GUIDEBOOK FOR PREPARING A MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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Guidebook for Preparing a Municipal Development Plan

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OLDMAN RIVER REGIONAL SERVICES COMMISSION
Guidebook For Preparing A Municipal Development Plan

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Introduction

As of 2017, approximately 125 of Alberta's smaller municipalities who have never had a comprehensive community plan or municipal development plan (MDP) will be preparing one for the first time.

Regardless of population size, Council is responsible for managing the community's land base. A future plan that is supported by the community benefits all. This guidebook has been written for municipalities who will be preparing their first municipal development plan. It is meant to aid the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and Council in ensuring that the municipality meets the obligations of provincial legislation and creates a plan that benefits the community.

This guidebook reflects advice from Registered Professional Planners (RPP) from across Alberta. These individuals have many years of experience advising and working with municipalities of many sizes to meet their planning responsibilities and needs. This guidebook is meant to:

• Create understanding and appreciation of the value that a well prepared MDP brings to a community;

• Communicate the role and purpose of an MDP;

• Provide guidance on the content and information needed to prepare a plan;

• Provide advice on the process to prepare an MDP.

To this end, the guidebook consists of three main components. These are:

• An overview of an MDP in terms of topics such as its benefits, contents, information needs, and process to prepare;

• A series of sample MDPs (contained in Appendix A) for municipalities of different types with smaller populations; and

• A set of topic papers spanning a range of issues commonly addressed in an MDP, and potential linkages with capital planning and municipal asset management (contained in Appendix B).

This guidebook does not promote a "one size fits all" approach to community planning. The Alberta planning system has long recognized the unique settings and aspirations of individual communities. While municipalities can and do learn from each other's experiences, adopted land use planning policies need to reflect their individual needs and circumstances.
What is a Municipal Development Plan?

A municipal development plan (MDP) is a key policy plan that communicates the long term desired land use for your community. It is a high-level blueprint that shows how your community is expected to change over time and the shape it will take in the future. It is often described as the “view from 30,000 feet” to reflect the conceptual, big picture role of the plan.

Much like a blueprint that guides the construction of a house, an MDP helps many decision makers collectively build their shared and desired physical setting. The resource that is being managed is the land base that is occupied by all members of the municipality. This land base is typically limited and is expected to accommodate many activities and functions. This means that choices have to be made. Creating an MDP involves a process to help make these decisions, and serves as a record of the choices that have been made for the community’s benefit.

The assignment of uses or activities to specific lands influences the use of other resources and the daily lives of community members. It has an effect on:

- **Economic** considerations such as the opportunity for commercial services to set up at locations where they can succeed, and space for local industries and businesses to provide employment opportunities;
- **Social** considerations such as the ability of community members to interact on a regular basis, to access services, and the ability to meet the variety of needs within the community;
- **Environmental** considerations such as the preservation of valued natural features and the impact of human activities on the natural environment (e.g. contamination of lands), and preparedness for extreme weather related events;
- **Cultural** considerations such as setting aside space for recreational, artistic, and community gathering or assembly activities; and
- **Governance** considerations such as locations for critical services like fire and emergency response, water treatment and wastewater treatment plants, and the process for making decisions about the future use of land.

The MDP serves as a guiding policy document for future decisions regarding the use of publicly owned and privately owned land, and the infrastructure and services that are needed to support the intended uses. It is a statutory document, meaning it is adopted by bylaw and the direction it sets should be followed.

Key attributes of a well thought out and prepared MDP include:

- A long term, strategic focus on what the community wants to be like 20 or 30 years into the future; for example a desire to have a healthier commercial land base;
- Clear communication of the desired physical layout of activities and features that will be accommodated within the community’s land base; for example, Confined Feeding
Operations (CFOs), residential areas, and open space areas;

- Guidance on how to achieve the desired long term vision and the decisions that will need to be made to implement the direction contained in the MDP, such as land use bylaw designations and subdivision decisions;

- Consideration of the draw on community resources to support the land use activities and form of development that the plan allows; and

- Decisions and directions that reflect a high degree of community consensus that balances the interests of individuals and groups with the needs of the community at large. For example, finding space for affordable housing.
What are the Benefits of a Municipal Development Plan?

The formal, legislated land use planning system has been in place in Alberta since the early part of the 20th century. Rail expansion, and later, the creation of extensive highway systems in response to increased rates of economic expansion, fueled the need to address haphazard land development and speculation throughout the Province.

Generally we plan:

- To make the most efficient use of limited resources with the primary resource being our land base;
- To minimize conflict between differing types of land uses and associated users;
- To ensure that growth and development occurs in the most efficient and effective manner;
- To preserve those features in a community which may have important environmental, social, or cultural significance;
- To acknowledge not only physical and economic factors, but social needs within a community;
- To create certainty between neighbouring municipalities and community members about what will develop and where growth will occur; and
- To become more resilient and able to respond to changing circumstances and emerging challenges.

We also plan so our future generations will have the same opportunities that we enjoy now. This is commonly referred to as promoting sustainable development and settlement patterns that meet the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It includes such things as:

- Creating and maintaining aesthetically appealing, orderly and comfortable communities containing the amenities desired by the public;
- Considering ecological and environmental impacts of proposals in an effort to maintain a clean and healthy environment;
- Protecting and promoting the health, safety, and welfare of the public at large through the provision of key facilities and services and avoiding hazardous situations and undue risk;
- Considering development impacts on culture and heritage resources valued by the community;
- Building an inclusive community able to accommodate and respond to the needs of individuals and a variety of household types; and
- Creating confidence for private investors in knowing what the community is prepared to accept and where to confidently invest.

Finally, an MDP can benefit the community by clarifying and communicating how it approaches planning issues and what the community may see in the future. This means:

- Maintaining fair planning decision making processes in which good development can flourish and all parties can participate;
• Promoting the public interest when managing growth and development, including efficiency in the development, delivery and use of infrastructure;

• Respecting the landowner’s right to the use and enjoyment of their land and restricting those rights only to the extent necessary for the greater public good and public health;

• Managing change in the community’s landscape through appropriate allocation of resources for the maintenance, upgrading and replacement of infrastructure; and

• Proactively identifying areas for investment opportunities that may economically and socially benefit the entire community.
What Topics are Covered by the Municipal Development Plan?

The topics or subject matter contained in a municipal development plan are determined by the minimum legislative requirements and direction provided by your community.

Under Section 632 of the Municipal Government Act, a municipal development plan must address:

(a) the future land use within the municipality;

(b) the manner of, and the proposals for, future development in the municipality;

(c) the co-ordination of land use, future growth patterns, and other infrastructure with adjacent municipalities, if not addressed in an intermunicipal development plan;

(d) the provision of the required transportation systems, either generally or specifically, within the municipality, and in relation to adjacent municipalities; and

(e) the provision of municipal services and facilities either generally or specifically

as well as the following provisions:

(f) policies compatible with the Subdivision and Development Regulation to provide guidance on the type and location of land uses adjacent to sour gas facilities;

(g) policies respecting the provision of municipal, school, or municipal and school reserves, including but not limited to, the need for, amount of, and allocation of those reserves and the identification of school requirements in consultation with affected school authorities;

(h) policies respecting the creation of joint use agreements;

(i) policies respecting the protection of agricultural operations.

Section 632 also provides that a municipal development plan may address:

(a) proposals for the financing and programming of municipal infrastructure;

(b) the co-ordination of municipal programs relating to the physical, social and economic development of the municipality;

(c) environmental matters within the municipality;

(d) the financial resources of the municipality;

(e) the economic development of the municipality; and

(f) any other matter relating to the physical, social or economic development of the municipality.

Finally, Section 632 also states a municipal development plan may contain statements regarding the municipality’s development constraints (e.g. steep slopes), including the results of any development studies and impact analysis, as well as goals, objectives, targets, planning policies and corporate strategies.
While there is a basic minimum of topics that must be covered, a municipality has a fair degree of latitude on what to include. Most land use decisions affect people in a limited, local area, so it makes sense that land use planning regulations should be created at the local level.

In practice the list of typical topics may include:

- **Future Land Use Patterns** - addressing the major land use or activity assigned to an area when development occurs, such as new residential neighbourhoods and new commercial development or industrial districts;

- **Growth Management** - addressing overall available land supply and amount of serviced lands available for short term growth; addressing the expected phasing of growth; addressing monitoring of development activity, and expectations about funding new development;

- **Urban Form and Design** - addressing the overall appearance of the community and its buildings and spaces;

- **Economic Development and Tourism** - addressing efforts to develop commercial and industrial activities, employment related activities, and prosperity for residents;

- **Heritage Preservation** - addressing the identification of buildings and sites related to the history of the community, and efforts to preserve and celebrate these as new development occurs;

- **Environmental Management and Community Resilience** - addressing natural areas to be preserved, use of conservation reserve, avoiding development on hazardous lands such as floodplains, and managing the impact of human activities on the environment;

- **Housing and Neighbourhood Design** - addressing the types of residential development needed for the current and future population, and the look and layout of new residential areas;

- **Commercial Development** - addressing the location and type of commercial development desired and policies to create new commercial areas. You may also address the needs of the downtown area;

- **Industrial Development** - addressing the location and type of industrial activities to be accommodated, and means to ensure these activities can avoid negative impacts on other uses;

- **Parks, Recreation and Culture** - addressing the locations and types of open space to be provided, and sites for community facilities like schools and indoor recreation venues;

- **Community and Protective Services** - addresses the provision of health and safety services for residents, as well as disaster response planning for unforeseen events;

- **Transportation** - addressing major road and transportation corridors for a variety of forms of transportation needs (vehicular, pedestrian and cycling) to ensure land is available for these functions;

- **Utilities** - addressing issues of capacity for water, waste water and landfills; and

- **Intermunicipal Planning and Regional Cooperation** - addressing matters of shared service delivery and ensuring consistency with the intermunicipal development plan.
Meeting the legislated minimums for topics does not necessarily result in a good plan. The topics to be addressed in your plan should reflect the needs of your community. This may result in different topics than those presented.
Who Uses the Municipal Development Plan?

As the main blueprint for the development and growth of the community, the municipal development plan should be targeted to many users, not just land use planners. Some users of the plan are mandated through legislation. An example is the decisions made on the subdivision of land which must comply with the direction of the MDP. Other users may not be required to follow the MDP by legislation but may benefit from being able to align their efforts with the community’s long term desired future. For example, an affordable housing provider or funding agency may seek to work with the community on achieving their housing goals.

The following users of the MDP should be considered:

**Community Members**
Residents, property owners, and business owners should be able to consult the MDP and determine what could be happening around them and their property in the long term.

**Development Community**
Those wishing to subdivide and develop property should be able to determine if their plans match up with the desires of the community in terms of the types of land use activities and the intensity of development.

**Council**
Decisions on more detailed plans such as area structure plans, area redevelopment plans and non-statutory concept plans should be gauged against the direction of the MDP. Land use bylaw designations should reflect the long term intended use based on the MDP. The desire to make changes in the MDP should be a discussion point during annual operating and capital budgeting. Council may also use the MDP as a corporate strategy for the planning of other municipal activities (e.g. how solid waste services will be provided).

**Subdivision/Development Authority**
Decisions on development permits or on subdivision approval should conform to the policy direction contained in the MDP.

**Subdivision and Development Appeal Board**
On appeal of a development permit or subdivision decision, the appeal board must consider the policy direction contained in the MDP. The MDP is the guiding document which provides the context for determining the appropriate course of action in reviewing the appeal.

**Municipal Government Board**
On appeal of a subdivision decision involving a provincial interest, the Municipal Government Board (MGB), should consult the policies contained in the MDP. Like the local Subdivision and Development Appeal Board, this group can set aside the policies if they feel it is warranted. The MGB will also consult the MDP on determining the appropriateness of proposed annexation of land and expansion of municipal boundaries. The MDP can be a key document in communicating a well thought out pattern of human settlement for your community.

**Engineers and Development Professionals**
The starting point for all plans involving municipal infrastructure (roads, water, wastewater, parks and recreation...
facilities, etc.) is the expected nature, intensity, and location of land use activities. The MDP should provide this context for assessments of existing capacity and master plans for future upgrades and expansions.

**Neighbouring Municipalities**
Abutting and nearby municipalities may refer to the MDP to understand how your community’s plans will interact with theirs. The MDP may also form the basis for what lands to set aside for future expansion and the land use patterns identified in an intermunicipal development plan, relative to transportation and the extension of municipal services.

**Provincial Government Departments**
The information included within an MDP may be of value to provincial authorities and departments that deliver or fund services to the community. In some cases the MDP may assist with obtaining provincial financial support in the implementation of the plan. For example, a regional housing authority may use the plan to build a case for funding or to select a suitable location for a housing project.

**Municipal Administration**
The MDP is for the entire municipal corporation; it is not just for the planning department. Implementation is a corporate wide endeavour. It can be used in a variety of functions such as recreation facility planning, subdivision approval, economic development, and planning for the delivery of municipal services (e.g. location of a new fire hall). The MDP does not replace service delivery plans or more targeted short term operational plans; rather, it informs these plans about what the future may hold.
As a publication that will be used by many different audiences, it is important that your municipal development plan is well structured. The following sections represent the minimum topics to cover the mandatory requirements of the Municipal Government Act and good planning practice.

**Introductory Section**
This section provides a brief overview of the function of the MDP. This includes noting which parts of the document are intended to be applied as policy and which parts are intended as information or for background context.

**Background and Context Section**
A high level overview of the major issues and trends facing the community and providing context for the policies of the MDP should be included. This may include the physical setting of the community and key demographic information such as current and projected population. A summary of factors influencing the proposed development patterns, (e.g. a large river forming a barrier to west, sour gas facilities nearby, or a waterbody shared with another municipality), should be included.

**Significant Features Map**
This map highlights the main features, natural and man-made, within and surrounding the community. It helps provide further context to the choices made in terms of future land use patterns and directions of growth. It should be noted that these features can be either opportunities or constraints.

**Vision and Principles**
A vision is an overarching statement to guide growth and development within a municipality. It states what the community wishes to be like in 20 to 30 years. Determining your community’s vision will help focus where you are and where you want to be in the future. It provides a reference point for the choices in policies and future land use patterns.

**Land Use Concept Map**
The future land use concept map is the most frequently referenced drawing in the document. It communicates the desired location of future residential, commercial, institutional, industrial and open space areas. Major roadways and transportation features are included, as are sites for key public facilities. The map is often supported by a written explanation of the major land use categories and what each entails.

**Topic and Policy Sections**
A series of sections are used to address the various topics the community wishes to cover in their MDP. Each section tends to start with one or more goal statements connecting the specific topic to the vision and principles. A goal statement provides more insight on the desired outcome. A series of objectives are usually added to give more focused direction to the goal(s). These are then followed by specific policy statements on individual considerations linked to the overall topic. Policies are typically structured as “shall”, “should” or “may” statements.

**Implementation Section**
This section addresses processes and mechanisms that will be used to make the vision contained in the MDP become a reality. It may include requiring more
detailed planning prior to development, such as an area structure plan or area redevelopment plan or shared service through the intermunicipal collaboration framework. It may also set out minimum expectations around public engagement efforts on key planning decisions and the funding/budgeting implications for your municipality’s 3 year financial planning cycle. The timing for periodic review/update/status check of the MDP is also addressed.
A community’s municipal development plan is not an isolated, one off document. It forms part of the planning system that applies across the Province. This means the MDP must be written to properly fit within this larger system which is referred to as the “planning hierarchy”.

There are several layers of plans that serve to articulate policy from the provincial government down to the local, municipal authorities. Each plan must “fit in” with the vision and direction outlined in the higher level document(s) above it. Generally, the level of detail presented in any plan increases as you move down the chart or inverted pyramid.

**Provincial Legislation (Land Use Framework or 1996 Land Use Policy)**

The highest level provincial document, the Land Use Framework, will create regional plans for the 7 different watersheds in the Province. In the absence of a regional plan under the Alberta Land Stewardship Act, the 1996 Land Use Policies will apply. Regional plans are managed and prepared by the Land Use Secretariat.

**Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework**

An intermunicipal collaboration framework (ICF) is a formal regional planning initiative which requires municipalities to work together regarding growth management, delivery of municipal services and cost sharing. The goal of an ICF is to limit duplication of services and increase cost efficiencies.
**Intermunicipal Development Plan**
An intermunicipal development plan, (IDP), is a plan adopted by two or more councils. An IDP acknowledges that land use decisions can often have significant impacts outside of one municipality’s legal boundary. An IDP is a tool which will help identify the positives of joint planning and address the potential challenges associated with growth and development.

**Municipal Development Plan**
Under updated Provincial legislation, all municipalities are required to adopt a municipal development plan. An MDP is a long range, statutory document that is required to be adopted by bylaw by every municipality, no matter how large or small the population.

**Area Structure Plans and Area Redevelopment Plans**
Area Structure Plans and Area Redevelopment Plans are considered intermediate or secondary plans which will identify in detail: land use, servicing requirements, and infrastructure needs within a portion of the community. Plans of this level also need to provide information regarding the proposed sequence and density of development within a given area.

**Land Use Bylaw**
A Land Use Bylaw (LUB) is the primary tool that is used to make “every day” decisions regarding applications such as redistricting and development permits. Although approved by bylaw, it is not a statutory document. A change in land use or redistricting a piece of property should conform to the vision contained in the MDP, or other higher level documents, if the long term vision is to be achieved. For example, if a piece of property is currently designated (zoned) as agricultural or urban reserve and the MDP identifies the future use as industrial, the local Council should not redistrict the property to residential.

**Subdivision**
The subdivision of land is accommodated by compliance with the Subdivision and Development Regulation, which is a specific implementation tool under the Municipal Government Act. The Subdivision and Development Regulation, amongst other things, identifies setback requirements for proposed development from landfill operations, sewage lagoons and oil and gas facilities. The Regulation also outlines when input is required by other authorities such as School Boards, Alberta Transportation for highway proximity/access, and the Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB) for potential development/expansion of a confined feeding operation.

**Development Permits/Site Plans**
The submission of a development permit/site plan is the most detailed level of information generally approved by a Development Authority, whether the Authority is a Development Officer, Municipal Planning Commission, or Council. The information contained in a Development Permit application or drawn on a site plan is used to assess conformity with the Land Use Bylaw.
Creating a Municipal Development Plan

The process used to create the municipal development plan is as important as the content and policy direction of the final adopted plan. The MDP aims to build consensus around how the community chooses to change. The opportunity to discuss various points of view and gain appreciation for different opinions should be a goal of a good, well-structured planning process. Participants should be able to recognize their contributions and acknowledge that they were listened to and that their perspective was taken into account.

Good, participatory process help build the consensus the community needs on the major topics covered by the MDP. A comprehensive appreciation of the perspectives of the community ensures that Council can create a plan that will stand the test of time.

Legislated Process Requirements

The Municipal Government Act provides limited guidance on the overall process to prepare an MDP. Section 632(1) requires that an MDP be adopted by bylaw. Section 636 outlines the basic expectations around the process to create and adopt an MDP. This includes:

- Providing an opportunity and means for any person who may be affected by the plan to make suggestions and representations to those preparing the plan;
- Notifying the public about the planning process and their opportunities to make suggestions and representations;
- Notifying school authorities that serve the area and providing them with opportunities to provide input;
- Notifying adjacent municipalities, being those with a shared boundary with the municipality preparing the MDP, about the plan process and opportunities for their input and review; and
- Notifying the Indian band of any adjacent Indian reserve, or any adjacent Metis settlement.

Section 692 sets out requirements for the process to pass a bylaw that adopts an MDP. Before second reading is given to the bylaw, Council must hold a public hearing. The public hearing is held as part of a regular or special meeting of Council. During the public hearing Council:

- Must hear any person or group who claims to be affected and has followed the procedures for a participant that may be set out by Council (e.g. any resident or property owner in the municipality); and
- May hear from any other person or group who wishes to speak and Council agrees to hear (e.g. a national environmental organization like the Sierra Club of Canada).

It is equally important that the proposed MDP be presented, typically in a summarized fashion, at the public hearing. Council is expected to make their decision on the bylaw or any amendments to the bylaw based on the information that they have presented to them as part of the hearing process.
The preparation of a municipal development plan needs to be viewed in the context of a broader planning system. As a community evolves its plans need to adapt and be kept up to date to address changing circumstances. The plan should serve as a living guide that is periodically revisited and updated.

The process starts at **Stage 1** with a “challenge” (e.g. upgrading municipal water line) to be solved or “opportunity” (e.g. new industrial business) to be explored.

In **Stage 2** information is collected and the current situation is assessed. At this point the process moves into setting a vision and supporting goals.

**Stage 3** seeks to answer “where we are going/wish to go?”

**Stage 4** involves building policies and strategies that will move the vision towards reality. These are typically actions and responses to a variety of items that may be encountered over the life of the plan. It addresses the “how are we going to get there” type questions.

**Stage 5** is the formalization of the plan in a written document. The main intent is to communicate the choices that have been made and the desired directions.

**Stage 6** is where resources are committed to making the plan’s directions take place. If the plan calls for public acquisition of a park, the implementation stage consists of activities to secure a site.

Finally, in **Stage 7**, the plan is monitored for effectiveness. The experience with the plan’s successes and shortcomings is used to inform the definition of the “challenge or opportunity” going into the next planning cycle, typically over a period of five to ten years.

There may be many activities occurring within each of the stages described above. There are also many stakeholders to be considered throughout each stage of the process. It is important to consider how best to ensure participation opportunities for all.

A plan should not be an end product. Planning is an on-going feedback process, which requires constant re-evaluation, relative to how the community is moving forward in a positive manner; or a realistic evaluation of what challenges have arisen that prevent reaching a goal. A plan is only effective if
initiatives are created and acted upon which are necessary to achieve the desired outcome.
Stakeholders in the Municipal Development Plan Preparation Process

The roles of various stakeholders in the planning process should be defined and reflected in the selection of activities. This includes consideration of the citizens/public, Council, municipal staff, and consultants brought in to assist with the process. The list of stakeholders may be longer based on the size of your community or the number and type of organizations that are present.

Steering Committee
The Steering Committee is the group tasked with overseeing the planning process, providing input and feedback, reviewing drafts of the plan, and making a recommendation to the Council on the plan to adopt. The membership of the committee can be all or several members of Council and can include members of the community at-large.

Committee members are often called upon to directly assist with hosting public participation events and communicating to the community about the plan and planning process. This means the Steering Committee is a critical component of the process.

Council
While some or all members of Council may form the Steering Committee, the final adoption of the plan is a decision rendered by all of Council. Starting with first reading of the bylaw to adopt the proposed MDP, Council assumes their role as decision maker for the benefit of the entire community.

Municipal Administration
Municipal staff can provide background information about the community and about possible challenges and opportunities. The CAO is typically a participant in Steering Committee meetings to provide the administrative perspective. This includes process advice and input on proposed plan directions and policies. Municipal staff also support the plan preparation process by providing communication support and helping with public participation efforts.

Municipal Planner or Planning Consultant
A planner, planning consultant, or planning team, can assist with the majority of the activities needed to successfully prepare the plan. This includes:

- Helping to structure the plan process and guide the Steering Committee through the various stages;
- Preparing research and background materials for review by other participants;
- Identifying and providing an evaluation of alternative courses of action such as land use pattern scenarios;
- Drafting plan policies and directions and writing the plan; and
- Facilitating public review and input on draft and proposed materials.

Agencies and Other Local Authorities
This group includes various Provincial Government departments and agencies that have a direct or indirect role in community planning. Examples are Alberta Transportation and Alberta Environment and Parks. The group also
includes local school authorities and housing authorities that serve the community and various private and public utility providers.

Referral agencies and other local authorities can provide useful background information related to their areas of expertise and interests regarding future development of your community. Some, such as school authorities, have specific interest in planning areas of land for their future needs and use as the community grows.

**Adjacent Municipalities and Indigenous Communities**

Neighbouring municipalities and adjacent or close by indigenous communities should be consulted. This ensures opportunity for the coordination of land use patterns and major infrastructure systems such as connecting roadways. It also allows sharing of perspectives on the nature of the economic, social, and cultural issues that the plan should take into account. For example, changing demographic trends in the nearby communities may have an impact on your community.

**Interest and Stakeholder Groups**

Organized groups may offer information and perspective about particular topics that are covered in the MDP. For example, conservation groups may be interested in the environmentally related policies. Developers and other groups may be interested in the planned future for a specific property. Economic development agencies may have information regarding future possibilities.

**Members of the Public**

The citizens of the community are interested in the outcome of the plan process and should be afforded ample opportunity to participate. Some may have ideas about the future of their own lands; others may have concerns about the environment being created for future residents. Citizen support for the direction coming out of the plan will be a crucial element in the successful implementation of the plan – it is their community.
Public Engagement in the Process

The process to create a municipal development plan must include opportunity to provide input as the plan is prepared, not simply react to a draft plan. This can take the form of notifying the general public, stakeholders, and referral agencies about the intent to prepare the plan, the process to be undertaken, and the ways they can participate.

The *Municipal Government Act* sets out the minimum legal requirements for the amount of public engagement to be used in preparing an MDP as:

- Opportunity for initial input while the plan is being prepared; and
- Participation in the public hearing to consider adoption of the plan.

Most communities will likely find these minimum levels insufficient to achieve the desired degree of consensus. The minimal level of engagement may also result in a plan and a process that may not be able to withstand criticism.

The amount of public engagement to be built into a process can vary. There are many techniques that can be employed to provide opportunities for participation. The challenge is finding and using the ones that will prove useful in your community. Your community’s public participation bylaw should give a starting point for the desired approach.

One of the common frustrations in this process is measuring the degree of actual participation by the public and citizens. The tendency is to score success or failure by the number of participants, rather than the significance and thoughtfulness of the collected input. It is important to remember that the municipality is required to provide meaningful, accessible opportunities for community participation and to communicate these opportunities to community members. It then falls on the individual community members to choose whether or not to make time in their schedules to participate and engage in the process. Anticipating low levels of participation is not a justification for not putting forward the effort. Different techniques may have to be tried.

Consultation is not only about informing individuals or groups where a meeting will be held. Be creative in terms of how you go about gathering ideas and input. Why not meet in a senior’s facility so that those individuals who may have challenges attending a meeting have the opportunity to share their wisdom? Why not set up a booth/table in the entrance to the local grocery store on a Saturday morning to hand out surveys and answer any questions? Could you meet a local class of school children to ask their opinion of what they see as desirable or necessary for the community? Remember, that it is likely that these children will be living with the benefits or consequences of the policy direction contained in the document as they grow up – their insights may prove invaluable.

Share the information provided and collected throughout the process; seek out opportunities for feedback or to “confirm what you heard”. More meaningful and creative opportunities for participation result in a better end product.

There are several toolkits available through the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities on public engagement tips and techniques. This section describes some of the most common approaches used in preparing a MDP.
Survey and Opinion Poll
Survey questionnaires can be useful in getting input on key issues and perspectives about the desired future of the community. In a small community with a population of less than 10,000 these surveys are rarely statistically accurate or reliable. For a limited number of straightforward questions (e.g. yes-no, circle preference) a properly structured survey can provide some general sense of the public view. Delivery of a survey can be through mail out, website, or hand out.

Website and Social Media
A project website or page can be used to keep your community up to date on the project and can be a means of gathering input. This can include:
- Interactive chat pages;
- Commenting through email; and
- Commenting through other social media methods such as Twitter or Facebook.

Open House
An open house is an informal event that allows for information using text, drawings, and visual aids, to be presented and for individual dialogue between a project team and members of the public. Static display boards summarizing key points of information are typically used. Open houses are run over a set period of time to allow participants to fit in attendance with their personal schedules.

Public Meeting
Public meetings are often used for two way information exchange between presenters and a large number of participants. A presentation is usually made at the beginning of the meeting. This is followed by a facilitated question or discussion period where all participants can hear answers to all questions and hear from their fellow community members, as well as the presenters.

Public Hearing
A public hearing and an open house/public meeting are not the same thing. A public hearing is a regulatory requirement and comes with a higher degree of formality. Presenters speak to Council, about their concerns about all or part of a proposed course of action. While a presentation about the plan or proposal is usually made, two way information exchange and discussion is limited. The process should follow your public hearing procedures bylaw.

Focus Group Session
A focus group session is a conversation with a small, invited group of participants. Participants are usually selected to achieve a cross section of the community members or based on their expertise in a particular area. Exchange of information through text, drawings and discussion, feedback on proposals and suggestions are collected through a facilitated conversation.

Workshop
A workshop is meant to solicit suggestions and ideas from participants to help craft the plan. It involves two way dialogues through general discussion, usually with a facilitator who directs small group and large group assignments. Workshops are commonly used to help create a vision statement and key planning principles.

Design Charrette
Similar to a workshop, a design charrette involves active participation and contribution by participants. The main difference is the emphasis on drawing as the technique to communicate ideas and suggestions such as options for future land use patterns.
Key Person Interview
This is a one to one conversation between a participant and a member of the project team. It can be based on the expertise and knowledge of the individual or a series of interviews can be conducted to obtain a cross section of community members. Interviews are typically scheduled around the needs and availability of the interviewee.
Sample Process to Create the Municipal Development Plan

This section outlines a sample process used to prepare a municipal development plan. The exact nature of the activities in each phase of the process should be based on the circumstances of the community being planned. For example, your community may favour open houses over public meetings. You may prefer a citizen led steering committee to guide the process, or you may utilize organized interest groups.

The basic linear phases presented below can be adjusted to reflect the process desired by your community. It assumes that you are starting with few existing studies, limited information, and little previous broad public discussion about the future of the community.

**Phase 1: Project Start Up**

Once resources such as a steering committee and planner/consultant have been arranged, the overall process to prepare the plan should be reviewed at an initial meeting. This ensures that both the steering committee leading the plan and the team working on the plan are familiar with the nature of the work and likely timing of events. It should involve a review of the terms of reference and discussion of logistical issues such as the availability of steering committee members for future meetings and venues for public participation events.

**Phase 2: Notice and Referrals**

Early in the process, the intent to prepare an MDP and the opportunities for participation should be broadly publicized. This can take the form of a public notice in a local paper and notice on a website. The intent is to alert the community about the planning process, the role and significance of the MDP, and their opportunities to participate. It should also invite sharing of any information that may be of interest relative to deciding the future of the community.

Written contact with referral agencies, other local authorities, and organized groups should also occur during this phase. A specific request for any relevant background materials should be included.

**Phase 3: Research and Analysis**

This is the review of available background information about the community, its surroundings and trends. This information is supported by field investigation and survey to establish an understanding of the existing physical setting and influences on future land use patterns.

Key aspects are summarized in a background report. This report may also contain the input and background materials received through Phase 2. This is then available to create a common base of understanding and discussion for the steering committee and other participants. A steering committee meeting to review the background report and identify, confirm and organize for the next steps in the process should be held.

**Phase 4: Information Sharing and Vision Setting**

Publication of the background information and sharing through an open house is undertaken to enable interested participants to become familiar with the issues that may influence the plan. This can be combined with a workshop where participants join the steering committee in setting out a future vision for the community. The workshop may also address goals for major topics such as housing, open space, etc. The key element at this stage is to determine...
what the community wishes to become based on an understanding of where they are currently.

Following the visioning workshop, a draft vision and set of principles and goals is written. A steering committee meeting should be held to review the draft materials and discuss the input received through the open house and workshop. This material guides the preparation of more detailed directions and policies in the draft plan.

**Phase 5: Plan Directions and Options**
Several potential plan outlines describing proposed policy directions and a set of land use concepts should be prepared for review and discussion with the steering committee. An evaluation of the options should be created to assist the committee.

An optional step at this phase is the hosting of an open house to solicit public input on the plan directions and available land use concept options. If held, a summary of the input should be reviewed by the Steering Committee to identify the preferred directions and land use pattern.

**Phase 6: Writing the Draft Plan**
The full plan document is prepared containing the vision, principles, goals, policies and land use concept. A steering committee meeting is held to review the draft and discuss desired revisions.

**Phase 7: Public Review of Draft Plan**
Notice that the draft plan is available for review by the public, referral agencies, local authorities, and all other interested participants is sent out. This may involve posting on the website, emailing copies, and having hardcopies available. An open house and/or public meeting are hosted to answer questions about the draft plan and receive input. All input is summarized and reviewed with the Steering Committee. Desired revisions are identified and the revised plan becomes the recommended or proposed plan to be forwarded to Council.

**Phase 8: Formal Consideration for Adoption**
An adopting bylaw for the MDP is prepared and placed before Council for first reading. The bylaw and the public hearing are advertised per the Municipal Government Act requirements (same as a Land Use Bylaw amendment). Formal referrals are sent to the adjacent municipality, government departments and other local authorities. Council hosts a public hearing on the bylaw and the proposed MDP prior to considering second and third readings and any amendments.

Given the significance of the MDP, a presentation at the public hearing should be made on behalf of the steering committee. This should outline the process used to create the plan and the major directions of the plan (e.g. future land use patterns). It should also outline any input from the final referral of the proposed plan.

If amendments are desired, the matters requiring more discussion should form the topic of a subsequent Council meeting. This allows for more considered thought about the nature and implications of possible revisions.

Following adoption, the approved document must be published on the municipality’s website.
## Linking Process Steps to Public Engagement Approaches

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The table above provides suggestions about where the various public engagement approaches can be used during the sample plan process. Many of the approaches can be adapted for information gathering and for two way dialogue on proposed direction to be taken in the new plan.
How Long Does Creating a Municipal Development Plan Take?

When setting a target timeline for creating the municipal development plan it is important to bear in mind other activities are underway at the same time. This means recognizing that participants and steering committee members have other commitments and demands on their time. The amount of time needed to prepare a good MDP for the first time typically spans 14 to 18 months.

Critical considerations in scheduling the process and target completion date should include:

- The community’s schedule. For example, regular or annual community events such as a farmers market, trade fairs or rodeos may provide key consultation opportunities;

- The community’s seasonal commitments and availability. For example, in rural farming communities, the demands of seeding and harvest may limit some communities and/or committee members’ ability to engage with the MDP process at particular times of the year;

- The impacts of holiday seasons. For example, during the Christmas season it may be difficult to schedule committee meetings and/or public events;

- The impact of vacation schedules. For example, scheduled Council meetings are often reduced over summer months, and ‘snowbird’ residents may leave the community for extended periods of time;

- The availability of background material, the length of time to collect information from other organizations and persons, and the time to summarize information collected;

- Sufficient time for participants to review materials, attend participation events, and provide their input. For example, allowing referral agencies, other local authorities, and community organizations 30 days to review and respond to materials;

- Sufficient time for steering committee members to review background and draft materials and have meaningful conversations about the possible implications for the community’s future (i.e. additional meetings may be needed); and

- Time for adequate notice and advertisement of public input and participation opportunities. For example, at least two weeks lead up time for an advertisement on an event. Participants should be given at least one additional week to provide written comments.
Information Needed for a Municipal Development Plan

In order to create a municipal development plan that meets the requirements of the Municipal Government Act, and that is also relevant to your community, it is important you take the time to gather the required information. Information may be obtained from several sources. So where do you start? This section describes useful tools, sources of information, methods of gathering information, and data interpretation hints to assist you in the process.

Why Does Background Information Matter?
While an MDP does not always have to identify minute technical details, (e.g. the size of a wastewater line), it does need to examine broad level information to determine what logical growth areas are available. For example, planning to grow in a direction that is not the most readily serviceable or that faces a major constraint like a sour gas well setback needs to be avoided. The background information should help to identify factors that may limit or alter the form or direction that growth can take.

Existing Population Statistics
An important step is gathering, reviewing, and interpreting current and historic population, employment, and housing statistics. Much of this information is available through Statistics Canada and Municipal Census records. This information will help identify and track population changes. You will be able to see or verify changes, which can help your municipality focus on how you would like to move forward into the future.

The review of trends should be based on long term information spanning the past 10 years. Key variables typically include total population, age ranges, household make up, gender, income, and sources of employment. The idea is to build snapshots of the population that reside in the community to then understand what their future needs may be or what future opportunities may develop.

Existing Studies and Background Documents
A review of past studies and reports from municipal records and referral agencies may provide useful information about how the community evolved to where it is today and what others thought of its future prospects and challenges. This may involve any materials pertaining to:
- Previous General Municipal Plans;
- Existing land uses and activities such as aggregate extraction, airport operations, soil and topographic conditions, etc.;
- The history of the community and its development;
- Changes in growth patterns (e.g. type and number of dwellings, pace of industrial land development);
- Changes in employment and similar economic indicators;
- Changes in population;
- Trends in property assessment base changes;
- The number of business licenses issued yearly;
- The number of development permits issued and types of development
- Infrastructure studies, as-built records and master plans; and
- Changes in school enrolment.

Field Survey
A field survey to understand the physical surroundings and setting of the community is a critical step. It gives you an understanding of the land base that is available to accommodate future uses. It
also confirms the presence and nature of any features or activities that may pose a constraint (e.g. sour gas well) or create an opportunity (e.g. permanent open space area) for the future evolution of the community. The field survey should be supported by aerial photographs and site photos. Much of the information collected should be communicated on the significant features map(s).

Key Person Interviews
There may be information the municipality is unable to find in document form. Information may be found through human sources such as long term staff and council members. In addition, local residents and business owners may be able to provide missing information through personal knowledge. Accessing this knowledge may be achieved through interviews and/or a public survey. Other sources include the five year capital plan and municipal asset management records.

SWOT Analysis
Undertaking a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) analysis may assist your community in determining areas of potential growth or decline as well as confirming successes. The process of undertaking a SWOT analysis is as varied as the municipality and can include a public and/or Council strategic planning session and/or a public survey/questionnaire through various media and/or engagement methods. Key planning areas to review in undertaking a SWOT analysis include land uses, community facilities, utilities, streets and transportation, recreation and parks, as well as industrial development issues.

Community Scan and Community Mapping
Similar to the field survey, a community scan of the existing development and activity can provide useful information. This can include such things as existing land use patterns, sites of historical interest and the location of community facilities and services. An offshoot of this is a community mapping exercise where members of the community are invited to mark areas of interest, value or concern directly on a map.

Population Projections
A useful tool to help municipalities plan for future growth is through producing population projections. Many communities project population growth through three scenarios (low, moderate, high) growth. This data aids in setting residential densities and the mix of housing types the municipality would like to encourage, (such as single detached, semi-detached, row housing, duplexes, or apartments), including both owner occupied and rental units. Reviewing historic population trends may assist in targeting the most likely growth scenario. In reality, many smaller communities are experiencing population decline. In this instance, the municipality may focus on the low growth scenario or promote economic diversification and/or enhance liveability for existing residents.

Economic Status or Base Analysis
By reviewing changes, (growth or declining trends), along with other community/economic indicators such as the strength of the economy, changes in industry, residential vacancy, and development activity, a snapshot picture can be formed. Once the municipality has a better understanding of what they are doing, policies can be developed to encourage growth or mitigate change. Developing policies is one component of addressing these challenges.

More detailed follow up studies can be recommended to obtain a better understanding of how to promote a community and encourage growth.
Data Interpretation
After compiling the background information, the next step is interpreting the data. Reviewing how your community has grown or shrunk, what industries have come and gone or continue to thrive, or identifying recreation and cultural activities that have come and gone. To determine how healthy your community may be, review your financial health by examining what amenities you may have including physical infrastructure such as a library and an arena. These are positive indicators of a healthy community. For example, is your municipality shrinking? Do you need to promote residential diversification to retain the existing population? Undertake succession planning to retain existing businesses? Encourage commercial or industrial diversification to attract investment? Are policies needed to continue to enjoy a high “quality of life” or limit further decline?

What if You Do Not Have Detailed Studies?
Ideally, the process to create an MDP starts with a series of comprehensive and detailed studies involving existing land use statistics and a general land inventory within the municipality. This is not always going to be the case. Additionally, conducting primary data collection, in a way that creates meaningful results, can be time consuming and expensive. This means the MDP may have to move ahead with the best information available at the time. Future studies, like a new infrastructure master plan, may simultaneously rely on the MDP to understand the community’s desired future and confirm the challenges in getting there.
In the case of preparing a municipal development plan for the first time, the “challenge/opportunity” in Stage 1 of the general planning process can be described as the need to envision a plan for the desired future of the community.

The MDP is the product of the process, and the goals of the project are often used to state the “challenge.” For example, a goal for the plan may be to describe the desired land use patterns within the community at a point 20–30 years into the future. Over the course of the 20-30 year period the MDP may be written, amended, and updated several times.

