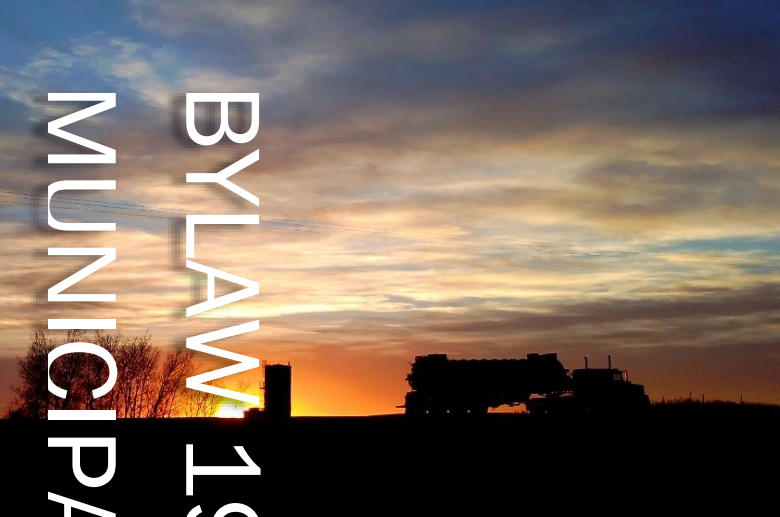




BYLAW 19-03
MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

BYLAW 19-03, AS AMENDED (OFFICE CONSOLIDATION) JULY 2025

Note:

This document has been prepared for convenience only. The official Bylaws, including all amendments, are available from the office of the County Administrator, and should be consulted for all purposes of interpretation and application.

Consolidated Copy includes:

Bylaw No. 19-20 January 2020

Bylaw No. 20-12 May 2020

Bylaw No. 21-17 August 2021

Bylaw No. 22-06 May 2022

Bylaw No. 25-15 July 2025

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County of Vermilion River

A Vision for the Future

A Sustainable, Vibrant, and Diversified Community with O p p o r t u n i t i e s f o r A l l

Sustainable. Balance short- and long-term needs and benefits in order to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs as well.

Vibrant. Engaging, creative collaboration between all stakeholders: municipality, community, and businesses.

Diverse. Open to explore new and emerging opportunities and facilitating economic growth and social integration.

Opportunities for all. A place to call home that supports a four-pillar-bottom-line approach to community sustainability:

1. **Socially**, through design guidelines for public spaces and streets that encourage neighbour interactions and serve as catalyst to support a complete community that allows residents the choice to live, work, shop, and recreate in proximity;
2. **Environmentally**, by incorporating planning and development strategies, and forms that contribute to reduce impacts and preserve agricultural lands; apply Low-Impact Development tools that respect natural drainage patterns and wetlands; and enhancement and integration of natural spaces and systems that preserve habitats, corridors, and productive landscapes;
3. **Economically**, through the responsible use of land and leverage of services infrastructure; the concentration of services and roadways for efficient and cost-effective service delivery and management, by providing a robust and dynamic land-use base that can adapt over time to accommodate diverse industry production and employment generating opportunities; and
4. **Culturally**, by strengthening our identity and sense of place, incorporating cultural dynamics (values and aspirations) into the built environment through context sensitive design principles, and participatory processes that promote our communities' well-being by enhancing quality of life and quality of place.

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PART 1.0

INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Guiding Principles

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Municipal Development Plan represents the collective effort of the County of Vermilion River community to define a long-term vision for the County of Vermilion River, our communities, our residents, and our region; and identify the actions to be taken to realize that vision. It is both a process and a product. We recognize the need to invest in the improvement of the quality of life of the people who make up the community – newcomers, alongside those who have deep roots. In order to attract families and local businesses who want to stay here and work here, we aim to send a clear message as a County that this is a good place to live and work.

The strategic focus of our Municipal Development Plan provides a clear long-term vision and the priorities for our community as a whole that is supported by the guiding principles that serve as pillars for the sustainable development of the County's land base.

The Municipal Development Plan integrates a land use development framework with strategic municipal objectives that serve as an overarching policy guide that aims to provide context for future decision-making by County government and other implementation partners. The adoption of this document is not the end of the planning process, but the beginning of an on-going implementation effort by the County and community stakeholders.

1.1 Guiding Principles

1.1.1 Community Resiliency

- (a) All actions should support resourcefulness in meeting our challenges and needs in a way that is sustainable through collaboration and mutual aid instead of competition.
- (b) All actions should recognize the diverse needs and aspirations of County residents and stakeholders.

1.1.2 Growth Management

- (a) All actions should respect the integrity of the County's land base and water resources.
- (b) All actions should be proactive in directing non-agricultural development to existing hamlets, planned development areas, and existing multi-lot development areas that have the capacity to support additional development.
- (c) All actions should apply Smart Growth principles to promote sustainable development respectful of the County's rural character.

1.1.3 Sustainable Development

- (a) All actions should establish land use patterns which make efficient use of land, infrastructure, public services and public facilities and which contribute to the development of healthy, safe, and viable

1.2 Goals

communities by encouraging appropriate mixes of all land use types and a wide range of economic opportunities.

- (b) All actions should support proactive, comprehensive planning that is carried out in a fair, open, consistent, and equitable manner.

1.1.4 Responsible Governance

- (a) All actions should ensure that the County operates in a fiscally sound manner now and into the future.
- (b) All actions should promote governmental excellence through consistent and accountable leadership and collaborative and transparent processes.
- (c) All actions should support implementing strategic decision making.

1.2 Goals

The main goal of this Municipal Development Plan is to provide a policy framework indicating the type and density of development for each of the planned land uses, improvements and servicing requirements to ensure orderly planning in the lands in the County.

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

The goals within this Municipal Development Plan are consistent with the requirements in the Municipal Government Act, the Provincial Land Use Policies, Land Use Framework, and other plans and regulations under the Land Stewardship Act. The following goal statements represent the County of Vermilion River's approach to implementing provincial directives relating to climate adaptation, land use, and land and environmental management as well as the goals identified by the community through the consultation process. These goals are further supported by plan objectives and policy statements that both express and regulate public policies on land use, development, and subdivision of land within the County.

1.2.1 Vibrant Communities

- (a) Facilitate sustainable growth and development in the County by balancing economic growth, environmental protection, and the preservation of the County's rural way of life.
- (b) Encourage the development of a variety of transportation choices including safe infrastructure for walking and cycling and driving in hamlet areas and multi-lot residential areas.
- (c) Facilitate the provision of diverse housing opportunities in order to ensure that people in different family types, life stages and income levels will be able to afford a home in the County.

