANNING

Another 20% of respondents focused on the importance of proactive infrastructure and traffic planning, encouraging the County to anticipate and plan for long term impacts of aggregate operations on County roads.

TRANSPORT NETWORK & SAFETY

Transportation safety and regulation were also key concerns, cited by 14% of respondents. Suggestions included regulations around speed, air brake controls, road exclusions, longer merge lanes and passing lanes.

Additional comments included the need for greater accountability and oversight mechanisms (9%) and protecting communities from negative impacts (5%).

KEY FINDINGS: **PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR AGGREGATE DEVELOPMENT**

Environment

The County is suggesting new requirements to ensure that aggregate developments are planned and managed in a manner that reduces environmental impacts and complies with broader environmental regulations.

- Operators shall conduct an Environmental Assessment in accordance with the County's Servicing Standards.
- Operators shall ensure proposed developments are in accordance with Federal, Provincial and County policies for environmental areas.

Question: What else would you like the County to consider when implementing environment standards? A total of 74 comments were received.

ENVIRONMENTAL & ECOSYSTEM IMPACT

The most common theme, raised by 26% of respondents, focused on the impacts of aggregate extraction on the environment and local ecosystems. Comments called for broader environmental studies that looked at land, wildlife, water, wetlands and other aggregate considerations, as well as significant setbacks from environmentally sensitive areas.

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

A further 19% of respondents emphasized the need for clear regulatory compliance, urging the County to ensure that environmental standards are well-defined, consistently monitored, and enforced.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Environmental assessments were another key concern, mentioned in 18% of responses. The suggestions varied; however, some key takeaways were related to impartial and third-party involvement, resident voice, and publicly available assessments.

RESIDENT IMPACT & PROXIMITY

In addition, 16% of respondents highlighted the proximity of extraction sites to residential areas as a major concern. Comments expressed disapproval of extraction near residential areas and the importance of increased setbacks near residential areas.

KEY FINDINGS: **PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR AGGREGATE DEVELOPMENT**

Water Quality

The County is proposing new requirements to protect water quality in areas with aggregate development.

- Operators must create a Surface Water and Groundwater Mitigation Plan to identify measures that will be implemented to prevent water quality deterioration. This plan must meet provincial standards, including commitments required for provincial approval under the Water Act.
- A Stormwater Management Report is required to explain how surface water will be stored and managed on-site in accordance with County standards.
- A Groundwater Investigation Report is required to assess how the proposed development may affect groundwater quality and levels on-site and in hydrologically connected areas.
- For extractions below the water table, operators must implement groundwater monitoring.

Question: What else would you like the County to consider when implementing water quality standards? A total of 85 comments were received.

OVERSIGHT & REGULATORY ENFORCEMENT

A significant portion of respondents (33%) emphasized the importance of oversight and regulatory enforcement. Comments highlighted the need for clear and consistent monitoring standards, including the tracking of groundwater elevations, water quality, and potential contamination, as well as strong enforcement mechanisms to address non-compliance.

ENVIRONMENT CONSERVATION & STEWARDSHIP

Environmental conservation and stewardship were raised by 28% of respondents as an important consideration when implementing water quality standards. Suggestions focused on the need to safeguard groundwater resources, with several respondents emphasizing that extraction activities should not extend below the water table.

ACCOUNTABILITY

An additional 14% of responses centered around accountability, emphasizing the importance of not only setting robust water quality standards but also ensuring that standards are implemented.

KEY FINDINGS: **PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR AGGREGATE DEVELOPMENT**

> *"We owe it to future generations to reclaim to better standards to what it started as. We should be improving our land, not only maintaining it."*

Reclamation

The County is proposing specific criteria to be included in a Reclamation Plan to ensure responsible land restoration, environmental protection, and site safety.

- Operators shall submit a full Reclamation Plan as part of their application in accordance with requirements listed in the Performance Standards.
- If a site is inactive beyond normal seasonal fluctuations, an Interim Reclamation Plan will be required to prevent environmental, safety, or other negative impacts.
- If a site remains unused for five years after the Interim Reclamation Plan is approved, an alternative plan will be required to provide for permanent reclamation.

Q: What else would you like the County to consider when implementing reclamation standards? A total of 70 comments were received.

PROJECT TIMELINES

A portion of respondents (24%) raised concerns related to project timelines. Comments outlined considerations to the length of project and time dedicated to preserving the land afterwards, as well as the size of parcels and gravel pits. Some shared that the interim period of five years was too long to leave a site.

SECURITIES FUND

Financial responsibility was another key theme, with 20% of respondents sharing the importance of a financial reserve when implementing reclamation standards. Respondents voiced that reclamation costs should be covered by the operators.

INITIAL PLANNING & ASSESSMENT

Early-stage planning and assessment were highlighted by 19% of respondents, who voiced that reclamation standards need to be considered and properly planned during initial planning and assessment stage.

Additionally, the County was urged to consider regular inspections and enforce non-compliance by 11% of respondents.