A “terms of reference” is a written outline that guides a community through a project or a process. It identifies the main goals of the project and the activities that will be undertaken to reach these goals. It helps participants understand what is expected as a final outcome, the order of activities to get to the outcome, and the likely timing. It also helps make decisions about the resources needed to complete the process.

Creating the “terms of reference” is where the process to prepare a municipal development plan is crafted. In defining the “challenge/opportunity”, it identifies the matters that must be addressed and the nature of the desired process. It can be a valuable resource before and during the process.

Key questions that should be addressed include:

- Who will lead the process? Will Council form the Steering Committee or will a group of at-large volunteers lead?
- What is the nature and level of desired public participation? Are there approaches that have been successful in the past? Are new approaches needed?
- What information is available to inform the process? What is our starting point in terms of existing studies and background information?
- What resources are available to help us go through the process? What is our desired or likely timeline?

The CAO, municipal planner and/or planning consultant should take a lead role in the initial crafting of the terms of reference. This can then be used to obtain Council support for the proposed process and the identification of the needed resources to undertake the project.

Three things that you should look for in a consultant are:

- Knowledge about the Alberta planning system and public engagement techniques;
- Previous experience in completing MDPs or similar plans in Alberta; and
- Project management skills and ability to guide the process from start to finish.

Other resources for building a process to create a MDP may be available from:
• Alberta Municipal Affairs – Planning Advisors;

• Regional planning service agencies; and

• Alberta Professional Planners Institute (APPI).
How to Implement the Municipal Development Plan

A common concern is that having an approved plan will bind and commit future Councils to a course of action. The Council who is creating the municipal development plan for the first time is responsible for a very significant “project”, being the development of a community which has been underway for decades. While it is their turn at the helm, it falls to the Council of the day to guide the community in a responsible direction using their best judgement.

Concerns about implementation and level of commitment to the plan can result in a desire to “water down” the policies, which in turn weakens the plan. This section discusses some key aspects pertaining to implementing your MDP that may make the commitment to a well thought out plan easier to bear and work with over time. It is up to you and community members to make the plan work the best it can for your community.

Conceptual Plan
The MDP is a statutory document that contains a land use concept. This means many of its directions and policies may afford a degree of latitude in how they are applied. It also means that the level of detail in the MDP may have to defer to more current and more accurate information that may be provided through a specific site plan, subdivision design, or area structure plan.

In terms of financial commitment, the Municipal Government Act expressly states that a municipality is not obligated to undertake a project described in the MDP. This acknowledges that priority for the use of limited resources, especially available funding, needs to be flexible. Effectively, Council makes the decisions regarding investments to advance the vision or goals identified in the MDP on shorter, 3-5 year time spans. This consideration is made in light of the other priorities facing the community.

Make the MDP a Living Document
The success of your MDP is ultimately a measure of the efforts made to implement the policies and directions. You can wait for someone else to initiate a change and then have a framework to respond with, (which is how private land development occurs and how development control works). You can also undertake initiatives as a municipality or in partnership with others, (like a park redevelopment proposal or joint community marketing efforts). It is very likely your MDP will contain both approaches.

Periodically, look at the MDP and identify follow up actions for each year. This includes your annual capital projects and annual operating budget. An MDP is not considered a static document, but a living, statutory document and should be referenced in current land use planning decision making, such as reviewing development applications. Like your other plans, the MDP should be available for public reference (e.g. website and hard copy at the office counter).

Review and Update
An MDP should be revised and updated to keep it relevant. The process for keeping an MDP current is through either a bylaw amendment or the review and rewriting or the entire document, (which must also be done by bylaw). It is recommended that a municipality review and/or update the MDP approximately every 5 - 10 years to keep it current with emerging trends, land use changes affecting the municipality, or changes in Provincial legislation. Amendments can be made but remember to keep all of
your adopted plans consistent with one another.

**It's About Managing Change**
Amendments outside of a scheduled review can be made but should be done in a thoughtful manner. The MDP gives the framework to understand the implications of changes to land use patterns and policies. Just like the original preparation, the right questions have to be asked when processing amendments to ensure the MDP continues to achieve the vision desired by the community.

**Long Term Focus**
An MDP is about the long term. The MDP horizon of 20 - 30 years seems like a long time for an individual but not in terms of the life of the community that is likely already more than 100 years old. It is important to remember that achieving your 20 - 30 year vision/goals does not have to happen overnight. Start with a few steps and when successfully completed, move on to others.
Parkland Community Planning Services (PCPS), Oldman River Regional Services Commission (ORRSC), West Central Planning Agency (WCPA), Mackenzie Municipal Services Agency (MMSA) and Palliser Regional Municipal Services (PRMS) are regional planning service providers in Alberta.

The agencies evolved from the regional planning commissions originally created by the Province of Alberta. In 1995, when regional planning commissions ceased operations, a number of municipalities created their own shared planning departments. The five agencies are all owned and operated by their member municipalities.
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Introduction and Purpose

This section provides a set of sample Municipal Development Plans (MDP) for a variety of municipalities. It includes samples for small urban communities, a summer village and rural municipality. The set of samples represent the best management practices discussed previously regarding the content and general structure of a MDP. The intent is to demonstrate what an MDP for a small municipality can look like and the variety of approaches that can be used to customize a MDP to meet the unique needs, circumstances and preferences of your community.

While the names of each sample MDP are fictitious, each document is loosely based on an existing place in Alberta. The content is drawn from real communities’ experiences. It is representative of the types of information and approaches that have been used throughout small town and rural Alberta.

There is no one size fits all solution for preparing an MDP. The process to create the plan and the resulting document should be unique thereby reflecting the community’s character and identity. That said, it remains possible to learn from the experience of others who may be experiencing similar issues and opportunities while planning for their communities. The sample MDPs can be used to create a checklist of the items and general structure you would like to see in your MDP. Additionally, the policies in the sample MDPs may have application in your community but the precise wording and intent should be adjusted to reflect your situation.

Things to Look For in the Sample MDPs

When reviewing the sample MDPs, particular note should be made of the following:

- Different approaches to mapping and how they are used to communicate key points of information and future direction. This includes the way the relevant text policies support the map direction and vice versa.

- Responses to current trends and circumstances (population that is growing slowly, barely any population growth or holding own, declining population).

- Who each plan treats as the primary “actor” or party expected to follow through on the policies.

- Use of a future land use concept addressing all lands within the current jurisdiction – not just areas that have not been built on or transformed from agricultural use – to communicate future compatibilities and areas to accommodate types of activity.

- Use of a glossary for key planning terms and concepts.

- Language and structure of individual policy statements (e.g. strongly worded or phrased as a suggested approach).

- Relation between goals, objectives, and policies and the different writing style for each type of statement. This includes the option of favouring the use of goals or objectives only before moving on to policy statements.
• The structure, contents and lengths of vision statements.

• Document layout and order of presentation of materials and overall flow for the reader.

• Use of graphics and tables to convey key points of information and add visual interest.

• Level of detail for various policies and direction for various parcels of land, and degree of guidance for a future decision maker working with the document.

• Emphasis on key pieces of information and how they have been used to set the context for future users of the document.

• Linkages to existing or future policy documents and plans that form part of the municipality’s overall planning system.

• Record of planning process used and community engagement in creating the plan.

• Relation to municipal capital budget process and ongoing operations relating to services and maintenance of infrastructure.

• Use of more detailed plans, such as area structure plans, area redevelopment plans and master plans, to fill in more detail than is afforded in the higher level MDP.

• Relation to the current or a future intermunicipal development plan in terms of principles and protocols for cooperation and referring planning items for review and comment.

• Relation to asset management and directing new growth to make the greatest use of the investment in existing infrastructure.

Additional Points to Consider

Some of the samples are based on communities that are facing very slow growth of population or decline in population. Population growth, while the most obvious and most often discussed form of growth, is not the only metric of change and development within a community. Use of property and buildings continue to evolve even where population levels remain constant over many years. The MDP is about managing change over time. Further, if your community does not like the current trend line that it appears to be on (e.g. population decline), the MDP may be one of the first steps you take in changing that direction. If you do not like where you are headed, then start the process to change course.
Sample A: MDP for a Village of 500

Village of Karen
Municipal Development Plan
Sample MDP Village of Karen

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PART 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Municipal Development Plan is the primary planning policy document for local governments in the Province of Alberta. The Municipal Development Plan provides direction for future change, growth and development within the Village of Karen. This plan is the Village of Karen’s first Municipal Development Plan.

The preparation of the Municipal Development Plan has been motivated by a number of factors:

- The Village of Karen has not developed a Municipal Development Plan since the Municipal Government Act was updated in 1995.
- The Village has undergone a number of Area Structure Plan and Land Use Bylaw amendments without a Municipal Development Plan to provide strategic direction.
- The local economy has declined, which may bring differing challenges to land use within the Village.

1.1 Purpose of the Plan and Enabling Legislation

A Municipal Development Plan (MDP) provides clear direction for the Village of Karen’s Council and Administration. The Plan is intended to guide change and development in the Village by defining the vision, principles, goals, and policies of the Village regarding planning matters; minimizing the occurrence of incompatible land uses; providing support and direction for the administration of the Land Use Bylaw, and the preparation of other statutory planning documents.

The Village will be flexible in terms of the implementation of the Plan, and where the “spirit and intent” of the Plan is not compromised, formal amendments to the Plan will not be required. When an amendment to the Plan is required, it shall be carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Government Act.

In this MDP, all words and expressions shall have the meaning assigned to them in the Municipal Government Act, the Village of Karen Land Use Bylaw and commonly-held definitions. For reference purposes and clarity, a glossary of terms is included in the Appendices.

The Municipal Development Plan, in addition to applicable Provincial legislation, will:
- provide the necessary direction to assist Council, the Development Officer, and the Subdivision and Development Appeal Board in making land use decisions;
- provide a foundation for the preparation of more detailed land use plans;
- be used in conjunction with the Village’s Land Use Bylaw to implement the policies of this MDP; and
- inform residents and developers of the Village’s future land use strategy.

The MDP includes a community vision for the Village. It outlines the anticipated form and character of its neighbourhoods. The MDP informs residents, developers, and investors about what type of development is desired and identifies the preferred locations.
This Municipal Development Plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Section 632 of the Municipal Government Act and upon adoption will become a statutory document. The legal framework and process for Council to adopt an MDP is established in the Municipal Government Act. As MDPs are municipal bylaws, they are legal documents. If Council wishes to allow development that contravenes the MDP, Council must first amend the MDP through a process that will provide opportunities for public input.

In accordance with the Municipal Government Act, the MDP must address:
- future land use,
- proposals for future development,
- co-ordination with adjacent municipalities,
- transportation,
- municipal services and facilities,
- school and municipal reserves,
- protection of agricultural operations,
- land uses adjacent to sour gas facilities.

In addition, the Municipal Government Act allows the MDP to address a number of other considerations which this MDP will consider as necessary for the Village of Karen. These include
- coordination of physical, social, and economic development;
- environmental matters;
- conservation matters;
- development constraints;
- economic development;
- financing and programming of municipal infrastructure;
- financial resources.

1.2 Interpretation

When interpreting the policy statements within this Municipal Development Plan document, the document should be read in its entirety to provide context. Policies are written using “shall”, “should”, or “may” statements. The interpretations of “shall”, “should”, and “may” that follow may provide the reader with a greater understanding of the intent of each policy statement:

- Shall/Will/Must – denotes compliance or adherence to a preferred course of action.
- Should – denotes compliance is desired or advised but may be impractical or premature because of valid planning principles or unique/extenuating circumstances.
- May – denotes discretionary compliance or a choice in applying policy.

1.3 Location and Site Conditions

The Village of Karen is located in northern Alberta. The Village is located adjacent to Highway No. 2, near Tranquil Lake, and is approximately 400 km northwest of Edmonton.
Highway No. 7 travels in a north-south direction through the Village providing links to neighbouring communities. The 2016 Census population was 384. Although the Village is physically located within Northwest County, it is politically and administratively separate from the County. Highway No. 2 lies adjacent to the Village and is considered the primary transportation route to the area. Its close proximity to Highway No. 2 also provides the Village with the potential to capitalize on the throughway traffic the corridor brings to the community.

Karen is primarily zoned as general residential and industrial; however the Village does make provisions for agricultural and commercial activity as well. In planning context the Village’s commercial and business activity is located along Main Street. The new MDP will continue to recognize the importance of Karen’s existing commercial district; however it will also explore new areas of opportunity and growth.

1.4 Community History

The Village’s history dates back to the early 20th century, when the area was surveyed for homesteads in 1927. The majority of the settlers that arrived in the area were farming families moving north. For locals, this meant easier access to neighbouring communities. As soon as the hamlet was fully established it was proposed that the new community be called Karen, named after the first postmaster.

In Karen’s early years church buildings became a fixture in the local community. The first church in Karen was located in a pool hall until more conventional buildings were erected. By the 1920’s there were three churches located in the Village, illustrating the different dominations that were residing in the area. Other notable structures that have contributed to the Village’s past include the Karen W.I. Hospital and the Bank of Nova Scotia; both institutes have had a profound impact on the way Karen developed over the years. The Bank of Nova Scotia opened in 1925 as a sub-branch and eventually evolved into full status in May of 1929. The bank provided day to day banking service to the locals and was a good source of employment for the Village. In 1932 the original building was judged beyond repair and replaced by a building that was originally erected in Waterhole, Alberta but placed in Karen.

This MDP acknowledges Karen’s rich history. It is the sites and events of the past that have created the culture that we see today. It is with the best intentions that this MDP respects the heritage of Karen and preserves the unique environment that has made it what it is today. The Hamlet of Karen incorporated into a Village in 1947.

1.5 Social, Health and Community Services

Karen is a progressive community that offers a wide selection of services. Local organizations and clubs include the Women’s Institute (W.I.), Agricultural Society, Arts & Crafts Club and the Golden Age Club. For recreational purposes the Village offers camping opportunities adjacent to Edge Park. Other recreational facilities include the Arena, Elks Community Centre and the Legion Hall.

Karen is serviced by the Northwest District Community Health Centre. It is a continuing care facility offering 24 hour emergency care, includes 30 acute care beds, a laboratory,
Sample MDP Village of Karen

and radiology services. Seniors housing is available at the Northwest Lodge and Villa (self-contained units) operated by the Northwest Regional Housing Foundation.

1.6 Planning History

Prior to the updating of this MDP the Village of Karen has been actively engaged in a number of land use and planning initiatives. A majority of the work originates from the Village’s membership with local Municipal Planning Agency, and has resulted in several planning documents. The following studies have been completed by the Village, to date.

1) Population Analysis (2005)

2) Land Use Bylaw

As a member of the local Municipal Planning Agency, Karen’s administration and staff recognizes the need to complete a comprehensive review of the existing planning framework for the Village of Karen, starting with the Municipal Development Plan. It is the intent of Council and administration to adopt the Municipal Development Plan and proceed with the review and rewrite of the Land Use Bylaw. In keeping with good planning practices the local Municipal Planning Agency will ensure all statutory documents comply with current provincial legislation.

1.7 Planning Context

Planning Area

All lands lying within the corporate boundary of the Village of Karen at the time of the enactment of this MDP are considered the planning area. The MDP has also identified lands for future expansion under the Urban Reserve designation.

Alberta Land Use Policies

In 1996, the Alberta Government released its Land Use Policies. All municipalities must implement these policies while undertaking their planning responsibilities. These policies provide direction for the municipality to address general and specific land use planning issues. The Village of Karen will ensure that the vision, goals, and policies of the MDP are consistent with the Land Use Policies.

Land Use Framework

The Province of Alberta is currently in the process of developing seven regional plans with two completed thus far (Lower Athabasca Regional Plan and the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan). The seven regions are congruent with the province’s major watersheds and are aligned with municipal boundaries. The development of the Upper Peace Regional Plan, which will include the Village of Karen, has not yet begun.

Intermunicipal Development Plan

The Village does not currently have an Intermunicipal Development Plan with the adjacent municipality, but will be required to develop and adopt one, as required under the new Municipal Government Act.
Land Use Bylaw No. 01-2010
As required by the Municipal Government Act, the Village of Karen has adopted a Land Use Bylaw that regulates the use and development of all lands within the municipality. Karen’s Land Use Bylaw was updated in 2010. The Land Use Bylaw may be updated subsequent to the completion of this MDP to reflect the policy direction therein. The Land Use Bylaw is a key implementation tool of the Municipal Development Plan.

East Industrial Area Structure Plan Bylaw No. 02-2009
The East Industrial ASP intends to guide the efficient and orderly development of agri-business and light industrial uses adjacent to Highway No. 7. The purpose of the agri-business/light industrial park is to set aside land for Industrial uses.

Westmount Residential Area Structure Plan Bylaw No. 01-2010
The Westmount Residential ASP intends to guide the efficient and orderly development of residential uses in the Village.

1.8 Community Profile

Land Base
The Village of Karen has a land area of 3.17 square kilometres (316.49 ha). Currently, 170.24 ha (approximately 54% of lands within the Village boundary) are undeveloped and designated as Urban Reserve lands by the Land Use Bylaw. Land within the Village boundaries are either privately owned or publicly owned by the Village.

Table 1: Land Use Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>Net Area (ha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>29.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>12.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational</td>
<td>12.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>12.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Lands</td>
<td>77.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Reserve</td>
<td>3.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>146.24</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Reserve</td>
<td>170.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>316.49</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Past growth in the community has largely focused on single family homes and duplexes in the residential districts. There are vacant lands within the Village of Karen under planning consideration through a couple of existing Area Structure Plans; the Westmount Residential ASP and the East Industrial ASP. Additional new development has primarily focused on infill within existing neighbourhoods.

Transportation
The Village has a total of 8.7 km (5.4 mi) of municipal roads. The Village’s road system is connected to Highway No. 2 through Main Street. This configuration allows for good access into the Village. The outer roads also provide access to the industrial lands at the north end of the Village, allowing the majority of industrial traffic to remain out of the Village centre. Within the Village, much of the road system is based upon a traditional ‘grid’ pattern.
An arterial road provides access to larger commercial lots south of the old railway lands near the northwest side of the Village, while access to the majority of the Village’s commercial lots is along Main Street (Highway No. 7).

**Utilities**

The Village’s treated water is supplied by the Regional Water Commission which also serves other local Villages and municipalities as members of the Water Co-op. The treatment facility draws water from Tranquil Lake and has two reservoirs; one for raw water located near the draw area and another one for treated water adjacent to the water treatment plant located in the southeast area of the Village. The storage capacity of the treated water reservoir is 750 cubic metres and maximum daily capacity of water that can be treated by the facility is 1500 m³/day. The average daily use of water for the region in 2014 was 350m³/day and the maximum for 2014 was 700m³/day. The treatment facility was upgraded in January and July of 2015. The Village has 10.6 km (6.6 mi) of water mains and 10.4 km (6.5 mi) of wastewater mains.

The sewage lagoon, located along Main Street, at the south end of the Village, can serve a population of up to 1,200 within the village limits. The existing lift station has capacity to handle anticipated sewage flows within the gravity basin limits. Storm water management is still primarily through a network of curbs and gutters leading to open ditches.

The Village provides curb side residential recycling and garbage collection to its residents. Drop-off recycling bins located on the west side of the Village are provided by the Northwest County.

**Figure 1: Drop-off recycle bins**

![Drop-off recycle bins](image)

**Fire Services**

Fire protection services in the Village are provided by the Regional Fire Department. The fire department consists of a full time regional fire chief and trained volunteer firefighters.

**Housing**

The Village currently contains a variety of housing types ranging from manufactured homes to single detached residential units. The majority of dwellings (75 of 120 dwelling units) are single-detached houses (Karen Municipal Count). Northwest Housing provides housing options to low and moderate income households in the Village, including family housing units, seniors’ apartments, and a senior’s lodge, Northwest Lodge.
Table 2: Total Number of Occupied Dwellings by Structural Type (Karen Municipal Count)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dwelling Type</th>
<th># of units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single-detached house</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movable dwelling</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row house</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>120</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Community Resources

The Village has a number of recreational resources available to its residents. The Village Recreation Complex includes an ice rink and meeting space. Community baseball diamonds and a walking path travel through the community and adjacent to the lake. There is also a passive recreation field adjacent to the Highlands school, as well as a playground adjacent to Tranquil Lake, as part of Lake Front Park.

Residents and visitors have access to meeting facilities in the school and library.

The Women’s Institute Library operates as part of the Northwest Library System, a regional branch that provides library services to residents in the Village and Northwest County.

1.9 Population Trend and Growth

Table 3: Population Growth

Table 3 shows that Karen has experienced small fluctuations in its growth patterns from 1991 to 2016. The last census count conducted for the Village was through the federal census. It revealed that the Village population increased at a rate of 0.86 from 1991 to 1996, but has steadily declined from 1996 to 2016, with a decrease in the population from 2011 to 2016 of 1.1%. The pattern of decline may be based on a number of factors.
including the consolidation of farms, the impact of a decline in oil and gas prices and a loss of many jobs in the area, as well as young people moving to larger centres for education and job opportunities.

The same theory can be applied when observing the Village’s different age cohorts. See Graph 1 for the Village’s age cohorts.

**Graph 1: Population by Gender and Age**

![Population by Gender and Age](image)

According to the above graph, people aged 10-14 and 50-54 for males and 55-59 for females represent the largest cohort in the Village of Karen. Based on this information, several assumptions can be drawn.

1) Over the next 10 to 15 years the largest cohorts in the Village will be beginning to retire.

2) The small portion of people 20-24 indicates that young adults are emigrating out of the Village in pursuit of education and employment opportunities.

With an aging population it is imperative that young adults are encouraged to stay; however, this can only be achieved by creating an environment that draws young professionals back to the Village.

The Village has experienced both a low population growth as well as a negative population growth. Considering the continuing decline in the population, the negative population projection will be the focus of the Village’s Municipal Development Plan.
1.10 Local Economic Indicator

Economic stability can be achieved by focusing on retaining the existing economic base, including essential services needed by the Village and the surrounding County.

The economy has experienced decline with the removal of the railroad in 1995, along with the consolidation of numerous family farms. As of September 2017 there are twenty-two businesses operating in the Village, providing services to residents and the surrounding agricultural land uses. The Village’s largest employment sector is the Trade, Transport and Equipment Operation and Related Occupations, followed by Processing, Manufacturing and Utilities sector occupations; Sales & Service Occupations; Recreation and Sport occupations; and Business, Finance & Administration. The Village lacks employment in the Arts and Culture sector.

To study the current economic market, the Village will encourage the local chamber of commerce to engage with the local community through the development of a Market Study. Involving local residents in local business initiatives could help build existing businesses as well as provide input into where there are gaps in services, as well as help focus marketing initiatives. The Village will also encourage the local chamber of commerce to work with the Regional Economic Development Board to ensure the Village’s needs and priorities are included regionally, as well as being aware of Regional Economic Initiatives.

1.11 Population Projection

The population projections shown in Graph 2 are based on historical growth patterns. These projections are dependent on external variables such as economic cycles and political conditions. The projections should not be taken as absolute values but as estimates.

The population projection for the Village of Karen was calculated using a standard linear formula that took into account population change over various census periods and was based on a 25 year time horizon. Table 4 provides 3 growth scenarios that were based on past population changes.

1) The High Growth Scenario of 0.86% annual growth rate is based on the population growth between 1991 and 1996. The Village experienced an increase in its population. Future growth of this nature may coincide with an increase in the resource sector and the desire to live in a smaller community.

2) The Moderate Growth Scenario of 0.38% annual growth rate is based on the average provincial growth rate from the 2016 Census.

3) The Negative Growth Scenario of -1.1% annual growth rate is based on the population change that was observed between 2011 and 2016.
Table 4: Growth Scenarios

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>HIGH GROWTH SCENARIO (0.86% Annual Growth)</th>
<th>MODERATE GROWTH SCENARIO (0.38% Annual Growth)</th>
<th>NEGATIVE GROWTH SCENARIO (-1.1% Annual Growth)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>387</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2026</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>387</td>
<td>382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2031</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2036</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>380</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: This population projection is calculated based on the Standard Component Projection. Calculations are derived from 2016 as the base year.

Statistics Canada Census 2016

Graph 2: Population Projection

For the purpose of this Municipal Development Plan, all policies pertaining to this MDP will be based on the assumption that the Village of Karen will have an average annual negative growth rate of -1.1% over the next 25 years. While it remains difficult to determine the most accurate growth scenario, a negative growth rate is the most relevant growth trend, based on the prominent population trend in the Village.
A negative population projection for Karen would coincide with several factors, including but not limited to, emigration of young people, an ageing population, and weak economy, particularly in the agricultural and, oil and gas sectors.

### 1.12 Development Constraints

There are a number of natural and man-made features that impact change and growth patterns in the Village of Karen.

**Conflicts between Current Land Uses and the Land Use Bylaw**
The Land Use Bylaw regulates development within the Village. Existing development that does not conform to the bylaw is legally existing non-conforming development (Section 643 of the *Municipal Government Act*).

Early settlement patterns and changing regulations within the Village have resulted in a number of non-conforming land uses. Predominantly the conflicts are residential uses in commercial or industrial districts of the Village. Within the industrial area, this includes three multi-acre lots with a lot size more consistent for country residential development in a rural setting.

**Tranquil Lake**
Tranquil lake, located in the east part of the Village provides local recreational opportunities for the Village and surrounding residents including fishing and passive recreation uses.

**Highway No. 2**
Highway No. 2 is the main transportation corridor in the Region, bringing goods and services to the community and surrounding service area.

**Sanitary Sewer System**
The current sanitary sewage lagoon is fed through a force main from the lift station located in the mid part of the Village. The gravity system is sufficient to meet the needs of the majority of the existing built up Village site. However, future expansion westward would require the installation of another lift station, which presents a significant additional cost to the Village.

**Non-operating Landfill**
Historically, a municipal landfill was located in the southeast area of the Village. Under the Subdivision and Development Regulation, development of a school, hospital, food establishment, or residence may be constructed within 300 metres of a non-operating landfill.

**Overland Flooding**
Due to landscape elevation changes, the east side of the village is more susceptible to overland flooding that is caused by storm water back up during spring run-off or after a heavy rainfall event. This issue impacts existing residential neighbourhoods, in particular houses nearby Edge Park.
1.13 Planning Process

The planning process describes how the Village of Karen Municipal Development Plan was created. The MDP aims to build consensus around how the community chooses to change. The Village included a public engagement process in drafting the MDP. Incorporating public input helps build consensus around major topic areas and strengthens the final product adopted by Council. The following process was used in the development of the Village of Karen MDP.

Stage 1 March-June 2016, Background Review: This stage involved the gathering of background information and the development of a Steering Committee. The role of the Committee was to assist the planner throughout the planning process by providing direction and guidance. The Steering Committee ensured the MDP was a reflection of the public’s concerns, thoughts, and ideas.

Stage 2 July-August 2016, Strategic Planning Session: This stage involved a visioning session and a Strength Weakness Opportunity Threat (S.W.O.T.) Analysis with the Steering Committee. The outcomes of both events helped define the Village’s Vision and Goals. In addition, a survey questionnaire was distributed to Village residents at the Karen Anniversary Celebration in August.

Stage 3 September-October 2016, Public Feedback “What we heard” and Youth Engagement: During this period the results of the questionnaire were summarized and shared with Village residents, and an alternate questionnaire was distributed to residents living within a 1.6 km (1 mi) radius of the Village. The Village also conducted a youth walking tour and engagement session with students from Highlands School.

Stage 4 November-December 2016, Draft Document: The MDP was drafted and reviewed by the Steering Committee.

Stage 5 January 2017, Input period: An open house was held for public feedback, and the draft MDP was also circulated to outside agencies for comments, as required by the Municipal Government Act.

Stage 6 February 2017, Completion Phase: The draft MDP was revised based on public feedback and was presented to the Village Council. After 1st reading, a public hearing was held, followed by 2nd and 3rd reading before the final adoption of the MDP.
1.14 Youth Walking Tour

It was considered desirable to include youth input in the MDP. Youth involvement is important to this process as it provides insight into what may keep youth in the community. To achieve this objective, Village staff and several members of Council led a youth walking tour with students from Highlands School.

Students were given a map of the Village illustrating the route of the walking tour. With guidance from the planner, teacher, Village staff and Council, students were asked to identify areas of concern, interest, opportunities and constraints using the map provided to them.

Key findings included:

- The Village is lacking in activities for them, they would like to see more activities and places such as a waterpark or swimming pool, a theatre, café, mini golf, a restaurant, a paintball course, a golf course, laser tag, clothing and/or retail stores, an ice cream parlour, an arcade, festivals and dance places.

- Youth would like to see more commercial businesses while simultaneously retaining a “small Village” feel.

- Concerns were raised regarding accessibility and the aesthetic appeal of the Village. The paving of sidewalks and roadways were identified as in need of repair.
PART 2.0  DIRECTION

2.1 Guiding Principles

Through community engagement activities and the MDP steering committee meetings, key themes and values important to the residents of the Village emerged. They are the basis for addressing the questions ‘who we are’ and ‘what we believe in’ as a community. These principles will be used to enhance the quality of decision-making, prioritize actions and evaluate programs and policy decisions.

Principle 1 - Embrace the Community
The Village residents value their small community and the relationships they have with their neighbours. Development, land use, and transportation policies serve to maintain the small Village feel of Karen.

Principle 2 – An 8 to 80 Community
The Village aims to build a community with a strong social fabric that bridges generational divides. The Village will build on the principle of providing residents of all ages access to social and recreational activities and spaces that create an active, creative, and connected community.

Principle 3 – An Informed and Engaged Community
The Village aims to provide responsible, transparent, and well-informed decision-making to its citizens. The Village will facilitate residents’ participation in all aspects of the community’s social life, acting as a communication hub for the community, with strong municipal communication practices.

Principle 4 – A Bilingual Community
Karen is a bilingual English/First Nations community which nurtures and honours its heritage.

Principle 5 - A Culture of Recreation and Leisure Activity
The Village values the contribution of open spaces, parks, cultural and artistic events, and recreational opportunities to the quality of life of its residents. The Village of Karen residents enjoy a variety of recreational pursuits. The Village facilitates year-round outdoor and indoor recreation programs, and will work with local artists and groups to develop more arts and cultural programming.

Principle 6 – An Affordable Community
The Village will encourage diversity in housing types and sizes to ensure that residents have a variety of housing options throughout their lifecycle. The Village will work to ensure that its residents have access to quality public and health services, and education.

Principle 7 – A Resilient Economy
Karen encourages the local chamber of commerce to work with local businesses to sustain the current economy, as well as attract additional businesses to fill in gaps. A Succession plan for existing businesses will help sustain current businesses.
**Principle 8 - A Liveable Community**
Karen aims to create and maintain a safe, clean, healthy, and beautiful community. Infrastructure (re)investments in the Village’s physical systems will work with nature to maximize effectiveness and minimize costs.

**2.2 Vision**

The vision of the Village of Karen is to develop in an orderly and efficient manner that is environmentally sustainable and economically viable for future generations.

**2.3 Goal**

The Village of Karen values its residents and businesses, sustaining social and recreational activities for future generations.
PART 3.0 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

3.1 Plans, Subdivision and Development Management

The purpose of this section is to outline policies that apply to subdivisions and developments regardless of location or land use.

Objectives

1. Encourage new development that contributes to a small community feel.
2. Ensure that new development supports the efficient use of Village infrastructure and services.
3. Identify locations for new development.
4. Maintain a separation of incompatible land uses.
5. Establish criteria for the preparation of more detailed plans.
6. Define developer responsibilities.
7. Identify requirements that apply to all development.

Policies

3.1.1 General

a. Changes in land use, and future subdivision and development shall be consistent with the Future Land Use Map.
b. Development or subdivision on undeveloped and unserviced land should be preceded by an approved Area Structure Plan (ASP).
c. Area structure plans shall be consistent with the Village of Karen’s Area Structure Plan Guidelines. AI
   i. All ASPs shall include a storm water management plan.
d. The Village shall only encourage subdivision and development of urban reserve lands when those lands are required for urban development.

3.1.2 Developer Responsibility

a. The Village should amend the Land Use Bylaw to ensure that developers may be required to enter into a Development Agreement with the Village in accordance with Section 650 of the Municipal Government Act. AI

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1 Denotes an ‘Action Item’ that requires further work on the part of the Village of Karen
Sample MDP Village of Karen

3.1.3 Subdivision Design

a. New neighbourhoods should integrate existing natural features, including, but not limited to, wetlands, watercourses, and stands of trees into the design where possible.

b. New neighbourhoods should require adequate parks and open space.

c. Storm water management facilities should be designed to function as a part of the open space system.

d. New street networks shall be a logical extension of the existing road network priority, providing connectivity while minimizing through traffic.
   i. Cul-de-sacs should be minimized to locations where it is impractical to provide a through street.

e. New neighbourhoods should be fully serviced by a paved transportation network; the municipal waste water system, water system, and storm sewer where feasible; as well as standard shallow utilities.

3.1.4 Application Evaluation

a. Applications for bylaw amendments, subdivisions, and development permits should be evaluated according to the following:
   i. Compliance with the Act, Regulation, MDP, LUB, and any other statutory plan or non-statutory document that is in effect at the time of the application;
   ii. Ability of the transportation network to accommodate the proposal;
   iii. Adequacy of municipal servicing;
   iv. Compatibility with adjacent land uses;
   v. Site suitability in terms of soils, topography, and size; and
   vi. Environmental factors, including the potential for
      1. impacts to the natural environment;
      2. soil erosion, flooding, contamination of surface water bodies and groundwater;
      3. impacts on wetlands; and
      4. impact of storm water runoff on adjacent lands.

3.1.5 Non-Conforming Uses

a. Existing uses may continue at their current scale of development and/or operation.

b. When redevelopment or a change of use occurs to a site that is inconsistent with the Future Land Use Map, that change should become consistent with the Future Land Use Map.

c. Where 3.1.5 b. applies, the Village of Karen should amend the Land Use Bylaw to a land use district that is consistent with the direction of the Future Land Use Map.
3.2 Residential Lands

This section addresses housing forms, locations, and standards for residential development. The current residential land base is 29.68 ha (73.33 ac). There are a variety of housing forms within the Village, but there may be future need for diverse and affordable housing to accommodate the lifecycle needs of residents.

Objectives

1. Encourage a variety of housing forms, tenures and sizes to ensure that residents of all ages and incomes have a diversity of housing choice.
2. Identify locations for new residential development.
3. Maintain a separation of residential uses from incompatible land uses.

Policies

3.2.1 General

a. The Village shall direct new residential development to:
   i. infill within existing residential or mixed use areas;
   and
   ii. new areas, which are adjacent to developed areas, to optimize the efficient extension of infrastructure networks consistent with the Future Land Use Map.

b. The Village shall limit parcel size to ensure that development patterns are urban in nature and make efficient use of municipal infrastructure.

c. The Village shall support the following housing forms:
   i. single-detached,
   ii. manufactured homes,
   iii. duplexes/semi-detached,
   iv. rowhouses,
   v. apartments.

3.2.2 Housing Diversity

a. The Village shall support the development of a mix of housing types and forms.

b. Through future statutory planning processes, the Village shall encourage the development of semi-detached, duplex, and rowhouse dwelling units in new neighbourhoods. The Village of Karen supports a range of housing types, densities, lot widths, and building heights within its residential neighbourhoods. AI

3.2.3 Accessory Dwelling Units

a. The Village may support legal accessory dwelling units that are accessory to a single detached dwelling, to increase housing choice and affordability. AI

3.2.4 Supportive Housing

a. The Village may support and/or partner with other organizations to ensure that there is adequate provision of affordable and special needs housing within Karen.

b. The Village supports the provision of residential-based
services for persons with disabilities as an integral part of all residential neighbourhoods.

3.2.5 Manufactured Homes

a. The Village shall ensure that new manufactured home park or subdivision communities are designed and developed with an equivalent level of services and open space as other residential neighbourhoods.

b. The Village shall encourage the redevelopment and/or upgrading of existing manufactured home communities as a means of ensuring that these developments are sustainable residential environments in the long term.

3.2.6 Aesthetics

a. The Village shall encourage the development of aesthetically pleasing neighbourhoods that will enhance the Village’s characteristics.

b. The Village may develop residential design guidelines.
3.3 Commercial Lands

This section addresses commercial development locations and standards. The current commercial land base is 12.02 ha (29.70 ac) with developments largely concentrated in the Downtown area. The Downtown of Karen is predominantly along Main Street, including generally smaller scale retail sales, and personal service businesses that are focused on individual consumers. The other commercial development area south of the old railway is on larger lots with a focus on business consumers.

Objectives

1. Promote the downtown core as the dominant commercial, administrative, service, and retail district of the Village.
2. Encourage succession planning to support successful services and businesses.
3. Increase the density and diversity of uses in the downtown.
4. Improve the pedestrian-friendly nature of the downtown core.
5. Ensure that commercial developments are located and operated in ways that are compatible with Karen’s social fabric, quality of life and environment.

Policies

3.3.1 General

a. Commercial uses shall locate in accordance with the Future Land Use Map.

b. The Village shall establish standards for commercial building design, landscaping, and signage in the Land Use Bylaw. Al

c. The Village should require that contaminated Brownfield Development sites be cleaned to provincial standards before re-use.

d. The Village should encourage the re-use of Brownfield Development sites before Greenfield Development sites.

e. The Village shall encourage Secondary Commercial uses that do not detract from the business and retail role of the downtown.

3.3.2 Downtown

a. The Village should establish a Business Improvement Area, based on the recommendations from the Market Study. Al

b. The Village shall encourage commercial uses to locate in the Downtown that:
   i. will promote Karen as a local commercial, administrative, service, and retail location;
   ii. have a small development site; and
   iii. have parking requirements that can be met by existing on-street parking and public parking lots.

c. The Village should require that development along Main Street orient the front façade and entrance to the street.

d. The Village should require that on-site parking and access to the parking be located at the side and/or rear of the development, where space permits.

e. Upper floor residential with ground floor commercial shall be enabled within the Land Use Bylaw and encouraged along Main Street between 3rd Avenue and 5th Avenue. Al
Sample MDP Village of Karen

i. The Village should consider changes to the Land Use Bylaw parking requirements to facilitate both uses, using a parking matrix to lower parking requirements.

f. The Village shall encourage the clean up or screening of unsightly premises in the Downtown.

3.3.3 Secondary Commercial

a. The Village shall encourage Secondary Commercial development to locate along Railway Avenue, and Central Avenue as outlined in the Future Land Use Map.

b. The Village shall support Secondary Commercial uses that
   i. are not suited to being located in the Downtown,
   ii. require relatively large sites to accommodate their operations, or
   iii. are oriented to serving the needs of the travelling public.

c. The Village shall require that development along Railway Avenue and Central Avenue orient the principal entrance and façade along the frontage
   i. Accessory buildings, outdoor storage areas, etc. shall be screened to maintain a high aesthetic standard.

3.3.4 Development Applications

a. Development applications for commercial uses shall include landscaping, circulation, and building plans prior to being considered complete and the development authority issuing a decision.

3.3.5 Design of Commercial Sites

a. All Secondary commercial sites shall have two access points where possible.

b. On-site landscaping shall be designed to minimize the impact of on-site storm water on the municipal storm water system.
3.4 Industrial Lands

This section addresses industrial development locations and standards. The current industrial land base is 77.29 ha (190.98 ac). Industrial development can be separated into two primary types: Heavy Industrial and Light Industrial. The northwest part of the Village is best suited to handling the site factors that accompany heavy industrial operations, being located adjacent to the old Railway lands and separated from higher density residential areas. Light industrial development may be appropriately located where there is good access to the highway, in the north end of the Village, east of Main Street, south of the old Railway lands. The protection of Tranquil Lake must also be included when considering future Industrial uses.

Objectives

1. Protect industrial land from the encroachment of non-compatible land uses and minimize conflicts with adjacent land uses.
3. The nature and design of any future industrial operations are such that the community’s quality of life and environment are not adversely affected.
4. Encourage industrial development that conserves energy, water, materials, and other resources.
5. Coordinate with and support the development of industrial growth in the surrounding County.