1.2.2 Innovation

- (a) Encourage economic development and renewal by supporting new and existing economic assets within the community including traditional and emerging regional economic drivers.

1.3 Interpretation

- (b) Encourage the use of green buildings and other innovative infrastructure and building systems to reduce the cumulative effects of new development.
- (c) Enhance existing regional and community partnerships and seek new collaborative opportunities.

1.2.3 Operational Excellence

- (a) Maintain a high quality and cost effective infrastructure within the County.
- (b) Encourage land development that is cost effective, orderly and developed in close proximity to similar developments and in locations in order to efficiently utilize existing infrastructure.
- (c) Establish sustainable and equitable land use planning standards that will minimize adverse impacts on working landscapes and significant natural features for future generations without burdening individual land owners.

1.3 Interpretation

1.3.1 Compliance with the policies in this Plan shall be interpreted and applied as follows:

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

- (a) “SHALL”, “MUST”, and “IS” are operative words that mean that the action or actions outlined are imperative or mandatory and therefore must be complied with, without discretion.,;
- (b) “SHOULD” is a directive term, which means that, in order to achieve the established goals, and objectives, it is strongly advised that the action be taken. Exceptions shall be made only under extenuating circumstances. When the regulation is directed to the Developer, the onus to justify is on the applicant; and
- (c) “MAY” is a discretionary term, meaning a choice is available, with no particular direction or guidance intended, and is usually dependent on the particular circumstances of the specific Parcel of land or Lot and application that are under consideration at any given moment. When the regulation is directed to the Developer, the onus to justify **the exception** is on the applicant.
- (d) “SUCH AS” indicates an idiomatic preposition meaning “for example” or “of a kind that; like” in reference to the condition or conditions following the statement, but does not imply an exhaustive list.
- (e) “SUCH THAT” indicates an idiomatic preposition meaning “to the extent that”, “as being what is indicated; in that capacity” in reference to the condition or conditions following the statement as a requirement for its fulfilment, but does not imply an exhaustive list.

1.3 Interpretation

- (f) “PROVIDED THAT” indicates a conjunction meaning “if; only if”, in reference to the condition or conditions following the statement as a requirement for its fulfilment, but does not imply an exhaustive list.
- (g) “CONSIDERED” indicates an adjective meaning “to regard as” or “deem to be”, in reference to the condition or conditions following the statement.
- (h) “OR” indicates that the connected items may apply singly or in combination; and
- (i) “EITHER/OR” indicates the items shall apply singly, but not in combination.
- (j) Words used in the present tense include the other tenses and derivative forms.
- (k) Words used in the singular include the plural and vice-versa.
- (l) When a word is used in the masculine, it will refer to either gender.

1.3.2 Illustrations

- (a) Drawings and graphic depictions are provided to assist in interpreting and understanding the provisions of this Plan. Where any conflict or inconsistency arises between a drawing and the text of the Plan, the text shall prevail.

1.3.3 Definitions

- (a) Where a Subdivision or Development proposal generally conforms to the wording of two (2) or more definitions, the relevant Authority shall determine the use that fits closest to the development’s character and purpose.
 - (i) In instances where a specific proposal:
 - 1. Does not conform to the wording of any definition; or
 - 2. Generally conforms to the wording of two or more definitions.

1.3.4 Policy Statements

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

- (a) The relevant Decision Authority shall consider subdivision or development proposals within the County in accordance with the policies that are most appropriate in character and purpose and align with the intent and purpose of this Plan.



PART 2.0

PLANNING FRAMEWORK

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2.0 PLANNING AND POLICY AREAS

The planning area includes all the lands within the jurisdictional boundary of the County of Vermilion River. These lands shall serve to accommodate the County's short-term and long-term planning and development activity. The planning area is depicted on Map 1.

The following sections constitute the planning framework and contain specific objectives, policies to help the County achieve each objective, and proposed strategies or programs to implement the policies. This framework is set up to support the Plan goals in Section 1.2:

2.1 Policy Framework

The policies in the following sections guide the implementation of the goals following the Plan's guiding principles that structure the Municipal Development Plan Framework:

- Community Resiliency
- Growth Management
- Sustainable Development
- Responsible Governance

Each section contains value statements, goals, objectives, and policies that outline the steps needed to move the County towards achieving its vision to be:

A Sustainable, Vibrant, and Diversified Community with Opportunities for All

2.2 Goal: Establish Regional Planning Areas

Objective

1. Achieve effective land use planning on regional level by ensuring that proposals for the development or subdivision of land within Regional Planning Areas (see Map2) implement the general objectives of the County for the relevant Plan, such as Intermunicipal Development Plans, Area Structure Plans, or Area Redevelopment Plans, as well as the objectives and policies in the County's Municipal Development Plan.
2. Focus actions on achieving desired outcomes in alignment with the guiding principles of this Plan.

Policies

- 2.2.1 Subdivision and Development within Regional Planning Areas must be consistent with the intent of the appropriate plan.

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

2.2 Goal: Establish Re

- (a) Proposals for subdivision and development within Regional Planning Areas shall be consistent with the policies within the appropriate plan.
- (b) Amendments to Plans shall be prepared by a Registered Professional Planner (RPP).
- (c) Proposals for multi-lot subdivision and development shall be in accordance with the policies in **Part 5.0** of this Plan and the provisions of the Land Use Bylaw.
- (d) The relevant Authority may require that any proposal for subdivision or development within a Regional Planning Area be accompanied by additional supportive information, prepared by a registered or licensed professional, in order to assess the conformity of a proposed subdivision or development with the appropriate plan before consideration of the subdivision or development shall commence. Further, if a subdivision or development is approved after such supportive information is provided, the relevant Authority shall require that any recommendations of the supportive information be implemented by the landowner/developer and registered against the title of the subject lands, in order to warn future landowners of the engineering requirements for development.



PART 3.0

COMMUNITY RESILIENCY

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3.1 Goal: Inclusiveness and Diversity

3.0 COMMUNITY RESILIENCY

As a County, we are mindful of our rural culture, respectful of our natural environment and grateful for our people. The heart of our communities are the people who live and work in them — newcomers, alongside those who have deep roots. Working together we have built a community that is safe and a lifestyle that is valued where the environment is treasured and resources are shared.

Communities that are connected, engaged, active and inclusive will thrive and prosper.

The following objectives and policies outline the manner and type of subdivision and development for residential and non-residential uses within the County.

3.1 Goal: Inclusiveness and Diversity

Objectives

1. Provide for a diversity of housing opportunities for the economic and demographic groups within the County, in harmony with existing development and historical and natural environments in a manner that allows existing and potential residents to live, work, and recreate in the region throughout their life cycle.
2. Encourage the placement of housing units of various economic value throughout new multi-family and mixed-use developments (i.e., market rate units next to workforce/affordable units).

