

# **Village of Galahad Viability Review**

What We Have Heard and Viability Determination Report

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**September 2014**

Village of Galahad Viability Review Team

***What We Have Heard and Viability Determination Report***  
**Village of Galahad Viability Review**  
**Alberta Municipal Affairs**  
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## Introduction

The **What We Have Heard and Viability Determination** report is intended to inform and support the Village of Galahad Viability Review Team's work in determining the viability of the Village of Galahad. The What We have Heard and Viability Determination report contains a compilation of public input that was received by the Viability Review Team following the release of the Initial Findings Report in April 2014.

Input was gathered from an open house held in Galahad on May 6, 2014, and from written submissions received from April 24, 2014 to May 16, 2014. Written submissions were accepted by mail, fax and email.

This report is divided into four sections.

### **Section 1 – Stakeholder input received**

A summary of the input gathered from the participants at the open house held at the Galahad Agri-plex on May 6, 2014, and from written submissions and completed Stakeholder Input Forms

### **Section 2 – Responses to stakeholder questions**

Responses to questions from stakeholders from the open house and from written submissions.

### **Section 3 – Viability Determination**

The Viability Review Team's determination on the viability of the Village of Galahad is found in this section.

### **Section 4 – Next steps**

The next phase of the viability review is outlined in this section.

Please note that some comments may have been edited to improve clarity (e.g. spelling and grammar). References to specific persons and names may be edited to protect the anonymity or privacy of both the contributor and/or the named individual(s). Comments which are of a similar tone and message may be grouped together. The numbers in parentheses indicate the number of times the comment was submitted.

## Section 1 – Stakeholder input received

### A. Stakeholder engagement overview

As part of the Village of Galahad Viability Review, the Viability Review Team (VRT) was tasked with leading stakeholder engagement with residents, property owners, and other stakeholders from the Galahad community. From July 2013 to February 2014, the Viability Review Team met to review and evaluate the state of governance, finance, and programs and services at the Village of Galahad. From April to May 2014, stakeholder engagement was held to provide community stakeholders with the opportunity to learn about the initial findings, and to provide input to the Viability Review Team.

The stakeholder engagement held consisted of two components. First, an open house was held in conjunction with a community dinner hosted by Flagstaff County in Galahad on May 6, 2014. Second, the Initial Findings Report was sent to each Galahad resident and property owner who owned property in the village and written submissions were accepted for a three week period from April 25, 2014 to May 16, 2014.

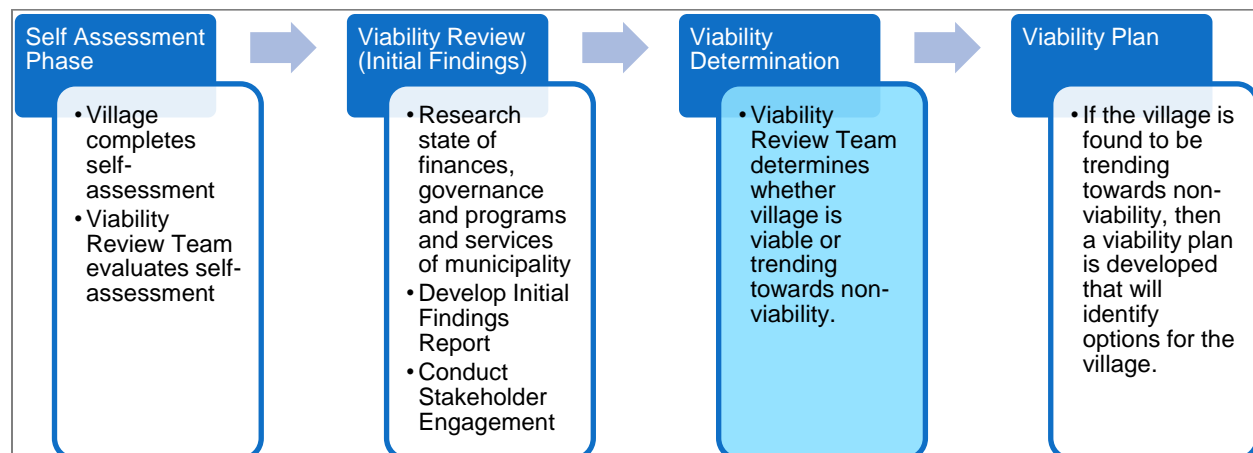


Figure 1 - Overview of the Viability Review Process

The Village of Galahad Viability Review Team held an open house at the Galahad Agri-plex on the evening of May 6, 2014 to present information from the Village of Galahad Viability Review Initial Findings Report and to gather input from the attendees on specific questions concerning the viability of the village. Approximately 50 members of the Galahad community attended the meeting and participated in the discussions.

Written submissions were also accepted via several methods for this stakeholder engagement. The input provided by those who attended the open house and from written submissions is shown in Section 1B.