Policies

3.4.1 General

a. Industrial uses shall locate in accordance with the Future Land Use Map.
b. Access to new industrial developments shall not be routed through residential areas.
c. New industrial areas should have a full range of municipal services. Developers are responsible for the upgrading and extension of the services required for new industrial developments.
d. The Village shall encourage the development of the East Industrial Area Structure Plan to support an adequate supply of available light industrial land within the Village.
e. The Village should require that contaminated Brownfield Development sites be cleaned to provincial standards before re-use.
f. The Village should encourage the re-use of Brownfield Development sites before Greenfield Development sites.
3.4.2 Development Applications

a. Development applications which may produce nuisance factors or negative impacts shall mitigate these impacts on surrounding, existing, or proposed residential areas to a level satisfactory to the development authority. Such industrial uses shall be directed to the north portions of Karen.

b. Industrial development producing nuisance factors shall maintain a distance buffer between the source of the nuisance and residential areas in order to mitigate the nuisance.
3.5 Transportation and Utilities

This section addresses the transportation network, including the location and development of roads, sidewalks, lanes and parking facilities within the Village. In addition, this section provides direction with respect to the provision of municipal utilities.

Objectives

1. Provide leadership in sustainable municipal infrastructure servicing.
2. Ensure that the Village has the financial capacity to maintain and replace municipal infrastructure systems.
3. Ensure that utilities and municipal infrastructure are planned to accommodate the existing and future needs of Karen’s resident and visitor population.
4. Ensure that all utilities are self-funding, with rates providing for life-cycle costing.
5. Maintain a road network that meets the needs of residents and industry.
6. Enhance the pedestrian environment throughout the Village and minimize traffic patterns that are hazardous to pedestrians.
7. Collaborate with the Northwest Regional Water Commission to ensure that water sources and reservoirs provide water of sufficient quality and quantity to service the needs of the Village.
8. Ensure potable water provision, storm water management, and flood control measures are designed to maintain the integrity of streams, riparian areas, and wetlands while adequately servicing residents in a reliable, efficient, and affordable manner.
9. Reduce the need for the landfill through community education programs and the implementation of recycling, reusing, and reducing programs.

Policies

3.5.1 General

a. The Village should, through its capital budgeting process, budget for the maintenance and replacement of existing municipal infrastructure.

b. Ensure that all subdivision and development proposals within the vicinity of the reclaimed landfill site and sewage treatment facility are consistent with the requirements of the Subdivision and Development Regulation.

3.5.2 Utilities

a. Developers, through development agreements, should be solely responsible for the construction of municipal infrastructure that is required to service the development.

b. Development within the Village shall be required to connect to municipal services where possible. On-site servicing is not permitted unless provided for in a Development Agreement.

c. The Village of Karen may consider an offsite levy bylaw to ensure that existing municipal infrastructure is maintained and enhanced to meet the increased demand placed on municipal systems by new development.
3.5.3 Water

a. The Village should work with neighbouring municipalities to ensure activity occurring within the water supply catchment areas is undertaken in an environmentally sensitive manner that gives highest priority to protecting water quantity and quality.

3.5.4 Municipal Waste

a. The Village should regularly review the municipal recycling program and options for expanding the type of materials that are accepted.

3.5.5 Transportation – Road Network

a. The Village’s transportation network is included in the Future Land Use Map.

b. The Village is responsible for the maintenance and control of the local road system.

c. The Village of Karen will consult with Alberta Transportation regarding any development adjacent to the highway network.

d. The Village should require the developer to pay the costs of any upgrades to highways necessitated by a development proposal, as required by Alberta Transportation, unless otherwise specified by a development agreement.

3.5.6 Transportation – Cycling

a. The Village of Karen shall encourage cycling through the provision of cycling infrastructure, including but not limited to parking facilities associated with commercial, institutional, and medium density residential development.

3.5.7 Transportation – Sidewalks

a. The Village of Karen should conduct a Sidewalk Infrastructure Condition Analysis to identify the current state of sidewalk infrastructure.

b. New sidewalk infrastructure shall be a minimum of 1.5 metres wide.

c. The Village should require the provision of pedestrian infrastructure, sidewalks, and/or trails in all new developments, the redevelopment of existing properties, and in changes to existing or proposed roads.

   i. A sidewalk is required on a minimum of one side of the street in all residential areas.

   ii. A sidewalk is required on a minimum of one side of the street in commercial and institutional areas along the frontage of the development.

      1. A defined pedestrian path to the building entrance is required.

   iii. A sidewalk shall be required in industrial areas where its absence would result in a gap in the sidewalk network.

   iv. To remedy gaps in the existing sidewalk network, a sidewalk shall be required when possible.

d. Pedestrian facility standards and parking lot standards shall accommodate the needs of persons with physical disabilities including, but not limited to, wheelchair and medical scooter users.

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Did you know?

Walking east-west across the Village takes approximately 17 minutes. Walking north-south across the Village takes approximately 21 minutes. Based on 5km/hr. walking speed.
3.6 Recreational Lands and Facilities

This section addresses the location and standards of parks, open spaces, recreation facilities, and social organizations. Recreation opportunities for a variety of ages and abilities foster a higher quality of life and are essential elements of a municipality. The Village of Karen operates a variety of recreation and community services and programs that support the well-being of its residents.

Objectives

1. All residents have easy access to a neighbourhood green space.
2. The distribution of parks and recreational uses is balanced across the Village to meet residents’ needs.

Policies

3.6.1 General

a. The Village shall continue to operate and maintain public facilities including the
   i. Recreation Complex,
   ii. Baseball diamonds,
   iii. Outdoor Swimming Pool,
   iv. Local Library, and
   v. Municipal campground.

b. Park and recreational needs should be assessed through an analysis of population demographics, geographic location, walkability, existing park lands, and the recreational needs of the community.

c. When considering a proposal for a new residential neighbourhood, the Village should determine the impact of the proposed development on community and institutional facilities.

d. The Village should require the provision of neighbourhood green spaces and the provision of a right-of-way to logically connect to and extend the Village of Karen’s pedestrian network in Area Structure Plans as new developments are planned and developed.

3.6.2 Recreation Plan

a. The Village should develop a Recreation Plan to establish the current state of park infrastructure and identify areas for reinvestment. AI

3.6.3 Design

a. Access for all residents, including the socially disadvantaged, persons with physical disabilities, or the elderly should be considered in the design of parks and selected trails.

b. All parks and playgrounds shall be landscaped.

Community Survey Results:

When asked to identify likes and dislikes about the Village, recreation and social opportunities were a recurring theme within the responses
3.7 Environmental Management

This section addresses standards that will help improve environmental management in the Village. Development and economic activity have inherent impacts on the natural environment. Municipalities may aim to minimize this impact and create development patterns that work with the natural environment to capture and enhance environmental services. There is a major water body within the Village boundary, Tranquil Lake. Karen is also part of a larger watershed and drainage area, and areas of the Village have been impacted by overland flooding.

Objectives

1. Preserve and enhance natural environments within and adjacent to the Village.
2. Foster the conservation and efficient use of energy and other resources in Village owned infrastructure, buildings, and vehicles.
3. Incorporate natural areas within future development plans in the Village.

Policies

3.7.1 General
   a. The Village of Karen shall encourage the Northwest Watershed Alliance in its efforts to plan for an ecologically healthy watershed while ensuring environmental, economic, and social sustainability.
   b. The Village should encourage the use of native vegetation in landscaping and park areas to minimize the need for maintenance, watering, and other inputs.

3.7.2 Environmental Reserves
   a. The Village may designate environmentally significant lands as environmental reserve, as enabled by section 664 of the Municipal Government Act.
   b. The Village shall ensure that environmental reserve lands remain natural areas.

3.7.3 Conservation Reserves
   a. The Village may designate environmentally significant lands to be permanently protected against development as conservation reserve, as enabled by section 664.2 (1) of the Municipal Government Act.
   b. The Village must compensate a landowner when taking lands as Conservation Reserve, as enabled in section 664.2 (2) of the Municipal Government Act.
   c. The Village shall ensure that conservation reserve lands remain in a natural state and may not be disposed of as enabled by section 674.1 of the Municipal Government Act.

3.7.4 Lands Prone to Flooding
   a. New development on lands prone to overland flooding shall be flood proofed. A certificate from a qualified, professional engineer or architect shall be required to confirm that the proposal includes proper flood proofing.

3.7.5 Air Quality
   a. The Village should amend the Land Use Bylaw to require that future development sites maintain sufficient vegetation and paving to reduce airborne nuisances.
3.8 Heritage

This section addresses standards for the preservation of historic resources. Historic development patterns and buildings provide the Village with a distinctive character. The essential role of pioneers, elders, and other seniors in the development of the Village is gratefully acknowledged. Preserving and enhancing these resources creates a connection to the past and promotes a unique sense of place that the Village can build from.

Objectives

1. Preserve historic buildings, monuments, sites, and natural features in ways that maintain and promote the Village’s heritage and unique ‘sense of place’.
2. Remain a community that honours its heritage, respects civic duty and responsibility, and is dedicated to preserving and building a legacy of community values for future generations.

Policies

3.8.1 General
a. The Village should consider the establishment of a Council committee or partner with a local heritage society to assist with heritage conservation within the municipality. AI

3.8.2 Historical Resource Inventory
a. The Village, working with historical societies such as the Northwest Historical Society, should compile an inventory of historical resources. AI

3.8.3 Historical Designation
a. Based on the Historical Resource Inventory, the Village may consider designating historically significant properties under the Historical Resources Act.
3.9 Economic Development

This section addresses standards that will promote economic development opportunities. The Village of Karen is a small economic community in the region and receives economic development guidance through the Northwest Regional Economic Development organization.

Karen’s future viability will rely heavily on its ability to retain existing businesses, attract new businesses through future economic cycles. For the most part, this will involve strategic planning that will address constraints that may hinder the continued viability of existing businesses, constraints related to potential growth opportunities, community branding, and strong leadership. It is in its best interest for the Village to recognize these actions as tools to ensure the community can remain viable in the foreseeable future.

Objectives

1. Provide a diverse and balanced economic base of quality employment.
2. Encourage state of the art information and communication technology systems.
3. Support the growth of a local trades and construction workforce.
4. Encourage commercial ventures that promote local tourism.
5. Maintain and encourage light industrial and heavy industrial uses within the Village as key employment nodes.

Policies

3.9.1 General

a. The Village of Karen, through its membership in the Northwest Regional Economic Development:
   i. will work towards the objectives for the Northwest Regional Economic Development Strategic Plan,
   ii. should maintain its membership in the Think Local Market, and
   iii. may consider assisting the local chamber of commerce in improving the vitality and viability of commercial areas through a downtown vitality strategic plan.
3.10 Inter-municipal Cooperation

This section provides direction that aims to promote inter-municipal cooperation.

Objectives

1. Collaborate with the County and neighbouring municipalities on regional and provincial issues.
2. Take a cooperative approach to Intermunicipal development issues.

Policies

3.10.1 General

a. The Village of Karen will develop an Intermunicipal Development Plan in partnership with Northwest County.

b. The Village of Karen will develop an Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework in partnership with Northwest County. Existing intermunicipal agreements will be incorporated into the ICF. These agreements are a means of delivering efficient and cost effective delivery of services, including transportation, recreation and utility infrastructure.
   i. The Village shall continue to enter into and negotiate agreements to address emerging issues.

c. The Village will be an active participant in the preparation of the regional plan for the Region, which is required under the provincial Land Use Framework and Alberta Land Stewardship Act.
3.11 Municipal Governance

This section provides direction to promote effective and transparent municipal governance.

Objectives

1. Provide responsive and democratic civic government to the citizens of Karen.
2. Foster better public understanding and awareness of civic functions, responsibilities, priorities and overall policy direction.
3. Encourage increased public participation in community development.

Policies

3.11.1 General

a. Using new and established communication channels, the Village of Karen should actively engage citizens in policy formation, program development, and service delivery processes, and increase awareness of political decisions.

b. The Village of Karen should leverage financial resources through cost-sharing agreements with other regional and municipal jurisdictions, senior levels of government, and the private sector.

c. The Village of Karen should work with other levels of government to secure long-term funding commitments and to develop alternative revenue streams.

3.11.2 Communication

a. The Village of Karen should maintain and enhance existing methods of communication with the citizens of Karen, including:
   i. continuing to regularly update the Village website and social media,
   ii. school handouts, and
   iii. a monthly municipal column in the local newspaper.
3.12 Winter

This section addresses the development, maintenance, and operation of infrastructure and services during the winter months. Northern communities must consider the impact of winter on community life, design, infrastructure systems, and more. A successful winter community works to make the community infrastructure and social fabric work during all four seasons.

Objectives

1. Ensure that new development enhances the public realm in all seasons.
2. Enhance winter safety and comfort.
3. Incorporate design elements for winter fun, activity, beauty, and interest.

Policies

3.12.1 General

a. Applications for public, commercial, and industrial development should incorporate site design elements to
   i. Maximize the exposure of public/pedestrian spaces to the sun through orientation, and site and building design.
   ii. Protect public/pedestrian spaces from wind (both prevailing winds and downdrafts).
   iii. Create visual interest through the use of contrasting or saturated colour to highlight building features.
   iv. Create visual interest and safe public spaces through the use of lighting.
   v. Consider the function and maintenance requirements of new infrastructure in both the summer and the winter months and aim to provide infrastructure that supports winter life.

3.12.2 Safety and Comfort

a. The Village should encourage sidewalk snow clearing.
   b. The Village should provide sheltered rest areas (or warming huts) in public parks.

Community Survey Results:

The Village’s excellent snow removal practices were repeatedly mentioned by residents as something they appreciated.
PART 4.0 IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 Monitoring and Review
The Village Council should request an annual report outlining progress towards the implementation of the Municipal Development Plan and consistency of development activity with the MDP. AI

The Village of Karen should undertake a major review and update of the Municipal Development Plan every 5 to 10 years. Minor amendments may occur on an as needed basis.

4.2 Annual Review and Budget Integration
As the Village of Karen Council and staff engage in strategic planning processes, the Municipal Development Plan shall be consulted to assist in identifying, guiding, and prioritizing the Village’s work priorities. Where the MDP requires municipal action and resources the Village should incorporate an MDP implementation budget into the annual budget to fund the resulting initiatives.

4.3 Plans, Bylaws, Permits and Programs
As the Village of Karen undertakes new initiatives, this Municipal Development Plan shall be consulted and will act as a guide for decision-making and actions.

4.4 Development Checklist
After the Municipal Development Plan is adopted, a development checklist should be incorporated into the development permit application and decision making process. The development checklist will ensure applicants are aware of the policies within the MDP which may affect their application. The development checklist will also guide the Development Authority to ensure that the policies in the Municipal Development Plan are considered when development permit decisions are made. AI

4.5 Plan Consistency
Any subsequent planning activity, particularly updates to statutory documents, such as the Land Use Bylaw or Area Structure Plans, or physical development shall be consistent with the Municipal Development Plan.

4.6 Area Structure Plan Updates
The Westmount Residential Area Structure Plan and East Industrial Area Structure Plan are currently undergoing updates to facilitate the development of new residential and industrial lands.

For the Westmount Residential ASP area, to accommodate the installation of modular dwelling units, and for the East Industrial ASP area, rethinking Industrial uses to attract investment.
4.7 Land Use Bylaw Update

Updates to the Land Use Bylaw are required to ensure that the direction set out in this Municipal Development Plan is reflected for new development in the Village of Karen. Changes which should be considered and incorporated in the next amendment of the Land Use Bylaw include

- Section 3.1.2 Requiring Development Agreements as a condition of development.
- Section 3.1.7 Resolving conflicting existing land use designations and existing uses.
- Section 3.2.1 Setting a maximum parcel size for single detached dwelling units.
- Section 3.2.2 Enabling a range of housing types, densities, lot widths, and building heights.
- Section 3.2.3 Enabling accessory dwelling units.
- Section 3.3.1 Establishing standards for commercial building design, landscaping, and signage.
- Section 3.3.2 Enabling mixed residential/commercial development along Main Street.
- Section 3.3.2 Reviewing parking standards to minimize requirements.
- Section 3.5.7 Establishing bike parking standards.

4.8 Action Items

- Over 20 Action Items have been highlighted throughout the document by the following symbol: AI. These include both amendments to the Land Use Bylaw and a number of other plans and initiatives that would move the Village of Karen towards the vision outlined in Section 2.2. The Village should work towards completing each of these action items, which will take a number of years to complete.
- Section 3.7.4 of the Land Use Bylaw establishes requirements to reduce airborne nuisances.
PART 5.0 APPENDICES

5.1 Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ARP</td>
<td>Area Redevelopment Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASP</td>
<td>Area Structure Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIA</td>
<td>Business Improvement Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR</td>
<td>Conservation Reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ER</td>
<td>Environmental Reserve</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICF</td>
<td>Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEED</td>
<td>Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design</td>
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<tr>
<td>LUB</td>
<td>Land Use Bylaw</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDP</td>
<td>Municipal Development Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MGA</td>
<td>Municipal Government Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MR</td>
<td>Municipal Reserve</td>
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5.2 Glossary of Terms

**Accessory Dwelling Unit** means a dwelling unit, such a garage suite, garden suite, or secondary suite that is secondary and subordinate to the principal dwelling unit on site.


**Aesthetics** means artistic or relating to good taste.

**Affordable Housing** means the cost of adequate shelter that should not exceed 30% of a household income. Housing which costs less than this is considered affordable.

**Area Redevelopment Plan or Area Structure Plan** means a long range land use and servicing plan adopted by bylaw and prepared in accordance with the *Municipal Government Act*.

**Business Improvement Area** shall mean an area within the municipality designated for revitalization.

**Brownfield Development** means development on previous industrial and commercial lands that are now available for re-use. These sites may be contaminated requiring soil remediation.
Building includes anything constructed or placed on, in, over or under land including supporting structures of any type, but does not include a highway or public road or a bridge forming part of the highway or public road.

Buffer means a row of trees or shrubs, a berm or fencing to provide visual screening and separation and/or reduce noise between sites of incompatible land uses.

Campground means an area used for setting up a camp or holding a camp meeting. Such use is designed for tourists, vacationers, or campers. These facilities may include parking, recreational areas, and Recreational Vehicle Park.

Conform means to act in accordance or harmony to related statutory Planning Documents.

Council means the Council of the Village of Karen.

Development means:

1) an excavation or stockpile and the creation of either of them,
2) a building or an addition to or replacement or repair of a building and the construction or placing of any of them on, in, over or under land,
3) a change of use of land or a building or an act done in relation to land or a building that results in or is likely to result in a change in the use of land or building, or
4) a change in the intensity of use of land or a building or any act done in relation to land or a building that results in or is likely to result in a change in the intensity of use of the land or building.

Environmental Reserves are lands separating private property from a body of water, flood plain, or drainage area. Under the Municipal Government Act when subdividing land, a developer may be required by the local municipality to provide these buffer zones to the specified area.

Flood Proofing means additions, changes, or adjustments to a building that reduces or prevents damage from flood events to the structure and/or its contents.

Fully Serviced means having all required services including water and sewer developed to provincial standards, developed road access to Village standards, and utilities such as power and gas.

Future Land Use Map means a map providing direction with respect to the predominant land uses within an area of the municipality.

Greenfield Development means development on land currently or previously used for agriculture, and or green space.

Heavy Industrial means land uses that are likely to have nuisance factors such as noise, odour, smoke, or airborne emissions. They require large tracts of land, extensive open storage areas, direct rail, and/or road access and may have high servicing demands (water, electricity, etc.).
Highway or Road means land:

1) Shown as a road on a plan of survey that has been filed or registered in a land titles office; or
2) Used as a public road; and
3) Includes a bridge forming part of a public highway or road and any structure incidental to the public highway or road or bridge.

Intermunicipal Development Plan means the Northwest Intermunicipal Development Plan adopted by Councils and pursuant to the Act.


Land Use Bylaw means a regulatory document that regulates development within the municipality.

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) means a green building rating system developed by the Canadian Green Building Council that provides a suite of standards for environmentally sustainable construction.

Light Industrial means land uses that do not create heavy customer flows, have fewer nuisance factors, and can be located on smaller tracts of land (relative to heavy industrial uses).

Market Study means the gathering and evaluation of data regarding the current and future demand for land, goods and services by industry type.

Medium density residential means the development of more than two dwelling units within a single building. Typical building forms include row housing or apartment buildings. Single-detached dwellings, duplex, and semi-detached dwellings, as well as secondary suites, are considered low density.

Municipality means the incorporated Municipality of the Village of Karen.


Municipal Reserves means the requirement of either 10% of land within a subdivision or cash in lieu of 10% of the value of subdivided lands, by a municipality, in accordance with the Municipal Government Act. Municipal reserves provide residents with parks, recreation facilities, public buildings, schools, natural areas, and horticultural or agricultural uses. Cash in lieu is added to a reserve account and is used to construct or maintain Municipal Reserve lands or facilities.

Non-conforming building/use means a building/use that is lawfully constructed or lawfully under construction at the date a Land Use Bylaw affecting the building/use or the land on which the building/use is situated becomes effective, and that on the date the Land Use Bylaw becomes effective does not, or when constructed, will not comply with the Land Use Bylaw.
Nuisance factors are by products of development such as noise, odour, smoke, airborne emissions, glare, etc.

Parks and Playgrounds means an area of land used for recreation purposes, usually including facilities such as slides, swings and other playground equipment.

Persons with disabilities means a person with a physical or mental disability as defined by the Alberta Human Rights Act.

Population Projection means projecting future changes in population totals, given certain assumptions including future trends in fertility, mortality, and migration rates.

Regulation means requirements related to the development of land as stipulated in the Land Use Bylaw, as well as regulations of the Municipal Government Act and amendments from time to time. Examples of regulations include minimum standards of development regarding the size of a parcel or lot area, floor area, yard setbacks, landscaping, design, character and appearance of a building (aesthetics). The Development Officer may vary these standards at their discretion.

Retail Store means a commercial establishment where goods are sold on a retail basis.

Roads, Arterial means roads that are intended to move large volumes of traffic.

Roads, Collector means roads that are intended to move traffic and provide land access, collecting traffic from local roads and carrying it to arterial roads.

Roads, Local means roads that are intended to provide land access.

Seniors Housing means an institution primarily for elderly persons where housing accommodation is provided and medical or supervisory care may be provided.

Unsightly Premises Bylaw means a statutory document meant to identify, limit the impact of, and provide enforcement options to a municipality with respect to unpleasant development that negatively impact the amenities of the neighbourhood.

Watercourses means
  a. The bed and shore of a river, stream, lake, creek, lagoon, swamp, marsh, or other natural body of water, or
  b. A canal, ditch, reservoir or other man-made surface feature whether it contains or conveys water continuously or intermittently.

Village means the incorporated municipality of the Village of Karen.

Wetlands means land having water at, near, or above the surface of which is saturate with water long enough to promote wetland or aquatic processes as indicated by poorly drained (hydric) soils, hydrophytic vegetation, and various kinds of biological activity that are adapted to the wet environment.
PART 6.0  MAPS

Map 1:  Future Land Use
Map 2:  Municipal Services
Map 3:  Significant Features
Sample MDP Village of Karen

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Sample B: MDP for a Village of less than 500

Village of Broad Valley
Municipal Development Plan
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1.0 Introduction

The Municipal Government Act requires all municipalities to prepare and adopt a municipal development plan (MDP). The Act states that an MDP must address such issues as future land use and development in the municipality, the provision of municipal services and facilities, and inter-municipal issues such as future growth areas and the co-ordination of transportation systems and infrastructure.

The overall purpose of the Village of Broad Valley Municipal Development Plan (MDP) is to guide future growth and development to ensure that it is sustainable, orderly, appropriate, complementary, efficient, and that it enhances the quality of life for the citizens of Broad Valley. The MDP is primarily a policy document that can be utilized as a framework for the physical development of the community within which both public and private sector decision making can occur. As a policy document it is, for the most part, general in nature and long range in its outlook. The MDP provides the means whereby Council can evaluate immediate situations or proposals in the context of a long range plan.

This Municipal Development Plan embodies the community goals and aspirations contained in the vision statement. Goal statements have been provided to guide future planning and development. These goal statements appear at the beginning of each policy section and provide a framework for the objectives and policies within each section. The goals of the community are enabled through key objectives which in turn are supported through the MDP policies and guidelines.

It is also important to bear in mind that the MDP works best as a comprehensive whole and should be interpreted in a holistic manner. While the Plan is constructed by topic area it is important to view all of the policy directions in context with one another rather than as individual parts. In this way, several policy statements are intended to contribute towards moving Broad Valley closer to the vision described in Section 2.6.

The Plan Area map (see appendix) is a snap shot of the current land uses in the Village, and shows the locations of the major facilities in the Village.
2.0 Community Context and Trends

2.1 Regional Setting

The Village of Broad Valley is located approximately 35 km south of the town of Settlers, at the intersection of Highway 56 and Highway 590. Broad Valley is accessed by two highways, Highway 56 running north-south with access from the towns of Settlers and Dinosaurs; and Highway 590 running east-west, with access to Highway 2 and the town of Isle of Destiny. The Village is situated on the west side of Highway 56 at the Highway 590 intersection. Both of these highway connections afford great accessibility to the central Alberta area.

2.2 Population Changes

The Village of Broad Valley has seen significant population variations over the 110 year history of the village. The population of the village reached 1,000 people by 1925, driven primarily by coal mining in the area. By the year 1950 the population had dropped to 280 people as a result of the surrounding coal mines closing, however the oil and gas boom saw new growth in the village through the 1950’s to a population of 450 by 1965.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>524</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>346</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3 Residential Building Trends

The 2016 federal census identified 170 private dwellings in the village, with single detached dwellings being the predominant housing form representing 70% of the existing structures. Moveable dwellings, defined as mobile homes, were the second most common housing type accounting for 24% of existing structures. Multiple family housing, in the form of row housing, made up the smallest portion of housing stock at approximately 6%.

The 2006 federal census indicates 140 dwellings were constructed before 1986, of the 170 dwellings that existed in 2006. In the 20 year period between 1986 and 2006, 25 dwellings were constructed. Census data from 2016 indicates the available housing stock has not changed, with 170 private households reported. This information indicates that approximately 85% of the current housing stock in the village is at least 30 years of age, constructed prior to 1986.
The demand for residential development is not expected to change over the next 30 years. Assuming a medium growth scenario with 0.53% population growth per year and assuming residential densities of 10 dwelling units per hectare as proposed in Section 5.0(9), it is anticipated that an additional 2.81 ha of land will be required to accommodate residential growth between 2016 and 2046.

2.4 Development Influences

Map 1 and Map 2 (see appendices) identify the significant features that influence the future growth pattern of the Village of Broad Valley. These features represent constraints to urban development as well as opportunities for the creation of an attractive, interesting urban community.

Map 1 identifies the significant natural constraints within the community, these being the naturally occurring features. The first of these features being the steep slopes identified in the northwest portion of the village. The most prominent area of the slopes is the escarpment that follows the boundary of the existing development. The areas identified are those that have a slope of 15%, representing areas where unstable slopes may be an issue and further investigation will be required to determine the suitability for development. The second significant feature identified is the Broad Valley Creek corridor. Two main concerns associated with this feature are, the 1:100 year floodplain of the creek, as well as the wetlands and riparian areas surrounding the creek. Though no floodplain mapping is available for Broad Valley Creek, a development setback will be required to avoid potential flood hazards. The wetlands adjacent to the creek also present a barrier, and should be avoided in order to maintain the ecological integrity of the riparian zone.

Map 2 identifies the significant human development constraints, mainly oil and gas facilities and coal mines. There are multiple active oil and gas wells within the Village boundary, which all have a 100 m development setback. In addition, there are sour gas pipelines at the south end of the Village which have a 500 m development setback. These facilities restrict the type of development that may be located within these setbacks. In addition there is an underground coal mine in the north portion of the Village which will also restrict development potential. The waste transfer station and its related setback limits the form of development northeast of the golf course. The wastewater treatment/sewage lagoons and related setback influences the types of land uses that could be considered for the lands south of the highway.

The surrounding land uses are primarily agricultural, which offer little future development conflict. However, the existing natural constraints to the west in the form of steep slopes and to the east in Broad Valley Creek, and human constraints such as the sour gas facilities in the south and the underground coal mines in the north, will severely limit the growth potential of the Village outside of the current boundary.
2.5 Future Trends and Opportunities

Broad Valley is advantageously located close to the Highway 56 corridor, within commuting distance of both the Town of Settlers and the Town of Dinosaurs which provide excellent opportunities for future growth and economic development. The Village boasts comfortable living within a rural setting with great views of the surrounding agriculture lands, a wide range of recreational activities and some business services, all of which contribute to an excellent quality of life for its residents. The share of future regional population growth and development attracted to Broad Valley will be dependent on several factors including:

- people’s preference for small town, rural setting living;
- the availability of affordable housing relative to other opportunities in the region;
- economic and employment opportunities in the region or within commuting distance;
- availability of recreation and leisure opportunities; and
- the level of services and amenities contributing to a high quality of life available in the community.

The Village of Broad Valley anticipates population growth throughout the planning period. Population projections through to the year 2046 are provided in the table below, as well as the anticipated additional dwelling units required for the projected populations.

Projected Population Growth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Very Low (0.01% per yr)</th>
<th>Low (0.12% per yr)</th>
<th>Medium (0.53% per yr)</th>
<th>High (0.58% per yr)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2026</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2031</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2036</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2041</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2046</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>412</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Additional Dwelling Unit Requirements (based on 2.1 persons/household)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Very Low (0.01% per yr)</th>
<th>Low (0.12% per yr)</th>
<th>Medium (0.53% per yr)</th>
<th>High (0.58% per yr)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2026</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2031</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2036</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2041</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2046</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>31.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average annual population growth of 0.53% during the planning period is considered a reasonable expectation for the Village of Broad Valley, based on previous growth. Using this growth rate, the population of the Village is expected to exceed 400 people by 2046 if this population growth rate is realized.

The following table identifies the future land requirements to accommodate the Village’s needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>Land/Unit Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential Land</td>
<td>2.81 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Units</td>
<td>28.1 dwelling units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>0.28 ha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>2.03 ha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.0 Vision Statement

The vision for the community is as follows:

“Broad Valley is a thriving village offering a clean and quaint community for people of all ages to live in. With a strong connection to their heritage, it offers a unique tourist destination within central Alberta that supports a multitude of activities and businesses. The citizens and community are welcoming to all who enter, providing a high quality of life through a variety of recreational and community opportunities and sustainable living practices.”

3.1 Future Land Use Concept

Map 3 Land Use Concept (see appendices) identifies the preferred long range growth and land use pattern as envisioned by the Village. This includes the type and location of different land uses, potential future growth areas outside the Village’s boundaries, and the general location of major roads. The land use concept may be further defined through the preparation and adoption of statutory and non-statutory plans for smaller areas of the Village.

Further, the Land Use Bylaw shall be utilized to implement the MDP policies through the designation of land use districts and the application of development standards for each district. In this regard, the boundaries between the land uses shown on Map 3 are not to be rigidly interpreted and the specific boundaries shall be determined through the designation of the Land Use Bylaw districts. The land use designations and the objective for each are as follows:

- **Residential** - reflects existing areas of residential development, land subdivided for residential development, and land intended for future residential growth;

- **Commercial** - reflects areas of existing commercial development and future areas of commercial development;

- **Industrial** - reflects existing and future areas with industrial development potential;

- **Public/Institutional** - reflects existing community amenities, major institutional uses, recreational uses, and public works; and

- **Open Space** – reflects areas to be kept in a natural state, and public and private recreational areas.
4.0 Growth Management

Goal

Well managed rate, type and direction of growth and urban development in a manner that is compatible with and enhances the physical setting and character of Broad Valley and is within its financial capability.

Objectives

- To ensure urban development and expansion provides for future land use requirements while recognizing the need to retain for as long as possible the agricultural use of lands.
- To manage urban development in a responsible, orderly and cost-efficient manner providing the necessary degree of land use control and adherence to good planning principles.
- To encourage development, operational and maintenance practices that contributes to attractive and pleasant urban spaces and minimizes the operational and maintenance cost of municipal services and infrastructure.

Policies

1. Prior to considering a change in a Land Use Bylaw designation on larger parcels of land, the Village may require submission of an area structure plan for larger tracts of land and where subdivision and development is proposed within 0.80 kilometers of Highway 56. The area structure plan shall be prepared to the satisfaction of the Village and shall include all requirements specified within the Municipal Government Act including the following:

   a) the sequence of development proposed for the area;
   b) the land uses proposed for the area;
   c) the density of population proposed for the area;
   d) the general location of major transportation routes and public utilities; and
   e) any other matters Council considers necessary.
2. Any additional studies, testing and approvals that may be required to determine the suitability of the subject lands for development may also be required and shall be the responsibility of the developer.

3. In considering a proposal for a change in Land Use Bylaw designation, subdivision or development that allows for more intense subdivision or development than presently exists, the Village may require submission of an outline plan. In preparation of the outline plan the following matters should be considered where applicable:
   a) the type and scale of the proposed use or uses;
   b) the suitability of the site for the proposed use or uses;
   c) site design with respect to natural topography, treed areas, landscape features, wetlands and steep slopes;
   d) compatibility with surrounding existing and future land uses;
   e) proposed access, intersection treatments and impacts on the road system;
   f) availability of municipal utility services;
   g) provision of open space in terms of public access and use;
   h) adequacy of parcel sizes to support the intended use, design and appearance;
   i) consistency with provisions contained in applicable statutory plans and the Land Use Bylaw;
   j) proximity to oil and gas infrastructure, wastewater treatment facilities and solid waste handling facilities;
   k) the need for the development and the benefits the development would bring to the community; and
   l) any other matters deemed relevant by the Village.

4. Wherever possible, development shall be contiguous to existing built areas unless the Village deems servicing and road requirements are more efficient and can be economically provided in areas isolated from the existing built-up areas. This requirement for contiguous development shall be applied in a manner that maintains a competitive supply of developable land within the Village boundaries.

5. The Village shall identify growth needs and directions for Broad Valley and plan for any necessary annexations to ensure the Village has access to an adequate supply of readily serviceable land for residential, commercial and industrial land
6. Infill development and intensification within existing built areas shall be encouraged to take advantage of existing municipal utilities and roads.

7. The Village shall promote the development of a compact community and encourage development at efficient density levels to make maximum use of infrastructure, land supply, and public expenditures for maintenance and operating and reduce per unit development costs.

8. Developers shall be responsible for the construction and initial maintenance of municipal utilities, including required extensions and oversizing, unless otherwise specified in a development agreement with the Village.

9. Any public expenditure for improvements or municipal services proposed within this Plan to be funded by the Village shall be subject to the Village’s annual operating and capital budgeting priorities and approvals process and shall be evaluated in relation to the overall needs of the community and village-wide spending priorities.

10. Broad Valley’s growth and development should be monitored by the Village in relation to:

   a) the rate of population growth and new housing construction;

   b) the supply of serviced and non-serviced land for residential, commercial and industrial uses;

   c) the capacity of the water, sanitary sewer and storm water systems;

   d) road access, safety and internal traffic patterns;

   e) adequacy of open space system and community services; and

   f) any other matter deemed appropriate by Council.
5.0 Economic Development

Goal
A robust local economy supported by a broad municipal tax base providing varied employment opportunities for residents of all ages.

Objectives
- To strive to reduce the tax load for residential properties by pursuing a 30:70 non-residential to residential ratio in the local property assessment base.
- To encourage investment in new and expanded commercial and industrial development.
- To advocate for local employment opportunities.

Policies
1. The Village shall support diversification of the economic base of the community through the expansion of industrial and commercial activities and identification of areas suitable for these uses.
2. Where compatible with residential land uses, the development of home occupations shall be encouraged.
3. The Village supports, in principle, private economic development initiatives.
4. The Village may support economic development initiatives, either on its own or in partnership with the private sector.
5. The Village supports, whenever possible, joint economic development initiatives with the County of Settlers and other municipalities in the region.
6. The Village encourages the development of the tourism industry in and around Broad Valley. Such development should not have adverse social, economic, or environmental impacts.
7. Tourism oriented development should benefit the citizens of Broad Valley and area by providing greater economic, recreational, and cultural opportunities.
8. The Village should consider the development of a tourism marketing plan to coordinate marketing efforts, both public and private, and to attract more tourists and increase the length of their stay.
9. The Village should consider developing a registry of local businesses and services in order to identify and then actively seek to fill gaps.
6.0 Urban Form and Design

Goal
A safe, attractive, stimulating, accessible and barrier free environment in which residents can live and work.

Objectives
- To achieve and sustain physical environment that is attractive, safe, functionally efficient, sensitive of its evolving character, and environmentally responsible.
- To ensure that the design of the built environment contributes to the sense of place by strengthening and enhancing the character of existing locations and neighbourhoods.
- To encourage proposals for re-development and infill within existing neighbourhoods that are designed to be compatible to the surrounding residential areas, based on principles of good urban design practice.
- To achieve a high quality of design in the public realm.
- To promote sustainable management practices and green building design standards (such as the principles of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)), which supports a framework for environmentally sustainable development.

Policies
1. The physical design of a site shall relate to its role in and enhance the overall village structure.
2. The physical design of a site shall contribute to the promotion of the vision and image of Broad Valley as a culturally rich and vibrant community hub and a sustainable and attractive village.
3. The design policies contained in this section shall be considered in the review and approval of all infrastructure projects, public realm improvements and development applications, in balance with other applicable policies contained in this Plan.
4. The density, scale, massing, floor area ratio, height, siting, setbacks and lot coverage of development shall be compatible with the existing development pattern in the surrounding area.
5. Residential neighbourhoods shall be designed to allow freedom of public access.

6. New development shall be located and oriented to frame and reinforce a street line, composed of existing and planned development to provide definition to the public realm.

7. Uses located at-grade, including ground-level residential uses, that front a public right-of-way should locate unit entrances so that they are accessible from the public sidewalk.

8. Buildings located on corner sites shall address both streetscapes through building massing, location of entrances, landscaping and/or architectural elements.

9. Blank facades shall be avoided and shall not face a public street or public open space.

10. Proposed development shall adhere to the existing prevalent road and lotting pattern in the area.

11. The street network design shall preserve and respond to existing natural and topographical features such as wetlands, woodlots and valleylands.
7.0 Housing and Neighbourhood Design

Goal

Inclusive neighbourhoods that contain a range of housing opportunities and related compatible uses supporting the needs and preferences of a variety of household types and income levels.

Objectives

- To diversify the variety of residential options in the community to address life cycles and lifestyles.

- To encourage the infilling and redevelopment of vacant or under-utilized lots to benefit from existing municipal services.

- To ensure a high standard of residential development and neighbourhood design.

- To avoid land use conflicts between residential uses and incompatible, non-residential uses.

Policies

1. The Village shall direct residential development to the areas identified on Map 3 Land Use Concept.

2. The Village shall encourage the provision of a variety of housing forms in terms of lot size, dwelling type, appearance, and affordability.

3. In considering new statutory and non-statutory plans, subdivisions, and Land Use Bylaw designations the Village should ensure that the following mix of housing types is achieved across the community’s overall residential area:

   a) no less than 60 percent of the total potential dwelling units being single detached dwellings; and

   b) no more than 40 percent of the total potential dwelling units being semi-detached, apartment, fourplex, town housing and manufactured home units.

   This mix is to be achieved on a broad, community-wide basis rather than on a site specific basis to allow for the creation of distinct residential neighbourhoods or sub-neighbourhoods.

4. In locating sites for multi-family housing, the following criteria should be applied:

   a) close proximity to a major collector or arterial road;
b) adjacent or nearby open space and path system;

c) compatibility with existing housing and uses; and

d) lot size sufficient to minimize traffic and parking congestion.

6. The Village acknowledges the contribution Manufactured Home Communities fill as a housing option. A proposal for a new Manufactured Home Park shall be integrated into a new development area only when guided by an Area Structure Plan or Outline Plan.

7. The existing manufactured home community may be redeveloped for other forms of residential development, or other appropriate use, compatible with adjacent land uses through the preparation and approval of an Area Structure Plan or Outline Plan.

8. Residential areas shall be adequately buffered from major arterial roads and industrial and commercial areas.

9. The overall design density for existing and future residential areas of the Village, with the exception of the low density residential area and live/work residential area, should average between 10 and 12.5 dwelling units per gross developable hectare. This design density does not apply to individual sites. Variations may be permitted if accommodated in an adopted statutory or non-statutory plan.