Policies

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

- 3.1.1 Where a multi-lot subdivision is proposed within an area that is characterized as containing:

- (a) Wetlands;
- (b) Historical Resources; or
- (c) Environmentally Significant Areas.
- (d) The proponent shall be required to demonstrate how the development has been designed to avoid these features. Where complete avoidance is not possible, the proponent must make reasonable efforts to mitigate disturbance and ensure that provincial approvals have been received prior to proceeding with any ground disturbance.

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

- 3.1.2 Subdivision and development proposals within Reginal Planning Areas should plan for mixed land-use patterns characterized by compatible residential and non-residential land uses located in close proximity to one another.

- (a) Mixed land-use patterns should incorporate safe, convenient, accessible, and attractive design features to promote active living and social interaction.

3.2 Goal: Rural Livability

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

3.1.3 Multi-lot subdivision and development proposals adjacent to hamlets and existing residential subdivisions should provide for Complete Streets serving multiple functions that safely and conveniently accommodate all users and desired functions, though this does not mean that all modes or functions will be equally prioritized on any given street segment.

(a) Complete Streets should accommodate travel, social interaction, and commerce to provide for more vibrant neighborhoods and more livable communities.

3.2 Goal: Rural Livability

Objective

1. Control and guide development to preserve natural resources, agricultural uses, and existing communities in order to retain a mix of small-town atmosphere, natural environment, and rural character within the County.
2. Ensure development contributes to improve the standard of living, the environment and quality of life for County residents.

Policies

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

3.2.1 Subdivision and development proposals should apply design standards appropriate to the community context.

(a) Subdivision and Development shall be in accordance with the provisions of the County's Land Use Bylaw. .

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

3.2.2 The County shall require, as a condition of subdivision and/or development, approval that all new subdivision or development conforms to current engineering County Standards..

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

3.2.3 Subdivision and development shall only be allowed on sites with direct access to:

(a) utilities (gas, electrical and communications) that have existing capacity to sustain the additional usage; and

(b) roads that are constructed to current County and/or provincial Standards.

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Bylaw 19-20

3.2.4 Where onsite or off-site infrastructure improvements are required to ensure compliance with these provisions, the improvements shall be the responsibility of the developer. Construction of the improvements, including any required road construction and/or upgrades and the provision of appropriate guarantees, will be a condition of subdivision and/or development approval.

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Bylaw 19-20

3.2.5 Subdivision and development proposals are encouraged to incorporate compact development that conserves natural landscapes and reduces impacts on the environment.

3.3 Goal: *Balanced Residential Mix*

- (a) Development density shall be directly related to the development capability of the land resources, such as potable water supply, topography, vegetation, soil, and drainage.

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Bylaw 19-20

- 3.2.6 Proponents for multi-lot development shall be required to provide the County with an assessment of environmental constraints on the site and the means whereby negative impacts on the natural environment may be mitigated.

3.3 Goal: *Balanced Residential Mix*

Objective

1. Encourage residential development within the County that provides an adequate supply and distribution of affordable housing, infill housing and supports rehabilitation of declining neighbourhoods in a cost-effective manner that leverages existing infrastructure and services.
2. Forecast and plan for changing housing needs over time to provide solutions along a spectrum of affordability in quality rental and ownership housing for households of all income levels and special needs.

Policies

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Bylaw 19-20

- 3.3.1 Residential developments shall be consistent with the provisions in the County's Land Use Bylaw to reduce potential land use conflicts and minimize servicing costs.

- (a) Residential development proposals are required to identify all municipal servicing costs associated with the development in accordance with Policy 3.2.4.

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- 3.3.2 Multi-lot residential developments will adhere to the following conservation design-based principles in order to mitigate potential negative impacts within Conservation Areas:

- (a) Environmentally sensitive lands and working landscapes should be left undisturbed wherever possible, but incorporated into the overall layout of the development.
 - (b) Wildlife corridors or connections between habitat areas should be maintained wherever possible.
 - (c) Development and subdivision shall be discouraged from locating on Higher Capability Agricultural Lands.
 - (d) The natural landscape and topography should be considered and incorporated into the overall design of the development.
 - (e) Wetlands should be avoided and riparian setbacks should be established that are consistent with provincial recommendations in the "Stepping Back from the Water" guide.

1.1

- 3.3.3 Residential subdivisions and developments shall meet the applicable policies under **Part 5.0** of this Plan.

3.4 Goal: Diverse Industrial Development

Objectives

1. Encourage the clustering together of compatible industrial uses into industrial parks with existing infrastructure over areas with limited or no infrastructure service.
2. Encourage the diversification of the County's economic base by identifying land and policies to support the development of a diverse range of industrial developments within the County.

Policies

- 3.4.1 Subdivision and development proposals shall encourage development in appropriate locations.

- (a) Industries shall be encouraged to locate in designated industrial areas that are designed and serviced to accommodate industrial development.
- (b) Industries shall be allowed to locate in intermunicipal areas in the manner provided for in an approved Intermunicipal Development Plan or Area Structure Plan, in accordance with the provisions within the County's Land Use Bylaw and consistent with the policies in this Plan.
- (c) Development proposals for industrial uses may require the provision of a Cumulative Effects Assessment including environmental impact information and a risk assessment (such as that provided for by the Major Industrial Accidents Council of Canada (MIACC) to assist the County in assessing the impact of the proposed development in relation to the natural and human environments. Cumulative Effects Assessments must indicate both: if and how, any negative matters can be mitigated. The implementation of any mitigating actions indicated in the information and assessment may be required.

(d)

- 3.4.2 All proposals for industrial subdivision and development shall:

- (a) In the opinion of the relevant Authority, NOT conflict with or jeopardize surrounding land uses;
- (b) Be considered only in accordance with a Site Development Plan, or at the request of the Development Authority an Area Structure Plan, which has been prepared by a Registered Professional Planner (RPP) pursuant to County Policy and approved in accordance with the Municipal Government Act.

- 3.4.3 Industrial development proposals are required to identify all municipal servicing costs associated with the development. The assignment of these

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3.4 Goal: Diverse Industrial Developmen

costs between the County and the developer will be the basis of a development agreement to be entered into prior to a subdivision approval or upon the issuance of a development permit. However, all development servicing costs associated with the development, including the provision of internal roadway systems to meet the County's Municipal Servicing Standards and the upgrading of other County roads leading to the site in order to provide good access to the industrial site will be the responsibility of the developer.

- (a) Multi-lot industrial developments shall be consistent with the provisions in the County's Land Use Bylaw for conservation or cluster subdivision and development to reduce potential land use conflicts and minimize servicing costs.