## **B. What We Have Heard**

### **Description**

Participants were provided with workbooks at the open house and information displays highlighting information from the Initial Findings Report were distributed around the hall. Five questions were asked of the participants, which are:

1. How satisfied are you with the level and quality of services that you receive from the Village of Galahad?
2. What would you say is your greatest concern or issue about the Village of Galahad?
3. Do you believe that you are getting good value for your property taxes?
4. Based on your knowledge and the information provided in the Initial Findings Report, do you believe that the Village of Galahad is a viable municipality?
5. Do you believe that a more in-depth study should be completed of the village's options – such as changes in what and how services are provided at the village, or potentially the dissolution of the village should be completed?

Residents and property owners of the Village of Galahad were mailed copies of the Village of Galahad Viability Review Initial Findings Report. The stakeholder input forms, along with any other written submissions have been compiled in this section and are shown below. A total of 25 written submissions were received by the Viability Review Team.

### **How satisfied are you with the level and quality of services that you receive from the Village of Galahad?**

- Satisfied. (6)
- Very satisfied. (4)
- Not satisfied. (3)
- Not very satisfied as the issues that have happened to us have never been fixed. (2)
- So-so. (2)

### **What would you say is your greatest concern or issue about the Village of Galahad?**

- Shrinking population & stagnant growth. (6)
- Lacking maintenance – village is not being kept up. (4)
- Administration – not getting done.
- Bylaw and speed control on Main Street.
- Lack of people that care what happens to the village
- Not able to recover equity in house & lots.
- Property taxes going up and current level of services going down.
- The feasibility of keeping the library and fire department.
- The upkeep of all infrastructure.

**Do you believe that you are getting good value for your property taxes?**

- No. (8)
- Yes (5)
- Not good, but fair value.

**Based on your knowledge and the information provided in the Initial Findings Report, do you believe that the Village of Galahad is a viable municipality?**

- No. (6)
- Not sure
- For the next couple of years yes, but not for the long term
- No I do not so eventually someone else will run things
- No the village needs to become a hamlet
- No, to small, to maintain all desirable amenities
- Not for long. Water & sewer will eventually need to be done, whose will this money come from
- Not long term
- Viable

**Do you believe that a more in-depth study should be completed of the village's options – such as changes in what and how services are provided at the village, or potentially the dissolution of the village should be completed?**

- A more in-depth study
- *(No Answer). (2)*
- Dissolution of the village should be completed
- I believe the truth should be said outright instead of spending money on all these different reports etc.
- No
- No, all info required has been provided “You have my Green Light”
- The dissolution should be complete
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes – I think the only viable option is dissolution
- Yes, I feel dissolution will probably have to be the end result
- Yes, need to make the best possible decision for all possibilities for everything & club(?) that goes on in our community

## Section 2 – Responses to stakeholder questions

A number of questions were received during the open house and through the written submissions. In this section, answers to some of these questions are provided.

**Q1:** What will become of the Galahad Public Library if the village dissolved?

**Answer:** Changes to municipal services, including the operation of the Galahad Public Library, will be examined by the Viability Review Team in the Viability Plan phase of the viability review. The library will continue to operate as normal during the viability review.

**Q2:** What will happen to the village's recreation facilities, such as the skating rink, campground, ball diamonds, recreation centre, and bowling alley if the village dissolved?

**Answer:** Changes to municipal facilities and services, including the operation of all municipal recreation facilities, will be examined by the Viability Review Team in the Viability Plan phase of the viability review. The municipally owned and operated recreation facilities will continue to operate and be maintained as normal during the viability review.

**Q3:** What will become of the Galahad Fire Department, Galahad Public Library if the village dissolved?

**Answer:** Changes to municipal services, including the operation of the Galahad Public Library, will be examined by the Viability Review Team in the Viability Plan phase of the viability review. The library and the fire department will continue to operate as normal during the viability review.

**Q4:** What happens to our public works person and public works equipment if dissolution occurs?

**Answer:** Changes to municipal services and how municipal services are provided will be examined by the Viability Review Team in the Viability Plan phase of the viability review. Staff and contractors will continue to provide municipal services as normal during the viability review.

Public works equipment are assets of the Village of Galahad. Should the Village of Galahad be dissolved, all assets and liabilities of the village will be transferred to Flagstaff County.

**Q5:** What could happen to the natural gas utility service if Galahad dissolved? Could Flagstaff County sell the system?

**Answer:** The future ownership and operation of the Galahad natural gas utility will be considered by the Viability Review Team when the viability options are analyzed. Should the Village of Galahad be dissolved, all assets and liabilities of the village would be transferred to Flagstaff County. The county may continue ownership and operation of the natural gas utility, or it may determine that other alternatives may be more appropriate for the Galahad community.

**Q6:** What grants are available for the Village of Galahad?

**Answer:** The Village of Galahad and all municipalities in Alberta can access a number of different federal and provincial grants for operations and capital projects. The grants the village have accessed in the past include the: Municipal Sustainability Initiative, Regional Collaboration Program, Basic Municipal Transportation Grant, Federal Gas Tax Fund, and Alberta Municipal Water/Wastewater Program. A full breakdown of all grants received from 2009 to 2013 can be found on pages 20 and 21 of the *Village of Galahad Viability Review Initial Findings Report*.