10. The Village shall require a high standard of subdivision design to promote the efficient use of land, roads and utilities, compatibility between housing types and land uses and aesthetically pleasing residential environments. Subdivision designs should:

   a) provide for varied lot sizes to accommodate different housing types, sizes and designs;

   b) minimize through traffic on local roads;

   c) provide sufficient on-street and off-street parking;

   d) encourage the retention and integration of natural and historically interesting amenities and features;

   e) accommodate adequate parks, open space and pathway systems;

   f) provide opportunities for lots with and without lanes;

   g) provide buffers and/or distance separation of land uses and features of lesser compatibility; and

   h) promote high visual standards and interesting streetscapes.
11. The Village shall work in partnership with community agencies, non-profit organizations, senior levels of government and the business community in pursuing affordable housing options including the provision of rental units, garden suites and secondary suites when opportunities or funding programs arise.
8.0 Commercial

Goal

A vibrant and diverse commercial area that meets the needs of Broad Valley, and the surrounding area.

Objectives

- To support existing businesses and uses and welcome new commercial development to the community including home occupations.
- To promote a functional and commercially attractive Village Centre business area.
- To ensure there is sufficient commercial land available for a variety of commercial development.
- To increase and diversify the long term commercial tax base of Broad Valley.

Policies

1. The Village shall encourage the location of commercial development within the areas identified on Map 3 Land Use Concept. The detailed form of commercial on individual sites and areas shall be determined through approved area structure plans, where applicable, and Land Use Bylaw designations.

2. All commercial development shall be required to:
   a) have a high quality of external design and finishing that complements or improves upon the appearance of existing development in the vicinity;
   b) have a high quality of landscaping and aesthetically pleasing site design;
   c) have controlled vehicle access from arterial and collector roads;
   d) provide for safe onsite vehicular movement, safe and convenient pedestrian movement and linkages to the open space system where possible; and
   e) provide adequate buffering between commercial development and surrounding existing and future residential areas in order to minimize noise, traffic, light, and visual impacts.

3. The Village shall support initiatives to maintain and enhance the central business area as a viable multi-use focal point of the community that includes shopping
opportunities, personal and business services, public institutions, restaurants and entertainment and office commercial uses.

4. Where uses existing on a parcel within the commercial areas identified on Map 3 Land Use Concept do not conform with the allowable uses under a commercial Land Use Bylaw designation, the Village shall safeguard these existing uses from the limitations of non-conforming use status by listing the existing use on that particular parcel as a discretionary use within the applicable commercial Land Use Bylaw district.

5. The Village shall strive for the development of a compact central business area along Main Street, and Railway Avenue north of Main Street and south of Third Street South as shown on Map 3 Land Use Concept and encourage development and redevelopment to maximum allowable densities.

6. The Village shall encourage compact commercial development through commercial mixed use buildings and live/work units including residential uses, where there is minimal possibility of conflict between adjacent uses and development of second floor space in commercial areas.

7. The Village shall encourage mixed use development in the central business area that includes complementary land uses such as community, cultural, recreational, entertainment, public uses and residential. In acting on this policy, the Village shall recognize that residential uses in the central business area will be subjected to more noise and traffic than is typically considered acceptable in a predominantly residential area and accept this as one of the trade-offs associated with creating residential opportunities in this area.

8. New development and redevelopment in the central business area shall be encouraged to use pedestrian oriented building and site design (building entrance close to or directly accessible from the public sidewalk) rather than vehicle oriented designs (parking lot separating building from public sidewalk) wherever possible.

9. The Village supports the development of home occupations in residential districts in accordance with the standards of the Land Use Bylaw.
9.0 Industrial

Goal

A strong industrial district which meets and services the needs of Broad Valley and district.

Objectives

- To expand and build upon Broad Valley’s experience with industrial, agricultural and resource based activities.
- To ensure there is a variety of parcel sizes and servicing levels to attract a diverse range of industry and related service industries.
- To increase and diversify the long term industrial tax base in Broad Valley.
- To minimize potential conflicts between industrial and non-industrial land uses.

Policies

1. Industrial activities shall include the development of structures, buildings and landscaped areas. Map 3 Land Use Concept indicates areas designated for Industrial development.

2. A wide variety of lot sizes will be provided to ensure the availability of land for a broad range of industrial activities. Industrial areas shall be provisioned with adequate infrastructure that can accommodate these developments in a timely, economical and environmentally sustainable manner.

3. The Village shall promote Broad Valley’s locational advantage when pursuing industrial expansion in areas of agricultural related activities, light industrial manufacturing, material transportation, heavy equipment, and support service activities.

4. Industrial development shall be encouraged to locate on lands readily accessible to existing transportation infrastructure to provide for efficient transportation and shipping operations.

5. Industrial uses shall integrate access and egress with Highway 590 through the use of service road systems or controlled access points approved by Alberta Transportation.
6. Care shall be taken in the placement and approval of industrial uses that normally create significant land use conflicts with regard to noise, vibration, smoke, dust, odour or potential environmental contamination. Such uses shall be encouraged to find a location that maximizes separation from residential areas and does not impact adjacent land uses.

7. The designation of additional land for industrial use shall take into consideration the following criteria:

   a) the site shall have direct and approved access to a major public road;

   b) the development will not generate additional traffic on residential streets;

   c) the development shall not have adverse impacts on the natural environment, including groundwater resources; and

   d) the development shall not detract from the visual attractiveness of the area.

8. The Village will require an independent Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to be completed before considering approval of an industrial use in a newly developed area which may have impacts on public health or the environment.

9. Industries considered hazardous due to the transport, handling, bulk storage or use of hazardous materials shall be discouraged from locating within the Village boundaries.
10.0 Transportation

Goal

Broad Valley is accessible, with a transportation network that provides a wide variety of options that are efficient, reliable and cost-effective to serve diverse needs and capabilities of citizens.

Objectives

- To ensure transportation infrastructure permits safe, efficient and convenient vehicle and pedestrian circulation.

- To provide access and internal roads to serve the existing and future needs of the Village.

- To consider environmental interests when planning, constructing and maintaining road systems.

- To ensure that future land use and development is compatible with existing and planned transportation infrastructure, including the Alberta Prairie Railway.

Policies

1. Developments will ensure safe access and egress from adjacent roadways without disruption to the transportation network. Highway 590 and Highway 56, local and arterial roadways are identified on Map 3 Land Use Concept

2. Planned development shall minimize transportation-related expenditures in service provision by coordinating access points on provincial roads and highways to minimize disruption to traffic flows.

3. The Village will work with Alberta Transportation to ensure land uses and development does not encroach on highway traffic circulation and safety. The Village shall continue cooperating with County of Settlers in the planning of inter-municipal transportation networks.

4. The Village will continue to budget for roadway improvement in annual and long-range budgets and plan roadways to ensure that they provide appropriate service in a cost effective manner.

5. The Village shall consider the long-term costs of transportation infrastructure and the short-term cost to individuals and businesses in all land use and development decisions. Infill development shall be encouraged as a means to reduce the need for new transportation infrastructure.
6. Care shall be taken in the location and approval of transportation infrastructure that normally creates significant land use conflicts with regard to noise, vibration, smoke, dust, odour or potential environmental contamination. Noise attenuation devices and visual screens, other land uses, development regulations (i.e. lot depth), or landscaped buffer strips shall be required to be installed by developers between new residential development and highways, railways and/or arterial roads.

7. The Village requires that Area Structure Plans (ASP) establish road types and major road alignment. New roads will be planned and constructed with regards to proposed land uses and the provision of suitable access.

8. New subdivisions will be required to enter into a subdivision servicing agreement and/or development levy. All roads and sidewalks or trail construction must meet municipal requirements. Any future subdivision shall provide for the general alignment of road networks identified in any adopted Area Structure Plan.

9. Signed truck and dangerous goods routes shall continue to be identified and monitored in order to minimize truck traffic intrusion into residential areas.

10. Property for road rights-of-way will be acquired through dedication or an agreement for purchase at the time of development or redevelopment of property through building setbacks and subdivision design.

11. The Village, through this Plan, shall provide for efficient and effective land use and transportation planning including consultation with Alberta Prairie Railway in order to minimize the potential for future land use conflicts and provide adequate protection for existing railway infrastructure. (i.e. land development or redevelopment in proximity to existing rail lines and road/rail crossing issues).

12. The Village will consult with Alberta Prairie Railway to ensure the safety of train, vehicular, and pedestrian traffic within the Village.
11.0 Heritage Preservation

Goal

Well preserved historical resources that aid in promoting the Village of Broad Valley as a cultural hub, through partnerships with local and regional organizations for rehabilitation, reuse and remembrance of heritage resources.

Objectives

- To identify and conserve the best elements of the Village’s cultural and heritage resources.
- To prioritize projects which promote local interest in Broad Valley’s heritage attributes.
- To encourage collaborations among community interest groups and businesses to promote the Village’s cultural assets.
- To encourage opportunities for reuse or rehabilitation of historic buildings.

Policies

1. The Village will cooperate with community stakeholders to identify and continually assess the significance of historic, cultural sites and special areas within Broad Valley.

2. At the request of owners and in accordance with the Historical Resources Act, significant historic sites and architectural features shall be designated and recognized as heritage properties. The Village will require the appropriate use and treatment of properties designated through the Act.

3. Existing heritage resources should be protected from incompatible or potentially incompatible land uses which may negatively impact their integrity or operation.

4. The Village shall encourage owners to conserve buildings and sites with heritage merit. Research and the collection of historical information of heritage buildings shall be continued.

5. The Broad Valley Historical Society shall be supported in their efforts to acquire, conserve, study, exhibit regional historical and cultural objects and artifacts and to educate/outreach to promote Broad Valley’s regional culture and heritage history.

6. The Museum shall be encouraged to market on-site activities and programming through collaboration with the Red Deer Regional Tourism initiative, Travel Alberta and the Alberta Ministry of Tourism and Culture.
7. The Village shall work with the Alberta Prairie Railway to promote Broad Valley as a heritage and tourist destination.

8. The Village shall continue partnering with County of Settlers for assistance in support of cultural facilities to ensure access to quality facilities and programs for the benefit of Village and district residents and users.

9. Recognition, through signage or place naming, shall be encouraged throughout Broad Valley to honour significant citizen and corporate contributions. Sport, agricultural and industrial heritage may be highlighted through the naming or sponsorship of public amenities and spaces.
12.0 Parks, Recreation and Culture

Goal

Integrated, accessible and well-planned facilities, along with open space and parks system that supports a broad range of recreation and cultural opportunities catering to diverse groups, and promote quality art and cultural programming that enlivens and celebrates the Village and region.

Objectives

- To provide natural open space areas which enhance the community’s appearance.
- To provide, encourage and support an adequate range of social care, day care, and religious opportunities to meet the needs of the community, in appropriate and accessible locations.
- To plan for and provide capital investment in maintaining and upgrading existing facilities and developing new recreation and community facilities.
- To encourage partnerships among community interest groups and businesses to promote the Village’s cultural assets.

Policies

1. The Village shall provide built and natural settings for recreation include facilities, parklands, open space areas and trails and recreational facilities to meet the needs of a growing community.

2. The Village encourages a range of recreational uses. A balance of indoor and outdoor experiences shall be explored to ensure recreational facilities achieve optimum usage and are accessible by Village and district residents for year-round recreational pursuits.

3. The Village will continue to explore funding options for the provision of recreation services and facilities in Broad Valley through partnerships with the public, private and not-for-profit sectors, County of Settlers, government agencies, and community groups.

4. Recognition, through signage or place naming, shall be encouraged throughout Broad Valley to honour significant citizen and corporate contributions. Sport, agricultural and industrial heritage may be highlighted through the naming or
sponsorship of public amenities and spaces. The corporate “sponsoring” of recreational facilities, park and trail furniture will be encouraged.

5. The Village shall work with and coordinate the initiatives of developers and other agencies to enhance the parks and open space network in Broad Valley including Municipal Reserve land and the dedication of environmentally sensitive areas.

6. The use of Municipal Reserve dedication for recreation shall be encouraged including the consolidation of reserve lands into larger parks and the provision of trail linkages around the Village when possible. New subdivisions must include walkway easements or Municipal Reserve linkages to existing development.

7. Local playgrounds shall be centrally located and safely sited within residential neighbourhoods as part of the Municipal Reserve dedication requirement.

8. In new residential subdivisions the provision and development of buffer strips, walkways, pathways and utility rights-of-way will be encouraged to separate incompatible land uses and, if possible, to keep important natural areas generally intact.

9. The Village supports the preservation of natural areas and natural vegetation in open spaces. A variety of native trees and vegetation shall be encouraged to minimize maintenance and water use. The Village encourages the planting of shelterbelts and windbreaks (snow catch) on municipal lands and on privately owned properties.

10. A safe network of pedestrian/bicycle sidewalks and trails between parks, recreational, community and institutional uses within the community shall be identified. The Village shall encourage trail user participation when planning trail design and maintenance programs.

11. The Village will cooperate with community stakeholders to identify and continually assess the significance of historic, cultural sites and special areas within Broad Valley.

12. At the request of owners and in accordance with the Historical Resources Act, significant historic sites and architectural features shall be designated and recognized as heritage properties. The Village will require the appropriate use and treatment of properties designated through the Act.

13. Existing heritage resources should be protected from incompatible or potentially incompatible land uses which may negatively impact their integrity or operation.

14. The Broad Valley Historical Society shall be supported in their efforts to acquire, conserve, study, exhibit regional historical and cultural objects and artifacts and to educate/outreach to promote Broad Valley’s regional culture and heritage history.
15. The Museum shall be encouraged to market on-site activities and programming through collaboration with Travel Alberta and the Alberta Ministry of Tourism and Culture.

16. Upon subdivision, the subdivision authority shall require the provision of up to ten percent (10%) of the land to be subdivided as Municipal Reserve in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Government Act. Municipal Reserve parcels shall be located so as to allow for convenient access by the public and shall not consist of ecologically sensitive lands.

17. Municipal and Environmental Reserves may be used for active and passive recreation, the development of continuous pedestrian linkages or for natural drainage courses, storm water retention or other similar uses. The Village may, at its discretion, credit a portion of lands dedicated as public utility lots (PULs) towards overall reserve dedication if the Village determines that the subject PUL lands have recreational value.

18. Municipal Reserve parcels may be used to provide green spaces, buffers, school sites, parks and recreation facilities, and linear parks and pathways, as identified on Appendix A: “Future Land Use Concept”. Other Municipal Reserve parcels not shown on Appendix A may be identified in outline plans and/or as part of the subdivision approval process.

19. When dedication of Municipal Reserve is required for subdivision, the Village may accept cash-in-lieu of dedication unless there is an identified need for recreational land in the vicinity of the development.
13.0 Environment

Goal

The protection and enhancement of natural areas and features in the village to maintain ecological integrity and avoid hazards.

Objectives

- To acknowledge and conserve natural, environmental features and systems within the Village of Broad Valley.
- To restrict development on land that is environmentally sensitive and/or subject to development risks.
- To extend the responsibility for sound environmental management to property owners and developers.
- To be proactive in acknowledging the potential for climate change effects.

Policies

1. Agricultural holdings within the Village’s boundary shall be encouraged to protect the natural and economic value of their soils by minimizing activities that cause soil degradation or loss. Topsoil should be retained, where possible, to provide a rich basis for site planting and landscape development.

2. Subdivision and development proposals involving hazard lands may be required to include a Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment in accordance with the Canadian Standards Association Z768-01 and/or a geotechnical assessment conducted by a qualified professional engineer, and to follow the recommendations of these studies regarding measures that could mitigate the hazardous conditions.

3. The Village will require a development proponent to provide documentation that a property, suspected as having some form of contamination, is clean or has been cleaned-up. This documentation is to be provided prior to undertaking any development of a suspected contaminated property. Where documentation is not available, the Village will require the proponent to undertake an analysis to determine the possible nature and extent of any contamination in accordance with Alberta Environment and Parks Regulations.
4. The Village shall protect municipal water quality and quantity by minimizing potential negative impacts through sound land use planning practices in source areas in collaboration with the County of Settlers.

5. The Village will encourage the use of innovative low impact development design, permeable surfaces, and technologies in infill redevelopments to address storm water runoff, groundwater infiltration and water quality on-site. Development shall avoid developing in low-lying catchment areas and drainage courses.

6. The Village shall ensure adequate storm water drainage of new developments by preserving natural holding areas or by other means which may be engineered and constructed (i.e. storm water retention pond).

7. Future developments shall integrate into the natural surroundings and shall complement the surrounding community design, landscape and vegetation. Natural areas and sensitive ecological areas shall be identified and protected where human activities may potentially stress the environment.

8. The Village will identify significant natural features, hazardous lands, and other lands and features for conservation. Where feasible, these areas are to be preserved and integrated into the open space system for public use and/or environmental protection or public safety. Consideration shall be given to the drainage effects of development in ecologically sensitive areas.

9. Upon subdivision, the subdivision authority may require that undevelopable lands are dedicated as Environmental Reserve parcels or Environmental Reserve easements in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Government Act.

10. For the protection of riparian zones, specifically around Broad Valley Creek, the minimum width of an environmental reserve adjacent to a water body or, in the absence of an environmental reserve, the minimum width of a development setback from a water body shall be 30 metre (100 feet) measured from the bed and shore of the water body or from an associated water management right-of-way to the nearest boundary of private property, subject to the discretion of the Village. Retention or new planting of natural vegetation is encouraged within the building setback as a means of enhancing water quality through sediment and contaminant removal and biodegradation.

11. Environmental Reserve parcels and Environmental Reserve easements shall remain undeveloped in their natural state. At its discretion, the Village may develop Environmental Reserve parcels for uses that are consistent with the Municipal Government Act and other applicable Acts.
14.0 Community and Protective Services

Goal
The residents of Broad Valley and surrounding area are well-served with social and protective services that reflect the level of service desired by the community.

Objectives

- To protect the residents of Broad Valley from criminal activity and unlawful conduct and ensure that the community can adequately deal with emergency situations.
- To ensure that emergency response plans are current and reflect changes in land uses or activities.
- To build partnerships with community groups, social, safety, and protective agencies.
- To work with surrounding municipalities in providing the required emergency service infrastructure on a regional delivery basis.

Policies

1. Public safety requirements shall guide all developments. The Village shall ensure that their Emergency Response Plan is current and reflects changes in land uses or activities. This plan is modified on an ongoing basis to ensure the most up-to-date resources and agencies are actively involved in the implementation of the Plan should an emergency situation arise.

2. The Village shall, on an annual basis, review the number of emergencies and response times to determine the requirement for additional protective services. In addition, the Village shall review the long-term capital building and equipment needs for protective services on an annual basis or as required by provincial agencies.

3. The Emergency Response Plan for the Village will be coordinated with all federal and provincial programs and policies and supportive of the other municipalities within the region. The Village shall support Emergency Protection services and facilities to ensure they are staffed with paid or volunteer individuals to meet the needs for protective services.

4. The Village of Broad Valley will continue working with existing emergency planning and response agencies in the region. The Village recognizes the importance of the Settlers Regional Emergency Management Partnership which is mutually supportive though reduces unnecessary duplication of resources.
5. The Village recognizes and appreciates the RCMP and County of Settlers Peace Officers and the services they provide. The Village invites these members to participate in community events both as members of the community and in their professional capacities.

6. The Village shall consider *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design* principles (CPTED) when reviewing development applications and in the layout and implementation of green spaces, gathering spaces and public areas.
15.0 Municipal Infrastructure

Goal
Residents, businesses and properties in Broad Valley will have access to safe, reliable, adequate and cost effective utility services capable of supporting existing and future urban development.

Objectives

- To proactively plan for the maintenance, replacement and upgrading of public utilities.
- To promote the use of conservation practices to reduce utility consumption, demands on utility systems and impacts on the environment.

Policies

1. Development and services should occur in a manner that minimizes the financial burden and risk for the citizens and property owners of Broad Valley while maintaining the Village’s fiscal health.

2. The citizens of Broad Valley should, whenever possible, be provided with adequate, timely, and efficient protective services. This includes, but is not limited to, protection from loss of life and property from fire, accident, natural disaster, or unlawful activity.

3. The citizens of Broad Valley should, whenever possible, be provided with adequate, timely, and efficient common services. This includes, but is not limited to infrastructure development and maintenance, snow removal, and garbage removal.

4. The citizens of Broad Valley should, whenever possible, be provided with adequate social programs and services that enhance the social wellbeing of individuals, families, and the community as a whole.

5. All development shall have, whenever possible, adequate access for common and protective service providers.

6. The Village may promote the transfer of operating costs of services and community facilities from the general tax base to users.

7. The Village supports the development, whenever possible, of partnerships with the County of Settlers for the provision of municipal services.
16.0 Intermunicipal Cooperation

Goal

Cooperate with adjacent municipalities and other government agencies to achieve mutual objectives benefitting residents and businesses in Broad Valley and helping to secure the Village’s long-term position in the region.

Objectives

- To broaden the joint planning, development and operating framework with the County of Settlers, and other municipalities through Joint Economic and Intermunicipal Agreements.
- To ensure open dialogue with the County of Settlers to address issues of mutual interest.
- To cooperate with the County of Settlers to ensure the availability of an adequate supply of urban developable land for future growth needs.

Policies

1. Intermunicipal cooperation and private or public sector initiatives that focus on a cooperative approach to providing and sharing community services shall be encouraged.

2. The Village promotes open communication with other interested parties including local industry, landowners, the Province, adjacent municipalities, transportation and utility companies and provincial authorities which provide services in the district.

3. The Village shall cooperate in a joint planning, development and operating framework with the County of Settlers that addresses the effective cost-efficient coordination of land uses, future growth areas, transportation systems, municipal infrastructure and community services through the policies and intent of the Village of Broad Valley/County of Settlers Intermunicipal Development Plan.

4. The Village shall ensure regular communication and dialogue with County of Settlers with respect to proposed planning initiatives, development and related issues.

5. The Village shall discourage, wherever possible, development or uses that may have a negative impact on adjacent uses in the County of Settlers. The Village of Broad Valley will refer to the County of Settlers for comment, prior to a decision, all:

   a) proposed statutory plans and plan amendments;
b) applications for land use bylaw amendment;

c) redesignation and subdivision;

d) dedication or disposition of environmental, municipal and/or school reserves;

e) public utility lots or road allowances;

f) discretionary non-residential development permit applications;

g) general planning studies and other major development proposals located adjacent to the Village boundary.

6. The Village encourages the County of Settlers to consult with the Village prior to a decision in regards to proposed statutory plans, applications for redesignation and subdivision, and development proposals situated within 1.6 kilometres (1 mile) of the Village boundary.

7. The Village should avoid a large and complex annexation in favour of annexations involving smaller amounts of land occurring on an as-needed basis where the annexation area can be serviced with a logical and cost effective extension of existing road and servicing networks.

8. The periodic need for urban expansion through the annexation process should be logical and consistent with the policies of this Plan. Annexation shall be undertaken in a positive, orderly, timely, and agreed-upon process where there is a clear and present need and development is expected to occur within a five (5) year period.

9. The need for community expansion should be demonstrated, to the satisfaction of the County, that the conversion of rural land for urban expansion in areas adjacent to the Village is timely and will protect existing rural land uses from premature conversion to urban forms of development. Annexation shall follow legal boundaries or natural features to avoid creating a fragmented pattern of land ownership and should as much as possible have the support of the current landowners.

10. Where it is necessary to expand the boundaries of the Village, expansion should be well-integrated with the existing community infrastructure and directed away from large acreages of prime farmland and livestock operations. Where growth warrants the expansion onto adjacent agricultural lands, the land requirement of the Village will take precedence over any existing agricultural use of these lands.
17.0 Implementation

Goal
To promote the implementation and use of the Municipal Development Plan.

Objectives
- To implement the MDP through other statutory and non-statutory plans and ensure consistency between these plans and the MDP.
- To provide guidance on interpreting and applying the MDP policies and directions.
- To foster awareness of land use planning policies and participation in planning processes by stakeholders and the general public.
- To provide for periodic review and amendment of the MDP and monitoring of effort to achieve the MDP goals.

Policies
1. The MDP contains “shall”, “should” and “may” policies which are interpreted as follows:
   - “Shall” policies must be complied with,
   - “Should” policies mean compliance in principle but subject to the discretion of the applicable authority on a case by case basis, and
   - “May” policies indicate that the applicable authority determines the level of compliance that is required. Inter-municipal cooperation and private or public sector initiatives that focus on a cooperative approach to providing and sharing community services shall be encouraged.

2. The Village or a landowner may initiate an amendment to this Plan. The Village shall require the submission of such background information as is considered necessary to support the amendment prior to the start of the bylaw amendment process. Amendment of the MDP shall follow the appropriate procedures as outlined in the Municipal Government Act.

3. All statutory plans adopted by the Village shall be consistent with one another. The Municipal Development Plan shall be consistent with the direction of the Intermunicipal Development Plan. All area structure plans and area redevelopment plans shall be consistent with the MDP.

4. Before approval of any Land Use Bylaw amendment that would allow for subdivision or development of a large block of land that has not been previously developed or used for any use other than agriculture, an area structure plan shall be required. For the purposes of this policy, a large block of land refers to a parcel...
of land having an area of 40 acres or more. For blocks of land having an area less than 40 acres, an area structure plan may be required if, in the opinion of the Village, such a plan is needed. All area structure plans shall be prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Municipal Government Act and any policies established by the Village relating to process and content requirements of an area structure plan.

5. As part of the process of managing physical growth and changes in the community, the Village shall facilitate public input on matters of general or specific planning interest, wherever possible. Public input may be obtained using a variety of techniques such as open houses, public meetings, focus groups, citizen advisory groups, workshops and surveys. The techniques and processes used may vary, based on the nature of the plan or matter being considered. Public input may be sought at any or all levels of decision making including concept development, detailed design and implementation. Input should be facilitated as early in the decision making process as possible.

6. In making a decision on a planning matter, the Village shall consider, but not be bound by, the input received from the public and shall balance the input received with other considerations relating to the long term land use planning interests of the broader community. The Village shall also continue to advise residents of existing plans and planning policies and the outcome of key planning decisions.

7. In order to ensure that the MDP is current, the plan should be reviewed every five to ten years.

8. To allow tracking of the impact and effectiveness of the MDP policies a bi-annual (every 2 years) report should be prepared and submitted to Village Council.

9. Various policies in this Plan suggest spending by the Village in order to achieve its successful implementation. Pursuant to the Municipal Government Act, it is not the intention of this Plan to commit Village Council to funding decisions. The funding of any proposals of this Plan shall be considered on an annual basis during the Village’s budget process along with all other funding requests and priorities.
Sample MDP Village of Broad Valley

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Guidebook for Preparing a Municipal Development Plan
Sample C: MDP for a Summer Village

Summer Village of Aspen Shores
Municipal Development Plan
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Introduction

The Summer Village of Aspen Shores is a seasonal residential community located approximately 2 kilometers south of the Alberta Town via Highway 97 at the northeast tip of Clear Lake. Its primary attraction is an alternative lifestyle for the many residents that make Aspen Shores their secondary home or their principal residence. Recent years have shown a marked increase in new residential lots, redevelopment of properties as well as the introduction of municipal services.

The Municipal Development Plan provides policy statements that clarify the context in which both public and private decision making will occur. Council can therefore assess development proposals as they arise within an overall, long-range plan, which will allow Council to maintain slow, high quality growth, as well as ensuring basic municipal services continue to be made available.

Purpose

The purpose of this Municipal Development Plan (MDP) is to set policies for the use of land within the Summer Village of Aspen Shores. Also, while accepting that Summer Village council has no jurisdiction beyond the municipal boundary, this plan discusses how development outside the boundary might affect the Summer Village of Aspen Shores, and respectfully suggests how the Summer Village would like to see the County of Alberta and Alberta Town manage that land.

The general area dealt with in this plan is shown on Map 1. Also, the location and the existing boundary of the Summer Village and surrounding lands are shown on Map 1.

This plan is intended to be consistent with the Clear Lake Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP), and if the two documents conflict, the Clear Lake IDP prevails until amended.

This MDP has been prepared on behalf of the Summer Village of Aspen Shores and together with the Land Use Bylaw (LUB) adopted in May 2016 provides guidance for future land use and development within the Summer Village. The policies contained within this MDP address what type of community the Summer Village wishes to be and provides potential developers and current landowners and residents with a vision or guide for future development and growth.

This MDP has been prepared in collaboration with a steering committee comprised of the Summer Village Council and Chief Administrative Officer. Review and adoption of the MDP will be based on community consultation with residents and property owners in the Summer Village of Aspen Shores and in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Government Act.
Vision

The Municipal Development Plan sets out the future for the community for the next twenty years. The vision statements are used to facilitate a common understanding of the community in terms of what elements are important to the residents.

The following are community statements that define the Summer Village of Aspen Shores:

- We are exclusively a low density, single family residential community
- We are committed to being good and effective stewards of the environment and will act accordingly
- We are committed to providing municipal services that compliment a simple approach to community living
- We are committed to a community that respects and shows pride with regard to public and private spaces
- We will endeavour to communicate, cooperate and work towards creating a better lake environment with all municipalities surrounding Clear Lake

The means of achieving these vision statements is expanded by the goals and policies contained in this plan.

Legislative Framework

The Municipal Government Act (MGA) provides the legislative basis for the preparation of the MDP. This MDP has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Section 632 of the Municipal Government Act (MGA) (Statutes of Alberta, 2000). The Act requires that all Alberta municipalities, no matter their population, must create a Municipal Development Plan.

As per Section 692 of the Municipal Government Act, before giving second reading to a proposed bylaw to adopt a municipal development plan, or a proposed bylaw amending a statutory plan, a council must hold an appropriate public hearing after having given proper notice.

The Municipal Development Plan is a policy document that provides guidance to the Summer Village’s Council and the community concerning future development. As per Section 632 of the Municipal Government Act, the plan must be consistent with the land use policies established by the Lieutenant Governor in Council and future municipal policy documents – such as an Area Structure Plan, an Area Redevelopment Plan, an Outline Plan, or a Land Use Bylaw – or amendments to current policy documents should conform to the vision expressed herein.
Provincial Land Use Policies

Pursuant to Section 622 of the *Municipal Government Act*, the Province of Alberta developed the Land Use Policies to help harmonize provincial and municipal policy initiatives at the local land use planning level. This MDP has been prepared in the spirit and intent of the Provincial Land Use Policies.

Public Participation

The Summer Village appreciates the potential contentiousness of changes occurring within the community. There is significant research showing that the quality of development improves, along with an improvement in attitudes towards development, when thorough and fair public processes are undertaken.

Council is fully committed to participation of the residents in the planning and development of Aspen Shores. In order to ensure that local residents are able to contribute to the development process, Council, before issuing a development permit or entering into a development agreement, may require a developer to host – at their own expense – an open house or other participatory process.
1.0 Growth Management

1.1 Location

The Summer Village of Aspen Shores is a residential community that seeks to maintain the quality of life they currently enjoy, seasonal and permanent residents alike, and is not considering growth, annexation or economic diversification. Its attraction is its recreational and open space atmosphere and basic amenities. The consumer needs of the community are met by the Alberta Town and the County of Alberta.

The study area of this Plan includes the lands contained within Aspen Shores Provincial Park. Map 1 shows the location of the study area in relation to the existing boundary of the Summer Village.

1.2 Population

Population projections are very difficult to determine for small communities, as they are not large enough to influence the general economy, but are dependent on it, and are impacted by the economic health of nearby urban centres. As with any seasonal residential community only the permanent population is recorded by Statistics Canada. The 2016 census information indicates a permanent population of 203, an increase of 11% from the 2011 census findings of 183 persons.

The past 15 years have shown significant population growth due to the development of previously vacant lands and conversion of seasonal dwellings to permanent residences. Considering the implementation of new municipal utilities and high land values, this trend is expected to continue over the next 10 years.

1.3 Location of Growth

The Proposed Land Use Concept (Map 3) generally outlines the location of existing land uses within the Summer Village and indicates where future settlement may be appropriate. The development pattern reflects the desires of the existing residents yet makes provision for new residents wishing to locate in the community. The boundaries are conceptual only and the actual road locations and land use patterns will be determined at the appropriate subdivision and development stages and through the land use redesignation process.

GOALS:

To ensure that growth is appropriate and complementary to the existing surrounding uses.

To ensure that growth is measured to mitigate impacts on the environment, and quality of life for existing residents.
POLICIES:

1.3.1 The Land Use Concept (Map 3) divides the Summer Village into the following land use areas:
   (a) Residential Area
   (b) Open Space Area
   (c) Commercial Area

1.3.2 The Municipal Cooperation Area is concerned with lands outside the municipal boundary and therefore the policies established in this plan are the subject of intermunicipal planning agreements between the County of Alberta, the Alberta Town and the Summer Village.

1.3.3 New subdivisions that create more than two (2) lots, or that require the dedication of a public road allowance, shall require an outline plan approved by Council before an application for subdivision may be considered.
2.0 Residential Development

Residential use is the exclusive permitted land use within Aspen Shores (Map 3). It is the intention of Council and the wishes of the residents that the community retains the character of a seasonal residential community even as it slowly evolves into a more permanent residential community. It is also their desire to promote a high standard of residential development and open space both within the existing built areas and in any future development areas.

GOAL:

To encourage high standards for new and existing development that complements and protects the existing character of the Summer Village.

POLICIES:

2.1 Single detached dwellings will be the main form of housing permitted within the Summer Village of Aspen Shores.

2.2 Council does not approve of commercial operations within the Summer Village, with the exception of Council approved home based businesses. Conditions and considerations for discretionary commercial ventures will be addressed in the Summer Village’s Land Use Bylaw.

2.3 All development shall conform to the provisions set forth in the Summer Village of Aspen Shores Land Use Bylaw.

2.4 Council supports the recommendation of the Clear Lake Association that the edge between lake and private property be kept as natural as possible for the lake to maintain its natural ecosystem.

2.5 There is an active landfill site on NW 4-50-5-W5 north of the Summer Village and east of Highway 97. It is within the County of Alberta; therefore, it has no formal restriction to any future development within the Summer Village. The 450m setback from the active land fill site is an excellent buffer from Summer Village to rural environment.

2.6 Lastly, there is an active lagoon belonging to Alberta Town, which is located on NE 4-50-5-W6. It is west of Range Road 53 and just north of Aspen Shores. It is within the County of Alberta therefore has no formal restriction to any future development within the Summer Village. The 450m setback from the lagoon is an excellent buffer from Summer Village to rural environment.

2.7 Map 4 shows many constraints around the Summer Village. Council of the Summer Village understands a great risk from these constraints therefore, Council decided to have additional setback for residences and increased it to 450m away from the landfill and the lagoon. However, these areas are within the County and therefore the County is still the development authority on these properties.
3.0 Open Space and the Natural Environment

The majority of residents of Aspen Shores have chosen the community because of the recreational lifestyle that the Clear Lake area offers. Although the current municipal owned land generally is left natural, it is Council’s desire to provide an Open Space system that provides a variety of experiences for the residents. Additionally, Aspen Shores faces pressures from outside users – ranging from parking, to private lessons on public property, to storage – that will require monitoring and, possibly, intervention.

New residential developments should incorporate alternative forms of recreational and open space lands that will meet the needs of the future residents. The lands that do not have direct lakeshore access require a more detailed and comprehensive plan.

Although traffic within the Summer Village does not, as of yet, present problems for pedestrians or cyclists, the desire for a trail system that follows the general alignment of Highway 97 is seen as positive by the majority of the residents.

Map 4 shows the location of treed areas and must be protected by conservation easements.

GOALS:

To maintain the privacy of all residents and ensure that negative impacts of non-resident users are mitigated.

To maintain and enhance the environmental integrity of the open spaces and provide a greater variety of passive recreational activities.

To ensure that the provision of open space and reserve land is in balance with the demands of the residents.

To ensure that public areas do not become an economic burden on local ratepayers.

POLICIES:

3.1 Open Space uses are generally expected to occur in accordance with the plan’s Land Use Concept (Map 3).

Open Space within the Summer Village will be designated as:
(a) Recreation Area;
(b) Conservation Area; or
(c) Connectivity Area

3.2 The following primary purpose shall guide the management of each designation of Open Space:

(a) Recreation Area: environmental management, open play, and recreation;
(b) Conservation Area: protection of the natural environment and landscape
appreciation;
(c) Connectivity Area: facilitation of movement throughout the Summer Village, landscape appreciation, and environmental management. These areas often conform to the Summer Village’s undeveloped road allowances.

A list of permitted and discretionary amenities for each designation can be found in Table 1 – Open Space Amenities.

3.3 Council shall require an environmental assessment/audit to be carried out on any site that has significant portions denoted Conservation Area that is the subject of a development proposal.

3.4 Council will discourage proposed developments that may have undesired environmental impacts.

3.5 As provided for in the Municipal Government Act, the Summer Village shall acquire the maximum allowable amount of municipal reserve, school reserve, or municipal and school reserve in order to obtain sufficient lands for local needs. The evaluation of proposed reserve land shall be based on:

(a) the size and configuration of the proposed reserve parcel(s);
(b) the proposed reserve parcel(s) accessibility to users;
(c) the proposed reserve parcel(s) characteristic; and
(d) the proposed reserve parcel(s) development potential.

3.6 Council will take the full ten (10) percent of dedication of municipal reserve as reserve land except for exceptional circumstances where cash-in-lieu may be appropriate for part or all of the provision of municipal reserves.

3.7 Public trails and natural green spaces are acceptable uses of municipal reserves in the Summer Village of Aspen Shores.

3.8 The Summer Village of Aspen Shores may require that part of a parcel of land of a proposed subdivision be dedicated as environmental reserve if that part consists of:
(a) a swamp, gully, ravine, coulee or natural drainage course;
(b) land that is subject to flooding or is, in the opinion of the subdivision authority, unstable; or
(c) a strip of land, not less than 30 meters (of environmental reserve or a combination of environmental reserve and environmental reserve easement) in width, abutting the high water mark of any lake, river, stream or other body of water for the purpose of
   i. preventing pollution, or
   ii. providing public access to and beside the bed and shore.

3.9 For reasons of environmental integrity and to maintain the character of the community, the Summer Village supports that Conservation Areas:

(a) should be left in their natural condition as much as possible; and
(b) may be appropriate for low-impact trails to provide access where conditions
are suitable;
(c) treed areas shown on Map 2 are protected from development and must be left in their natural condition.

3.10 Tree cutting and pruning is prohibited on any open space areas, including but not limited to municipal reserves, environmental reserves (and environmental reserve easements), and undeveloped road allowances without the prior approval of the Summer Village.

3.11 The open space areas are meant for the enjoyment of residents and visitors, not generally for storage or parking. The Summer Village recognizes the impacts of storage and parking on public property and will investigate how to best address these linked issues.

3.12 In order to address the encroachment of private facilities on the Summer Village’s reserves the following policies will apply:

(a) For private facilities encroaching upon municipal reserves, landowners will be asked to remove unauthorized material and structures; the owner of any unauthorized structures may be able to enter into a license agreement to allow the structures to remain on municipal reserve land only in unusual or extenuating circumstance. Any private facilities that are allowed to remain shall be maintained in a safe – as regularly certified by a professional engineer – and environmentally responsible manner, and provide proof, and ongoing assurance, of proper liability insurance;

(b) For private facilities encroaching upon environmental reserves, landowners will be asked to remove unauthorized structures and materials by a specific date.

3.13 The Summer Village of Aspen Shores shall not dispose of lakefront reserves, and disposition of other reserves may only occur under exceptional circumstances and after the careful consideration of Council.

3.14 Council will ensure that all development complies with the provisions of the provincial Land Use Policies regarding the protection of, and consideration for, the natural environment.

3.15 The Summer Village recognizes the many water activities that occur on the lake, but that the development of a public boat launch is neither desirable nor practical within the community.

3.16 Council will participate in a regional approach to identifying appropriate locations for, and promoting, an additional boat launch for the lake. Council will work with Provincial Park authorities, Environmental Protection, Reserve #99, County of Alberta, and the Alberta Town, as well as the other summer villages in realizing this project.

3.17 The Summer Village will support a pedestrian/cyclist trail to provide a reasonable link within the limits of the Summer Village – without infringing on the privacy and security of the residents – and to connect to existing and future trails developed in
3.18 All trail designs must be reviewed and approved by Council before development may occur in order to ensure the trail’s appropriateness for its context.

3.19 Surveyed and undeveloped road allowances throughout the Summer Village are considered a part of the Open Spaces system for the purpose of this plan. These road allowances are:

(a) to be left in their natural condition as much as possible;  
(b) to provide pedestrian access to the lake shore;  
(c) to provide access to, community docks where permitted by the Summer Village;  
(d) to provide alternative methods for access, where appropriate, through the adoption of a bylaw or resolution by council; and  
(e) to be kept in a reasonable state of repair by the Summer Village.