3.4.4 Industrial subdivisions and developments shall meet the applicable policies under **Part 5.0** of this Plan.

3.4.5 Industrial development requiring municipal services will be encouraged to locate in areas with access to municipal servicing.

- (a) Industries that require urban services shall be considered where such services are available either from the County or where a joint development/servicing agreement between the County and an adjacent urban municipality has been finalized.
- (b) Industrial subdivision and development which, in the opinion of the relevant Authority, could have a significant impact on the community and environment, shall be controlled through the process of Land Use Bylaw amendment to an appropriate Industrial District in the Land Use Bylaw and, in areas where there is an Intermunicipal Development Plan or an Area Structure Plan, by amendment to the appropriate Plan.
- (c) The proponent of any new industrial development or expansion of such development shall identify any costs associated with providing new services and upgrading existing services made necessary by the proposed development. The apportionment of costs shall be negotiated by the County and be settled within a development agreement which shall be a condition of subdivision or development approval.
- (d) In order to encourage the establishment of diverse industries in the County, an area may be established within which only certain industry-specific type(s) may be located. If the County does this, the identified area shall be designated through an Area Structure Plan, and appropriate Land Use Bylaw regulations shall be applied to substantially regulate both the industry and any adjacent development to the industry-specific area.

3.5 Goal: Suitable Commercial Development

3.5 Goal: Suitable Commercial Development

Objectives

1. Accommodate commercial facilities in appropriate locations throughout the County, as provided for in the County's Land Use Bylaw recognizing that specific commercial uses may require unique site locations in order to serve our communities.
2. Support commercial developments that will not adversely affect the standard of safety or convenience, or the functional integrity of any highway or road.

Policies

3.5.1 Subdivision and development proposals shall minimize the impacts of commercial activities on working landscapes and cultural landscapes.

(a) proposals for commercial development shall be considered where they:

- (i) will not unnecessarily fragment the working landscape; and
- (ii) do not conflict with adjacent land uses.

3.5.2 Commercial development shall be allowed to locate in intermunicipal areas in the manner provided for in an approved Intermunicipal Development Plan or Area Structure Plan and consistent with the provisions in the County's Land Use Bylaw.

3.5.3 Commercial development with servicing requirements that do not exceed the servicing capabilities of the hamlet or negatively impact the character of the hamlet shall be encouraged.

3.5.4 Commercial subdivisions and developments shall meet the applicable policies under **Part 5.0** of this Plan.

3.5.5 Multi-lot commercial developments shall be consistent with the provisions in the County's Land Use Bylaw for conservation or cluster subdivision and development to reduce potential land use conflicts and minimize servicing costs.

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3.5.6 All proposals for commercial development (including multi-lot commercial or business developments) shall:

- (a) in the opinion of the Development Authority, NOT conflict with or jeopardize surrounding land uses;
- (b) be considered only in accordance with a Site Development Plan, unless the County requires an Area Structure Plan, which has been prepared by a Registered Professional Planner pursuant to County Policy and approved in accordance with the Municipal Government Act.

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Bylaw 19-20

3.5.7 In consideration of a proposal for a commercial development, an assessment of the proposed development may be required, which:

- (a) precisely defines the boundaries of the proposal;

3.6 Goal: Emergency Preparedness

- (b) designates suitable building sites;
- (c) ensures the functional integrity of the adjacent roads is maintained through the use of service roads and limited access points;
- (d) defines standards of development consistent with the County's Land Use Bylaw, including architectural, landscaping, and sign controls;
- (e) identifies methods and facilities for servicing;
- (f) includes groundwater and soil permeability tests; and
- (g) any other matters identified by County Policy.

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Bylaw 19-20

- 3.5.8 Commercial subdivision and development that could have a significant impact on the community and environment, shall be controlled through the process of Land Use Bylaw amendment by redesignation to an appropriate Designated District in the Land Use Bylaw and, in areas where there is an Intermunicipal Development Plan or an Area Structure Plan, by amendment to the appropriate Plan.

3.6 Goal: Emergency Preparedness

Objective

1. Ensure the safety of all County residents by requiring emergency preparedness measures to be a consideration in the design and approval of developments throughout the County.
2. Work collaboratively with adjacent municipalities to support public safety in natural disasters and emergency situations.

Policies

- 3.6.1 Developments shall be designed to ensure high levels of emergency preparedness within a rural context.
- (a) Developments shall encourage the use of effective wildfire prevention techniques and the development of on-site firefighting measures to reduce the risk of wildfires resulting from development.
 - (b) Applications for subdivision and development may be referred to the province's Land and Forest Service or the local fire department for comment in evaluating the suitability of a site in forested land for development.
 - (c) Development which is too remote to be adequately serviced by existing firefighting services shall be considered subject to the following as conditions for approval:
 - (i) the provision of a suitable on-site water supply for firefighting purposes;
 - (ii) the use of fire resistant building methods;
 - (iii) the installation of spark arrestors on chimneys; and/ or

3.6 Goal: Emergency Preparedness

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- (iv) the removal of trees, shrubs, and fuels in proximity to certain developments.
 - (d) Development in significant wildfire hazard areas shall be discouraged.
 - (e) Developments and Subdivisions should provide appropriate fire protection measures consistent with County Bylaw.
 - (f) Provision of an emergency access may be required as a condition of approval of subdivision or development.
 - (g) Residential development will be prohibited in those areas which are too close to sour gas facilities, in accordance with Provincial legislation and regulations.
- 3.6.2 Multi-lot subdivision and development proposals shall ensure compatibility with surrounding land uses.
 - (a) Buffering measures, to the satisfaction of the Development or Subdivision Authority may be required at time of development or subdivision between residential uses and other, adjacent land uses.
 - (b) Development will be encouraged to implement FireSmart preventative measures or similar strategies that aim to reduce the risk of and mitigate potential damage caused by wildfires.
- 3.6.3 The County will promote collaboration and partnerships with various stakeholders in the develop net of emergency preparedness plans and strategies.
 - (a) The County will actively promote collaboration with adjacent municipalities to ensure adequate emergency preparedness measure are in place.
 - (b) The County will engage residents, businesses, employers, utility companies, subject matter experts, community, and faith-based organizations as partners to help identify opportunities to strengthen the region's hazard resilience.



PART 4.0

GROWTH MANAGEMENT

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4.1 Goal: Responsible Regionalism

4.0 GROWTH MANAGEMENT

“The only constant is change, continuing change, inevitable change; that is the dominant factor in society today. No sensible decision can be made any longer without taking into account, not only the world as it is, but the world as it will be.” — Isaac Asimov.

