



Terms of Reference

1. Purpose:

The North Blindman River Tri-Municipal Collaborative (NBRTC) is a tri-party forum created by the City of Lacombe, Lacombe County, and the Town of Blackfalds. Its purpose is to strengthen regional collaboration by discussing issues and opportunities of mutual interest and recommending areas for cooperation. The NBRTC is not intended to replace existing Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework (ICF) or Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP) Committees already established between Lacombe County and the two urban municipalities. It serves as a strategic advisory committee, with all decisions remaining the responsibility of each respective Council.

2. Shared Values:

NBRTC members commit to being accountable to each other for these shared values:

- Mutual respect and professionalism
- Collaborative, solution-focused dialogue
- Recognition and respect for each municipality's distinctiveness
- Shared success and equitable benefit
- Honest, open-minded, and candid discussions
- A safe space to address challenges
- Focused attendance,
- Productive discussions

3. Membership:

- 1) The NBRTC includes six (6) Council representatives and three (3) CAOs comprised of:
 - a) Two (2) elected Council members from each municipality
 - b) Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs) from each municipality in an advisory (non-voting) capacity
- 2) Each municipality shall also appoint one (1) additional Council member to serve as an alternate if their regular elected member cannot attend,
- 3) Existing municipal processes will be used for making appointments to the NBRTC.
- 4) It is intended that all members will be present for NBRTC meetings. If a regular Council member is unavailable, they may send their alternate, permit the meeting to proceed without representation, or request rescheduling.

4. Committee Scope:

- 1) New, emerging, existing, and ongoing regional issues or opportunities impacting the member municipalities.



- 2) Topics may include (but are not limited to) strategic growth, infrastructure, recreation, culture, economic development, emergency services, and regional planning.
- 3) NBRTC discussions will focus on strategic, high-level collaboration. Operational discussions will remain with administrative bodies unless referred otherwise.
- 4) Additional stakeholders may be invited to participate in topic discussions by agreement of the NBRTC.
- 5) An annual "social event" will be hosted to strengthen relationship-building among members.

5. Out of Scope:

- 1) Direct management of operational or administrative matters already governed under separate agreements or committees unless strategic oversight is appropriate.
- 2) Topics not approved by the NBRTC to discuss.

6. Initial Topics Workshop:

- 1) A workshop will be held shortly after the NBRTC's formation facilitated by qualified third party.
- 2) Each municipality will bring forward potential discussion topics.
- 3) The workshop will collaboratively prioritize an initial list of topics for NBRTC discussion.
- 4) Topics identified will guide the NBRTC's initial workplan.

7. Scoping New Topics:

- 1) Any member municipality can propose new topics.
- 2) The proposing municipality must submit a briefing report outlining:
 - a) the rationale for the topic
 - b) potential regional benefits
 - c) relevant information and supporting data.
- 3) The NBRTC will determine whether the topic fits within the committee's scope.

8. Meeting Expectations:

- 1) Host Municipality responsibilities will rotate annually in the following order:
 - Year 1:** City of Lacombe,
 - Year 2:** Lacombe County, and
 - Year 3:** Town of Blackfalds.
- 2) Meetings will be primarily in person.

- 3) The Host Municipality will provide a suitable meeting space accommodating the Committee's needs.
- 4) Frequency and Duration:
 - a) Meetings will occur semi-annually unless otherwise agreed.
 - b) Meetings will not exceed three (3) hours unless otherwise agreed.

9. Roles and Responsibilities:

- 1) Appointed Council Members shall:
 - a) engage collaboratively and respectfully,
 - b) speak freely but focus on ideas,
 - c) prepare by understanding their municipality's perspective,
 - d) identify objectives for each topic,
 - e) direct administration in a timely manner.
- 2) Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs) shall:
 - a) provide general administrative support and background reports,
 - b) advise their Appointed Council Members,
 - c) collaborate to prepare draft agendas and joint Council reports.
- 3) The Host Municipality CAO shall:
 - a) facilitate the selection of a meeting Chair in consultation with their Appointed Council Members,
 - b) provide a meeting location,
 - c) coordinate meeting logistics and scheduling,
 - d) draft the meeting agenda based on input from other CAOs,
 - e) prepare and circulate meeting materials, and
 - f) record and circulate meeting notes.
- 4) The Host Municipality Meeting Chair shall:
 - a) provide structure, uphold shared values, and facilitate effective meetings,
 - b) serve as a fair and objective facilitator, encouraging balanced participation from all members, and
 - c) model collaborative tone, ensuring discussions remain constructive and respectful.
- 5) Municipal Councils retain full decision-making authority regarding NBRTC recommendations.

10. Communications:

- 1) Unless otherwise agreed upon, discussions at NBRTC are considered confidential to foster open dialogue and the free exchange of ideas, enabling participants to form well-informed opinions.
- 2) Updates, and the review of meeting notes, to each full Council will occur through confidential, in-camera sessions as appropriate.
- 3) Media communication will occur through joint news releases, with the Mayor/Reeve (or designate) serving as spokespeople.

11. Decision-Making Model:

- 1) The NBRTC aims to reach decisions by consensus.
- 2) If consensus is not achievable within agreed timelines, "consensus-minus-one" will be used; meaning a decision can be made even with one dissenting Appointed Council Member, but a second dissenter would block it.
- 3) If consensus-minus-one fails, the recommendation will not proceed to Councils.
- 4) All recommendations to Councils will be documented through joint administrative reports.

12. Joint Administrative Council Reports:

- 1) Reports will be prepared jointly by administrations.
- 2) Reports will be vetted through each municipality's internal processes before submission to Councils.
- 3) Collaboration between administrations will ensure consistency and clarity.

13. Conflict Resolution Framework:

- 1) NBRTC members commit to resolving disputes informally through facilitated collaboration first.
- 2) If unresolved, mediation may be initiated jointly.
- 3) Mediation costs will be shared equally.
- 4) If mediation fails to resolve the issue, the disputed topic will not be forwarded to Councils for consideration.

14. Terms of Reference Review:

- 1) This Terms of Reference will be reviewed after one (1) year.
- 2) Future reviews will be scheduled at regular intervals or as needed.



15. Adoption and Approval

This Terms of Reference shall come into effect once it has been adopted by resolution of all three municipal Councils.

Approved by the City of Lacombe Council on **September 8, 2025**

Approved by the Lacombe County Council on **August 28, 2025.**

Approved by the Town of Blackfalds Council on **August 26, 2025.**