3.20 As emerging provincial legislation is brought forward and clarified, the Summer Village shall continue to investigate, regulate, and enforce policy concerning the issue of community docks and boat lifts.

3.21 On SE4-50-5-W6 i a low/wet sensitive area is identified. This area is not suitable for development but it should be protected as a wetland as environmental reserve. Future development plans must dedicate this area as environmental reserve for the protection of the natural drainage, etc.
4.0 Commercial

There is a small pizza/donair shop in the centre of the Summer Village, which opens during the summer season only. There is also a gas station within the Summer Village which opens all year round. The Summer Village’s land use bylaw does not provide for this use. That could cause problems if the present building burned down and the Summer Village was legally unable to issue a permit for a replacement.

There may also be small home businesses operating out of residences. The land use bylaw allows these as a discretionary use, and appears to give the development officer adequate guidance in the exercise of discretion.

If more lots are developed, or even if more of the present residences are used year-round, it is possible that landowners may want to develop commercial outlets such as boat rentals or storage compounds where boats and RVs can be stored securely for the winter. Whether or not land would be zoned for these uses would be decided by council at the time of application.

Neighbours are often concerned that by granting commercial zoning, the municipality may be opening the door for undesirable uses such as bars. This can be avoided by limiting the approved uses, or by using Direct Control zoning under section 641 of the Municipal Government Act, in which "council may ... regulate and control the use of land and buildings ... in any manner it considers necessary".

GOALS:

To encourage the growth and development of the Summer Village’s commercial base.

To minimize incompatibility with adjacent uses.

POLICIES:

4.1 Ensure that any new commercial uses are compatible with existing residential uses.

4.2 Ensure that the lakeside character of the community is maintained.

4.3 Ensure that adequate parking is provided on-site, or in close proximity, for the intended use.
5.0 Utilities and Municipal Services

It is the intention of Council to maintain Municipal services currently contracted for the Summer Village. They are snow removal, snow fencing, ditch mowing, garbage collection, police, fire, and general maintenance. There are contracts for the operations of the Summer Village Office, as well as the continued services of the administrator and other support staff. Growth of the Summer Village by development of new lands or by an increase of permanent residents will not affect the ability of the Summer Village to maintain these basic services.

Historically the Summer Village of Aspen Shores was a minimally serviced, seasonal residential community. Over the years, as environmental concerns over lake water quality were raised, Council and ratepayers have chosen to implement solutions that address sewage disposal methods that respect the natural lake environment. To this end, Council approved the capital expenditure and secured grant monies for the installation of a municipal sewage collection system in 1996. The entire system was installed in the spring of 1997 and connected to treatment facilities in the Alberta Town. Costs associated with this project are to be recovered by off-site levies for future growth areas and an improvement bylaw was utilized for the existing built area.

The private utility companies have facilities in place that will serve the future growth of the municipality. Their systems are monitored and will be upgraded as growth and markets dictate.

As permanent residency increases to levels where the addition of a municipal water distribution system is requested and warranted, Council will review the need to provide that service, and work with the water and sewer commission to ensure appropriate service.

GOALS:

To maintain and upgrade the sanitary sewer system as required.

To ensure an effective storm water drainage system is in place for future and existing developed areas.

To develop and maintain an adequate municipal water supply to meet domestic and firefighting requirements.

To ensure the orderly and economic extensions of the utility systems to all developing areas of Aspen Shores.

POLICIES:

5.1 The Summer Village will continue to work with regional partners and the Regional Water Commission concerning the provision of a municipal water system.

5.2 Council does not support street lighting within the Summer Village, but will
consider intersectional lighting where warranted for safety reasons.

5.3 Storm drainage plans shall be required for all new development areas. Council will review and improve surface drainage in the existing built areas as needed, and as funds are allocated.

5.4 Aspen Shores will work with provincial agencies, as necessary, to continue to address drainage issues and concerns within the Summer Village.

5.5 The development of new residential areas and roads shall not restrict the present water courses, or allow for the clearing of wooded and marsh areas.

5.6 All new developments are required to be connected to the municipal wastewater system.

5.7 Prior to any proposed development or redevelopment, confirmation must be obtained from the municipality that municipal services (e.g. sewage and water) have sufficient capacity to service the proposed development. If capacity is not present, the applicant shall be required to upgrade municipal services at their sole expense in order to obtain sufficient capacity.

5.8 Developers shall contribute to municipal service and utility upgrades if deemed necessary and to an extent deemed necessary.

5.9 New private water wells should be installed at least 60 m from any permanent body of water, as required by provincial legislation.

5.10 Within the plan area, no sour gas facilities exist within the Summer Village jurisdiction and the Summer Village does not consider sour gas facilities, or other industrial and hazardous land uses, to be appropriate for the Summer Village.

5.11 Within the plan area, there is one active well site on the west side of Highway 97 and there is a 100m development setback from that well site. This setback will limit residential development around the well site.
6.0 Transportation System

The Summer Village of Aspen Shores is essentially served by Lakeshore Drive, which consists of three separate municipal roads that have access onto Highway 97. From this one road, access is provided to all of the residential parcels. There are also two surveyed road allowances that were part of the subdivisions that created the Summer Village (Map 2).

While the Summer Village of Aspen Shores is in many ways reliant on automobiles, it is recognized that an effective transportation system considers not only automobiles, but also pedestrians, cyclists, and other alternative forms of transportation.

GOALS:

*To establish and maintain an effective and safe road system for the movement of vehicles and pedestrians in Aspen Shores.*

*To foster alternative modes of travel locally and through the region.*

POLICIES:

6.1 The Summer Village transportation system shall consist of local roads, which provide legal and physical access to the residential lots, and safe and effective highway access at the one existing location.

6.2 The Summer Village shall establish safe, visible locations for pedestrian crossings on Lakeshore Drive where deemed necessary by Council.

6.3 In order to ensure the safety of all road users, the Summer Village shall provide traffic calming measures where warranted.

6.4 All municipal roads shall be developed to the following standard:
   (a) that a 20.12 m right-of-way is provided;
   (b) that a sub-base is constructed to serve the current and projected traffic volumes, as determined by an engineer;
   (c) that a hot mix asphalt surface be a minimum of 35 mm in depth to an overall roadway width of 7.3 m pavement.

6.5 The Summer Village shall ensure that adequate maintenance of the existing roads is provided by consultation with a professional engineer.

6.6 The Summer Village will continue to work with Alberta Transportation, and other pertinent partners, to address matters such as safety and noise reduction.

6.7 The Subdivision Authority shall require the owner of a parcel of land that is the subject of a subdivision application to provide for the construction of a pedestrian trail, if and where, appropriate.
6.8 Aspen Shores shall provide on-going maintenance for existing trails within the Summer Village and explore linking the community to existing and planned trails in the County of Alberta and Alberta Town.

6.9 For the purposes of this plan, undeveloped road allowances are considered open space and are addressed in Section 3.0 Open Space and the Natural Environment.
7.0 Municipal Cooperation

The Summer Village of Aspen Shores recognizes the mutual benefits of a consultative and cooperative planning approach with regard to land uses, common infrastructure, economic growth, and environmental concerns.

GOAL:

To establish and maintain open dialogue with adjacent municipalities for the coordinated approach to matters of mutual interest.

POLICIES:

7.1 The Summer Village supports consultative approaches with adjacent rural and urban municipalities regarding but not limited to the following matters:
   (a) environmentally significant areas;
   (b) subdivision and development of adjacent lands;
   (c) transportation and utility linkages;
   (d) economic development; and
   (e) communication and issue resolution processes.

7.2 The Summer Village does not intend to annex the lands around the Summer Village Limits but the development of these lands should not materially or aesthetically impair the quality of life for the residents of Aspen Shores, therefore consideration should be given to ensure compatible land uses.

7.3 The Clear Lake Management Plan: 2015 prepared for the Clear Lake area, is the principal tool for the implementation of policies that are envisioned for the residents and public users of the lake as a whole.

7.4 The Summer Village supports intermunicipal planning initiatives for the integrated planning of Clear Lake’s shoreline, and the planning of the wider watershed in general.

7.5 Insofar as it is beneficial to residents and other municipal interests, the Summer Village of Aspen Shores may enter into utility and/or service agreements for:
   (a) water utility;
   (b) wastewater utility;
   (c) waste management;
   (d) road maintenance;
   (e) protective and emergency services;
   (f) administrative, recreation, social, cultural services; and
   (g) any other services deemed necessary.

7.6 The Summer Village of Aspen Shores will seek to collaborate with the Alberta Town, Reserve #99, County of Alberta, and other Summer Villages around Clear Lake to ensure compatible and mutually acceptable land use and development policies.
7.7 In considering any amendments to the Summer Village’s MDP, the adoption of an area structure plan or intermunicipal development plan, an amendment to the Land Use Bylaw, or the approval of any land use development, which in the opinion of the Summer Village may impact agricultural operations within and/or adjacent to the Summer Village, the Summer Village may refer the matter for comment to the County of Alberta, the agricultural operators who may be affected, and any other body the Summer Village deems appropriate.
8.0 Implementation and Review

As the overall planning document that provides direction for the subdivision and development, land use, and road patterns within the Summer Village, Council’s primary role is to administer the goals and policies of the Municipal Development Plan.

**GOAL:**

*To promote the use of the Plan by policy implementation.*

**POLICIES:**

8.1 Council may require the preparation of an area structure plan or outline plan to provide the details of land use, utility servicing, road patterns, open space, storm drainage, and any other matters deemed necessary, prior to the consideration of any re-designation (zoning) proposal, or subdivision or development application. Council will require the preparation of an outline plan for proposed subdivisions that create more than two (2) lots, or that require the dedication of a public road allowance.

8.2 This Plan shall be interpreted with flexibility having regard to its purpose, objectives and policies. The Council’s decisions on interpretation shall be final.

8.3 Council will observe the effect of this Plan after adoption and implementation, and if new ideas or changing circumstances warrant, will bring forward amendments to satisfy public concerns and aspirations.

8.4 Council will conduct a review of this Plan whenever it considers it no longer expresses the long-term goals of the Summer Village and in any event, within ten (10) years. The Plan will be amended in accordance with the procedures established in the *Municipal Government Act* (as amended).

8.5 Council will consider a Capital Works Plan in support of the policies of this plan for the future municipal improvements, including costs, with the assistance of the Summer Village Engineer.

8.6 Council will undertake a review of the Land Use Bylaw within one (1) year of adopting this Plan.

8.7 The subdivision authority is instructed by Council to require the applicant for subdivision to submit a plan of survey for all subdivisions requiring endorsement, with the exception of boundary adjustment applications.
### Summer Village of Aspen Shores Open Space Plan

**Table 1: Open Space Amenities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amenity</th>
<th>Recreation Area</th>
<th>Conservation Area</th>
<th>Connectivity Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Play Equipment</td>
<td>Δ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restroom Facilities</td>
<td>Δ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycle Racks</td>
<td>Δ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picnic Tables</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benches</td>
<td>Δ</td>
<td></td>
<td>Δ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lookout Areas</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refuse Containers</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge/Boardwalk</td>
<td></td>
<td>Δ</td>
<td>Δ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedestrian Lake Access</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>Δ</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motorized Lake Access</td>
<td>Δ</td>
<td></td>
<td>Δ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dock/Pier/Boat Lift</td>
<td>Δ</td>
<td>Δ</td>
<td>Δ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Δ” indicates a discretionary amenity when accompanied by an open space concept plan, as determined by the Council of the Summer Village.

“○” indicates an appropriate amenity when accompanied by an open space concept plan.
Sample MDP Summer Village of Aspen Shores

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Guidebook for Preparing a Municipal Development Plan
Sample MDP Summer Village of Aspen Shores

SUMMER VILLAGE OF ASPEN SHORES
MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

MAP 2
EXISTING LAND USES

MUNICIPAL BOUNDARIES SHOWN THIS

- Residential
- Commercial
- Open Space

TREED AREAS SHOWN THIS

Guidebook for Preparing a Municipal Development Plan
Sample MDP Summer Village of Aspen Shores

SUMMER VILLAGE OF ASPEN SHORES
MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

MAP 4
CONSTRAINTS ON DEVELOPMENT

MUNICIPAL BOUNDARIES SHOWN THIS

Treed areas protected by a conservation easement shown thus:...
No lot allowed within 30m...
No lots allowed within 300m...
No wells allowed within 450m...
Active oil / gas sites:
Require 500m setback to residences...
Gas pipelines:
Setback distance depends on row...
Highway 97 thru S.V., shown thus:...
Sample D: MDP for a Town of 2,500

The Town of Ravine River
Municipal Development Plan
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PART 1: OVERVIEW

Introduction
A Municipal Development Plan is the primary planning policy document for local governments in Alberta. The Municipal Development Plan provides direction for future change, growth and development within the Town of Ravine River.

Purpose of the Plan and Enabling Legislation
A municipal development plan (MDP) provides clear direction for the Town of Ravine River’s Council and Administration. The Plan is intended to guide growth and development in Ravine River by defining the vision, principles, goals, and policies of the Town regarding planning matters. This will be achieved by minimizing the occurrence of incompatible land uses; and by providing support and direction for the administration of the Land Use Bylaw, and the preparation of other statutory planning documents.

The municipal development plan, in addition to applicable Provincial legislation, will

- provide the necessary direction to assist Council, the Development Officer, and the Subdivision and Development Appeal Board in making land use decisions;
- provide a foundation for the preparation of more detailed land use plans;
- be used in conjunction with the Town’s Land Use Bylaw to implement the policies of this Plan; and
- inform residents and developers of the Town’s future land use strategy.

The MDP provides a community vision for the residents and property owners of Ravine River. It outlines the anticipated form and character of their neighbourhoods and more generally the entire Town. Furthermore, the MDP informs residents, developers, and investors with respect to what type of development is desired and identifies the preferred locations.

This Municipal Development Plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Section 632 of the Municipal Government Act and upon adoption will become a statutory document. The legal framework and process for Council to adopt a MDP is established in the Municipal Government Act. As MDPs are municipal bylaws, they are legislative documents. If council wishes to allow development that contravenes the MDP, council must first amend the Plan, through a process that will provide opportunities for public input.

In accordance with the Municipal Government Act, the MDP will address

- Future land use,
- Proposals for future development,
- Co-ordination with adjacent municipalities,
- Transportation,
- Municipal services and facilities,
- School and municipal reserves,
Protection of agricultural operations,
Land uses adjacent to sour gas facilities.

In addition, the Municipal Government Act allows the MDP to address a number of other considerations, which this plan will consider as necessary for the Town of Ravine River. These include

- Coordination of physical, social and economic development;
- Environmental matters;
- Development constraints;
- Economic development;
- Financing and programming of municipal infrastructure;
- Financial resources.

**Interpretation**

When interpreting the policy statements within this MDP document, the document should be read in its entirety to provide context. Policies are written using “shall”, “should” or “may” statements. The interpretations of “shall”, “should” and “may” that follow may provide the reader with a greater understanding of the intent of each policy statement:

- Shall/Will/Must – denotes compliance or adherence to a preferred course of action.
- Should – denotes compliance is desired or advised but may be impractical or premature because of valid planning principles or unique/extenuating circumstances.
- May – denotes discretionary compliance or a choice in applying policy.

Terms emphasized in “italics” are further defined in Part 5 Appendix A: Glossary of Terms.

**Context**

**Community History**

In the early 1920s, the Hamlet of Ravine River Landing became a regional service centre and railway crossing when the rail line was extended to the area and the first bridge was built. The rail line was later moved north and the bridge was converted for automobiles. The Hamlet of Ravine River Landing incorporated into a Village in 1945 and into a Town in 1950. Its name was changed to Ravine River in 1965.

**Regional Context**

The Town of Ravine River is surrounded by Dover County. The Town is located at the junction of Highway Y and Highway Z, and extends to both sides of the Ravine River which flows directly through the Town limits. Ravine River is approximately X km northwest of Edmonton, X km southeast of Grande Prairie, and X km northwest of Calgary. Highway Y travels in a north-south direction through the Town and Highway Z moves east-west providing links to neighbouring communities.
Planning Context

Alberta Land Use Policies
In 1996, the Alberta Government released its Land Use Policies. All municipalities must implement these policies while undertaking their planning responsibilities. These policies provide direction for the municipality to address general and specific land use planning issues. The Town of Ravine River will ensure that the vision, goals, and policies of the MDP are consistent with the Land Use Policies.

Land Use Framework
The Province of Alberta is currently in the process of developing seven regional plans with two completed thus far (Lower Athabasca Regional Plan and the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan). The seven regions are congruent with the province’s major watersheds and are aligned with municipal boundaries. The development of the ABC Regional Plan, which will include the Town of Ravine River, has not yet begun.

Intermunicipal Development Plan
The Town does not currently have an intermunicipal development plan with Dover County but intends to initiate the process in the near future.

At the time of this MDP rewrite, the Municipal Government Act is also being amended by the Provincial Government. This amendment will include the requirement for each municipality with common boundaries to establish an intermunicipal collaboration framework (ICF). The ICF could include an IDP as an appendix.

Municipal Development Plan 2008
This Municipal Development Plan will build upon the goals outlined in the previous MDP. The goals of the 2008 MDP were to:

- To establish a land use and policy framework that will allow the Town to develop as a commercial, industrial, recreational, institutional, tourism and residential community in a manner that respects and balances the needs of all uses and users throughout the Town.
- To develop land use policies that effectively balance growth and development, limiting land use conflicts and ensuring the efficient use and stewardship of the Town’s land base.
- To use this Municipal Development Plan as a tool to provide the framework for land use and development within the Town of Ravine River.
- To manage growth through the integration of land use planning with the development of transportation and infrastructure systems.
- To discourage sprawl and spot development to avoid undue financial burden and associated costly servicing.
South Ravine Area Structure Plan
The South Ravine ASP intends to guide the efficient and orderly development of industrial uses in the southwestern section of the Town. The primary goal of the ASP is to help facilitate the economic and orderly disposition of industrial land within the Town of Ravine River as to ensure the most effective and efficient delivery of municipal services and/or resources.

Land Use Bylaw
As required by the Municipal Government Act, the Town of Ravine River has adopted a Land Use Bylaw that regulates the use and development of all lands within the municipality. Ravine River’s Land Use Bylaw was updated in 2010. The Land Use Bylaw should be updated subsequent to the completion of this MDP to reflect the policy direction therein. The Land Use Bylaw is a key implementation tool of the Municipal Development Plan.

Community Profile

Land Base
The Town of Ravine River has a land area of 8.75 square kilometres (approximately 875 ha). Currently, approximately 211 ha (approximately 24% of lands within the Town boundary) are undeveloped and designated as Urban Reserve lands by the Land Use Bylaw. Land within the town boundaries are either privately owned or publicly owned by the Town.

Table 1: Land Use Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>Net Area (ha)</th>
<th>Existing Net Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>153.0</td>
<td>17.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Use</td>
<td>118.04</td>
<td>13.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>175.26</td>
<td>20.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Lands</td>
<td>217.43</td>
<td>24.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Reserve</td>
<td>210.98</td>
<td>24.11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recent growth in the community has largely focused on manufactured (mobile) home development as an affordable option for residents. New development has primarily focused on infill within existing neighbourhoods. Through one existing area structure plan, the South Ravine ASP, a small portion of the vacant land within the Town of Ravine River has been developed through planning consideration.
**Population**

As shown in Table 2, the Town of Ravine River experienced a population boom in 1971 and 1991. Since the peak in 1996, the Town's population experienced a slow decline, reaching approximately 2,450 residents in 2006 and increasing to 2,500 in 2016. The Town has grown at a rate of 4.1% since the last census. If this trend were to continue, this would equate to a population growth of 100 residents by 2021. The pattern of population growth has not been consistent over the last fifty years and is subject to change, primarily due to economic factors.

**Table 2: Ravine River’s Historic Population Trend**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>2300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>2400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>2350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>2500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>2800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>2750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>2500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The average number of people per census family within Ravine River was 2.6 people, slightly below the provincial average of 3 people.

**Development Climate**
Over the last five years, development in the Town has largely consisted of accessory structures, such as signs, fences, sheds, and garages (Table 4). There have been more development permits issued during the past 5 years in Residential-2 (R2) and Commercial-1 (C1) land use districts as seen in Table 5.

**Table 4: Types of Development Permits from 2010 to 2015**
Table 5: Number of Developments per District Type 2010 to 2015

Table 6: Number of Development Permits 2010 to 2015
Transportation
The Town’s road system is connected to Highway Z (100 Avenue) which runs in an east-west direction, with all of the arterial roads connected to the highway in a north-south direction. Highway Y extends adjacently along the river heading north-south through the Town. Within the town, much of the road system is based upon a traditional ‘grid’ pattern.

The Town of Ravine River has a road hierarchy as follows:

- **Arterial Roads** – Are intended to move large volumes of traffic.
- **Collector Roads** – Are intended to move traffic and provide land access. They are designed to collect traffic from local roads and carry it to arterial roads.
- **Local Roads** – Are intended to provide local access. They are designed to provide for small volumes of local traffic only.

Parking requirements in the commercial core of Ravine River are accommodated through on-street, angle parking as well as an off-street public parking lot. Larger commercial developments also provide off-street parking, in accordance with the requirements of the Land Use Bylaw.

Utilities
Ravine River’s treated water is supplied by the Ravine River Regional Water Commission which also serves Dover County. The treatment facility draws water from the Ravine River and has two reservoirs; one for raw water located near the draw area and another one for treated water adjacent to the water treatment plant located northwest of town.

Fire Services
Fire protection services in the Town of Ravine River are provided by the Dover County Fire Department. The fire department consists of a full time regional fire chief and trained volunteer firefighters.
Housing
The Town predominantly contains single-detached houses and manufactured (mobile) homes with few options for multi-family units. Table 7 indicates the current number of actual residential units by type.

Table 7: Total Number of Occupied Dwellings by Structural Type (2016 Census)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dwelling Type</th>
<th># of units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single-detached dwelling</td>
<td>660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apartment</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufactured home</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-detached dwelling</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Row house</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>875</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Economy
As of June 2017, there are ninety-five businesses operating in the Town of Ravine River, providing a range of services and retail options to residents. As an employment centre, a diverse range of employers operate within the Town including government, education, and businesses within the health and hospitality sectors. Agricultural services, such as farm equipment sales and seed services, lead the local economy; however, increasingly the tourism industry is becoming a key sector due to the Town’s location next to the Ravine River.

Lifestyle
Ravine River offers parks, natural areas, and amenities to support a wealth of recreational and cultural activities that are enjoyed by residents of Ravine River and the surrounding area. Sidewalks and trails provide multimodal options for residents and take advantage of scenic views. Furthermore, various housing options allow all residents to find a comfortable place to live.

Community Resources
The Town of Ravine River has a number of recreational resources available to its residents. The Hill-Brush Recreation Centre and the Logan Arena offers a wide variety of recreational options for Town residents. New walking trails in Lincoln Park have been widely used by the residents from the Town and Dover County. The Alfred Memorial Pool provides water activities for Ravine River and area residents.
The Ravine River Library operates as part of the Alberta Library System, a regional branch that provides library services to residents in the Town and the region.

**Planning Process**

**Steering Committee**
The Town’s Municipal Planning Commission (MPC) acted as the Steering Committee for the Municipal Development Plan.

The Steering Committee led the development of the MDP by providing direction and feedback on:

- community principles and values,
- survey questionnaire,
- a vision and goals,
- community consultation event(s),
- municipal policies, and
- implementation strategies.

The Steering Committee met periodically throughout the MDP process.

Information about the MDP was also available on the Town of Ravine River website and the Town’s Facebook page.

**Community Survey**
A community survey was developed consisting of a series of questions to gather public opinion on the Town’s functionality and resources. The questionnaire was made available to the public in both paper and online format. An online link to complete the survey was placed on the Town’s website and also on the Town of Ravine River’s Facebook page. The survey resulted in more than one hundred responses from households and businesses in the Town.
Public responses were carefully analyzed and collected for future planning purposes and led to the formation of eight guiding principles and the Town’s vision statement for the Municipal Development Plan.
PART 2: DIRECTION

Guiding Principles

Through community consultation activities and the MDP Steering Committee meetings, key themes and values important to the residents of the Town of Ravine River emerged. They are the basis for addressing the questions ‘who we are’ and ‘what we believe in’ as a community. These principles will be used to enhance the quality of decision-making, prioritize actions, and evaluate programs and policy decisions.

**PRINCIPLE 1 - EMBRACE THE SMALL TOWN**
Ravine River residents value their small community and the relationships they have with their neighbours. Development, land use, and transportation policies serve to maintain the small town feel of Ravine River.

**PRINCIPLE 2 – PROMOTE COMMERCIAL BUSINESSES**
The Town ensures that residents have access to a wide range of commercial businesses and activities that create an active and stable community.

**PRINCIPLE 3 – AN INFORMED AND ENGAGED COMMUNITY**
The Town aims to provide responsible, transparent and well-informed decision-making to its citizens. The Town facilitates residents' participation in all aspects of the community's social life, through strong municipal communication practices.

**PRINCIPLE 4 – ENCOURAGE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**
The Town aims to create more employment opportunities with new commercial and industrial businesses in the town to sustain a population of all age groups, local business, and develop an economic base that is diverse, to maintain a vibrant commercial core.

**PRINCIPLE 5 - A CULTURE OF RECREATION AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES**
Ravine River residents enjoy a variety of recreational pursuits. Town policies and programs facilitate year-round outdoor and indoor recreation, arts and culture programming.

**PRINCIPLE 6 – PROVIDE AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPTIONS**
The Town values diversity in housing types and sizes, to ensure that residents have access to a variety of options throughout their lifecycle.

**PRINCIPLE 7 – PROTECT NATURE FEATURES**
The Town aims to protect environmental assets, natural features, and open spaces in the Town.

**PRINCIPLE 8 - A LIVABLE COMMUNITY**
The Town aims to create and maintain a safe, clean, healthy, and beautiful community. Infrastructure (re)investments in the Town’s physical systems will work with nature to maximize effectiveness and minimize costs.
Community Vision

The Town of Ravine River will continue to grow and prosper while enhancing its small town atmosphere by providing a clean, safe, and healthy community, and fostering its natural features.
PART 3: GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

3.1 Residential Land Use

The intent of the “Residential” designation is to ensure the predominant land use in these areas of the Town is for housing accommodation. One purpose of the Municipal Development Plan is to address the many forms of residential development in the Town.

Goal

➢ The Town of Ravine River will create more affordable housing options while preserving and enhancing the character of existing residential neighbourhoods.

Objectives

1. Ensure future residential development occurs in a manner that allows for the orderly and economic provision of municipal services.
2. Ensure new development areas facilitate a balanced housing mix that provides housing for all residents regardless of life cycle, household size, or income level.
3. Develop in a manner that will lead to compact, low-impact, cost effective, and efficient forms of land use, while enhancing Ravine River’s small town atmosphere.
4. Allow sensitive integration of different housing forms in all designated residential areas.
5. Focus new residential development and ensure that it supports efficient use of Town infrastructure and services.

Policies

3.1.1 General Residential

a. The Town shall direct new residential development to
   i. infill within existing residential or mixed use areas;
   ii. areas which are adjacent to developed areas; and
   iii. areas shown as residential on the Future Land Use Concept.

b. The Town will encourage the separation of residential uses from incompatible land uses where possible, and where not possible, separated by an adequate landscaped buffer and/or fence.

c. The Town shall limit parcel size to ensure that development patterns are urban in nature and make efficient use of municipal infrastructure.

d. The Town shall require residential development be connected to the municipal sewage and water systems.

e. The Town shall support the following forms of housing
   i. single-detached;
   ii. manufactured homes;
   iii. duplexes/semi-detached;
   iv. rowhouses; and
   v. apartments.
3.1.2 Accessory Dwelling Units

a. The Town may support legal *accessory dwelling units*, which are accessory to a single detached dwelling, to increase housing choice and affordability.

3.1.3 Supportive Housing

a. The Town may support and/or partner with other organizations to ensure that there is adequate provision of low income and special needs housing within Ravine River.

b. The Town supports the provision of residential-based services for *persons with disabilities* as an integral part of all residential neighbourhoods.

3.1.4 Medium Density Development

a. The development of *medium density residential* development shall be supported in cases where

i. the proposal is identified for such use in an approved *area structure plan* or area redevelopment plan;

ii. the site is adjacent to *arterial or collector roads*;

iii. the development is in convenient proximity to community amenities, schools, recreation opportunities, and commercial areas where the greater amenity and infrastructure capacity can afford to sustain higher densities;

iv. there is an appropriate transition between lower density housing; and

v. the aesthetic quality, including massing, scale, building form, view, and shadow impacts, is compatible with the surrounding development.

3.1.5 Manufactured Homes

a. The Town shall ensure that new manufactured home park or subdivision communities are designed and developed with an equivalent level of services and open space as other residential neighbourhoods.

b. The Town shall encourage the redevelopment and/or upgrading of existing manufactured home communities as a means of ensuring that these developments are sustainable residential environments in the long term.

3.1.6 Home-based Business

a. The Town will allow for home-based businesses in residential areas provided that the home-based business use is subordinate to the principle use of the dwelling as a residence.
3.2 Commercial Land Use

This section deals with commercial development locations and standards. The current commercial land base is largely concentrated along Main Street (Highway Z). The Downtown of Ravine River is generally smaller scale retail sales, entertainment and personal service businesses that are focused on individual consumers. Branching off of Highway Z south, there is commercial development along Highway Y which utilizes its location next to the river. Alternatively, development at the west end of Ravine River along Highway Z is on larger lots with a focus on highway commercial development.

Goal

- The Town will encourage the creation of more commercial businesses that would offer more services to the public and the community in a cost effective manner.

Objectives

1. Encourage compatible commercial developments and retail areas that support and provide access to nearby residential neighbourhoods.
2. Enhance the pedestrian-friendly environment and mixed-use ambience in the Downtown Commercial area.
3. Ensure commercial development occurs in a manner that is efficient and beneficial to both the community and business.
4. Minimize conflicts between commercial and non-commercial land uses while ensuring that commercial lands are linked to and part of the surrounding neighbourhood.
5. Ensure commercial and retail development and redevelopment provide adequate pedestrian connections on site.
6. Support commercial building and site design standards which support both the small town feel as well as modern design elements.
7. Encourage the use of low impact development, environmental design, green building techniques, and recycled construction materials in commercial development.
8. Promote commercial development that generates opportunities for local employment.

Policies

3.2.1 General Commercial

a. Commercial uses shall locate in accordance with the Future Land Use Concept.

b. The Town shall establish standards for commercial building design, landscaping, and signage in the Land Use Bylaw.

c. The Town shall encourage Secondary Commercial uses that do not detract from the business and retail role of the downtown.

3.2.2 Downtown Commercial

a. The Town should encourage the Downtown revitalization and adaptive reuse of underutilized or Brownfield sites for future mixed use developments.
b. The Town will allow for commercial, residential, institutional and business uses that support the development of a vibrant, multi-functional downtown area.

c. Development within the Downtown area should incorporate universal and barrier-free design features that enhance accessibility for low mobility and disabled residents whenever possible.

d. The Town may encourage mixed-use development (residential and commercial) and medium density residential development, including seniors housing, in the downtown area.

e. The Town shall ensure that parking areas for commercial development provide for pedestrian circulation, landscaping, and architectural elements to enhance the safety and comfort of pedestrians.

f. The Town shall ensure new commercial development is compatible with the adjacent neighbourhood in terms of size, scale, use, and overall design.

g. The Town shall ensure the design of commercial uses adjacent to residential neighborhoods are more pedestrian oriented and are connected to the larger neighbourhood through trail and sidewalk connections while still providing adequate vehicle access and parking.

h. The Town shall prepare a Downtown Beautification Plan to identify and prioritize public realm improvements such as, but not limited, to lighting, landscaping, street furniture, and sidewalk improvements.

3.2.3 Highway Commercial

a. High visibility commercial development along major roadways should be enhanced through attractive building and landscape design.

b. The Town will promote commercial development that incorporates pedestrian-oriented frontages.
3.3 Industrial Land Use

Industrial development is an important part of the economic activity that occurs in the Ravine River area. The Town wants to continue to develop its industrial land base and provide similar development opportunities.

Goals

➢ The Town will ensure that there is sufficient, suitably located and serviced industrial land available to attract and facilitate a wide range of industrial development in the future.
➢ The Town will build on its industrial strengths and examine new opportunities appropriate for the Town.

Objectives

1. Ensure that internal roads for industrial parks and industrial areas are designed in a manner that allows for easy access and turning space for large vehicles.
2. Require appropriate screening of all storage areas in industrially designated areas.
3. Encourage the provision of industrially designated land that corresponds to market needs.
4. Protect industrial land from the encroachment of non-compatible land uses and to minimize conflicts between adjacent land uses.
5. Ensure the nature and design of any future industrial operations are such that the community’s quality of life and environment are not adversely affected.
6. Encourage industrial development that conserves energy, water, materials, and other resources.

Policies

3.3.1 General Industrial

a. The Town should ensure that industrial developments mitigate visual impacts from public roads.

b. Access to new industrial developments will not be routed through residential areas.

c. Industrial areas are required to have a full range of municipal services and developers should pay for the upgrading and extension of the services required for new industrial developments.

d. Locate new industrial areas where traffic and related impacts on non-industrial uses are minimized.

e. Promote the development of industries related to food production and the processing of agricultural products, particularly in relation to local agricultural operations and food that is produced within the region.

f. New industries that create air pollution, negative environmental impacts, or noxious odours should be discouraged from locating in the Town.
3.4 Parks, Open Spaces, and Recreational Uses

This section deals with the location and standards of parks, open spaces, recreation facilities, and social organizations. Recreation opportunities for a variety of ages and abilities foster a higher quality of life and are essential elements of a municipality. The Town of Ravine River operates a variety of recreation and community services and programs that support the well-being of its residents.

Goals

- The Town will create an integrated, accessible and well-planned system of open space, recreational and cultural facilities, and parks that support a broad range of recreation and cultural opportunities catering to diverse age groups, income levels, and skill levels.
- The Town will maintain and expand a pedestrian pathway system in order to link all areas of Ravine River as a pedestrian-oriented community.

Objectives

1. Incorporate environmentally significant areas into the open space system.
2. Provide recreational and cultural facilities that meet the needs of the whole community.
3. Ensure that the community open space requirements are met through appropriate reserve dedications.

Policies

3.4.1 General

a. The Town recognizes the importance of open spaces, parks, cultural and artistic events and recreational opportunities in enhancing the quality of life for its residents.

b. The Town will require all parks and playgrounds be landscaped in accordance with the intended use, and where practical, xeriscaping and naturalization techniques will be employed to reduce life cycle costs.

c. The Town will encourage shade trees and benches to be incorporated into the design of playgrounds.

d. The Town should ensure proposed open spaces and linear parks within new residential subdivision proposals connect to any existing trail networks to encourage walkability.

e. The Town should create and maintain a trail mapping system.

f. The Town will ensure that adequate open space, recreation land and, where necessary, land for schools and environmental protection is obtained through the subdivision process pursuant to Section 661 of the Municipal Government Act.

g. In conjunction with streetscapes and other public realm areas, parks and open space shall be designed to be easily accessible to pedestrians.
3.5 Institutional and Public Uses

Public buildings that provide the community facilities for the Town of Ravine River are strategically located across the town and are within easily accessible distance from the residential neighbourhoods. Public uses also include provincial and county office buildings that are located within the town.

Goals

- The Town will encourage a safe, healthy, and inclusive community through the provision of a variety of public uses, institutional, and community services.

Objectives

1. Ensure opportunities are available for all residents to enjoy a high quality of life and participate in the community.
2. Support the ability to develop an adequate range of community resources and educational facilities to meet the needs of the community.

Policies

3.5.1 General

a. The Town should endeavour to apply Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) principles to all municipal projects.

b. Town will ensure that schools and public buildings including hospitals and libraries are easily accessible for all modes of transportation.

c. The Town will consider the impact of a proposed development on the capacity of institutional facilities, such as schools, to meet the needs of the development as required.

d. The Town will ensure that any proposed institutional development is compatible with the surrounding land uses, is serviceable with Town services, and will not create any adverse impacts with transportation networks.

e. The Town shall continue supporting police and fire protection services and should encourage design using Crime Prevention through Environment Design (CPTED) principles in order to ensure a safe and livable community.
3.6 Reserve Land

The Town acquires reserve lands under the provisions of the Municipal Government Act. Reserve lands include municipal reserve, school reserve, environmental and conservation reserves. Municipal reserve lands may be used to create public parks and public school sites. Environmental reserve protects environmentally sensitive or ecology significant land from development. Conservation reserve is a new type of reserve for lands that have an environmentally significant feature that municipalities wish to conserve.

Goal
- The Town will recognize and promote environmental sustainability initiatives and trends in land development in urban reserve areas of the Town.
- To meet the needs of residents, the Town will provide land for community facilities by acquiring municipal, school and conservation reserves.

Objectives
1. Promote environmental sustainability principles in land use planning decisions and development practices.
2. Recognize the value and contribution that natural areas and functions make towards quality of life in an urban setting.
3. Support environmental and ecological management programs and procedures that facilitate the maintenance of attractive, clean and ecologically responsible natural and built environments.
4. Conserve and incorporate environmentally significant features into the open space, trail and transportation systems, wherever possible.

Policies
3.6.1 General
a. The Town will exercise its right to obtain reserve land pursuant to the Municipal Government Act (MGA) in every subdivision.

b. The Town will acquire the maximum amount of reserve land entitled under the MGA for each subdivision in the form of land, cash in lieu of land, or a combination of the two.

c. Notwithstanding Policies 3.6.1.a. and 3.6.1.b. above, the Town will reserve the right to defer the acquisition of reserve land in a subdivision by way of a Deferred Reserve Caveat registered on the title.

d. The Town will enforce the MGA with respect to designating lands adjacent to watercourses as environmental reserve at the time of subdivision.

e. The Town will incorporate, where appropriate, land taken as environmental reserve into the open space and/or trail system.

f. Notwithstanding Policy 3.6.1.e. above, the Town may restrict public access to environmental reserve land if it is determined access would negatively impact the land.
g. In addition to environmental reserve dedication, the Town should use tools such as land purchase, land swaps, tax incentives, reserve dedication, leasing and conservation agreements or easements, and other similar mechanisms as a means of conserving natural features within the Town.

h. The Town may consider reducing the municipal reserve requirement to eight per cent in residential subdivisions, and taking the balance as cash in lieu of land dedication for the purpose of re-investment in the local parks system.
3.7 Infrastructure

The provision of municipal services and transportation is a key factor in the planning and development of the Town. The Town strives to ensure that municipal services and utilities are developed in a manner that complements the growth of the municipality. Municipal services consist of water, sanitary sewer, and storm sewer systems. Utilities available in the Town include natural gas, electricity, telephone, internet, and cable.

The Town relies on the two Provincial Highways moving through the Town as the primary transportation routes in and out of the community. Priority trucking routes have been established to provide access to industrial lands and to have minimal impact on other uses. Without rail access in Ravine River, sufficient transportation routes are essential to the movement of goods in the municipality.

Goals

- The Town will provide environmentally responsible, safe, efficient, and reliable utility systems to serve the Town of Ravine River.
- The Town will provide for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods within and through the Town of Ravine River.

Objectives

1. Ensure the utility infrastructure and capacity is available, when required, to accommodate growth in Ravine River.
2. Ensure utilities are maintained and operated in an efficient manner that minimizes their impact on the environment.
3. Ensure utilities are maintained and operated in a manner that protects the health and safety of consumers.
4. Ensure the construction of safe and efficient road, transit, bicycling, and pedestrian facilities.
5. Coordinate the planning of land use and transportation systems to build an efficient transportation network.