**Q7:** Who will provide street repairs, street maintenance, and water/sewer line maintenance services if dissolution occurs?

**Answer:** The Viability Review Team is moving into the Viability Plan phase of the Village of Galahad Viability Review. During this phase, the Viability Review Team will examine how services such as street maintenance and street repairs will be changed in the future in both viability options (the village remains incorporated with changes made to its operations, or the village is dissolved and Galahad becomes a hamlet in Flagstaff County). No decision has been made on the future of street repairs, street maintenance, or water/sewer line maintenance in Galahad.

**Q8:** Who will be responsible to look after or enforce the maintenance of yards where no one lives anymore?

**Answer:** The Village of Galahad is responsible for bylaw enforcement during the viability review. The future of bylaw enforcement in Galahad - who provides bylaw enforcement and how bylaw enforcement will be provided will be analyzed by the Viability Review Team and will be explored in the Viability Plan.

**Q9:** Can a committee for economic development be formed?

**Answer:** The option to create an economic development committee is at the discretion of village council. Residents interested in forming an economic development committee are advised to contact village council to discuss their idea.

**Q10:** Will anything be done to fix or eliminate the flooding of the back land on the northwest part of the village?

**Answer:** Issues pertaining to any specific location or property should be addressed to village council as the village is still operating as normal. The viability review will only address issues related to localized flooding if it is related to the operation or current condition of an infrastructure system.

**Q11:** What will happen to the value of our properties? What will happen to the resale potential of our properties?

**Answer:** The impact of the viability options (the village remains incorporated with changes made to its operations, or the village is dissolved and Galahad becomes a hamlet in Flagstaff County) on property values and resale potential of properties in Galahad is outside the scope of the viability review.

**Q12:** Will there be a taxpayers vote before final decisions are made?

**Answer:** Updates on the viability review and reports from the Viability Review Team will be mailed to Galahad residents and property owners. A vote of the electors of Galahad will only be held following the completion of the Viability Plan, and if the village council votes in favour of dissolution.

If village council does not vote in favour of dissolution, the Minister of Municipal Affairs will direct village council to implement the recommendations of the Viability Review Team for the viability option where the village remains incorporated with changes made to its operations. Village council will be given a set time frame to implement these changes to improve the viability of the village.



**Q13:** What happens to the bowling alley, outdoor rink, school grounds, and campground?

**Answer:** All future ownership and operation of community facilities in Galahad will be considered by the Viability Review Team when the viability options are analyzed. Should the Village of Galahad be dissolved, all assets and liabilities of the village would be transferred to Flagstaff County. The county may continue ownership and operation of the community facilities, have community groups operate the facilities, or it may determine that other alternatives may be more appropriate for the Galahad community.

**Q14:** What happens to taxes if the village dissolved?

**Answer:** At this time, municipal tax rates for the Village of Galahad will not change. During the development of the Viability Plan, the Viability Review Team will consider the impact of the viability options on the municipal tax rates of Galahad. Property taxes will likely change and details on the changes will be outlined in the Viability Plan once it is developed.

## Section 3 - Viability Determination

Based on the information analyzed by the Viability Review Team and the input collected from residents, the Viability Review Team has determined that the Village of Galahad is trending towards non-viability.

The Viability Review Team came to this determination due to the following factors:

1. The village's finances are projected to show deficits due to the pending cuts to provincial government grants for the village's operations. The impact of these cuts will result in future tax increases, or the eventual depletion of the village's financial reserves.
2. The village's aging infrastructure will require significant upgrades or replacement which the village may not be able to afford with its limited financial capacity.
3. The village's population shows a gradual decline in the past twenty years and the age of the village's population continues to rise.
4. The village has experienced a lack of development and growth, which creates further dependence on the village's residential tax base.
5. The village has experienced difficulties in attracting and retaining qualified staff to maintain operations of the village's infrastructure systems. These personnel challenges continue to exist due to budget constraints and a tight labour market.

## Section 4 - Next Steps

The What We Have Heard and Viability Determination Report is meant to provide members of the Galahad community with information on the public input collected to date. The information gathered was analyzed and used by the Viability Review Team's determination of the Village of Galahad's viability.

The Viability Review Team has begun the development of the Viability Plan in August 2014 with the Village of Galahad and Flagstaff County councils. During the upcoming months, options will be developed on solutions that will allow Galahad to become viable in the long-term. These options may include changes to the way that Galahad is governed and administered, how Galahad works with its municipal neighbours, and whether Galahad should be dissolved and become a hamlet in Flagstaff County.

Residents will be informed of project updates and further stakeholder engagement will take place once the Viability Plan has been completed.

For further information, please contact:

**Michael Scheidl**  
Chairperson  
Village of Galahad Viability Review Team  
Alberta Municipal Affairs

**Kai So**  
Manager, Municipal Sustainability and  
Information  
Alberta Municipal Affairs

**Email:** [viabilityreview@gov.ab.ca](mailto:viabilityreview@gov.ab.ca)

**Toll-free in Alberta by dialing:** **310-0000** and entering **780-427-2225**