Growth can be an exciting but tumultuous experience for predominantly rural municipalities such as the County of Vermilion River. On one hand, the County benefits from an expanding economy, an increasing tax base, and more vibrant communities. On the other hand, the County must contend with a series of challenges including meeting future demands for services and environmental protection.

In 2013 the County completed a Regional Growth Management Strategy that outlined how the County can support a projected population of up to 14,500 residents by 2052, in keeping with the County’s goals of fiscal, environmental, and social sustainability.

The following objectives and policies support and expand the goals and objectives of the Regional Growth Management Strategy.

4.1 Goal: Responsible Regionalism

Objectives

1. Support well-balanced and well-planned growth that harmonizes the needs and visions of our community and is supported by its residents input.
2. Strengthen cross-jurisdictional planning and collaboration with neighbouring municipalities by ensure that all local proposals account for, connect with, and support the goals and objectives of provincial, regional, and intermunicipal plans.

Policies

- 4.1.1 Development shall be in a manner that reflects the aspirations of residents, landowners, and other stakeholders.
 - (a) The County will develop and adopt a Regional Growth Management Plan that will identify growth areas and provide a means of monitoring change over time. The Plan should take into consideration the recommendations of the Regional Growth Management Strategy.
- 4.1.2 Creative, regional collaboration and diversification based on planned growth, relationship building and engagement shall be encouraged.
 - (a) The County will promote regional cooperation and sharing of resources.
 - (b) The County will include regional development visions and plans in local planning scenarios.
 - (c) The County will ensure local plans are consistent with regional plans and priorities.

1.1

- (d) The County will identify and delineate designated growth areas for residential and non-residential uses.
- (e) The County will promote intermunicipal dialogue at both the political and administrative levels to facilitate an approved and united vision for the region.
- (f) The County will collaborate with industry and municipal partners to develop, update and align risk management initiatives regarding heavy industrial development located within and along County borders.
- (g) The County will encourage the coordination of joint municipal processes and Planning Documents that provide agreement for land-use activity along shared municipal boundaries.
- (h) The County will establish infrastructure servicing and joint-use partnership agreements with municipal neighbours and other government agencies that are mutually beneficial and provide for the coordinated distribution of municipal services.
- (i) The County will strive to understand stakeholder perspectives and concerns by promoting consultation and participation in projects of County-wide significance.

4.1.3 Orderly growth and development within the County's hamlets shall be encouraged.

- (a) Development adjacent to hamlets shall be in accordance with the provisions within the Land Use Bylaw.
- (b) Development in hamlets which do not have communal water supply and sewage disposal systems should be planned and designed so that the lots are of a size and the subsequent development is of a configuration which would permit re-subdivision to a higher density should communal water supply and sewage disposal systems eventually be available.

4.1.4 Regional cooperation in the provision, operation and maintenance of infrastructure services will be encouraged.

- (a) The County will endeavour to cooperate with other municipalities in the upgrading of intermunicipal roadways.
- (b) The County will endeavour to cooperate wherever possible with other municipalities and/or the provincial government with planning, development and operation of sanitary waste disposal facilities and sewage lagoons.
- (c) Development adjacent to the future Highway #16 Lloydminster bypass must be designed to adhere to provincial requirements regarding siting and access.

4.2 Goal: Complete Communities

Objective

4.2 Goal: Complete Communities

1. Provide necessary community facilities and services to our residents in an efficient, cost-effective and quality manner within the financial resources of the County, consistent with concerns to protect natural resources and accomplish managed, concentrated, and well-planned development.
2. Create a sustainable mix of commercial and residential uses within the hamlets.

Policies

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

- 4.2.1 The County will encourage a variety of development types in an effort to achieve complete communities within County hamlets and residential subdivisions.
 - (a) The County shall require development proposals to respect the existing scale, type and character of the community. Secondary suites or mixed-use developments may be contemplated, in accordance with the provisions within the County's Land Use Bylaw, where the applicant can successfully demonstrate to the relevant Authority that no significant impacts on municipal infrastructure or community amenities will occur.
- 4.2.2 The County will encourage orderly growth and urban density development within the County's hamlets.
 - (a) The County will develop and adopt a Hamlet Plan for each of the hamlets in the County to guide growth and expansion for each of the Community Areas, which will maintain their distinctive attributes and provide residential and non-residential development opportunities different from those provided in urban centers.
 - (b) The County will ensure that hamlets have enough land within their respective boundaries to undertake comprehensive land use planning and development of servicing systems.
- 4.2.3 Development shall be encouraged in those hamlets where municipal piped water supply and sewage collection and disposal services are already available, or can be economically made available.
 - (a) Development in hamlets that do not have communal water supply and sewage disposal systems shall be planned and designed so that the lots are of a size and the subsequent development is of a configuration that would permit further subdivision to a higher density should communal water supply and sewage disposal systems eventually become available.
 - (b) The County shall ensure that development accounts for increased population and subsequent community impacts through the timely delivery of social services and communities amenities.
 - (c) The County shall undertake an evaluation of municipal servicing needs prior to significant Hamlet development or expansion in order to identify and prioritize improvements for development.

4.3 Goal: Urban Growth Areas

- 4.2.4 The County will promote quality public spaces by restricting the dedication of municipal reserve for right-of-ways, public utilities and marginal lands as they are not considered useable parks and open spaces.
- (a) The County should ensure that community facilities and support services are suitably located for the identified residential populations that they are intended to serve.
 - (b) The County should encourage the use of joint partnership agreements with public and separate school boards for delivering community service.

4.3 Goal: Urban Growth Areas

Objective

1. Balance growth and expansion needs of urban centres with the needs of residents and communities adjacent to their boundaries.
2. Promote an orderly transition from low density uses to higher density urban uses through the establishment of efficient, compact patterns of land use in a manner that discourages uncontrolled, sprawl, leap-frog, or strip development within intermunicipal boundary areas.

Policies

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

- 4.3.1 Expansion of adjacent municipalities and hamlet communities into Urban Growth Areas will be encouraged to occur in an orderly manner and in a manner that encourages the sustainability of the municipalities and communities.
- (a) Adjacent municipalities and hamlet communities will be encouraged to accommodate growth in areas that would minimize the removal of:
 - (i) regionally significant natural resources; and
 - (ii) environmentally sensitive areas.
- 4.3.2 Development on lands near adjacent municipalities and hamlet communities should be in harmony with future growth requirements and should be able to accommodate urban uses.
- (a) The policies within approved Intermunicipal Development Plans and any approved Site Development Plan or, when required, an Area Structure Plans will apply to the lands located in the areas affected by those Plans.
 - (b) The County will continue to work closely with adjacent municipalities in the detailed planning of the lands near them, and by continuing to do detailed planning with the goals being the best utilization of the land and the minimization of long range land use conflicts and servicing costs.