Policies

3.7.1 Utilities

a. Developers, through development agreements, should be responsible for the construction of municipal infrastructure that is required to serve the development.

b. Commercial and bulk water utility pricing shall reflect the cost of water supply, as well as the proportional cost of current operations and future upgrades to the water system.

c. Land required for municipal services and utilities shall be identified as part of the planning process for urban expansion areas or areas to be re-developed in the Town.

d. The Town may require easements or public utility lots for municipal services and utilities as part of a proposal to subdivide and/or develop land.
e. The Town shall work closely with utility companies in the planning for the installation of municipal services and utilities.

f. The Town shall attempt, wherever possible, to create a looped system for all utility services.

g. The Town shall work towards the development of an additional river crossing for all water and gas lines.

h. The Town shall enter into servicing agreements with developers for the provision of on-site and off-site municipal services and utilities.

i. All development within the Town's boundaries shall be serviced by municipal services.

j. Notwithstanding Policy 3.7.1.i. above, alternative wastewater treatment technologies may be considered in development and redevelopment proposals, subject to satisfactory engineering design and regulatory approvals.

k. The Town shall encourage innovative stormwater management solutions that are suitable to the topography, climate, and needs of the Town.

l. Stormwater management ponds should use indigenous plant materials and be designed to mimic natural wetland areas, wherever feasible.
3.8 Heritage Conservation

Heritage conservation helps provide links between present day life and past events in the creation and evolution of a community. Retaining physical evidence of Ravine River’s past is part of instilling a sense of community and belonging. This includes historic buildings reflecting past practices in architecture and craftsmanship, and landscape features that have cultural significance. Heritage conservation is also about respecting the past and the efforts of earlier generations in making Ravine River the beautiful and attractive community that it is.

Goal

- The Town will preserve and interpret heritage resources as an expression of community identity and pride, and to provide tools and practices, whereby identified resources may be preserved.

Objectives

1. Conserve and retain resources such as buildings of historic or architectural significance.
2. Promote heritage conservation to foster community identity.
3. Ensure compatible development with, and adaptive reuse of, heritage resources and properties.

Policies

3.8.1 General

a. The Town should consider working with a local heritage society to assist with heritage conservation within the Town.

b. The Town, working with historical societies, should compile an inventory of historical resources and properties.

c. The Town may consider designating historically significant properties under the Historical Resources Act.

d. The Town shall continue to promote community awareness about the importance and value of heritage conservation through heritage interpretation programs and fostering cooperation with other levels of government, private agencies, non-profit groups and individuals in the conservation of heritage resources.
3.9 Economic Development and Tourism

This section aims to make Ravine River more economically sustainable and an attractive place to reside. Economic development entails attracting new businesses seeking to enter the regional and provincial market, as well as providing an environment where existing businesses can thrive and expand. Creating an attractive community with high quality amenities and services is a vital component in attracting and keeping the skilled labour force that local businesses, including the tourism sector, require for success.

**Goal**

- The Town will foster local business retention and to attract diverse, long term economic growth, including tourism, through a partnered approach by marketing Ravine River and Northern Alberta.

**Objectives**

1. Create a positive and competitive business climate.
2. Develop and maintain regional partnerships for economic development.
3. Evaluate regional market opportunities for innovation and diversification in Ravine River’s economy.
4. Increase tourism visitation through co-operative marketing, heritage preservation, and the development and enhancement of tourism and cultural attractions, parks, and services.

**Policies**

3.9.1 General

- The Town should promote a competitive business climate through policies and actions that help maintain competitive operating costs and streamline approval processes and timelines.
- The Town should pursue opportunities to diversify the local and regional economic base by promoting and attracting value-added industries.
- The Town should pursue community economic development, which emphasizes community self-reliance and fosters growth from within the community, with emphasis on nurturing small business, supporting skills training, and entrepreneurship.
- The Town should aim to increase tourism visitation through promotions, development and enhancement of local tourism products (e.g. local history and culture), services and infrastructure.
3.10 Regional Initiatives and Inter-Municipal Cooperation

It is important to recognize that the Town of Ravine River is part of a region and that many issues and factors that can impact the community, its economic vibrancy, and the quality of life of its citizens, occur beyond and transcend the city’s boundaries. It is for this reason that the Province encourages cooperation between municipalities, provincial departments, and other agencies to address planning issues.

Although the Town of Ravine River and Dover County have not yet negotiated a formal Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP), the two Councils recognize the benefits of working together in terms of the development of the Ravine River area and enjoy a good working relationship.

Goal

➢ Collaborate with Dover County on regional and provincial issues.

Objectives

1. Cooperate with municipalities and other government agencies to determine and achieve mutual objectives that benefit residents and businesses within Northern Alberta.
2. Work with the Government of Alberta, its agencies, and other municipalities, in the provision of programs and services that are of benefit to the residents and businesses in the region.

Policies

3.10.1 General

a. The Town shall investigate opportunities to obtain mutual benefits in the provision of transit, protective and emergency services, and social, recreational, environmental and cultural programs and facilities through cooperation with other municipalities and agencies.

b. The Town shall explore options for the creation of regional partnerships with the Province, municipalities, and agencies in the planning and co-ordination of land use patterns, transportation, utility, and other service delivery systems in Northern Alberta.

c. The Town shall continue to work with Dover County, its municipal neighbour, on the future planning of the Ravine River area.

d. The Town shall initiate the process of establishing an Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP) with Dover County for the planning and coordination of land use and development.
PART 4: IMPLEMENTATION

The success of any plan depends on the degree to which efforts are made to implement and integrate the plan’s directions into decision making. The MDP provides the means whereby Council, the Municipal Planning Commission, Town staff and members of the community can evaluate situations or proposals in the context of a long range plan for Ravine River.

4.1 Plans, Bylaws, Permits, and Programs

As the Town of Ravine River undertakes new initiatives, this Municipal Development Plan shall be consulted and will act as a guide for decision-making and actions.

4.2 Plan Consistency

Any subsequent planning activity, particularly updates to statutory documents, such as the Land Use Bylaw or Area Structure Plans, or physical development shall be consistent with the Municipal Development Plan.

4.3 Area Structure Plan

An area structure plan (ASP) provides a framework for further subdivision and development of specific areas within a Municipal Development Plan. An ASP must describe the sequence of development, the proposed land uses, the density of the population proposed, the general location of major transportation routes and public utilities, and any other matters Council considers necessary.

4.4 Land Use Bylaw

The policies contained in this Municipal Development Plan shall be implemented through the application of the Town of Ravine River Land Use Bylaw. The Town shall interpret and enforce the regulations of the Land Use Bylaw in the spirit and intent consistent with the policy direction of the Municipal Development Plan.

4.5 Monitoring and Review

The Town will monitor the administration and implementation of this Municipal Development Plan to ensure that the Plan remains an effective policy document. The Town shall undertake a major review of this MDP once every five years, or earlier, if deemed necessary by Town Council. Minor amendments may occur on an as needed basis.

4.6 Annual Review

As the Town of Ravine River Council and Staff engage in strategic planning processes, the Municipal Development Plan shall be consulted to assist in identifying, guiding, and prioritizing the Town’s work priorities.
4.7 Plan Amendments

From time to time it may be necessary to amend the MDP. Specifically, whenever a land use direction of the MDP is proposed to be changed, an amendment to Map 1: Future Land Use Concept would be required to reflect the proposed land use direction.

An application to amend the MDP can be made to the Town of Ravine River, and the request will be considered by Town Council. An application should include supporting rationale that includes how the proposed land use designation will be compatible with the surrounding land use designations. A decision to approve a proposed MDP amendment will require a first reading, then formal public hearing, followed by second and third readings. The timing of the public hearing is somewhat flexible, yet must be held prior to second reading, as per the MGA.

Notice of the public hearing must be published at least once a week for two consecutive weeks in at least one newspaper or other publication, and mailed or delivered to every residence in the area to which the proposed amendment relates, as per the MGA.
PART 5: APPENDICES

Appendix A - Glossary of Terms
Appendix B - Maps
Appendix A - Glossary of Terms

Accessory Dwelling Unit means a dwelling unit, such as a garage suite, garden suite, or secondary suite that is secondary and subordinate to the principal dwelling unit on site.

Area Structure Plan means a long range land use and servicing plan adopted by bylaw and prepared in accordance with the MGA.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a multi-disciplinary approach to deterring criminal behaviour through environmental design. CPTED strategies rely upon the ability to influence offender decisions that precede criminal acts by affecting the built, social, and administrative environment.

Future Land Use Concept means a map providing direction with respect to the predominant land uses within an area of the municipality.

Land Use Bylaw means a regulatory document that regulates development within the municipality.

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) is an accredited registration program of “green” building under the US Green Building Council.

Medium density residential means the development of more than two dwelling units within a single building. Typical building forms include row housing or apartment buildings. Single-detached dwellings, duplex, and semi-detached dwellings, as well as secondary suites, are considered low density.

Persons with disabilities means a person with a physical or mental disability as defined by the Alberta Human Rights Act.

Roads, Arterial means roads that are intended to move large volumes of traffic.

Roads, Collector means roads that are intended to move traffic and provide land access, collecting traffic from local roads and carrying it to arterial roads.

Roads, Local means roads that are intended to provide land access.

Watercourses means the bed, and shore of a river, stream, lake, creek, lagoon, swamp, marsh, or other natural body of water; or a canal, ditch, reservoir or other man-made surface feature whether it contains or conveys water continuously or intermittently.

Wetlands means land having water at, near, or above the surface of which is saturate with water long enough to promote wetland or aquatic processes as indicated by poorly drained (hydric) soils, hydrophytic vegetation, and various kinds of biological activity that are adapted to the wet environment.
Appendix B – Maps

MAP 1 – FUTURE LAND USE
MAP 2 – MUNICIPAL SERVICES
MAP 3 – SCHOOLS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE
MAP 4 – TRANSPORTATION NETWORK
MAP 5 – LOT AVAILABILITY
MAP 6 – SIGNIFICANT FEATURES
Utility Line Lengths
Water Line: 25.78 km
Sanitary Sewer Line: 25.82 km

Town of Ravine River Municipal Development Plan

Map 2: Municipal Services

- Town of Ravine River Boundary
- Water Line
- Sanitary Sewer Line
- Sewage Treatment Plant
- Water Reservoir & Treatment Plant

Projection:
Scale:
Data Source:
Created:
Printed:
Sample E: MDP for a Rural Municipality of less than 500

County of Farmlands
Municipal Development Plan
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Introduction

Nestled in the Mountains and rolling foothills, the County of Farmlands includes some of the finest farming in Canada. The area possesses outstanding forestry, wildlife, and grazing resources, in addition to some of the most important watersheds in Alberta.

Administered by the Department of Municipal Affairs since the early 1900s as an Improvement District, the County seized the opportunity provided by the Government to incorporate and become a self-governing municipality in 1995. As part of the transformation, the County was required to develop a series of new policies, procedures and bylaws.

In a proactive effort to pursue its vision of preserving and promoting their unique farming heritage, the County Council initiated the preparation of this Municipal Development Plan to further reinforce the Municipality’s land use goals and objectives as defined in the Land Use Bylaw.

Function of a Municipal Development Plan

In 1995, the Alberta Planning Act was rescinded and matters relating to planning were incorporated into Part 17 of the Municipal Government Act. Under the new legislation, a hierarchy of statutory planning documents exists. Created and adopted by bylaw for the purpose of planning and managing land use, these statutory plans include Municipal Development Plans, Land Use Bylaws, Intermunicipal Development Plans, Area Structure Plans and Area Redevelopment Plans. All plans must comply with the Provincial Land Use Policies.

Under this system, the role of a Municipal Development Plan is to guide the general direction of future development and provide land use policies regarding development, while the Land Use Bylaw regulates land use and development on a site-specific basis. Section 639 of the Municipal Government Act requires every municipality to adopt a Land Use Bylaw and section 632 requires those municipalities to adopt a Municipal Development Plan.

As required, the County of Farmlands completed and adopted their Land Use Bylaw in March of 1996 but at that time did not pursue the development of a long-range plan. The preparation of a Municipal Development Plan at this time satisfies the current need to define a long-term land management strategy for the Municipality. The County represents one of the most biologically diverse areas in the province. The farming...
community has been the main contributor to the present landscape and the long-term viability of the area is dependent on the effective management of local natural resources and preservation of the Municipality’s farming heritage.

**Legislative Requirements**

The County of Farmlands Municipal Development Plan has been developed in accordance with section 632(3) of the *Municipal Government Act*, Revised Statutes of Alberta 2000, Chapter M-26, as amended (MGA) for the purpose of identifying future land use goals, defining the long-term expectations and aspirations and clearly defining the municipality’s development philosophy. The goals, objectives, and policies of this Plan are reflective of the values and philosophy of the landowners and residents of the County of Farmlands. The *Municipal Government Act* requires policies on a broad range of issues. Section 632(3) states:

A municipal development plan

(a) must address

(i) the future land use within the municipality,

(ii) the manner of and the proposals for future development within the municipality,

(iii) the co-ordination of land use, future growth patterns and other infrastructure with adjacent municipalities if there is no intermunicipal development plan with respect to those matters in those municipalities,

(iv) the provision of the required transportation systems either generally or specifically within the municipality and in relation to adjacent municipalities,

(v) the provision of municipal services and facilities either generally or specifically,

(b) may address

(i) proposals for the financing and programming of municipal infrastructure,

(ii) the co-ordination of municipal programs relating to the physical, social, and economic development of the municipality,

(iii) environmental matters within the municipality,

(iv) the financial resources of the municipality,
(v) the economic development of the municipality,
(vi) any other matter relating to the physical, social or economic development of the municipality,

(c) may contain statements regarding the municipality’s development constraints, including the results of any development studies and impact analysis, and goals, objectives, targets, planning policies and corporate strategies,

(d) must contain policies compatible with the Subdivision and Development Regulation to provide guidance on the type and location of land uses adjacent to sour gas facilities, and

(e) must contain policies respecting the provision of municipal, school or municipal and school reserves, including but not limited to the need for, amount of and allocation of those reserves and the identification of school requirements in consultation with affected school authorities.

Public Participation

In order to allow for public participation and to meet the requirements of the Municipal Government Act, the County of Farmlands undertook the following steps:

• conducted a survey of rate-payers of the municipality and published a summary of questionnaire results;
• published a background summary and preliminary recommendations;
• held meetings with Council and administration to discuss preliminary recommendations;
• published a draft plan;
• circulated draft plan to adjacent municipalities and affected government departments for comment; and
• hosted a formal public hearing.
VISION Statement

“To protect and enhance the unique farming heritage and to promote activities that are sustainable and compatible with the environment.”

Emerging out of a series of amalgamations and annexations in 1995, the newly formed County embraced a vision for their community’s future. This vision promotes the protection of the area’s farming heritage while conserving the environment. The Council and the residents share the vision and they are unfaltering in their belief in it.

Local farmers are cognisant of the fact that their livelihood depends on the preservation and continued existence of the current farmlands. The County of Farmlands supports this concept.

Municipal Development Plan Goals

In pursuit of the implementation of the various policies of this plan, Council intends to accomplish the following:

- To protect the existing unique farming heritage from the encroachment of land uses that conflict with the County’s vision statement.
- To ensure, where applicable, historically and environmentally sensitive lands are considered when making land use planning decisions.
- To promote intermunicipal cooperation and partnerships that supports the County of Farmlands’ Vision Statement.
Background

Regional Location

Located in the foothills and Rocky Mountains of Alberta’s eastern slopes, the County of Farmlands is one of the most picturesque areas in Alberta. Encompassing nearly 2500 km², the Municipality consists of forest reserves, protected areas, creeks and streams and open rangeland. Approximately 75 percent of the land base is Crown owned; privately owned land is held in large holdings.

Approximately 100 people populate the County and traditionally reside on secluded farming and ranching operations rather than in urban areas. Currently, no urban centres exist within Municipal boundaries and residents travel outside the Municipality for goods and services.

Physical Characteristics

Three main events have shaped this portion of Alberta. First, the advance and retreat of the Bearpaw Sea approximately 100 to 70 million years ago; second, the formation of the mountains between 70 and 55 million years ago; and finally, a major period of glaciation.

Located in the Rocky Mountain Natural region, western portions of the County lie on a major uplift that forms the Continental Divide. Characterized by a rugged mountain environment, underlain primarily by up-thrust and folded carbonate and quartzitic bedrock, surface materials vary from residual bedrock to colluvial material on the upper and mid-slopes. The lower slopes and valley bottoms consist of gravely alluvial material associated with watercourses. Major valleys trend southeast to northwest through the mountains and are occupied by headwaters of many of the Province’s major rivers, which drain into the Saskatchewan River System.

Natural Sub regions

Situated at the crossroads of several natural sub regions, the landscape within the County is characterized by four distinct categories that include the:

- foothills fescue grassland sub region,
- montane sub region,
- subalpine sub region, and
The rough fescue grassland lies to the east at the edge of the foothills and mountains. The region is flat to gently rolling with a few major hill systems. Most of the bedrock is covered with extensive, thick glacial tills supporting mixed vegetation in addition to rough fescue and Parry oat grass.

The Montane sub region ranges from an elevation of 3,300 ft. to 6,300 ft., depending on the location and aspect. Chinooks are characteristic of this sub region and soils vary with the climatic conditions and complex topography. A pattern of open forests and grasslands characterize the landscape. Douglas fir and limber pine can be found on the exposed ridges of the north and east aspects, while lodge pole pine and aspen can be found in areas recently disturbed by forest fires.

The Subalpine region is found between the elevations of 4,300 ft. to 7,600 ft. and occupies the area between the montane and alpine sub regions. Below freezing temperatures occur year round and the frost-free period is likely less than 30 days. Engelmann spruce, subalpine fir and larch dominate the mature forests and typically occur on higher, moister sites, which have not been as subject to fire as the lodge pole pine forests.

Finally, the Alpine sub region includes all areas above tree line including vegetated area, rock land, snowfields and glaciers. Much of the alpine sub region has no soil and the
amount of weathered material present is too thin to qualify as soil. Climatic data for this region is limited and few records exist for winter periods. However, this is clearly the coldest sub region in Alberta and wind speeds and temperatures are more extreme than those found at lower elevations.

**Water and Watershed**

A significant portion of the headwaters of the Oldman River, which eventually flows into the South Saskatchewan River, originates in the Livingston Range and Porcupine Hills. In southern Alberta both the Oldman and South Saskatchewan Rivers are heavily used downstream for domestic, recreational and irrigation purposes. The drainages of the Oldman, Crowsnest, and Livingston Rivers are provincially significant and an important natural resource.

Precipitation throughout the Municipal District is high, generally increasing towards the west at the higher elevations. Approximately 60 percent of the annual precipitation is in the form of snow and stream levels peak in the spring with the melting snow pack.
History of Farming and Ranching in Alberta

An essential component of the Conservative government’s national policy in the 1870s was to encourage a stable and productive settlement of the West, particularly Alberta. In an effort to promote settlement, surveyors were sent west to survey the land into townships in 1871. In 1872, the Dominion Lands Act was enacted to attract millions of hard-working farmers to the area. Continuing debate over the suitability of southern Alberta for extensive agriculture hampered the government’s settlement aspirations, and prompted the government to reconsider its settlement plan.

Activities of early settlers, the North West Mounted Police and American merchandising companies convinced the government to support, at least in the short term, ranching. Southern Alberta in fact had several factors that made the area ideal for ranching. First, the warm Chinook winds regularly alleviated excessive snow accumulation; coulees provided ample shelter from the cold, and the abundance of native grasses and mountain streams provided food and water for range cattle. Second, the success of the American merchandising companies of I. G. Baker and T.C. Power in the area offered further proof of the region’s suitability for ranching. These companies brought stock, capital and expertise to an area lacking all three and demonstrated the economic viability of the industry. Third, the presence of the North West Mounted Police provided both the security and the market required to launch a growing industry. Local ranchers supplied the force with beef and in turn, it represented a small but stable market. Finally, the signing of Treaty 7, including the commitment by the Federal Government to supply beef to the First Nation’s people of southern Alberta, created an additional local market.

To stem the flow of money and profits across the border, the Federal Government initiated favourable land policies that encouraged the growth of a domestic cattle industry. In an effort to promote investment, Prime Minister Macdonald eagerly established a long-term lease system that would be the foundation of open range ranching. This lease system allowed the leasing of 100,000 acres for up to 21 years at an annual rental of one cent per acre. With capital expenditures kept at a minimum, investors were encouraged to commit large amounts of money.

By 1885, four major cattle companies — the Walrond Ranch, the Cochrane Ranch, the North-West Cattle Company and the Oxley Ranch — alone controlled 42 percent of the total leased land in southern Alberta. By 1895 approximately 200 ranchers
controlled the entire region and provided the majority of Canadian exports of live cattle. Ranching and ranchers wielded a considerable amount of power and from 1885 to 1905 the cattle business dominated the southern Alberta economy. However, the vigorous immigration campaigns of Clifford Sifton and Frank Oliver succeeded and attracted thousands of farmers to southern Alberta and brought an end to the glory days of ranching. Within months of Oliver taking office, government leased lands, which were the foundation of ranching, were sold and opened to general settlement.

Although the closing of the lease system was the most detrimental to the cattle business, poor markets, high tariffs and freight weights and a series of hard winters all affected the industry. Many ranchers sold out but the cattlemen who remained endeavoured to place ranching on a more solid footing by scaling down operations. After the Great Depression of the 1930s, the provincial government reassessed land use policies and enacted legislation designed to re-establish viable ranching and community livestock grazing in the southern region of the province. Many of the ranchers in the area today are continuing to build on the legacy left by their fathers, grandfathers, and great-grandfathers.
General Land Use

The County of Farmlands encompasses approximately 631,999 acres (255,770 ha) of land. It is unique in that there are no urban municipalities, hamlets or urban service areas within the boundaries of the County and almost all land within the municipality is used for agricultural purposes. The Council has endorsed the concept that the complex watershed, ecoregion and habitat are protected to interact with grazing, ranching and other land uses. Land uses that conflict, fracture or destroy the long-term vision of the County are discouraged.

The County is one of many municipalities along the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains in which much of the land is Provincial owned. Public land in Alberta is managed by the provincial government.

Figure 3
County of Farmlands
Crown and Private Land

The Council for the County endorses the concept that land is an extremely valuable resource. All lands should be used wisely to encourage both a prosperous regional economy and a stable rural environment where residents, especially farmers and ranchers, can plan their livelihoods, confident that potential conflicting non-agricultural uses will be minimized.

Over 72 percent of the County is in the Green Area and committed to the Bow Crow Forest Reserve. Of the remaining 28 percent, approximately one-third is in the possession of individual private landowners. Of the privately held land, approximately 172,891 acres (69,939 ha) is zoned as agricultural land in the County’s Land Use Bylaw. The purpose of the district is to conserve agricultural land, including grassland, while permitting activities associated with agricultural production on privately held land or leased land within the White Area. All development proposed for leased lands require prior approval from the Public Lands Division of Alberta Agriculture and Forestry. This government department requires, as a condition of its disposition, that the leasee also receive development approval from the Municipality.

Within the boundaries of the County of Farmlands, there exists one provincial park, a wildland park, an ecological reserve and three natural areas. The protection of these landscapes reflects the unique roles that the Municipality and its residents must play in preserving Alberta native grassland ecosystems. Ranchers rely on the continued diversity and production of native grasses, and the fact much of the land is unbroken and without road access is a direct consequence of their stewardship.
Table 1

Parks and Protected Areas within
The County of Farmlands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parks and Protected Areas</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Hectares</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rope Lake Provincial Park</td>
<td>1,010.56</td>
<td>408.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phil Creek Wildland Park</td>
<td>52,608.65</td>
<td>21,290.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed Stelmach Wildland Park</td>
<td>2,953.99</td>
<td>1,195.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Phil Creek Ecological Reserve</td>
<td>6,426.86</td>
<td>2,600.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wasp Nest Natural Area</td>
<td>13,990.61</td>
<td>5,662.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount Deadingston Natural Area</td>
<td>1,358.07</td>
<td>549.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Creek Heritage Natural Area</td>
<td>18,160.54</td>
<td>7,349.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Area</strong></td>
<td><strong>93,555.29</strong></td>
<td><strong>37,861.79</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Provincial Parks are areas that have been set aside to provide opportunities and facilities for a wide range of outdoor recreational and educational activities. Parks designated under the Provincial Parks Act offer protection to significant natural, historical and cultural landscapes and features. Rope Lakes Provincial Park was opened in 1972 as a result of access conflicts between private landowners and the general public to the Rope Lakes Reservoir. The park has grown to encompass 1010 acres of willow and aspen groves and grassland. The park hosts a large abundance of flora and fauna to be viewed and enjoyed by the public.

In 1999, the Phil Creek Wildland Park was designated under the Provincial Parks Act. These types of parks are usually large, natural land bases where human development and interference are kept to a minimum. Intensive recreational development is not permitted, but backcountry campsites and a few motorized trails may be allowed. Approximately 70 percent of the Phil Creek Wildland Park is montane landscape and largely undisturbed.

Ecological Reserves are designated under the Wilderness Area, Ecological Reserve and Natural Areas Act (WERNA). Some of Alberta’s most rare and fragile landscapes, plants, animals and geological features have been given protection under the Ecological Reserves Program and designated land is primarily used for scientific research and educational opportunities and is protected from recreational and industrial development. While staging, parking and/or interpretive facilities may exist on the perimeter of some ecological reserves, surface disturbances within the reserve are prohibited. The Upper Phil Creek Ecological Reserve was designated in 1999 to protect significant resources.
Land Use Issues

This section of the Municipal Development Plan attempts to identify land use planning issues that are prevalent in the County of Farmlands. The identification of such issues will lead to the formulation and application of the policies presented in this plan. As the Municipal Government Act establishes a detailed number of issues that must be addressed, including the provision of transportation systems, municipal services, guidance on land use adjacent to sour gas facilities and other land uses, municipal and school reserve issues, and coordination of land use issues with adjacent municipalities, this section will also identify the legislative requirements pursuant to this enactment.

Future Land Uses

Farming and Ranching are the predominant land uses in the County of Farmlands and pressures from country residential and non-agricultural developments can have a dramatic impact on agricultural land and the environment. The Municipal Development Plan contains policies which relate to the regulation of land use and identifies uses that are suitable in certain locations within the County.

The paving of Highway 222 has resulted in the County becoming a very significant transportation corridor. In addition to a major increase in commercial vehicles, the corridor has also become a tourist/public attraction in its own right as exemplified by the establishment of a National Historic Site and the designation of the Cowboy Trail. Preserving the natural beauty along this corridor from a tourism perspective should be a major consideration in any land use/planning decision by the County or the Province. It may be that tourism and conservation groups are the best allies for the County residents in preserving the area and restricting resource development and urban encroachment.

The Council for the County of Farmlands endorses the following land use concepts with regard to future development within its boundaries:

- Land with a Canadian Land Inventory soil classification of 1 to 6 will be considered prime agricultural land since classes 5 and 6 (the lower soil classes) are equally important to agricultural production in the County as those soils of higher capability. In many circumstances, marginal lands form a valuable and integral part of a
viable agricultural operation.

- The development of non-agricultural land uses within the County should be considered only in the case where agricultural opportunities are not compromised by conflicting developments.
- Owners of agricultural land will try to maintain viable agricultural operations.
- Fragmentation of rural land should be discouraged.
- Development, which may detract from the aesthetic appearance of an area, should be discouraged.
- Oil and gas (exploration, production, gathering and processing); pipelines or electricity transmission activities and developments in the County will be considered subject to certain qualifications outlined in the Policy section of this plan.
- The municipality should encourage utility companies to locate on lands that will not unduly interfere with the scenic attributes of the area.
- Future recreational development should be limited so that agricultural endeavours are not compromised.
- The municipality shall encourage landowners to protect the present environment, watershed and natural amenities for future generations.

Coordination of Land Use

The Municipal Government Act and the Provincial Land Use Policies encourage intermunicipal planning cooperation. This can be addressed formally in two ways through the adoption of a Municipal Development Plan or an Intermunicipal Development Plan. As there are no urban jurisdictions existing with the County of Farmlands, the intent would be to establish policies that are compatible and acceptable to adjacent rural municipalities and provincial Crown interests in terms of desirability and location of development, which may affect them.

Adjacent Municipalities

One of the other requirements of the Municipal Government Act is that a Municipal Development Plan must address land use matters with adjacent municipalities. Section 632(3)(a)(iii) of the Municipal Government Act states:
“A municipal development plan must address the co-ordination of land use, future growth patterns and other infrastructure with adjacent municipalities if there is no intermunicipal development plan with respect to those matters in those municipalities.”

The County of Farmlands shares boundaries with the Municipal District of Willow Creek, the Municipal District of Pincher Creek, the Municipality of Crowsnest Pass, the Municipal District of Foothills and Improvement District No. 5 (Kananaskis Country). Therefore it is of benefit for the County to maintain contact with the other municipalities and to discuss issues of shared concern. Administration and Council should endeavour to consult with all neighbouring municipalities regarding plans to undertake any major projects which may affect the other municipality, or other projects that may be of mutual interest.

**Provincial Departments**

In addition to the surrounding municipalities, it is essential that the County coordinate land management with the provincial government. The Government of Alberta is responsible for managing public land and focuses on establishing and sustaining an optimum balance of use, conservation and development of resources in harmony with the values and needs of the citizens of Alberta.

Through Integrated Resource Management, government policies, programs and activities are integrated to gain the best long-term benefits while minimizing conflicts. Currently, the Livingston-Porcupine Hills Sub-Regional Integrated Resource Plan is responsible for identification and assessment of all resource value in the County of Farmlands. In order to promote consistent and compatible development on both public and private lands, consideration should be given to public policies outlined in the Integrated Resource Plan.

**Transportation Systems**

The normal hierarchy of road systems characterizes the County of Farmlands and includes one primary highway, numerous secondary highways and a local road system. Highway 222 is the main north-south route through the Municipality. Secondary highways 533, 532 and 520 all provide access from various points east into the Municipality.

Tables 2 and 3 (see Appendix B) track information about traffic volumes, type of vehicle and primary function of primary and secondary highways and the local road system within the County of Farmlands. The network of roads and highways is essential to the movement of people and goods. They are especially important to the ranching community as a primary means of moving agricultural products to market. The provision, maintenance, and improvement of the system are a constant challenge to the County of Farmlands.

**Water Act**

The Water Act was enacted January of 1999 and is the primary provincial legislation governing a municipal council’s ability to pass resolutions, or enact bylaws for the
direction, control, and management of water within its jurisdiction. It is the intent of the provincial government to eventually adopt Water Management Plans (WMPs) for all basins in Alberta.

Watershed management within the County of Farmlands is a priority and, as these WMPs will take several years to prepare in accordance with the provincial guidelines, the County is encouraged to adopt interim policies in the respective Municipal Development Plan with respect to the Water Act.

Sour Gas Facilities

The Municipal Government Act recognizes that sour gas facilities can create special planning concerns and may have a detrimental effect on subdivision and development; thus, the Municipal Government Act requires that they be addressed in the Municipal Development Plan. The Municipal Government Act stipulates that the Municipal Development Plan contain policies consistent with the Subdivision and Development Regulation regarding the type and location of land uses adjacent to sour gas facilities.

However, municipalities have no jurisdiction in the location of most oil field development. The Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) regulates the oil industry and they are exempt from the planning legislation pursuant to the following section of the Municipal Government Act:

“618(1) This Part and the regulations and bylaws under this Part do not apply when a development or a subdivision is effected only for the purpose of
(a) a highway or road,
(b) a well or battery within the meaning of the Oil and Gas Conservation Act, or
(c) a pipeline or an installation or structure incidental to the operation of a pipeline.”

Since municipal approval must comply with the distances established by the AER, land use policies must be adopted which identify facilities within the Municipality and which sets off the mandatory referrals. According to section 9(1) of the MGA Subdivision and Development Regulation it is required that:

“A subdivision authority must send a copy of a subdivision application and a development authority must send a copy of a development application to the AER if any of the land that is subject to the application is within 1.5 kilometres of a sour gas facility or a lesser distance agreed to, in writing, by the AER and the subdivision authority.”

According to information from the AER, sour gas wells are located in various areas of the County of Farmlands (see Map 2). As municipal approval must comply with the distances established by the AER, land use policies must be adopted which identify these facilities within the municipality and which trigger the mandatory referrals.
Municipal and School Reserves

The Municipal Government Act allows for the taking of municipal and/or school reserve at the time of subdivision under certain circumstances, subject to section 666(1). The Subdivision Authority may require the owner of a parcel of land that is the subject of a proposed subdivision to provide a part of the parcel of land, to provide money in lieu of land, or to provide any combination of land or money.

The Municipal Government Act requires all Municipal Development Plans contain policies respecting the provision and allocation of municipal and school reserves. As no formal agreements exist with the associated school authorities, the Municipal Government Act requires that the amount and allocation of those reserves be discussed with those affected authorities.

Other Land Uses

All other land uses proposed in the municipality shall be regulated through the standards established in the Land Use Bylaw.

Subdivision and Development

Due to the traditionally large tracts of land utilized for ranching within the County of Farmlands, very little subdivision or development occurs within the Municipality. Between 1966 and 1994, only six subdivisions have been approved. This trend has not changed.

Subdivision Criteria

At this time, no Municipal Development Plan or General Municipal Plan (plans adopted prior to 1995) exists for the County of Farmlands. The Advisory Council for former Improvement District No. 6 endorsed a Land Use Policy Statement, which provided a philosophical overall view regarding land use and established a number of guiding principles that still govern many land use decisions today. The preparation of the Municipal Development Plan will provide an opportunity to review and incorporate these land use principles as they pertain to the various land uses encountered in the municipality.

Environmental Considerations

The unique natural environment, including both the diverse landscape and vital watersheds, requires the community to be active stewards of the land and to take positive measures to ensure the continued health of the ecosystem. Environmental protection is accomplished through steps by each level of government as well as the public at large. In this regard, the County of Farmlands, along with appropriate government agencies and landowners, have been very active in promoting and participating in projects which
Sample MDP County of Farmlands

cconcern riparian habitat protection and reclamation in partnership with the Alberta Cows and Fish Program.

In terms of land use, the powers available to the County are somewhat limited due to other provincial legislation, but do involve the monitoring of the following:

- land uses adjacent to environmentally sensitive areas,
- land uses in close proximity to sour gas facilities.
Policies

Previous sections of this document highlighted several issues and concerns. The identification of these planning issues provides the opportunity to establish land use policies that are intent on addressing and mitigating those concerns. The policies presented in this plan will provide guidance and direction for municipal decision-makers regarding future growth and other planning-related issues. The Council, council committees and the public will review the policies, prior to adoption, to ensure that conformity exists with the Municipal Government Act, Provincial Land Use Policies and reflects the vision and mission statement of the community.

Future Land Use and Growth

Agriculture has been identified as the predominant land use in the County of Farmlands and it is imperative to protect and preserve agriculture and the environment while balancing the interests of non-agricultural uses. The current statutory plans adopted by municipal councils have approved very restrictive land use policies with the intent of preserving lands within the County for farming and ranching. As such, guidance for development and subdivision matters is provided in the Land Use Bylaw and this statutory plan.

Objectives:

- To protect the present ecosystem.
- To protect agricultural land for agricultural activities.
- To ensure that consistency exists between this Municipal Development Plan and the present Land Use Bylaw.
- To ensure that the municipal decision makers have sufficient information to make an informed decision and a process in which to obtain and review that information.
- To promote consistency of decision making by ensuring decisions are made within a framework of policies.

Policies:

1.1 The Municipal Development Plan shall contain policies as to the criteria used for making subdivision and development decisions.

1.2 The subdivision and development criteria shall be drafted to protect agricultural land and the environment.

1.3 Input shall be sought from adjacent municipalities prior to decisions being rendered on matters of mutual concern or interest.
1.4 The municipal Council or its committees may require additional information from an applicant or ratepayer any time during the land use process, including the provision for scheduling public meetings or hearings to obtain additional input.

1.5 The County shall continue to prohibit certain land uses that are deemed to be detrimental to a specific land use district in the Land Use Bylaw.

**Coordination with Adjacent Municipalities**

Recognizing it is important for adjacent municipalities to work together to promote efficiency and effectiveness, dialogue must occur for this process to be successful. It is not intended to increase the complexity of decision-making, but rather to open channels of communication to take advantage of any opportunities that may be available.

**Objectives:**

- To ensure cooperation in planning issues between neighbouring municipalities.
- To allow municipalities to take advantage of mutual opportunities to maximize efficient use of transportation systems, infrastructure and other mutual interests.
- To ensure cooperation and dialogue between municipalities on matters of mutual interest or concern.

**Policies:**

2.1 Administration and Council shall consult with adjacent municipalities regarding plans to undertake any major projects that may affect or impact other municipalities.

2.2 Administration and Council should endeavour to consult with adjacent municipalities where mutual interest exists.

2.3 All proposed statutory plans, land use bylaws and/or amendments that may have an impact shall be forwarded to adjacent municipalities for their comments.

**Crown Land**

The *Municipal Government Act* requires a municipality to adopt a land use bylaw that prohibits, regulates and controls land use within the County. The County has limited jurisdiction over public lands or provincial Crown lands in terms of issuing dispositions, licences of occupation or permits for land use activities. Given this situation, it is desirable that dialogue, coordination and referrals occur between appropriate government departments.
Objectives:
• To coordinate the land use decisions made between the two levels of government recognizing the planning processes established for integrated resource plans and municipal development plans.
• To ensure land uses are compatible on private land adjacent to provincial Crown lands.

Policies:
3.1 The appropriate government departments having jurisdiction on Crown lands are requested to have regard for the policies established in this plan.
3.2 To ensure proper notification of adjacent landowners, provincial departments are requested to obtain municipal approval for any developments on Crown land.
3.3 Prior to the disposition of Crown lands, the appropriate government department is encouraged to inform the County of the said disposition.

Municipal Services and Transportation
A strong, healthy assessment base provides the necessary revenues for the Municipality to provide the services and facilities to which ratepayers have become accustomed. Given the dramatic decline in provincial grants to municipalities and the pressure to keep municipal taxes low, the challenge persists for the County to maintain its current levels of service.

Objectives:
• To provide a basis for evaluating the services provided to the ratepayers of the County.
• To establish guidelines for the provision or acquisition of services at the time of subdivision and/or development.
• To provide a safe, economic and efficient road system.

Policies:
4.1 At the time of subdivision and/or development, the provision of municipal services shall be at the expense of the developer.
4.2 The Municipality should endeavour to ensure that the developer provides satisfactory levels of services for any subdivision or development application.
4.3 The Municipality and or the appropriate government department shall ensure that the developer provide service roads and access points for road or highway related land uses as required following consultation with the appropriate government department.

**Water Act**

The Water Act is the primary provincial legislation governing a municipal council’s ability to pass resolutions, or enact bylaws for the direction, control, and management of water within its jurisdiction. It is the intent of the provincial government to eventually adopt Water Management Plans (WMPs) for all basins in Alberta. As these plans will take several years to prepare in accordance with the provincial guidelines, municipalities are encouraged to adopt interim policies in their respective municipal development plans and land use bylaws. To this end, the County of Farmlands has identified the following objectives and adopted the subsequent policies with respect to the Water Act.

**Objectives:**

- To protect the existing watersheds within the Municipality by implementing the provisions of the Water Act.
- To ensure that subdivision and/or development in the County of Farmlands complies with the provisions of the Water Act.
- To adopt interim land use polices prior to the preparation of the Water Management Plans.

**Policies:**

5.1 Prior to the preparation of a Water Management Plan for the region, the municipality shall require that a certified hydrogeological report be prepared for any application for subdivision approval, or a proposed land use redesignation that proposes to create six or more parcels of land in a quarter section.

5.2 All certified reports shall be prepared in accordance with the “Report Requirements under Section 23 of the Water Act for Subdivision Development” as produced by Alberta Environment, September 1999.

5.3 All costs associated with the preparation, evaluation, interpretation and /or distribution of the said report shall be borne by the registered owner or the agent authorized to act on behalf of the registered owner.

5.4 Any subdivision and or development application within the County is not precluded from any appropriate federal legislation.
Petroleum and Gas Facilities

The Municipal Government Act requires the Municipal Development Plan to contain policies compatible with the Subdivision and Development Regulation regarding the type and location of land uses adjacent to oil and gas facilities. For the most part, the oil industry is regulated by the Alberta Energy Regulator and is exempted for the provincial legislation pursuant to section 618 of the Act.

Objectives:

- To meet the legislative requirements of the Municipal Government Act, the Provincial Land Use Policies and the Subdivision and Development Regulation.
- To identify any sour gas, sweet gas and other petroleum facilities within the boundary of the County of Farmlands.
- To minimize any adverse land use conflicts in proximity to a sour gas facility.
- To minimize any adverse land use conflicts in proximity to all facilities.
- To ensure that suitable access is provided to all oil and gas developments.
- To encourage an open and continued dialogue between developers in the petroleum industry and the local municipal council.
- To encourage developers in the petroleum industry to reclaim lands and cover-type to their predevelopment state.