KEY FINDINGS: **PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR AGGREGATE DEVELOPMENT**

Proactive Monitoring, Reporting and Enforcement by the County

The County is proposing a new Aggregate Site Monitoring Bylaw to ensure that aggregate sites operate responsibly and comply with the thresholds set out in the Performance Standards.

- As a condition of their development permit, the County shall schedule four inspections of aggregate sites throughout the year.
- If complaints about a site can be substantiated, the County shall conduct additional inspections based on those complaints.
- If a site is found to not be in compliance, operators are responsible to rectify any areas of non-compliance.

Question: What else would you like the County to consider when implementing proactive monitoring, reporting, and enforcement? A total of 123 comments were received.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MONITORING / INSPECTIONS

A total of 23% of respondents provided suggestions on what needs to be monitored, including but not limited to water, dust, traffic, air quality, and hours of operation.

REGULAR & UNSCHEDULED MONITORING / INSPECTIONS

Regular and unscheduled monitoring and inspections were requested by 22% of respondents.

PENALTIES FOR NON-COMPLIANCE

There was also a strong call for significant penalties for non-compliance, with 21% of comments stressing the need for strict consequences. Suggestions included imposing fines and the possibility of pausing or shutting down operations if regulations are not followed.

Additional comments addressed areas such as complaint processes and procedures (9%) and the importance of public accessibility and notification of inspection results (6%).

KEY FINDINGS: **APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR AGGREGATE DEVELOPMENT**

> *"It's probably coming up in the next question(s), but residents should be informed and given opportunity for feedback in a more timely fashion."*

The County is working to ensure clarity and consistency in the aggregate application process for applicants and the public.

- A master site development plan is required for all proposed aggregate developments as per the Municipal Development Plan.
- Additional requirements for master site development plans are being proposed to align with the increased regulations set by the new Performance Standards.
- All new aggregate developments must redesignate the land use to the Special – Natural Resource (S-NAT) district.
- All new aggregate development applications shall be considered by Council.

Question: What else would you like the County to consider when implementing application requirements? A total of 92 comments were received.

RESIDENT FOCUSED

A theme among respondents (35%) was the importance of resident-focused considerations when implementing application requirements. Respondents called for increased setbacks and stressed the need for early notification, ongoing engagement, and meaningful consideration of resident input throughout the application process.

REQUIREMENTS

Another 33% of comments focused on specific application requirements**.** Suggestions included the use of impartial or third-party assessments, the inclusion of non-negotiable criteria related to water and air quality, and a greater level of detail in applications, such as project timelines, parcel size, and a comprehensive reclamation plan.

Additional concerns included the need to prevent scope creep, application changes and enforcement for non-compliance (10%). Some respondents also suggested limits on the type or number of applications that can be submitted (9%), while others emphasized the importance of qualified and experienced evaluators (7%).

KEY FINDINGS: **IMPROVED TRANSPARENCY AND COMMUNICATION**

Rocky View County is developing a publicly accessible digital portal on its website to provide clear information and guidance on how the public can provide input in the aggregate development process.

- A portal, which will include an interactive map showing all ongoing and proposed aggregate developments.
- Provincial and municipal legislation related to aggregate development will be provided.
- The platform will provide the step-by-step process that operations must follow to achieve final approval, including at what stage residents can provide their input into a proposal.
- A link will be available for residents to report concerns related to aggregate development compliance.

Question: What else would you like the County to consider on proposed measures to improve transparency and communication? A total of 76 comments were received.

PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE

The most frequently mentioned theme, raised by 39% of respondents, was the need for public access to information. Respondents emphasized that reports, applications, and any materials related to aggregate extraction should be readily available to the public. This included access to complaints and concerns, operator information, and plain-language reporting that is regularly communicated to residents.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Another 30% of respondents focused on communication strategies and outreach methods. Many called for increased opportunities for community input and greater involvement in decision-making processes. There were also strong suggestions to expand notification parameters, ensuring that residents are notified in a timely and consistent manner through a variety of channels such as email, mail, and online platforms.

An additional 11% of comments highlighted the importance of amplifying the voice of residents through improved communication and direct engagement, ensuring their concerns and perspectives are clearly heard and integrated into the County's processes.

KEY FINDINGS: **MANDATORY STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

Rocky View County is adding public engagement requirements to the Aggregate Development Performance Standards to ensure community concerns are heard and addressed during the development process.

- Operators shall create and submit a full Engagement Plan demonstrating how complaints will be received and the process of rectifying these complaints.
- Operators shall host at minimum one open house to engage nearby residents, with advertising done according to County engagement standards. The operator shall provide opportunities for submission from the public if attendance at the open house is not possible.
- An Engagement Summary of all questions asked during this engagement period and rectifying actions will be required as part of the operator's application to the County.
- Summaries of comments received from the public shall be submitted to the County.

Question: What else would you like the County to consider when implementing engagement requirements? A total of 72 comments were received.