An aerial photograph of a vast rural landscape. The foreground and middle ground are filled with a patchwork of green and yellow agricultural fields, separated by thin lines of trees and roads. In the distance, a small town or village is visible, followed by a hazy horizon. The sky is filled with large, soft, grey clouds, with some blue visible near the horizon. A semi-transparent orange banner is overlaid at the bottom of the image, containing the text.

PART 5.0

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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5.1 Goal: Manage Land Use and Built Environment

5.0 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” — United Nations 1987.

Although, the concept of sustainability may suggest a sense of stability to some, it does not mean that in the future we will, or should, function the way we function today. Communities evolve, and change is the only surety we have of the future (although, some residents will always fight for their community to remain exactly as it was the day that they moved in). Nevertheless, unmanaged change can be detrimental to the social and fiscal wellbeing of a community, which is not sustainable.

The value added of the concept of sustainability, above and beyond the social, economic, and environmental concerns that make it up, is that it forces us to recognize links and trade-offs, rather than dealing with each concern independently. To achieve sustainability, we need to sustain our economy, protect our environment, and achieve our social goals — ideally without trading off one goal for another (Hecht 2007).

The following objectives and policies set the direction for the County’s future growth and development. The policies provide direction on how our County will maintain successful communities, create a stronger sense of place and civic identity. They support planning for a balanced land-use mix for fiscal sustainability characterized by a pattern that includes both residential and non-residential uses, such that the long-term cost of providing a desirable level of services to residents, business owners, and visitors is closely matched to the tax or user-fee revenue generated by those uses. They guide the development of land within the County, and ensure that such development enhances the quality of life in the County.

Land is a limited resource and how we use it reflects our community values and priorities.

5.1 Goal: Manage Land Use and Built Environment

Objectives

1. Manage appropriately land use and development to strengthen our local economy: providing a diverse range of jobs, goods, services, and the tax revenue necessary to maintain quality services to meet the needs of our communities.
2. Address land uses and the built environment in a manner that strengthens the sense of place for the County as a whole, as well as its rural landscape.

Policies

- 5.1.1 Subdivision and Development proposals shall be consistent with plans for identified regional growth and development areas, which provide the framework for logical, efficient land-use patterns that accommodate a mix

5.1 Goal: Manage Land Use and Built Environment

of uses in accessible and safe configurations that are attractive, efficient, and sustainable.

- (a) New development shall be focused in and around existing developed areas to discourage rural sprawl.
- (b) The County will support development that respects natural topography, such as conservation and cluster development to preserve and protect natural areas and promote the efficient use of existing infrastructure.
- (c) The County will support innovative practices that promote fiscal sustainability by making more efficient use of existing infrastructure and topographies, such as low-impact development, including green infrastructure.
 - (i) Green building and site design in development and redevelopment projects is encouraged.
 - (ii) appropriate site design standards shall be followed and appropriate buffers shall be located between non-residential developments and other existing and future sensitive land uses and roadway profiles in order to provide adequate visual or acoustic screening.
 - (iii) The County may require that the applicant of a development apply the principles and guidelines of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design within subdivision and development reviews to guide design and ensure effective use of the built environment.
- (d) Shared driveway access, parking, and coordinated site plan designs for non-residential uses is encouraged, wherever feasible.
- (e) The County will identify brownfield sites within the County and develop a strategy for mitigation and redevelopment into productive uses.
- (f) The County will provide sufficient commercial and industrial sites to be competitive in attracting new, high-quality businesses to the County. Sites should be located to avoid adverse impacts to existing and planned residential communities.

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

5.1.2 Development for non-agricultural uses will be encouraged to be located on lower agricultural capability lands, as shown in a farmland assessment, unless it can be demonstrated by the proponent that the benefits to the community justify the use of higher capability agricultural lands.

- (a) Fragmentation of rural land and working landscapes is discouraged.
- (b) Development on Hazardous Lands that are deemed undevelopable or may result in life loss or injury, property damage, social, and economic disruption or environmental degradation shall not be permitted.

5.1 Goal: Manage Land Use and Built Environment

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

- (c) The development of non-agricultural land uses within the County should be considered only in the case where agricultural uses are not compromised by conflicting developments.
- (d) The County shall encourage the development of vacant lots, underdeveloped sites, and the redevelopment of older buildings within the hamlets, provided that the infill development or redevelopment will not adversely affect the surrounding areas and is consistent with the provisions in the County's Land Use Bylaw.

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

- (e) Industries shall be encouraged to locate on lower capability agricultural land, in proximity to paved County roads or provincial highways, and in areas with access to existing regional or municipal services wherever possible.
- (f) Commercial uses shall be encouraged to locate on lower capability agricultural land wherever possible.
- (g) Adjacent municipalities should be encouraged to expand in areas which would minimize the removal of higher capability agricultural land.
- (h) Expansion of hamlets should be discouraged from occurring on higher capability agricultural land.
- (i) Council shall only support annexation proposals in accordance with the policies in **Sub-section 6.4** of this Plan.

5.1.3 Development should only occur on lands that do not have critical development constraints.

- (a) Groundwater of sufficient quantity and quality should be available to support the proposed development. Development will be discouraged in areas where reserves of potable water are inadequate.
- (b) Development will be discouraged in areas characterized by wetlands, swamps, muskeg, or saturated soils. Development will also be discouraged in valleys, ravines, or seasonal draws. Where development is allowed in areas exhibiting these characteristics the development must adhere to provincial regulations, guidelines and wetland mitigation policies.
- (c) Development shall be prohibited on slopes in excess of 15% or on slopes which are subject to slippage or mass movement.
- (d) Development is discouraged from locating on soils where a percolation test has demonstrated to have extremely fast percolation rates and/or which might result in the possibility of groundwater contamination.
- (e) No permanent structures will be allowed within the 1:100 year flood fringe of any river, stream or lake shore, unless proper flood proofing techniques are applied. A certificate from a qualified, registered

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

5.2 Goal: Adequate Subdivision of Land

professional engineer or architect will be required by the County to confirm that the development has been properly flood proofed.

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

- (f) The County shall encourage flood way and flood fringe areas to be kept in their natural state. However, if provincial requirements are met and engineering studies have been completed by the applicant that supports development within these areas then the development authority may approve non-residential development within these locations as long as any mitigation measures identified by the province and in any supplementary engineering studies are adhered to.