Policies:

6.1 The Municipality shall ensure all subdivision and development applications that are located within 1.5 kilometres of petroleum and gas facilities are referred to the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER).

6.2 Pursuant to section 619 of the Municipal Government Act, a license, permit, approval or other authorization granted by the Alberta Energy Regulator shall prevail over any bylaw or land use decision rendered by the Municipality.

6.3 The Municipality should refer all subdivision and development applications to the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) for comment.

6.4 All subdivision and development shall adhere to setback requirements requested by the AER.

6.5 The Municipality should be proactive on matters of mutual interest prior to the issuance of any approvals by the AER.

6.6 New pipelines and electricity transmission lines should be sited along existing rights-of-way.
6.7 The municipality shall encourage the petroleum industry to refer their exploration and development program to the local council for perusal and comment.

6.8 Oil and gas exploration and development activities should be undertaken such that:
   (a) surface disturbance, environmental damage and land usage is minimized (e.g. use of hand held seismic; multi-well drilling pads; and processing through existing/underutilized facilities);
   (b) undisturbed lands (e.g. native grasslands) are avoided where at all possible;
   (c) any disturbed lands are restored to as close to their natural state;
   (d) the impacts (e.g. traffic, noise, dust, water usage) on adjacent/nearby residences and agricultural operations are minimized;
   (e) the impacts on waterways and the regional watershed are minimized;
   (f) public safety is not compromised; and
   (g) the scenic attributes are not devalued.

Municipal and School Reserves

The Municipal Government Act requires that, under certain circumstances, the Subdivision and Development Authority address municipal and/or school reserve at the time of a subdivision decision rendered. The Act also requires that these reserves be allocated in conjunction with affected school authorities.

Objectives:
- To establish guidelines for the allocation of municipal and school reserves.
- To ensure that any applicable municipal and/or school reserves are addressed and acquired at the time of subdivision.

Policies:

7.1 Municipal and/or school reserve shall be provided in accordance with the provisions of section 666 of the Municipal Government Act.

7.2 Municipal and/or school reserve shall not be required to be provided under the circumstances authorized in section 663 of the Municipal Government Act.

7.3 Where the reserve requirement is to be satisfied as money in place of land, it shall be done so in accordance with the provisions of sections section 667 of the Municipal Government Act.
Subdivision Criteria

The following objectives and policies are intent on providing guidance to the Subdivision Authority and/or the Subdivision and Development Appeal Board when rendering decisions on these applications.

Objectives:

- To establish clear policies and guidelines that address subdivision issues in the Municipality.
- To ensure that subdivision approvals are limited in number as to not fragment lands for future ranching, agricultural endeavours and the protection of the environment.
- To provide landowners and residents with a reasonable certainty as to what limited subdivisions approvals are acceptable.
- To ensure that opportunity exists for the referral of any subdivision applications to the appropriate government departments, agencies and adjacent landowners for comment.

Policies:

Agricultural

8.1 For the purpose of this plan the minimum parcel size in the Municipality shall be 160 acres (64.75 ha) except where the quarter section may have been reduced in size by road widening, forced roads, cemeteries, school sites or any other public use.

8.2 A subdivision application which proposes to create one or more single lot undeveloped country residential parcel (bare land) is prohibited.

8.3 A subdivision application which proposes to create two 80 acre (32.4 ha) from a previously unsubdivided quarter section is prohibited.

Single Lot Country Residential

8.4 A subdivision which proposes to create a single lot country residential parcel containing a developed residence or farmstead is prohibited.

Grouped County Residential

8.5 A subdivision application which proposes to create a multi-lot residential use shall not be approved unless the said property is redesignated in accordance with the provisions outlined in the Municipal Government Act.
Intensive Agricultural Operations

8.6 A subdivision application which proposes to create a separate title for an existing intensive agricultural operation shall not be subdivided from the original parcel on which the original operation was allowed to locate.

Commercial and Industrial

8.7 No subdivision shall be allowed for a grouped commercial or industrial use unless the property is redesignated pursuant to the process outlined in the Municipal Government Act.

8.8 A subdivision for grouped or isolated rural industries shall, wherever possible, be located on poor agricultural lands, unless in the opinion of the subdivision authority such suitable parcels:
   (a) are not reasonably available,
   (b) would create land use conflicts,
   (c) would conflict with other Municipal Development Plan policies and objectives.

Fragmented Parcels

8.9 Lands which are physically fragmented by way of forced roads, water courses, railways or any natural barriers are not eligible for subdivision approval.

Existing Parcels

8.10 A subdivision application which proposes the enlargement, reduction or realignment of an existing separate parcel may be approved provided that:
   (a) the additional lands required are to accommodate existing or related improvements;
   (b) the proposal is to rectify or rationalize existing habitational, occupancy, cultivation or settlement patterns;
   (c) no additional parcels are created over and above those presently in existence;
   (d) the proposed new lot and the proposed residual lot will continue to have direct legal and physical access to a public roadway, adequate development setbacks, and a suitable building site;
   (e) the size, location and configuration of the proposed lot will not significantly affect any water project or transportation system in the area.
Municipal Referrals

8.11 The County shall forward all subdivision applications to adjacent municipalities for comment pursuant to the provisions outlined in this plan.

Development Criteria

The intent of this section is to ensure that future development complies with the minimum standards established in the Land Use Bylaw or an approved area structure plan. To minimize land use conflicts with other uses in the immediate vicinity, development approval should ensure that a quality development could be provided.

Objectives:

- To ensure that all developments in the County of Farmlands are of an acceptable standard.
- To provide applicants with guidance as to the acceptable standards for development in the County.

Policies:

9.1 All development shall occur on parcel sizes outlined in this Municipal Development Plan or the municipal Land Use Bylaw for the use proposed.

9.2 Development approvals should ensure that non-compatible land uses are either sited properly or not approved at all.

9.3 The development authority may require a developer to provide additional information to determine the suitability of a site. Such information may include the provision of percolation and soil stability tests as well as other geotechnical data.

9.4 No development shall take place within the Municipality without being authorized by the issuance of a development permit unless the said development has been specifically identified with the Land Use Bylaw as not requiring a permit.

9.5 No person shall construct or erect more than one dwelling unit on a parcel of land unless authorized to do so by the issuance of a development permit by the Development Authority.

Environmental Considerations

The unique natural environment of the County of Farmlands includes both a diverse landscape and vitally important watersheds. Consideration must be given to the
protection of the natural environment to ensure the continued health of the entire ecosystem.

Objectives:

- To identify environmentally sensitive areas within the County.
- To ensure public awareness of land use activities within environmentally sensitive areas.

Policies:

10.1 The Municipality, through its Land Use Bylaw, shall address hazard lands with a view of reducing risks to health, safety and property damage.

10.2 The Municipality shall discourage any subdivision or development on lands that are environmentally sensitive or identified as hazard lands.

10.3 The Municipality shall consider the acquisition or use of environmental reserve easements as a means of restricting future subdivision and/or development in the Municipality.

10.4 The Municipality may forward any application for subdivision and/or development to the appropriate government department or agency for pertinent comments.

Implementation and Procedural Issues

The Municipal Development Plan is a statutory plan identified in the hierarchy of planning in the Municipal Government Act. It has been prepared for the County of Farmlands in accordance with the provisions of the Act, the Provincial Land Use Polices and the Subdivision and Development Regulation. The Act requires all local plans and bylaws to be consistent with the provincial legislation and adopted by bylaw.

The Act also establishes a public participation component, which requires providing opportunities for input, referrals to adjacent municipality, and a mandatory public hearing prior to second reading of the bylaw. By the time this Municipal Development Plan has received its third and final reading, it will have been refined and rewritten based on the comments of ratepayers, municipal administration, and elected officials.

With the final revisions made, the Municipal Development Plan will ultimately become the long-range philosophical document for the County to which the Land Use Bylaw will provide guidance and implement the day-to-day decisions on subdivision and development matters and land use decisions.
Objectives:

- To adopt a plan which provides guidance for future land use decisions in the County of Farmlands.
- To meet the legislative requirements established in the *Municipal Government Act*.
- To establish a mechanism whereby the Municipal Development Plan may be revisited, refined and amended to accommodate changes in the Municipality.

Policies:

11.1 The Municipal Development Plan shall be adopted and subsequently amended if required pursuant to sections 230, 606 and 692 of the *Municipal Government Act*.

11.2 Prior to the adoption of this document, the plan should be sent to adjacent municipalities for their comments and concurrence.

11.3 In order to achieve consistency, the Land Use Bylaw shall be amended to comply with any policies to the contrary in this plan.

11.4 Strict adherence to minimum parcel size and measurable standards may be waived to a certain extent if:
   (a) the applicant has proven the existence of some special or isolated circumstance;
   (b) the effect of the variance would not, in the Council’s or Subdivision and Development Authority’s opinion, harm the agricultural potential, environment or adjacent land uses in the area;
   (c) reasons for the variance are stated in the minutes of the meeting when the variance was contemplated and subsequently granted.

11.5 Any amendments or changes to this plan shall be forwarded to the County of Farmlands’ planning advisor for review and comment.

11.6 This plan shall be reviewed, amended or replaced by a new bylaw from time to time in order to achieve consistency and reflect the wishes of the County and its ratepayers.
Appendix A: Maps
Sample MDP County of Farmlands

Guidebook for Preparing a Municipal Development Plan
# Appendix B: Tables

## TABLE 2
TRAFFIC VOLUMES 1993 to 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>AADT 1993</th>
<th>AADT 1997</th>
<th>AADT 2001</th>
<th>ASDT 2001</th>
<th>% Change over the last 10 years</th>
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<td>1330</td>
<td>1730</td>
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<td>160</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>-28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIGHWAY 532</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>E of FTR N of M</td>
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<td>70</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>4km W 22 and 532 Rope Lakes</td>
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<td>70</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>110</td>
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<tr>
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<td>120</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>35.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIGHWAY 533</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E of 22 at Rope Lakes PP</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>48.0</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**AADT**  Annual Average Daily Traffic is an average daily two-way traffic expressed as vehicles per day.
## TABLE 3
COUNTY OF FARMLANDS TRAFFIC VOLUMES AND FUNCTION OF THE LOCAL ROAD SYSTEM (2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Road Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
<th>Length (km)</th>
<th>AADT 2000</th>
<th>Primary Function</th>
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<td>Maycroft Rd</td>
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<td>Dutch Creek Rd</td>
<td></td>
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<td>171</td>
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<td>recreation/logging/gas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>West</td>
<td></td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>recreation/logging/gas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oldman River Road</td>
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<td>West</td>
<td></td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>recreation/local access</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bob’s Creek Road</td>
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<td>West</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>local access/regional continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stavely Road</td>
<td>S.H. 533</td>
<td>MD E Boundary</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Chimney Rock Road</td>
<td>Hwy. 22</td>
<td>West</td>
<td></td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>local access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saddle Mountain Road</td>
<td>Chimney Rock Rd</td>
<td>West</td>
<td></td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>recreation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Trout Road</td>
<td>S.H. 520</td>
<td>Trout Creek</td>
<td></td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>recreation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skyline Road</td>
<td>S.H. 520</td>
<td>Heath Creek Rd</td>
<td></td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>recreation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Sharples Creek Road</td>
<td>MD S Boundary</td>
<td>Skyline</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Creek Road</td>
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<td>4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maycroft Road</td>
<td>F.T.R</td>
<td>MD E Boundary</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>recreation/logging/regional continuity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GUIDEBOOK FOR PREPARING A MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

APPENDIX B: TOPIC PAPERS

March 2018
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Introduction – How to Use the Topic Section

The creation of a Municipal Development Plan (MDP) requires a basic knowledge of your municipality and the items, which may have an impact on how and where you develop. The economic, environmental, social and cultural components, as well as the manner in which your municipality is governed, will differ greatly across the province, region, and even between neighbouring municipalities. The following topics are not intended to address every potential influencing factor or variable, but they may serve to help you move forward in a more informed manner during the preparation of your MDP.

The first few topic papers focus on assessing your physical environment and what is on top of the ground, as well as what is underneath it. They identify items which are crucial in evaluating your current situation prior to identifying the long term development goals for your community. It is important to remember that both positive and negative factors will influence how and where your community will be able to grow in the future. The first few topic papers identify all-encompassing items which every municipality should consider in the early stages of creating their MDP. Some examples include the identification of flood prone areas, oil and gas facilities and their related setbacks, or the location of water and wastewater lines and facilities and their respective capacities.

The second group of topic papers are more specific in nature and they may or may not be relevant to your current situation. These are not items that are addressed only by larger municipalities – they are scalable and suitable for municipalities of all sizes. It is recommended that you review them because even if they are not a primary focus now, they may prove to be a resource for you in the future as your community evolves over the years. For example, if a proposal for an alternative energy initiatives came before you how would your community respond.

Finally, the topic papers which address intermunicipal cooperation and urban expansion or annexation should be consulted in the event that you have determined that your municipality’s physical land base will need to expand in order to support the continued growth and development of your community.

It is important to note that all topics or variables that you identify as being relevant to your community should contain corresponding MDP policies indicating how you will address them. The policy statements that you include in your document may have an impact on your budget program. For example, policy statements requiring things like technical studies, physical upgrades to infrastructure, or remediation of a site to meet your long term development goals. Therefore, it is important to understand the potential budget and resource implications of these items and ensure they are considered in your operating and capital plans and budgets.
Projecting Future Growth and Land Needs

An integral part of planning for a community and future land requirements is projecting the anticipated population and the lands needed to support it. Projecting population and land needs is an ongoing process that can be refined as new data becomes available. It is important to present accurate projections using accepted data, such as census data from either a municipal or federal program, so the information is understood, and can be replicated.

Population Projections

The first step in preparing this information is to find the most up to date data set available. For most municipalities the federal census data is the most complete and accurate set. This information is easily and widely accessible from Statistics Canada. If municipal census data is available, that may offer an alternative if the municipal census years fill in the 5 year space between the federal census years.

Once you have chosen a data source you must set a time frame for how far into the future the municipality is planning to project (i.e. 30 years or 50 years) and build on data from a similar time frame from the past. By breaking down the past data set into time intervals, you can determine the projected growth rates. The following is a sample data set for a small Alberta municipality. The past population data set was built from the Census of Canada and from the provincial population data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Census Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>524</td>
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<td>1966</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>340</td>
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<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>346</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once a data set has been built, you can then move to determining growth rates. The simplest way to do this is to break the data into intervals, such as 5, 10, 15 years. The following example outlines this method using the sample data set. The equations provided are exponential calculations that utilize the formula function of an excel spreadsheet. The equation that will be used to determine the growth rates over 40 years (1976 to 2016) is as follows:

\[(\text{Present Population}/\text{Past Population})^{(1/\text{Time Period})}-1\]

For the first example, the equation will appear as: \((346/344)^{(1/40)}-1 = 0.01\%\)
Once you have determined some future growth rates, you can select those that represent a low, medium and high growth rate. It may also be necessary to add a controlled growth rate for a very low scenario, such as 0.01% to build a more varied scenario. The growth rates that will be used for this example will be as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Very Low</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual Growth Rate</td>
<td>0.01%</td>
<td>0.12%</td>
<td>0.53%</td>
<td>0.58%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the growth rates have been selected you can then apply them to your population data set. The equation used for this is as follows:

$$\text{Present Population} \times (1+\text{Growth Rate})^{\text{Time Interval}}$$

For the first example of 0.01% below the equation will look like: $346((1+0.01\%)^{5})$

For each time interval the Present Population value will be the population from the previous interval. So calculations for the year 2021 will be based on the 2016 population, the year 2026 will be based on the 2021 population and the year 2031 will be based on the year 2026, and so on.

The time interval in this example is 5 years, to match the existing data set. This equation will apply the growth rate over the selected intervals of your time frame, and account for population added. The following table shows how the equation is applied to the sample data set to give us the projected populations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Growth Rate</th>
<th>Population Projections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.01%</td>
<td>346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.12%</td>
<td>346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.53%</td>
<td>346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.58%</td>
<td>346</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once you have projected the population for each growth scenario, you can then select one scenario to use for determining future land requirements. One way to do this is to determine the actual growth rate over a past period of time that may be expected to continue. For this example the Medium growth rate of 0.53% per year was chosen for the future land needs assessment because it most closely resembled the recent 30 year growth rate, and can be reasonably be expected in the coming 30 years.
Appendix B – Topic Papers

Residential Land Requirements

With the growth rate selected, the expected additional population over the next 30 years can be calculated. This is done by subtracting the present population from the projected population value. Once the additional persons have been calculated, the additional dwelling units required for the population can be determined.

The Census of Canada data contains dwelling information, including the average household size (the average number of people per housing unit). For this example the census data indicates the average household size is 2.1 people. Using this value you can divide the projected number of additional persons by the average household size to determine the number of required housing units.

Additional Persons: 2046 population (405) – 2016 population (346) = 59 additional persons
Dwelling Unit Requirement: 59 persons / 2.1 people per housing unit = 28.1 housing units

With these values now available, it is possible to calculate the amount of land required for residential development. The additional value required for this is the density target for the community. For this example a value of \( 10 \) dwelling units/hectare is being used, as it is a relatively low density community. Setting a density target is something that is typically included in a Municipal Development Plan. The calculation below is a method that can be used for determining the land requirement.

Residential Land Requirement: \( \frac{28.1 \text{ projected units}}{10 \text{ units per ha}} = 2.81 \text{ ha required} \)

Based on the projected population, average household size and the target density for the community, it is anticipated that 2.81 ha of additional residential land will be required for this community for the 30 year planning period.

Industrial and Commercial Land Requirements

Projecting future land requirements for commercial and industrial uses is also important for community planning. The method described below is based on a ratio of existing area of developed commercial and industrial lands to the current population. You will need to know the amount of land currently developed for commercial and industrial uses for this calculation. For this example the following applies:

Commercial Lands – 1.63 hectares
Industrial Lands – 11.89 hectares

For larger municipalities a ratio of hectares of land per 1,000 people would be used. Since this example is for a much smaller municipality we will be using a ratio of hectares of land per 100 people. For our example community the population size is 346 people, or 3.46 hundreds. The following is an example for industrial land:

Industrial Land Ratio – 11.89 ha of industrial land
\[
\frac{346 \text{ people}}{100} = 3.46
\]
\[
\frac{11.89 \text{ ha}}{3.46} = 3.44 \text{ ha for every 100 people}
\]
Therefore the ratio of industrial land per 100 people is 3.44 ha
The next step is to apply the ratio to the expected population growth. There is an additional 59 persons expected by 2046 based on the growth rate.

*Industrial Land Requirement – 59 additional people, or 0.59:100 people * 3.44 ha = 2.03 ha*

The total Industrial land requirement for the expected additional population will be 2.03 ha.

The same method can be applied to the Commercial land expectations, as follows:

*Commercial Land Ratio – 1.63 ha of commercial land
346 people/100 = 3.46
1.63 ha / 3.46 = 0.47 ha : 100 people
Therefore the ratio of industrial land per 100 people is 0.47 ha.*

*Commercial Land Requirement – 59 additional people, or 0.59:100 people * 0.47 ha = 0.28 ha*

The total Commercial land requirement for the expected additional population will be 0.28 ha.
Flood Hazard Areas

Flooding is a natural process, which every stream and river has the potential to experience. Flooding can be the result of a variety of factors, so understanding what the hazards are, and where they might occur, are vitally important when considering future land uses and development.

A Flood Hazard Area as defined by Alberta Environment and Parks is, “the area of land that will be flooded during the design flood event under encroached conditions”. The flood standard used for a design flood event is the 1:100 year flood event. The 1:100 year flood event has a 1% chance of occurring in any given year, and is considered a major flood that risks causing serious damage to people and property. Typically, this flood hazard area, also referred to as the flood plain, is marked by the 1:100 year flood water elevation, is separated into two zones being the flood fringe and floodway.

The intent of this two zone approach is to identify the expected severity of flooding across the floodplain. The flood fringe is the area of land at the outer edge of the flood hazard area that experiences shallower flood waters (less than 1m deep) with lower water velocities (less than 1m/sec.).

The floodway is the portion of the flood hazard area that experiences flows that are deepest, fastest, and most destructive. This area includes the active stream channel and part of the adjacent floodplain. The Provincial Flood Hazard Identification Program identifies the floodway to be located where flood water are 1 m deep or greater; are flowing at 1 m/s velocity or higher; and are no more than 0.3 m higher under encroachment conditions. The image below depicts the 1:100 year floodplain of a river (shown as the flood hazard area), and the areas considered to be the floodway and the flood fringe.
Identifying the flood hazard areas is crucial in the long term control of development in and around floodplains. Flooding is an inevitable event on any stream or river channel, though frequency and magnitude of a flood event can vary. The potential for floods to cause damage to life and property is the primary objective of controlling or limiting development within the floodway of a water course.

Flood recovery efforts are expensive and often rely upon Provincial and Federal aid, which places the burden of recovery across the shoulders of the larger population. By limiting development within floodplains and requiring existing development to be properly flood proofed, municipalities can ensure adequate steps are taken to prevent personal loss whether it is lives or possessions; ensure the safety of the population; prevent potential environmental contamination; and reduce our overall insurance costs.

One of the first steps to reducing potential impacts from flooding is to identify the areas of the municipality that are susceptible to flood hazards. The drawing below is an example of a Flood Hazard map that can be used within an MDP to identify the hazard areas.

Accompanying a drawing of this nature should be a variety of stated objectives and policies aimed at addressing the municipality’s expectations regarding development in and around flood hazard areas. For example, a policy identifying areas subject to flooding which are unsuitable for development and requiring the dedication of Environmental Reserve may be implemented. Another policy method may be to identify all lands adjacent to water bodies and watercourses to be dedicated as Environmental Reserve based upon
a geotechnical report identifying the top of slope, with a minimum required width for Environment Reserve, such as 6 metres.

The Government of Alberta has introduced Bill 27, the Flood Recovery and Reconstruction Act, to provide regulations to control development within floodways. Until such time as a regulation is ratified and released, decisions regarding development in these hazard areas will be guided by each municipality’s individual land use bylaw and flood plain policies. However, as a cautionary note, municipalities may be jeopardizing their access to disaster relief funding from the Province in the future, if they currently permit development within flood hazard areas, even though the legislation has not been enacted.
Steep and Unstable Slopes

Steep and Unstable slopes often provide a municipality with both a challenge and an opportunity in terms of its planning and overall development. For a municipality, steep slopes can represent a potential liability if, over the passage of time, they become unstable and unable to support development that has occurred on or around them. Likewise, steep slopes are often environmentally sensitive, and may be a feature that a municipality would choose to highlight and protect in its planning documents, including a Municipal Development Plan. On the other hand, Developers may view steep slopes as an opportunity, particularly for residential development, as these slopes are often associated with higher value lots due to improved viewscapes, and close access to natural features such as rivers, lakes, or streams. Given these conflicting pressures, it is important that a municipality have a clear strategy for how it will manage its steep and unstable slopes; this information should form a part of a Municipal Development Plan.

Legislative Context

The Municipal Government Act provides tools for municipalities to control development on steep slopes through section 664. More specifically, the Act provides two channels through which the municipality may seek to protect environmentally sensitive features, including steep and unstable slopes:

1. Environmental Reserve can be taken by the municipality as a condition of subdivision without compensation to the land owner in accordance with section 664(1) of the act. By doing so, the municipality takes ownership of land and commits to preserving the natural features of the land. Lands that are eligible to be taken as environmental reserve are specifically listed in the act; if lands are environmentally sensitive but not listed, they are not eligible. Steep and unstable slopes are eligible to be taken as Environmental Reserve.

2. Environmental Reserve easements can be applied as an alternative to Environmental Reserve, and are eligible to be applied against lands only if they meet the requirements for environmental reserve. While there are a number of important considerations for the application of an environmental reserve easement detailed in section 664 of the Act, the fundamental difference in the case of the easement is that ownership of the lands is not transferred to the municipality; rather, ownership of the lands stays with the landowner and the easement, registered on title, is retained on the land and remains in place if and when ownership of the land transfers from one person to another.

Potential Issues to Address

- Protecting the Integrity of Slopes - a Municipal Development Plan provides a municipality with the opportunity to identify areas where slopes have degraded or have the potential to degrade, and to set out policies which will minimize the impact of slope degradation. This might include specific mapping of steep slopes within the municipality, or may include policies promoting land management practices which serve to protect the integrity of slopes, such as promoting the maintenance or renewal of tree coverage and other vegetation which serve to reinforce slope integrity. It
should also be noted that undercutting by a river or a stream, particularly on a curve or bend in the watercourse, may have a substantial impact on the stability of a slope. Degradation of a slope can occur with one weather event, so frequent updating of base information may be required.

- Provide an Inventory of Steep Slope Areas - the MDP process provides the municipality with an opportunity to quantify the lands within its boundaries which may be too steep or unstable to accommodate development. In doing so, the municipality will provide its citizens, and prospective developers, with a clear sense of a major constraint to future growth or a challenge to overcome.

A Home at the Top of an Escarpment Collapsing Due to Slope Degradation
Wastewater Treatment Plants & Waste Management Facilities

Wastewater treatment facilities and waste management facilities, (including landfills) are part of municipal infrastructure that helps to ensure high standards of public health and safety for your residents, while caring for the environment. Whether you operate your own waste water treatment facility/landfill, or contract out the services, your Municipal Development Plan should take into consideration mandatory provincial regulations.

The Subdivision and Development Regulation specifies mandatory minimum setback distances for wastewater treatment plants and waste disposal facilities from schools, hospitals, food establishments or residences. These standards must be adhered to, and should be incorporated into the development of your MDP in determining the location for a variety of land uses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility</th>
<th>Mandatory Setback Distance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wastewater Treatment Facility</td>
<td>300 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating Landfill</td>
<td>450 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disposal Area of an Operating or Non-Operating Landfill</td>
<td>300 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disposal Area of Disposal Area of a Non-Operating Hazardous Waste Management Facility</td>
<td>450 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating Waste Storage Site</td>
<td>300 m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Site Selection for Wastewater Treatment Plants and Waste Management Facilities

As with all components associated with preparation of a MDP, it is important to consult your community regarding new or expanding wastewater treatment plants or waste management facilities early in the process. The mandatory technical siting requirements (setbacks) may have an impact on the economic value of lands within the community relative to their development potential.

In the following diagram, 300 m has been measured from the property boundaries of the wastewater treatment facility. Despite the legal requirement to measure setbacks from the working areas of the facility (e.g. the water settling pond), it is highly recommended that you consider measuring from the boundary of the site, rather than the working area. This additional land may allow for future expansion and upgrades to the facility or may prevent the creation of a non-conforming situation if setback requirements increase in the future. However, if a new cell is added to address capacity issues, the buffer distance will increase and may render some existing land uses both within and outside of the urban area, non-conforming.
Note the Impact on the Adjacent Rural Municipality Relative to Development Potential

Although residential development, food establishments or schools may be prohibited from locating within the hatched area, this would be an ideal location for light industrial development or certain commercial uses. It should be noted that the setback distance extends into the adjacent municipality, which is why consultation with your neighbours early in the MDP preparation process is important.

Relative to the most appropriate physical siting requirements for landfills or waste transfer stations, the following, although not an exhaustive list should be considered:

- Gently sloping topography that is compatible for building necessary ramps;
- Topography - consider on-site and off-site drainage controls and surface water management;
- Geotechnical considerations for supporting building and retaining wall structures, and may include geotechnical investigations to confirm soil conditions for settling ponds;
- Allowance for site buffers and landscaping including fencing, berms, open spaces, and trees;
- Potential capacity and/or upgrading of utilities and roads; and
- Potential design or orientation considerations relative to the mitigation of nuisances including litter, noise, dust and odours (e.g. prevailing winds).
Industrial Uses

Industry is a valuable economic component of any municipality’s tax base and usually offers employment opportunities. However, the community, through its Municipal Development Plan, must also acknowledge the need to ensure that any industrial development minimizes negative factors on the remainder of the community and your municipal neighbours. Industry may vary from “light” uses such as a business park, which may take the form of mixed-use light industrial to commercial/wholesale, all the way up to “heavy” industrial uses or facilities, such as processing plants.

Appearance, air quality, safety, emission of contaminants, noise, odour, fire, explosive hazards/dangerous goods and/or traffic are examples of variables that should be considered when planning to identify appropriate locations for the development of industrial or employment activities. How can you plan to avoid or mitigate potential negative factors that may affect the use or enjoyment of nearby sites, both within and outside of the community boundaries? The most effective way to avoid potential off-site impacts is through the separation of uses and a transitioning of zones.

What Should the Community Consider in the MDP Relative to Industrial Uses?

- Ensure there is adequate separation distances between industrial development and homes, schools and medical facilities to minimize the risks to the public and to facilitate effective emergency response in the event of an industrial incident. The “buffer” should be reciprocal, in the event that the industrial use expands in the future.

- Although having industries within your municipal boundaries for taxation purposes and to provide employment opportunities is highly prized, remember that industrial developments can make poor neighbours. Identify locations for a range of industrial opportunities and adhere to the strict separation of uses.

- Choose locations for future industrial development which are adequately setback from lakes, drainage courses and environmentally sensitive areas. The goal is to minimize potential impacts on the environment relative to wildlife and water contamination.

- Identify industrial transportation routes/access which may include wider roads and turning radii.

- Acknowledge that there may be potentially higher voltage power requirements for larger facilities or industries and prepare accordingly.

- Industrial facilities often require large volumes of water, both for their processing requirements, but also to meet minimum Safety Code standards for fire flow pressures. Water line capacity may need to be upgraded for industrial development.
• Consider the visual impacts of outdoor storage and the future location of industry within your community. Although industrial development may often occur at the entrance to a municipality due to transportation requirements, is this the first impression of your community that you want the travelling public to have? Buffering and screening may be warranted and your MDP can certainly identify this requirement.

Agribusiness

Consider site line impacts and emissions
Energy Sector - Oil and Gas

Oil and Gas activity or the “Energy Sector” is generally provincially regulated. The Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) succeeded the Energy Resources Conservation Board (ERCB) and administers Alberta’s energy resources, such as oil, natural gas, coal and pipelines. The AER mandate also includes managing public lands and the environment.

While your community may not have any decision-making authority relative to the location of wells or pipelines, you are required to acknowledge them in your land use planning exercises in the MDP. Remember that setback requirements do not take into consideration municipal boundaries; a gas well located outside the legal boundary of a village may affect the development potential of lands within the village’s boundary.

A setback is the minimum distance that must be maintained between any energy facility such as a well, pipeline or plant relative to a dwelling, restaurant, school or public facility. The setback requirements will vary depending on the nature of the urban development and whether the gas facility or structure contains sour gas.

What Should the Community Consider in the MDP Relative to Oil and Gas Developments?

A good practice when preparing your MDP is to identify the locations of existing oil and gas wells, as well as pipelines at the outset of the plan preparation exercise. This includes identifying oil and gas wells or facilities outside of your municipal boundary. By today’s standards, a level 2, sour gas facility requires a 500 m setback from any urban development and this may nullify any proposed development, municipal expansion or annexation. However, the same level 2, sour gas facility would only have to be separated from an individual rural household or farmstead by 100 m.

It is imperative that you consult with the AER or check their website if you have any questions pertaining to existing or oil and gas activities. These sites may have a significant impact on acceptable future land uses and the creation of your Municipal Development Plan.
Agricultural Land Uses and Confined Feeding Operations

In any rural MDP, there should be sections referring to policies on agricultural lands, general uses and confined feeding operations. In an urban MDP, there should be a focus on protecting farmland and the uses it supports, until such time as the land is needed for conversion to more intensive, urbanized uses.

Small urban centres need to care about agriculture, both within their boundaries and outside of their borders. Farmland is not only a benefit for food production; it can also help to support clean air and water initiatives; provide wildlife habitat and riparian areas; and can add substantially to the perceived quality of life for urban inhabitants.

Most rural MDPs contain policies on protecting existing agricultural lands. These policies outline how a municipality will prevent fragmentation of farmland in their jurisdiction, e.g. prohibit the subdivision of previously unsubdivided quarter sections for non-agricultural purposes. Most MDPs limit the number of subdivisions per quarter section on productive, agricultural lands.

The Canada Land Inventory rating system (CLI) is useful for regional-scale planning but does not provide a great deal of detail. Many municipalities supplement the CLI information with their own farmland assessment ratings (FARs), which are much more detailed.

In order to protect the agricultural industry, it is not enough to protect good farm land from subdivision. Residential subdivisions and other non-farm uses should be separated from some types of farming practices for several reasons:

- Non-farm development may interfere with existing agricultural operations and the potential for the agricultural use to expand in the future.
- Non-farm developments may be impacted by potential negative influences of farming practices i.e. manure spreading, hours of operation during seeding/harvesting seasons; dust; chemical usage; farm machinery on roadways, etc.

Confined Feeding Operations

Municipalities have the power to regulate small livestock operations, but large scale Confinned Feeding Operations (CFOs) are regulated by the Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB), under the authority of Agricultural Operation Practices Act (AOPA). The NRCB must consider your policy direction identified in MDP relative to agricultural pursuits and CFOs prior to rendering a decision on a new or expanding CFO.

Regulations under AOPA set out a minimum distance setback (MDS) between CFOs and residences. This is determined by using the type and number of animals, the type of manure handling system, and number of people affected. Most municipalities apply the MDS reciprocally; they do not allow residences close to a CFO. From a rural perspective, it should be noted that potential growth of an existing CFO may be negatively impacted by progressive encroachment by residential development in an urban area.
Potential Problems with the Urban/Rural Interface
Transportation and Land Use Patterns

As dependency upon automobile transportation has increased over the last century, land use planning principles and practices to address various forms of moving vehicles safely and efficiently in our communities has evolved. From compact urban centres to sprawling developments on the periphery of our communities, transportation planning decisions directly impact land use and vice versa. Our MDPs have the ability to influence the amount of land being used for transportation infrastructure which can also affect the location, design, and efficiency of development that occurs in our communities.

The MDP is required to incorporate information on the major transportation network and highway system(s). Roads do not stop at municipal boundaries and land use decisions you make may impact the road network in an adjacent municipality.

How does Transportation Affect Land Use?

Automobile-oriented mobility focuses on expanding transit ways, such as wider streets and increased hard surfacing. Transportation infrastructure of this nature leads to an increase in urban sprawl, in order to accommodate the space required for the infrastructure, as well as dispersing other land uses due to lack of developable land. It is important to note that this phenomenon is not only a “large city” issue. Municipalities of all sizes should try to minimize the amount of land devoted solely to serving the automobile. Remember, those roads will need to be plowed and resurfaced affecting your operating and asset management budgets.

A transportation system planned ONLY for high mobility affects how and where people will choose to locate their homes and businesses. Land use patterns that are spread out will further increase the demand for transportation because of the greater travel distances. The impact these choices in transportation planning and development have on our societies go beyond the just the land uses, and also impact the environment, the public realm, accessibility for the non-driving population and community health. Transportation that is heavily reliant in automobiles requires a large street network, with ever increasing street widths to accommodate larger vehicles.

In addition to transportation affecting land uses by limiting development area and where uses are located, land uses can also affect transportation. Certain types of land uses can have greater traffic impacts than others, and require more care in placement so as to not negatively impact adjacent uses or impede the efficiency of the entire transportation network.
Street Classifications

An important aspect of transportation planning is the hierarchy and classification of streets used in the transportation network. Some streets are designed to accommodate high volumes of traffic and ease of movement across a community, and others are intended to only serve a small area and population. Arterial roads are designed to accommodate large volumes of traffic and generally have a minimum number of access points. Collector roads are the “connectors” in the system, linking major thoroughfares to the local road network. Local roads generally have the largest number of access points and serve limited populations within a specific area.
Traffic Impacts

Traffic patterns and volumes are also affected by land uses. Certain types of uses will generate larger volumes of traffic than others. Locating these types of uses in areas that are close to arterial or collector roads that are designed for increased traffic volume will reduce impacts on adjacent, potentially more sensitive uses, such as residential developments.

Industrial uses can also generate increased traffic volumes, as well as generating larger vehicles such as transport trucks. The impacts of industrial traffic and transportation on non-industrial adjacent uses can be detrimental, with high numbers of daily trips and large vehicles creating dust and noise. These types of uses benefit from being located close to arterial roads for easy access in and out of the community and on specific streets that can accommodate the traffic volume, similar to commercial uses.

Residential land uses in general generate lower traffic volumes than commercial or industrial uses; however, the density of the residential neighbourhood can have an impact on the efficacy of the road network. Uses such as apartment buildings, row houses and other multi-family dwellings will generate more daily trips and have an increased parking area requirement than low density detached dwellings. As such, these high density residential uses should be located closer to collector and arterial roads, typically at the periphery of residential communities. Locating low density, single family development on smaller local roads in the interior of a neighbourhood will concentrate the majority of traffic in a community, to the streets designed to accommodate higher traffic volumes.
Sustainability

Sustainable development is often defined as, “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. Sustainability has become a typical “lens” or filter that is applied to strategic planning processes. While the Municipal Government Act (MGA) does not specifically mandate municipalities to address sustainability within their MDPs, the range of issues that may be addressed and their complex interactions are a good rationale for municipalities to include sustainability as a component of all aspects related to future development identified in the MDP.

What is Sustainability?

Sustainability is typically described as having five pillars or components that provide a framework for understanding the interactions between various aspects of community life and how they can be managed to bring about change.

The Pillars of Sustainable Development

- **Environmental Sustainability** focuses on the relationship between human systems and the natural environment. It is premised on the understanding that many of the natural resources that we depend on today, such as, fossil fuels, land, air and water, are limited either in quantity, quality or both, and that unhealthy consumption of these resources can adversely affect their capacity to renew themselves.

- **Social Sustainability** concerns itself with how the benefits of development are distributed. It addresses issues relating to the distribution of services, such as education, health care and housing, and looks at how vulnerable persons are impacted by the distribution of resources and services, and develops polices to protect them from marginalization.

- **Cultural Sustainability**, closely linked to social sustainability, concerns itself with how cultural resources can be shared, developed and preserved over time. These resources include both tangible assets, such as sites of special value and heritage, museums and recreational facilities; and non-material elements, such as sports, arts, architecture, traditions, community history, language, media and entertainment.
Economic Sustainability is about making the local economy resilient, so that citizens are able to earn a decent living and essential services needed to improve their quality of life are provided. Without sufficient income, employment opportunities and a stable financial base, many communities would not be viable. Economic sustainability is also about ensuring prudent fiscal management to ensure value for money in the use of government resources.

Sustainable Governance is the organizational connection within the sustainable development framework. It is about making the machinery of government more effective, transparent, accountable and inclusive. It recognizes the critical role that governance plays in achieving the goals of sustainable development. Sustainable municipal governance means ensuring that governments cultivate and embrace sustainability in their decision-making and actions.

Why do Municipalities Need Sustainability Planning?

There are a number of benefits from including a focus on sustainability in a MDP. It:

- provides a holistic framework through which to view development and change, which can help judge the adequacy of the various policies and actions.
- can assist in identifying areas of commonalities or conflicts that might arise in pursuing the different policies contained in the MDP. This can help better coordinate policies and resources to minimize conflicts and optimize beneficial impacts.
- can help to stabilize environmental impacts, protect the economic base and enhance community well-being.
- recognizes the potential financial implications of various policy directions contemplated in the long term vision for the community.
- encourages decision makers to think long-term about the future of their community, often beyond the time frame provided for in the MDP.

How to Incorporate Sustainable Development Goals in the MDP

As an overarching concept or way of “doing business” in the community, sustainability can be incorporated throughout a MDP, from conceptual principles, to specific goals/policies, and practical implementation actions. Examples of sustainability related policy directions within existing MDPs include:

Principles

- Smart growth principles will be applied in maintaining the integrity of the land base and to promote sustainable development such that the needs of the present generation are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- Our community will be managed with a long-term perspective. We will conserve and strengthen our environmental, economic, fiscal, and social resources through wise stewardship and smart growth to support our Town into the future.
Policy

- Wherever possible, the Town should facilitate the adaptive reuse of historic buildings in order to preserve the identity and history of the built environment, and demonstrate a commitment to sustainable building techniques.

