



## **Frequently Asked Questions**

The following are questions and areas of messaging that have been asked of the public regarding the Amalgamation process.

- 1. A timeline of activities and anticipated completion dates be developed to guide the process; and, that the timeline be shared with the stakeholders including the residents of the municipalities:**

Sept 15, 2020- Notification to the Minister of Municipal Affairs

Sept 2020- Sept 2021 Negotiations

Sept 2021- Report submitted along with application to Minister

Anticipated Order in Council- June 2022

Incorporation Date- Jan 1, 2023

Message: Because this is voluntarily initiated, we maintain much control over the timelines; once the application is submitted to the Minister, other competing priorities of cabinet may require up to six months. The decision to delay application until after the Oct 2021 election is deliberate and avoids confusion of the electorate on the purpose of the Oct 2021 municipal elections.

- 2. What are the clear benefits of amalgamation? What could be the downsides?**

Benefits:

1. Building one sustainable community – efficiencies of scale.
2. One Council, one voice – stronger voice with Province, elimination of “communication issues” and distraction between communities.
3. Efficiency of service delivery - service delivery efficiencies will lead to additional cost savings over time (i.e. potential merging of departments)
4. Reduction in duplication of capital resources (i.e. equipment)
5. Larger assessment base – increase in available grants due to population (i.e. RCMP policing costs)
6. Common tax base of larger community will attract investors and business to community.
7. Integrated approach to development i.e. Intermunicipal Collaborative Framework, (ICF) Municipal Development Plan (MDP) and Land Use Bylaws (LUB)

8. Coordination of community fundraising efforts, and a larger audience that can attract more investment
9. Allows the partner municipalities to move forward with initiatives that have stalled due to the prospect of amalgamation talks.

Challenges:

1. Transitional blending of priorities or different strategic visions
2. Staffing issues / fear of transition
3. Perceived loss of identity or the impression that one community may benefit more than the other.

**3. Can you give me a high- level overview of the Amalgamation process?**

Report on Negotiation- To assist in forming the contents of an amalgamation order, municipalities are required to submit a report that should contain a list of:

- a) the matters agreed on;
- b) matters on which there is no agreement between the municipal authorities; and,
- c) relevant matters, if any, related to contents of any formation orders or amalgamation orders. MGA s.105(1).

Since this is a joint application, both Turner valley and Black Diamond submit together.

The report must include a certificate by the municipalities stating that the report accurately reflects the results of the negotiations. MGA s.105(2)(a)

A municipal authority that does not pass a resolution of council to approve the report may include in the report its reasons for not approving. s.105(3)

**4. RCMP- what is the difference in policing costs pre/post amalgamation?**

An increase in policing costs has always been assumed to be a barrier to amalgamation. In fact, post amalgamation policing costs vary from municipality to municipality based on several factors including population, crime severity index and shadow population to name a few. However, with the new police costing model introduced in 2020 by the provincial government, both Turner Valley and Black Diamond are now expected to pay a portion of their police costs whether they amalgamate or not (currently, neither pays for policing).

The New 2020 graduated Police Costing Model is fully applied in five years, and each municipality is projected to pay approximately \$60K in year one- increasing to approximately \$160K in year five. When both municipalities are combined, the total costs for policing in 2025 will be approximately **\$333K without amalgamating.**

Per RCMP guidance, the costs of RCMP staffing in municipalities of similar size equal \$150k per member (prorated all-in costs per member including facilities costs and equipment); The RCMP estimates our newly amalgamated municipality will require three members plus one support staff - Estimated total costs are **\$550k**.

Municipalities with populations over 5,000 are eligible for two provincial grants to help subsidize policing costs: The Municipal Police Assistance Grant (MPAG) and the Police Officer Grant (POG). The MPAG is based on the following thresholds: Towns and cities with a population from 5,001 to 16,666 receive a \$200,000 base payment plus an additional \$8.00 per capita. At 5100 residents total grant would be approximately **\$240k**; Therefore, we can subtract \$240K in grants leaving \$310K in estimated policing costs post amalgamation.

Assuming \$333K expected in new police costing model by 2025, *the total amalgamated policing costs are less by amalgamating.*

Additionally, the municipality shares fine revenue with the province.

**New Police Model Estimated Payments to Province of Alberta (Not Amalgamated)**

	<b>Black Diamond</b>	<b>Turner Valley</b>
2020	\$ 56,446.00	\$ 54,632.00
2021	\$ 84,720.00	\$ 82,006.00
2022	\$ 112,891.00	\$ 109,263.00
2023	\$ 169,458.00	\$ 164,013.00
2024	\$ 169,458.00	\$ 164,013.00
<b>Total combined</b>		
<b>Costs=</b>		<b>\$ 333,471.00</b>

**Estimated Policing Costs if Amalgamated** \$ 550,000.00

**Municipal Police Officer Grant** **(\$240,000)**  
**Police Officer Grant** **TBD**  
\$ 310,000.00