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Bylaw 19-20

- (g) On municipal lands within flood hazard areas, new development should be limited to recreational uses.
- (h) Unless unique site requirements determine otherwise, development proposals adjacent to environmental features should conform to the Alberta Environment Land Conservation Guidelines so far as they pertain to setback requirements from valley breaks, ravines and watercourses.
- (i) The County shall continue working in collaboration with non-profit organizations and the Province to manage and conserve wetlands within the County's boundary.

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

5.1.4 Conversion of productive agricultural land to non-farm uses is discouraged. (See **Section 5.9**).

- (a) The County will encourage new pipelines, electrical and transmission lines, rail lines and road developments to be located adjacent to quarter section or property boundaries and/or within recognized corridors to limit the further fragmentation of lands within the County.
- (b) The County will discourage the premature conversion of productive agricultural land to other uses when equally viable alternatives exist.
- (c) Developments for non-agricultural uses will be encouraged to locate on lands of lower agricultural capability and in areas where possible negative impact on agriculture are minimized.

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

5.1.5 The County will support opportunities to diversify the economy and strengthen the tax base through land use and development.

- (a) The County may support local economic development initiatives that benefits local rural businesses and residents.
- (b) Environmentally sustainable businesses and work will be encouraged to attract and grow green jobs in the County.

5.2 Goal: Adequate Subdivision of Land

Objective

5.2 Goal: Adequate Subdivision of Land

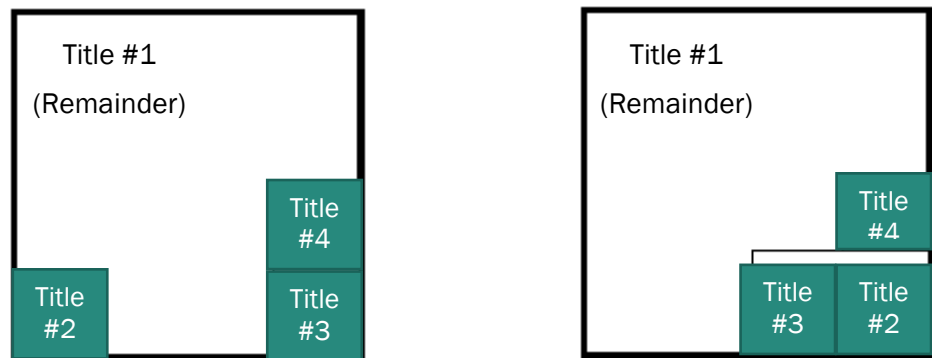
1. Provide guidance to the Subdivision Authority when considering proposals for the subdivision of land within the County in accordance with the objectives and policies of this Plan, consistent with provincial legislation.
2. Ensure safe and reasonable enjoyment and use of County lands by our residents that benefit both present and future generations.

Policies

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

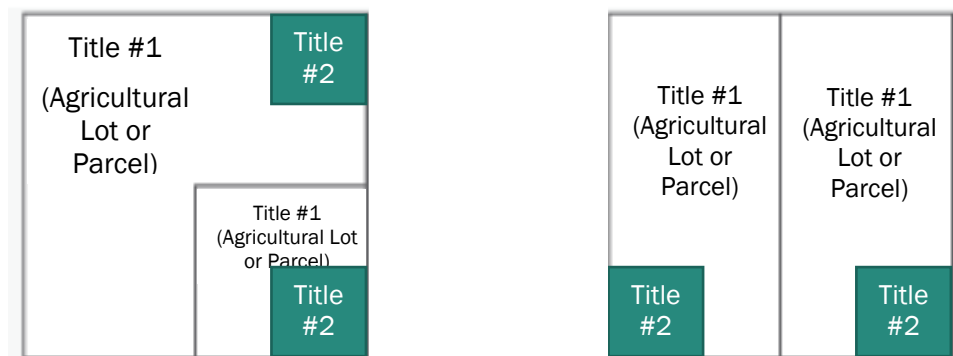
- 5.2.1 The maximum density per quarter section in the Agricultural Use area shall be four (4) parcels. (See **Figure 1**)

Figure 1. Maximum number of titles out of a quarter section.



Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

Figure 2. Maximum Subdivision of Existing Agricultural Lots or Parcels.



Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

- 5.2.2 Where a quarter section has previously been subdivided into two (2) agricultural parcels, a maximum of one (1) country residential use parcel shall be allowed per agricultural parcel. (See **Figure 2**)
- 5.2.3 A multi-lot subdivision for residential and/or non-residential use shall be considered to be any subdivision that will create more than four (4) titles on a quarter section, meaning the title for the quarter + 3 new titles. (See **Figure 1**).

5.2 Goal: Adequate Subdivision of Land

- 5.2.4 Multi-lot subdivisions may require a Land Use Bylaw amendment and, where there is an Intermunicipal Development Plan or an Area Structure Plan, an amendment to the appropriate Plan may be required.
- 5.2.5 Multi-lot subdivisions shall comply with the applicable provisions of the County's Land Use Bylaw.
- 5.2.6 Subdivisions shall be designed to follow the logical extension of existing infrastructure.
- (a) Subdivisions shall not be approved where access to existing graded and graveled or paved roads does not exist, or where construction of roadway and access to County standards to the site is not undertaken primarily by the landowner/developer.
 - (b) Access to individual lots within a multi-lot subdivision will be provided by internal roads or service roads developed to meet the County's General Municipal Servicing Standards, and not directly onto Provincial Highways or County main grid roads.
 - (c) The assessment of the suitability of a proposed residential subdivision will not take into consideration required setbacks for private sewage disposal systems. Rather, if a subdivision results in the reduction of setbacks between an existing or proposed private sewage disposal system and a property line then the developer will be required to ensure that the existing or proposed private sewage disposal system conforms to all relevant provincial regulations affecting private sewage disposal systems.
 - (d) The subdivision of a naturally fragmented parcel shall not be approved for any use, unless the fragmented parcel is fragmented by reason of one or more public roadways, railways, rivers, or creeks.
 - (e) In addition to the criteria indicated in **Policy 5.2.6 (d) above**, a natural fragmentation may also be considered to be a barrier to the crossing of cultivation equipment created by substantial topography, such as a ravine or gully. The determination that such a topographic barrier is a natural fragmentation for the purpose of subdivision shall be at the sole discretion of the Subdivision Authority.
 - (f) In the case where another policy of this plan would allow for a subdivision to occur and the subject site also contains a fragmenting feature as described in **Policies 5.2.6 (d) and (e) above**, and where the fragmented area contains adequate developable area, the County will encourage the developer to subdivide the fragmented area, as the first subdivision from the subject site.
 - (g) The County may refuse to approve an application that proposes to subdivide a fragmented parcel if:
 - (i) in the opinion of the County, the construction and maintenance of the roadway adjacent to the parcel would serve no greater or long-term public interest; and

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

5.2 Goal: Adequate Subdivision of Land

- (h) Documentation indicating that arrangements satisfactory to the County have been made regarding a development's water supply, sewage disposal, and storm water management systems, including access to the systems for maintenance and any necessary easements, may be conditions of approval for multi-lot subdivisions and/or development.
- (i) Documentation indicating that satisfactory arrangements have been made regarding a development's sewage disposal system may be a condition of approval for residential subdivision and/or development.