Action Plans

Beyond guiding policies and goals, some municipalities may prefer to list actions that provide an additional layer that bridges the gap between their sustainability goals and the actions needed to help them achieve an identified end result. Such actions may be useful in the sense that they offer a means of linking knowledge to action as well as provide an avenue for tracking progress towards stated sustainability policies or goals. Below are examples of sustainability actions:

- **Environmental Sustainability**: Provide education to inform decision makers of the current expense of some technologies, the intrinsic value of being more “green” and those technologies and approaches which could be a total cost reduction into the future.
- **Social Sustainability**: Maintain and improve services for at-risk populations.
- **Cultural Sustainability**: Create an Arts Board to oversee the arts in the community.
- **Economic Sustainability**: Increase support for local business by encouraging the public to shop local.
- **Sustainable Governance**: Hold candidate forums and create training opportunities for those interested in leadership roles in the community.

It is important to note that “action plans” or action-based initiatives usually have a financial obligation associated with their implementation. A sustainable perspective may help to reflect the interrelationship between goals or desires in a community, relative to the economic reality of being able to not only achieve a desired end product, but the financial ability to maintain it over the long term.
Development Density

Development density refers to the ratio of buildings, population, and infrastructure compared to the land area of a given region. Density can take different forms and have a variety of applications in terms of land-use and context. It can be expressed in different ways using numerous definitions and methods of measurement, such as: persons per square mile, units per acre, or floor area ratio etc. Density can also be discussed at different scales or levels, including but not limited to: regional, municipal, neighbourhood, census tract, city block or individual campuses and buildings. The focus of this guide will be primarily on development density at the municipal level.

Why is Development Density Important to MDPs?

A Municipal Development Plan (MDP) sets goals and objectives, and establishes policies that will guide future land-use and development. These components of the MDP may set a direction for the municipality with respect to density. Generally, the intent of density related policies is to ensure that:

- development is efficient and makes good use of municipal infrastructure;
- the municipality can financially sustain its infrastructure over the long term; and
- the natural environment is not unnecessarily or prematurely fragmented or developed.

Municipalities have a variety of practices to utilize land more efficiently and manage the footprint of the built environment. Three of the most important principles that should be conveyed through MDPs via vision statements, objectives, goals or policies for promoting the efficient use of land are:

a) Utilize the minimum amount of land needed;
b) Utilize already developed or disturbed lands; and
c) Maximize the use of existing infrastructure.
Zoning Incentives:

This allows a developer to develop a higher density development in a place where it typically is not allowed can lead to what is known as “density bonusing” or “incentive zoning”, which can provide some exceptions in regulations for the developer in exchange for some public benefit needed by the community. Density “bonusing” can reduce the development footprint by accommodating additional residential or commercial uses on a given area of land. This is typically enforced on a municipal level, at the development authority’s discretion. One example is a policy allowing for two additional parcels on a quarter section if there is an over-dedication of municipal reserve and/or dedication of a conservation easement.

Minimum Density Requirements:

This refers to the minimum amount of development that is allowed on a given area of land. Controlling/reducing the amount of low-density development and encouraging higher density development reduces fragmentation and the strain on municipal resources and infrastructure required to service the lands such as roads, water, sewer lines, or private utilities. An example is a policy requiring the residential density for new neighbourhoods shall be a minimum of 17 dwelling units per net developable hectare.

Minimum Intensification Requirements:

Infill intensification occurs when an existing building, site or area is developed or re-developed at a density higher than what currently exists”. For example, a policy that seeks to accommodate approximately 40% of growth over the next 50 years through infill and intensification.

Reducing Developmental Footprint and Encouraging Land-Efficient Living:

MDPs may prioritise high-density mixed-use development over low-density single-use development as it is more land-efficient. An example of this type of incentive would be an MDP that encourages more commercial spaces at ground level with residential suites above them and less single-detached houses with separated mini-malls and commercial plazas.
Lot sizes:

Optimizing and implementing maximum lot size policies can affect the overall development potential within the area to which it is being applied. Many rural municipalities in Alberta establish a minimum or maximum lot size in agricultural areas through their MDPs and Land Use Bylaws. For instance, discouraging the premature subdivision and development of good agricultural land by limiting the number of parcels permitted as well as restricting the size of the parcels allowed.

![Minimum Lot Sizes in Place](image1.png)

![Maximum Lot Sizes in Place](image2.png)

Transfer of Development Credits (TDC):

TDCs work by directing development away from areas of environmental, aesthetic, or agricultural value and re-directing them into higher density clusters. A TDC Program can “sell” or “transfer” an owner’s development credits to landowners in a “sending” or “receiving” area as an incentive to be used in the development of additional density. The additional density may take the form of increased building height and/or reduced parking. A TDC program is enabled under the Alberta Land Stewardship Act (ALSA), which can only be established if approved by the Lieutenant Governor in Council who can enforce the requirements on a regional or local level.

Form-based Development Codes:

MDPs may identify the need for new approaches to development regulations. Form-based development codes regulate the physical aspects of buildings by making them more pedestrian friendly and compact rather than spread-out. An example is a set of regulations that mandates certain styles of buildings, such as walk-ups and high-rise residential buildings, for specific areas of the site. This is a departure from planning only based on use – the focus is now on the structure or building, not solely on the uses it contains.
Community Design

Great neighbourhoods are created with careful planning and thoughtful design to create sustainable, healthy and vibrant communities. These neighbourhoods can increase the quality of life for all ages and may aid in attracting new people and businesses to the community. A well planned neighbourhood has the ability to:

- Set the urban character and design of an area;
- Provide opportunities for public spaces for social interactions;
- Define the access and transportation/movement networks; and
- Allocate land for a variety of uses, such as commercial, residential and open space.

A great community will contain a mix of land uses, which includes a commercial corridor or centre, and a range of housing densities. The public realm is pedestrian oriented and easily accessible to most residents by short walking distance. Well connected sidewalks and trails throughout the community help encourage healthy lifestyle choices by making active, alternative transportation methods more convenient and appealing. These active methods also reduce the number of vehicles on the roads and traffic volumes.

An important aspect of a great community is also the ability to support and encourage a healthy lifestyle for residents. The presence of the natural environment through features such as parks and natural spaces for trails, not only encourages people to explore the outdoors, but can also improve the environmental living conditions in urban settings. Well connected multi-modal transportation options; encourage active forms of movement such as walking and biking, instead of relying solely on automobiles.

The following are some principles and objectives to consider when evaluating or conceptualizing neighbourhood design:

- Multi-Modal Transportation – offers mobility choices to residents to travel to, from and within the community. Streets, trails and sidewalks are well connected to encourage alternative movement options, instead of relying solely on vehicular transport.

- Mixed Land Uses – each community should contain a mix of uses and densities that offer options to live, learn, work and play. Residents are able to access daily shopping and recreational opportunities in their community regardless of transportation choice.

- Natural Areas – every community should retain some natural open space and be aware of existing land conditions and the local ecology. Neighbourhoods should be designed to include existing or enhanced natural areas. Parks and open spaces play an integral part in our overall well-being, offering the capacity to cool and filter air in dense neighbourhoods; promote alternative transportation options; and access to the natural environment.

- Compact Urban Form and Density – communities should be designed to use land efficiently and effectively. Concentrating higher density residential units close to commercial and/or institutional uses may reduce vehicular reliance. The wise use of land will support a mix of densities and limit the effect of urban sprawl.
Appendix B – Topic Papers

- Parks and Community Spaces – every community should offer high quality public spaces with a variety of leisure and recreational opportunities. The spaces should be well connected and integrated into the community where they are easily accessible by people of all ages and abilities. These spaces support the community in making healthy choices by making physical activity accessible and affordable.

- Safety and security – communities that are designed for health and well-being will also promote community safety. Sidewalks and trails are designed to keep pedestrians and cyclists safe. Public spaces are designed to be seen from adjacent properties, streets and buildings. Sight lines, lighting, active frontages all help to create a sense of security by increasing visibility.

- Unique communities – newly evolving neighbourhoods should have a distinct identity that inspires community pride and a sense of belonging. The use of entrance features, public art installations, parks and open spaces can help to create an identifiable sense of place.
Commercial Areas

Commercial land uses refer to lands where the primary activity is the exchange of goods and services that allow people to meet their needs. Commercial uses are one of the primary land use categories present in most communities and as such, direction with respect to commercial land development is incorporated into most Municipal Development Plans. The presence, scale, quantity and form of commercial lands within a community will have a significant impact on its character and on the opportunities the community may provide to its residents.

Typical Downtown Commercial Area

The form commercial development takes varies greatly across municipalities and can even vary across specific locations within the same municipality, i.e. highway commercial vs. downtown commercial. A varied array of commercial uses supports a diverse tax base and can act as an employment generator for your community. Typical commercial development forms include:

- **Downtown** — characterized by a concentration of businesses, often in multi-storey buildings, with a variety of commercial uses, located on smaller lots, with access provided by both the road and sidewalk network and served by both onsite and on-street parking.

- **Strip Commercial** — characterized by single storey development with parking located on-site between the building frontage and the street. This commercial development style is typically developed on collector or arterial roads.

- **Highway Commercial** — characterized by large, single storey “big box” stores, service stations, drive-thru and hotels, developed on large lots with significant areas devoted to on-site parking, adjacent to highways and major thoroughfares.

- **Shopping Centre** — characterized by a large building with multiple internal store fronts, centralized around a common indoor, protected pedestrian space, with significant areas devoted to on-site parking.
• **Office Park** – characterized by a group of office buildings situated together in landscaped setting with shared parking lots.

• **Neighbourhood Commercial** – characterized by small scale retail development, typically on a corner parcel and adjacent to a residential area with businesses aimed at meeting the needs of the neighbouring population.

• **Mixed Use Development** – characterized by a combination of commercial development with residential, community or light industrial uses together in the same area or building. Often, mixed use buildings are developed with commercial uses on the ground floor and residential above.

The effects or influence of commercial lands on the community varies across the forms listed above and the types of economic activity they support likewise vary. When considering commercial development within the process of preparing your MDP, it is important to identify existing commercial development patterns; the opportunities and constraints those existing patterns offer; and the desired and realistic future direction for commercial lands, whether it is infill or new construction/expansion.

These factors will affect the type of commercial uses the community seeks to develop as well as identify the opportunities/challenges faced by developers. The size and location of commercial development must take into consideration, at a minimum, servicing capacity for water/wastewater; water flow rates to ensure adequate fire protection; and the carrying capacity of your road system. Expanding commercial development may impact your municipal maintenance costs for upgrades or expansions to your utilities and your transportation network.
Housing Mix

Introduction

One of the key pillars for developing a sustainable community is the availability of a diverse range of housing stock. A community that has a variety of housing options will be able to support families of various sizes, ages, abilities and income levels. Differences in unit size, parcel size and density will create variations in housing prices and increase market options. Affordable housing and its availability within communities, has become an important topic for many municipalities, which can be addressed with appropriate housing policies and strategies. Planning for the housing needs of a municipality for the future will require understanding the needs of each segment of the community.

What Does Housing Mix Look Like?

Diverse housing mix will be a composition of differing housing forms, parcel sizes and densities. When municipalities consider housing form it is usually discussed in terms of single family units and multi-family units, or detached and attached housing. Single family units are those that are typically referred to as Single Detached Dwellings. Manufactured homes or modular homes also fall into this category, as providing a single dwelling unit unattached to other dwellings. Multi-family dwellings or attached units can take the form of row houses or town houses, two or more unit structures such as duplexes and four-plexes, or multi-unit apartment complexes. The image below describes the various dwelling types for detached and attached housing forms.

When planning for new neighbourhoods or redeveloping existing ones, the creation of a homogeneous community should be avoided. This can be accomplished by incorporating a variety of housing types described above, as well as by planning for a range of parcel sizes.
Individual parcel size can have an effect on overall market value of a property, as well as the density of development within a community. Including varying parcel sizes for similar housing can also create variety; narrow lot single detached housing may be a more affordable option than individual large lot, single detached housing. The same principle can be applied to row houses; some may be located on titled parcels and others may be within condominium developments. Depending on individual lifestyles, some individuals may prefer private outdoor amenity space, while others may prefer a low maintenance property. An additional method to increase housing variety and density within an established neighbourhood is the inclusion of secondary suites, in the form of basement suites, garage suites or carriage houses. These types of dwelling units add smaller housing options to the market that may be more affordable for some individuals.

Creating a community with a variety of housing options opens the area up to a more diverse population. The example below depicts a neighbourhood with a range of housing types, including single detached dwellings, multi-family in the form of row houses and apartment units, as well as smaller units such as garage suites or carriage houses in the lanes.

How is Housing Mix Beneficial?

Having a variety of dwelling unit sizes and types, means the community can support a diverse range of family sizes, from individuals that may only require a single bedroom, to large families that may require several bedrooms and larger shared spaces. Different lifestyles will dictate the type of housing a person may require. Also, not every person can afford to own a single detached dwelling. By having smaller rental units available, the community is able to support a more diverse population.

Affordable Housing – diverse housing options means more choice for rental properties and for rental value. Having more choice affords people and families with fixed incomes, housing options that won’t limit their ability to obtain other necessities. Offering smaller dwelling units which may not have yards such as apartments may be more desirable to some people who are not able to maintain outdoor spaces. Increasing density with multi-family units closer to areas where public facilities and commercial uses are located offers more choice to people who utilize transit or alternative modes of transportation.
Community Sustainability – A community with a broad range of housing options can support a diverse population. Diversity in age and family composition in a community can aid in maintaining a healthy population to support the commercial and employment sector. Being able to support community members at various stages of life makes the community more desirable for young people to remain and for attracting new residents.

Aging in Place – Housing options available that are low maintenance such as apartment or condo units without yards; easily accessible ground floor access units; locations near public transit or a “handi-van” for easy community access; or within walking distance of commercial centres, allows people to remain in a community as they age. Offering housing options or encouraging the development of a mix of housing types, can mean, that as residents age, they will be able to remain in their community and close to family for a longer period of time.
Planning for School Sites

The provision of schools is a joint responsibility shared between municipalities, school boards, and the Province of Alberta. Municipalities and school boards are responsible for working together to identify future school needs and to plan accordingly. In smaller communities, a school site is often at the heart of the community, providing significant community and recreation space that would not otherwise exist. When municipalities and school boards take a proactive approach to planning for schools they can ensure that the needs of both the community and school board are met.

Legislative Framework
Municipalities are responsible for providing land for schools and school boards are responsible for building schools. Municipalities collect land, and/or money for school land, through the dedication of reserves or alternatively, cash in lieu at the time of subdivision.

The requirement for municipalities and school boards to work together collaboratively to address community needs is reinforced in the MGA requirement for mandatory Joint Use and Planning Agreements (JUPA) between municipalities and school boards. The JUPA should serve as the base from which subsequent discussions about school site planning can occur. It outlines how reserve lands will be allocated between the municipality and each school board within its boundary and the process to be followed. Some of the components of the agreement may include:

- the planning, development, and use of school sites on municipal reserves, school reserves, and municipal and school reserves in the municipality;
- the transfer of reserves between municipalities and the school boards;
- the servicing of school sites;
- the use of school facilities, municipal facilities, and playing fields on reserves and related maintenance and fees;
- the methods the municipality and the school board will use to work together; how they will resolve disputes; and the timeframe within which the agreement will be reviewed; and
- the disposition of lands if the school site is no longer required.

Municipalities can begin to address school site planning through their Municipal Development Plan (MDP). If there is a Joint Use Planning Agreement in place, then the MDP can begin to build upon the direction established in the agreement. If there is no JUPA in place, the MDP should address the intent to create one. The following section outlines some planning considerations that should be taken into account when identifying a school site.

Planning Considerations
A MDP should outline the general size, shape, and location of the school site and its relation to major roads providing access. Other considerations that should be taken into account when selecting a school site are:

- Site constraints - It is important to consider the overall development potential of a site and to identify possible limitations to school development such as:
  - The proximity of oil and gas facilities, wastewater treatment facilities and landfills; and the required setback from these types of uses for schools.
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• The presence of high tension powerlines and high pressure pipelines; and required setbacks.
• The geotechnical and topographic conditions of the site i.e. can the site accommodate the construction of a large building and associated parking and play areas? Are there steep slopes that might hinder development or cause safety concerns? Is there a flood risk to the site?
• Does the site have the reasonable ability to be serviced with water, sewer, storm water, and power services?

• Size and configuration of site – The municipality should work with the school board(s) to ensure the school site chosen will be suitable for the type and size of school that is being proposed. Some considerations to be taken into account when accessing a potential site are:
  • The amount of land required for a school is usually 10-12 acres (4.04 – 4.85 ha).
  • Generally, a rectangular site with an approximate width to length ratio of 3:5 is preferred to an irregularly shaped site, as it is better suited to accommodate school buildings, playgrounds, and parking/drop off areas.
  • Access and servicing capabilities. Due to the large amount of traffic from private vehicles and buses, the site should have access to a collector road or its equivalent to accommodate private vehicles and buses. The site should also have good connections to pedestrian networks.
  • Opportunities to coordinate the use of reserves to serve both school purposes and community recreation needs should be investigated to make the best use of limited reserve lands.

Typical School Layout on 10+ acres
• Balancing reserve needs – Because the amount of reserve land and/or money that a municipality can collect is limited under the MGA, the municipality must try to balance the allocation of reserve resources among a number of community interests. Some considerations that should be noted are:
  o Reserves are used for providing public parks and trails as well as school sites; therefore, it is necessary to balance the needs of the school boards with the needs of the rest of the community.
  o Reserves are shared between public school boards, catholic school boards, and francophone school boards.
  o School boards often have jurisdiction in more than one municipality and a school that is built in one municipality may benefit surrounding municipalities. The manner in which reserve allocations are balanced between these groups must be established.

• Determining timing of need – The municipality and the school boards should work together to determine short and long term needs and the timing of the anticipated need for future schools. Some considerations in this regard are:
  o Population and enrollment data should be used to forecast the expected need for future schools.
  o Timing of school construction relative to the population growth rate in the region e.g. will reserve lands/money will be available when they are needed for school development? Can the site be serviced in keeping with the logical pattern of development?

• Use and maintenance of facilities – Municipalities and school boards may work together to provide joint use facilities such as libraries and recreation facilities to make better use of limited reserves. The responsibilities of each party related to the use and maintenance of the facilities needs to be outlined. This can be addressed through the Joint Use Planning Agreement.
Open Space, Parks and Trails

Why is Planning for Open Spaces, Parks and Trails Important?

Access to high quality open spaces, parks and trails can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. Not only do these spaces provide for excellent and low cost recreational opportunities, they also provide a community with spaces for public and social engagement, by connecting various nodes and land uses within the community.

A well-developed system may include planned parks, trails, schools, natural areas, ball diamonds, splash parks and recreation facilities within the community. The system can improve connectivity and accessibility through the development of outdoor spaces, for users of all ages and physical abilities, both within your municipality and potentially, throughout the region.

Why Include a Plan for Open Spaces, Parks and Trails in the MDP?

The Municipal Development Plan provides a community with an opportunity to clearly articulate its vision for its open spaces, parks and trails. During the MDP development process, all stakeholders will have the opportunity to participate in developing this vision. Once the vision is established and desired outcomes are clearly articulated in the MDP, it will be much easier for successive municipal councils to make decisions which support achieving these long term goals.

Extensive trail systems and parks typically don’t emerge over the short term. Communities must actively plan and budget for their development. Giving thorough consideration to open spaces, parks, trails and facilities as part of the MDP development process, will in turn guide future decision makers. The MDP should provide direction relative to the allocation of municipal reserves, land acquisitions and budgets for land purchases, site development and ongoing maintenance of recreation areas/facilities.

What Can an Open Space Plan Address?

Developing a plan for open spaces, parks and trails in a MDP can take a number of forms. Often, a MDP will include policies outlining everything from general park planning principals to accessibility. A more specific example is a goal for accessibility of park space in the community and a policy requiring park space within 400 meters of every existing and proposed residence.
Conservation of Natural Areas:

The natural environment can strongly influence development and the patterns of the larger open space system. Conversely, development decisions and human activity can have a significant impact on the natural environment. Therefore, it is reasonable for the municipality to address environmental matters within their MDP; to establish direction regarding how the natural environment will be considered; and what components have value and should be preserved for future generations. The natural environment can serve many functions within your community. It can:

- act as a buffer between incompatible uses;
- minimize damage relative to flooding;
- provide space for a variety of recreational activities; and
- retain iconic natural spaces for the community, i.e. a tree stand or a coulee.

In addition to general strategic direction, the MDP may also provide specific direction with respect to how municipalities use the reserve land established by the MGA and the Alberta Land Stewardship Act (ALSA). The MDP can provide direction with respect to when and where the municipality will require reserve lands, or provide principles that the municipality may use to determine when reserve lands will be taken on a case by case basis.

- **Environmental Reserve (ER)** – consists of a swamp, gully, ravine, coulee or natural drainage course; it may be land that is subject to flooding or is unstable; or a strip of land, not less than 6 metres in width, abutting the bed and shore of any body of water. ER lands must be left in their natural state and are generally considered “hazardous” lands. Environmental Reserves may be taken at the time of subdivision without compensation to the landowner.

- **Environmental Reserve Easement (ERE)** – is used in place of environmental reserve, and can only be taken if the municipality and landowner agree. The easement restricts activity on the land, similar to the creation of environmental reserve; however, the land remains under privately ownership. The easement must be registered on the land title. The environmental reserve easement must be agreed to at the time of subdivision, without compensation to the landowner.

- **Municipal Reserve (MR)** – may only be used for public parks, public recreation areas, school board purposes, or to separate areas of land that are used for different purposes. Up to ten percent of the developable land or cash in lieu may be taken as Municipal Reserves at the time of subdivision, without compensation to the landowner.

- **Conservation Reserve (CR)** – may be used to protect environmentally significant natural features, including stands of trees and wildlife corridors. The land could be developed, but it serves a social purpose and the community, through its MDP determining that the feature should be retained in its natural state. This reserve may be taken if the municipality includes policies addressing conservation reserve in its MDP. CR lands may be designated where the land has environmentally significant features but does not meet the definition of environmental reserve and will be taken at the time of subdivision with compensation to the landowner in an amount equal to market value.
Urban Design and Architectural Appearances

Urban design is the attempt to influence and control how community members experience the outdoor spaces within the community, whereas architectural appearance is the design and impact of specific buildings within the community. Both of these factors can work together to impact the aesthetics, comfort, safety and navigability of our communities. The design of communities can greatly affect the quality of life of residents. Given its importance, a community may choose to provide direction within their Municipal Development Plan regarding the desired future direction for urban design and architectural appearance. The MDP process provides the opportunity to re-imagine the public realm in the municipality and establish or reaffirm direction with respect to architectural appearances of private structures. Objectives and policies in a Municipal Development Plan and subsequent implementation actions can help to bring this vision to life.

Urban design operates at many scales. Establishing the importance of and direction for urban design and architectural appearance in the MDP sets the stage for the municipality to integrate this priority into specific planning projects and decision-making on particular developments.

At the municipal scale, key urban design elements include:
- Block sizes and patterns
- Street grids
- Street and sidewalk width
- Viewscapes
- Parcel size and width
- Scale and setback of buildings
- Provision of green space and landscaping elements
- Provision of street/site furniture
- Provision of lighting
- Provision of public art
- Accessibility

Alternatively, architectural considerations include:
- Building location and orientation
- Building massing, height and resulting shadow impacts
- The visual connection between the interior and exterior of the building
- Location and prominence of entrances/exits
- Location and prominence of windows
- Provision of outdoor space (such as balconies)
- Building structural and design elements
- Building materials, texture and colour

An example of a uniform streetscape with scaled changes between building heights

An example of a uniform streetscape with scaled changes between building heights
Complete Streets and Accessibility

A complete street is designed to accommodate all ages, physical abilities and modes of transportation; complete streets are streets for the entire community. These streets consider the needs of all users in the planning of the right-of-way through to construction, operation and maintenance of the right of way. The fundamental aspect of these streets is they are safe for all users, including walkers, cyclists, transit and the mobility impaired.

Adopting complete street policies ensures that future plans will consistently incorporate these design principles, regardless of the planners and engineers developing the plans or designs. Creating a community that is accessible to all citizens is important for developing a sustainable community.

What Is A Complete Street?

The following definition is an inclusive way of depicting a complete street:

“A complete street is a public right-of-way where the transportation facilities and adjacent land uses are planned, designed and constructed to accommodate users of all ages and abilities including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit vehicles, automobiles and freight traffic.”

Three important elements of a complete street are improved accessibility for all, safety and security, and enhancing the experience. The needs of all users are considered when designing the street, so the final product is inclusive for all potential users.

Following is a design example of a complete street. The street incorporates important elements for safety, including dedicated lanes for all modes of transportation; a raised median; safe crossing spaces for pedestrians; and a dedicated bicycle lane.
Why Are Complete Streets Important?

- **Livable Communities** - Alternative modes of transportation can increase walkability within a community, which can lend to revitalization of neighbourhoods or downtowns. More public accessibility and availability can increase private investment in communities, which can lead to increased property values and tourism opportunities. In addition, creating communities that are accessible without a vehicle means a community can support a wide range of ages and ability levels. Children, seniors and people with disabilities can access the community easily, making it a more desirable place to live.

- **Public Health** – Complete streets improve two aspects of public health; reducing injuries and fatalities; and increasing activity level. By creating safe spaces for pedestrians on sidewalks and trails; and incorporating safe crossing corridors, conflicts with vehicles are reduced. The same can be said for bicycle lanes, which provide a dedicated space for cyclists that are visible to vehicular traffic and away from pedestrian traffic. Providing these spaces also increases the likelihood people will use these alternatives to driving. Encouraging people to walk and cycle increases physical activity levels of the community which reduces risk factors and incidence of chronic disease and illness.

- **Improved Road Safety** - designing streets to accommodate all modes of transportation increases safety for all users. Streets that are designed with safe spaces to walk, cycle, and access transit will reduce conflict with vehicular traffic. Adding elements such as raised medians, traffic calming measures, sidewalks, ideal bus stop placement and treatments for those with limited mobility, increase visibility to vehicular traffic and can prevent collisions. These measures allow pedestrians to cross streets more safely and are visual warnings for drivers of pedestrian crossing areas. Including dedicated bicycle lanes also increases cyclist safety, by concentrating cyclists in a dedicated lane, instead of on sidewalks or travelling against traffic flow.

- **Economic Vitality** – complete street networks can have a positive economic impact. In addition, encouraging more multi-modal or active transportation types they can reduce the amount of vehicular traffic and the financial impact of providing road infrastructure. Employment levels can also rise as a result, by offering alternative transportation methods for people without vehicles to live and work in the vicinity, and increasing demand for commercial space adjacent to street networks with more pedestrian traffic.

- **Saves Money** - Implementing complete street policies at the beginning of a new development can save the municipality money in the long term. Construction of a complete street design from the start means the road network will not have to be retrofitted later to incorporate the design and safety elements.

- **Greener Environment** – Making alternative modes of transportation available and accessible to the community will reduce the number of car trips for close proximity destinations. Public transit that is more available and safely accessible will also decrease the number of car trips residents make. A reduction in vehicular traffic will reduce the overall Green House Gas emissions within the community, and contribute...
to better air quality. Note that the “public transit” element may include special bussing options often available in facilities designed for seniors.
Natural Resource Extraction – Mining and Aggregate

Mining and Aggregate may be a vital part of municipal operations and are important components of many local economies. Aggregate can include sand, silicate, silt, gravel, clay, topsoil, and marl, though it is primarily the production and stockpiling of sand and gravel that is the focus of municipal planning in Alberta. The economic and operational importance of these industries is juxtaposed by their tendency to produce negative externalities or offsite impacts. Balancing these important considerations is an integral part of municipal planning and should be a component of a well-crafted Municipal Development Plan.

Why Include a Plan for Mining and Aggregate?

Mining and aggregate can have significant positive and negative impacts on municipalities and those living near the operations. On the one hand, operations such as gravel pits can produce noise, dust, heavy truck traffic, and other off-site impacts that can potentially have a real and significant impact on the quality of life of nearby residents. On the other hand, these industries can provide a positive economic benefit for the area and perhaps more importantly, produce products like gravel, which are fundamental to the maintenance and operation of municipal and/or regional assets.

Given these competing pressures, and understanding that the Municipal Development Plan process is an opportunity for all the members of a community to come together to establish a cohesive vision for the long term growth and development of their municipality. This includes a discussion revolving around mining and aggregate extraction. By including all stakeholders (including industry, residents, and the consumers of these products), in the development of policies governing mining and aggregate operations, the municipality has the opportunity to develop clear, consistent policies and reduce (though likely not eliminate completely) conflict before it occurs. These policies can work in conjunction with the more specific detailed subdivision and development requirements outlined in the Land Use Bylaw, and can make the municipality’s decision making authorities better able to make good, consistent decisions regarding mining and aggregate development.

How Can This Fit in the MDP?

While the specific regulation of mining and aggregate operations should be detailed in other documents like the Land Use Bylaw, the MDP provides an opportunity for the municipality to present its direction for accommodating mining and aggregate operations. While the majority of these operations will exist in rural municipalities, it is possible that even urban municipalities find themselves in a position to see resource extraction within their boundaries; this is especially true for urban municipalities with a larger land base or where there are substantial undeveloped lands near rivers or in valleys.

It is typically in rural municipalities where a more robust discussion of mining and aggregate operations is required, and may result in the development of policies or guidelines within the MDP covering natural resource extraction. Policies in an MDP for a municipality that includes mining and aggregate operations might include:
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- A statement requiring potential developers of mining and aggregate operations to develop strategies to minimize impacts on infrastructure, particularly roads in the case of gravel extraction operations.

- A requirement for consideration of potential mining and aggregate operations during the development of new Area Structure Plans, including the identification of potential sites and a plan for their eventual subdivision and development. This can protect future residential expansion sites.

- A requirement that new applications demonstrate a commitment to minimizing negative impacts on surrounding land owners and homes in particular relative to potential impacts from dust, noise, pollution, etc.

- A statement indicating that the municipality will work with other agencies or provincial departments where required or appropriate.

- An identification of lands where mining and aggregate operations will be discouraged, such as adjacent to Hamlets or sensitive environmental areas.

- A requirement to post reclamation bonding for smaller sites, as large sites over 5 hectares will require reclamation plans and bonding to be submitted to the Province.
Alternative Energy

Alternative energy represents both an opportunity and a challenge for communities in Alberta. Solar, wind, and biogas all have the potential to contribute positively to a community goal of environmental sustainability, and can likewise be an economic boom. Conversely, there can be negative impacts from renewable energy development of which a municipality should be cognizant.

A Question of Scope

When considering renewable energy development, one of the first things that a community will need to understand is not only the differences between types of renewables (wind vs. solar for example) but also the differences of scope within each category. Consider, for example, solar power. Communities in Alberta are witnessing the development of large scale solar farms, which might include panels covering hundreds of acres of land. These types of developments are known as “utility or commercial scale solar farms” and will typically need to connect directly into a transmission grid, much like a coal or gas based power plant would. These facilities will require long term access to land and will need to be located not only to capture sunlight but also near infrastructure that can handle the loads they will produce. For a municipality, they will typically want to ensure that these projects are located in such a way as to be compatible with adjacent land uses, including long term development plans as the facilities will typically stay in place for 30 or more years. Additionally, a municipality will want to balance this type of development with its policies concerning the protection of agricultural land; is converting productive land into a solar facility in the best interest of the community? This will be an important point for discussion in drafting an MDP.

Not all solar projects will tie into the transmission grid. Smaller scale projects might produce power for general consumption but tie into the local distribution grid instead. These “medium-scale solar gardens” might be a community led initiative, and could potentially be placed on municipally owned land in smaller communities that is not slated for development in the near future (or perhaps within the undeveloped setback buffer of a municipal lagoon). These types of facilities will not need access to the transmission system, but will need to access the local distribution system to be effective.

Lastly, strictly in terms of solar development, a municipality may wish to promote the use of rooftop style solar projects. These are “behind the meter” systems which supply power directly to homes or businesses, and as such are a substantially different issue than medium or large scale solar farms or gardens. Municipalities may wish to promote these types of initiatives and might include policies to this effect in a community development section of the MDP.
**Important Considerations for an MDP**

Much of a municipality’s focus with respect to renewable energy will be with respect to its land use bylaw; ensuring that regulations are in place to govern the specific development. While it is true that the Land Use Bylaw will be necessary to outline the specific regulations associated with renewable energy development, the MDP should provide the municipality and its decision makers with a broader sense of the municipality’s vision for renewable energy development and how it should be incorporated into the community.

While the examples provided above are specific to solar power, the same issues of scope exist for other forms of renewable energy like wind or biogas generation. During the MDP development process, the municipality will want to engage its citizens in a discussion of how they would like to accommodate large and small scale renewable energy projects in their community, including how and where they would like to promote this development and the issues they would like to address in order to minimize any negative impacts on adjacent land owners. This could be as simple as a policy statement indicating that the municipality will encourage land owners to install micro generation systems or an indication that council will endeavor to install renewable energy systems in new or renovated publicly owned buildings.
Community Services and Safety

Community services encompass a broad range of protective and support services provided in a municipality. These services help make a municipality a safe community in which to live and work and create an environment where all residents have the opportunity to enjoy a high quality of life. A key focus is to ensure that individuals and families in need are able to access a range of support services and that all community members are able to participate in, and feel part of, the larger community. Related to this is the physical environment’s ability to encourage interaction through formal and informal contact with neighbours and other community members.

The MDP should identify the goals, objectives and specific policies so a municipality can achieve a safe community for their residents. An MDP deals mainly with land use, so there is not a lot of overlap with social services, but specific policy areas might include the following:

1. Emergency and protective service responsibilities and goals;
2. Crime prevention programs (defensible space concept, natural surveillance);
3. Key location of social service facilities; and
4. Inclusive community (such as mixing types of housing and spaces to interact).

Work with provincial and local agencies to provide the best community services and highest level of safety for your community. An example is the four community outcomes framework shown below.

**Four community outcomes:**

- **Affordability**: “Citizens have increased capacity to meet their basic needs.”

- **Access to Programs and Services**: “Citizens have straightforward access to programs and services that are easy to find.”

- **Safety**: “Citizens feel physically, emotionally, spiritually, and mentally safe.”

- **Connectedness and Inclusion**: “Citizens are connected to one another and their individual differences are valued and respected.”
The Role of Detailed or Secondary Plans

What are Secondary Plans?

Secondary plans are more detailed than an MDP and provide additional or more refined direction and goals relative to the Municipal Development Plan. Examples of secondary plans include:

- statutory plans, which are either Area Structure Plans (ASPs) or Area Redevelopment Plans (ARPs);
- non-statutory plans, which include outline plans or concept plans, as well as topic specific master plans, such as transportation master plans or utility studies;
- tentative plans or descriptive plans, which may form part of a subdivision application; and
- site plans which are required as part of a development permit application.

The MGA identifies the hierarchy and relationship of statutory plans (Figure 1), and requires that each plan be consistent with the plans above it and, in the event of an inconsistency, which provisions in what plan will prevail.

Area Structure Plans and Area Redevelopment Plans

Area Structure Plans (ASPs) and Area Redevelopment Plans (ARPs) are statutory plans that form a part of the legislative planning framework and are adopted by bylaw. The hierarchy of plans established by the provincial government requires that an ASP or ARP must be consistent with the direction set out by the MDP, and that it in turn must be consistent with an Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP). Where an ASP or an ARP proposes development that is inconsistent with the direction set in the MDP or IDP, those higher level plans should be amended concurrent with the ASP/ARP adoption process.

The primary difference between an ASP and an ARP is that an ASP typically provides development direction for undeveloped lands, whereas an ARP is typically focused on providing direction for the redevelopment of previously developed lands. Given this difference, the development of an ASP may be undertaken by a municipality but is often developer-driven. ARPs are typically initiated by the municipality and cover previously subdivided areas with a greater number of landowners.

As a statutory plan, the process to prepare an ASP/ARP is similar to that of the Municipal Development Plan, albeit with more focused stakeholders. Once the draft plan has been prepared and a public consultation process has been completed, the plan is adopted by bylaw subsequent to a public hearing. Depending on the circumstances of the ASP/ARP, other agencies may also be required to give their approval prior to council being able to adopt the plan.
Master Plans

Master plans are topic specific, non-statutory plans. The Municipal Development Plan often provides high level policy direction with respect to the master plan subject matter. The development of a master plan is often the result of information, strategic direction and/or a service deficiency identified during the MDP process. The subject matter addressed in these plans can include, but not be limited to, transportation, agriculture, recreation, storm water, environmentally significant areas, waterfront, waste management, etc. Master plans are common in larger municipalities; however, each municipality is unique with respect to the number of master plans developed and the topics addressed in those plans. The value of having a master plan is that it lays the groundwork for future development; it may decrease timelines for processing new development proposals; and it may identify costs associated with development i.e. proportional financial contribution requirements for road upgrades or water/wastewater systems.

Installation of a water line

Tentative Plan or Descriptive Plan of Survey

Both a Tentative Plan and Descriptive Plan of Survey show a proposed subdivision and form part of a subdivision application. This plan provides the subdivision authority with essential information to make a decision. A typical tentative plan is prepared by an Alberta Land Surveyor and shows the:

- Location of the proposed subdivision in the municipality;
- Legal description of the land;
- All lot locations and measurements;
- All easements, rights of way, roads, railways, etc.;
- Location or surveyed boundaries of any environmental features such as a water course;
- Building locations and setbacks; and
- Other information (external to diagram, i.e. potable water)
A descriptive plan shows the proposed subdivision graphically on a plan; however, no legal survey posts are placed to show the location of the property boundaries. A descriptive plan is only acceptable to the Land Titles Office under certain circumstances.

**Site Plans**

Site plans are diagrams that show existing and proposed development/improvements on a specific parcel. They are essential information for development authorities making development permit decisions, as they show whether or not the proposed development meets many of the requirements established by the land use bylaw, including setbacks, site coverage, parking and landscaping.
Intermunicipal Cooperation and Future Annexation

For practical and political reasons, the majority of land use planning in the Province of Alberta takes place at the municipal level. Informed and effective planning for your community and the region will transcend municipal boundaries. Positive relationships with your neighbours can be achieved through proactive communication, consultation and cooperation. Under provincial legislation, municipalities must document existing intermunicipal initiatives and explore opportunities for sharing resources with the goal of reducing costs through the creation of Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks or ICFs.

The benefits for having a good working relationship with your regional neighbours may be the starting point for your community to improve or enhance the services that you provide. Remember that you may receive your drinking water from the same source, share the same emergency response personnel, travel on the same roads and utilize the same recreation facilities as your neighbour. Identifying your similarities and then potentially exploring the “gaps” or areas for improvement/cost savings may lead to a stronger regional position and enable you to increase the range of services you can offer to your community (economies of scale).

Often, one of the most stressful discussions you will have with your neighbours is if you have determined through evaluation that your land supply will not be sufficient over the lifetime of the MDP, (20-25 years) and you would like to initiate discussions on annexation. Having a good working relationship with your neighbour(s) is beneficial from both a political standpoint, as well as a practical perspective for the residents who will be impacted. Growth invariably necessitates expansion of boundaries.

Your MDP is a valuable tool for promoting certainty of land use within the urban boundaries, but also identifying acceptable rural land use and development locations by designating and safeguarding areas for continued rural development. If annexation is successful, lands will be removed from one municipal jurisdiction and placed in another. It is wise to acknowledge that although you may gain “assets” in the form of land for future growth, you will also gain potential obligations to landowners and there may be liabilities running with the land. As a starting point for discussions between municipalities, consider the following:

- Is annexation justifiable based on projected growth rates reflecting historic trends or anticipated land demands?
- What are potential mechanisms to address differing taxation rates between urban and rural municipalities and the potential effects on landowners?
- What is the current service level for those residents and will you be able to continue to meet landowner expectations?
- What is the realistic potential for providing municipal services including financing of municipal service extensions for utilities? Is there an opportunity for cost sharing?
- Is the existing transportation system able to accommodate higher usage or is it able to expand? How will you finance transportation upgrades?
What is the financial impact on both municipalities and have you identified any means of mitigating impacts e.g. phasing taxation rates for rural landowners who may become part of an urban area with (usually) higher taxation levels?

Whether you are considering a future annexation of land or are preparing your MDP in a “business as usual” manner, you should strive toward having a good working relationship with your regional neighbours. A little competition is healthy, but by respecting differing urban and rural needs and being open to exploring new ideas on a regional basis, your individual communities will benefit in the long run.