ENGAGEMENT & NOTIFICATION STRATEGIES

A leading theme, raised by 28% of respondents, focused on engagement and notification strategies. Many respondents called for an expanded notification radius, recommending that engagement efforts extend to 5 km and beyond. Others emphasized the need to diversify community input strategies, such as increasing the number of open houses, extending the duration of engagement periods, and ensuring greater opportunities for public participation.

RESIDENT FOCUSED

Resident voice was also a significant consideration, mentioned by 19% of respondents. Comments highlighted considerations for the impact on resident property value and the toll that multiple aggregate extraction applications take on residents.

POLICY & PROCEDURES

Another 17% of respondents addressed the importance of clear policy and procedural accountability. Suggestions included ensuring that established processes are consistently followed and operators are held accountable.

An additional 13% of comments called for more publicly accessible reports and information, supporting transparency and helping residents stay informed about aggregate-related developments in their area.

KEY FINDINGS: **LOCATION CRITERIA**

The County is proposing updates to the Municipal Development Plan to provide clearer direction for aggregate resource projects, which include buffer zones for new or expanding aggregate development.

- A 1.61-kilometre exclusion zone for aggregate development would be established around residential lands within an area structure plan.
- A 2-kilometre boundary around designated provincial parks would be established. This exclusion zone may be reduced to 0.800 metres if an area structure plan is created and approved by Council.

Q: What else would you like the County to consider when implementing location criteria? A total of 172 comments were received.

BUFFER ZONES

The most common theme, raised by 34% of respondents, was the need for greater setbacks and buffer zones. Many respondents felt that the current 1.61 km exclusion zone is too close to residential areas, with numerous comments recommending a minimum 5 km buffer and some respondents suggesting 10 km plus buffers.

ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS

Environmental sensitivity and water protection were also prominent concerns, raised in 18% of comments. Respondents highlighted that environmentally sensitive areas are disturbed by extraction (i.e., wildlife, air, water, soil etc.). Specifically, the County was asked to consider impacts on the Bow River. Several comments also outlined the importance of including lands in environmental reserves and protected land in location criteria, not just provincial parks.

Additional themes included a desire for no extraction near residential areas and greater attention to resident impacts (10%), as well as concerns about multiple pit applications in close proximity (7%).

> *“Provide a significant buffer from residents - make sure residents' health is protected from noise, dust, etc.”*

KEY FINDINGS: **TECHNICAL REVIEW PROCESS**

A new technical requirement will be added to the Aggregate Development Performance Standards to identify when there is a need for an additional third-party review.

- The County may request a third-party review of items submitted in response to acoustics, air quality, water quality, and transportation, among other areas.
- The operator will bear the cost of these additional reviews.
- If an operator does not agree to the additional review it will be noted as part of their application review.

Question: What else would you like the County to consider when implementing a technical review process? A total of 76 comments were received.

REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

A majority of respondents (63%) emphasized the importance of clear and robust technical review requirements. A common recommendation was that technical assessments be conducted by impartial third parties, with additional calls for mandatory supplementary reviews as part of the process. Many respondents also noted that the cost of these reviews should be covered by the operator.

An additional 8% of respondents advocated for greater resident involvement in the technical review process, emphasizing the value of local perspectives. A smaller group of (4%) suggested that the County consider covering a portion of the review costs, particularly in certain circumstances.

> *"Industry feels like the cost to review should be a 50-50 split with the County to ensure there is some stake by both parties."*

KEY FINDINGS

Q: Is there anything else you would like the County to consider in its work to implement Aggregate Resource Plan initiatives? A total of 114 comments were received.

NO EXTRACTION NEAR RESIDENTIAL AREAS

A key concern raised by 21% of respondents was the call for no extraction near residential areas. Many emphasized that aggregate operations should be kept away from homes and communities and expressed concern over the number of applications being submitted, particularly in areas already impacted by existing operations.

OPERATION SUGGESTIONS

Another 15% of comments included operational suggestions, covering a broad range of topics such as increased setbacks, reduced hours of operation, improvements to road infrastructure, limits on the number of active pits, and operator taxes.

ENVIRONMENT & WILDLIFE IMPACTS

Concerns about land, environmental, and wildlife impacts were raised in 14% of responses, with a focus on the long-term effects of extraction.

AGGREGATE RESOURCE PLAN SUPPORT

Some respondents (12%) shared their support of the proposed initiatives and communication and engagement efforts undertaken by the County on the Aggregate Resource Plan project.

ENGAGEMENT

Respondents requested more opportunities for resident and community input (11%) throughout the aggregate development process.

Additionally, there were calls for the consistent application of rules and standards (5%) and the importance of regular inspections and enforcement to ensure accountability (5%).

> *"Thank you for asking for community input. This is very important to the ecological, environmental, and human protection of our community."*

THANK YOU

Thank you to all who participated in public engagement on proposed rules and regulations for aggregate management in Rocky View County.