5.2.7 Subdivisions' lot or parcel size shall be in accordance with the lot or parcel size for the Designated Land Use District within the County's Land Use Bylaw.

- (a) However, lots or parcels and farmstead separations may be larger than allowed in a Land Use District subject to a Real Property Report or Building Site Certificate prepared by an Alberta Land Surveyor; which verifies the locations of all improvements, site features, and proposed boundaries; where it has been demonstrated by the applicant, to the satisfaction of the subdivision authority, that the site includes topographical features such as:

- (i) treed areas.

- (ii) sloughs, and

- (iii) poor quality farmland with a farmland assessment ratio of 41% or less, which is rocky or sandy land or slough areas.

Only additional lands that the Real Property Report or Building Site Certificate demonstrates are required to accommodate the improvements, farm yard, or topographical features will be permitted.

- (b) At the discretion of the Subdivision Authority, lots may also be larger, where it has been demonstrated by the applicant, to the satisfaction of the subdivision authority that the larger lot or parcel has been requested to include land that otherwise would be a small area of the remaining farm unit less than 60 m (200 ft.) in width, between the lot and a boundary of the quarter section or adjacent to a road.

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

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Bylaw 19-20

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Bylaw 25-15

5.2.8 Generally, a total maximum area of 10.1 ha (25.0 ac) will be allowed for separation per quarter section. (See **Figure 3**)

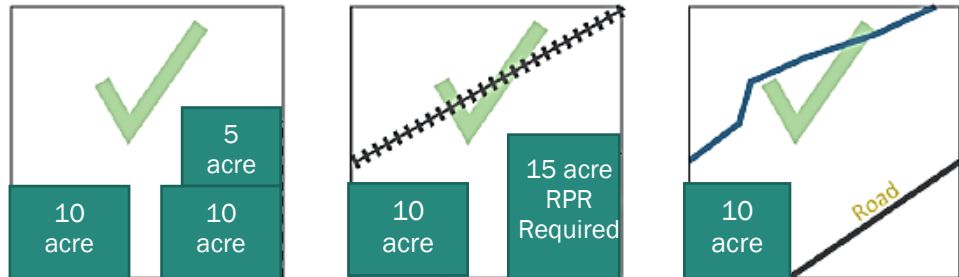
- (a) However, at the discretion of the Subdivision Authority, where a quarter section contains two (2) oversized farmsteads, as defined within this Plan, a total area of 12.1 ha (30.0 ac) may be permitted to be subdivided from a quarter section to accommodate the two (2) oversized farmsteads. In such cases, a Real Property Report or Building Site Certificate prepared by an Alberta Land Surveyor, will be

5.2 Goal: Adequate Subdivision of Land

required to verify the locations of all improvements, site features, and proposed boundaries. (See **Figure 4**)

- (i) If the Real Property Report or Building Site Certificate does not demonstrate that the additional land is required to accommodate the topographical features or improvements then the additional lands will not be permitted.

Figure 3. Maximum Separation per Quarter Section.



Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

Figure 4. Oversize Farmsteads Separation Example.



5.2.9 Lots which include areas described as “pan handles” (lengthy narrow sections leading to a wider development site), shall not be approved by the Subdivision Authority. Exceptions to this policy shall be allowed, if in the opinion of the Subdivision Authority, the proposed Subdivision does not interfere with an existing agricultural operation and:

- (a) The subdivision is to separate an existing farmstead from the balance of the quarter section; and
- (b) The lengthy narrow section is directly adjacent to the property line or quarter section line, whichever the case may be; or

5.2 Goal: Adequate Subdivision of Land

- (c) The lengthy narrow section is at least 100 m from the property line or quarter section line, whichever the case may be.

5.2.10 Land Use Bylaw amendments for multi-lot development that will be considered by the County shall include the following criteria:

- (a) The site should possess features such as trees, ravines, hilly terrain or other topographical features that would provide an attractive residential environment. When the amendment is to allow a currently vacant parcel from a quarter section, the site should not include cultivated land or good quality agricultural land. Where a site is fully or partially treed, all possible means will be undertaken to retain the maximum amount of tree cover.
- (b) The density of development shall be directly related to the development capability of the land resources, such as potable water supply, topography, vegetation, soil, and drainage. In this regard, proponents for multi-lot and residential development may be required to provide the County with an assessment of environmental constraints on the site and the means whereby negative impacts on the natural environment may be mitigated.
- (c) UAccess to individual lots will be provided by internal roads or service roads developed to standards acceptable to the County, and not directly onto Provincial Highways or County grid roads.
- (d) There shall be an adequate supply of potable water for the development as proposed. The supply may be provided by wells or by other options, such as by hauling or by communal systems, in accordance with Provincial regulations. If the well option is to be considered, the Council will ask that the report required under the Water Act for multi-lot residential subdivisions be provided at the Land Use Bylaw amendment stage for its consideration. If the communal system is to be considered, Council will require that the creation or expansion of such systems be undertaken at the developer's cost, and not at the County's cost.
- (e) Sanitary sewage shall be treated and/or disposed of in accordance with Provincial requirements. In this regard, the Council will ask that information be provided at the Land Use Bylaw amendment stage for its consideration. If a communal system is to be considered, Council will require that the creation or expansion of such systems be undertaken at the developer's cost, and not at the County's cost.

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

5.2.11 Residential Development

- (a) Residential subdivision and development best practices, consistent with the provisions in the County's Land Use Bylaw, will be generally supported.
 - (i) Residential subdivision or development shall not normally be allowed:

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

5.2 Goal: Adequate Subdivision of Land

1. within an area likely to be subjected to high levels of noise from industry, transportation facilities, or other sources of noise;
 2. in close proximity to a resource extraction operation;
 3. within a known 1 in 100 year flood plain; or
 4. within the minimum distance separation between a single dwelling and a confined feeding operation as determined through the use of Schedule 1 of the Standards and Administration Regulation adopted pursuant to the Agricultural Operation Practices Act; or
 5. adjacent to river banks, unless the banks are certified as being stable by an engineer prior to development, or, alternatively, unless the land owner takes all responsibility for the impact of any bank instability currently or in the future.
- (ii) Residential subdivisions should be located in proximity to gas, electrical, and telephone lines which have existing spare capacity to sustain the additional usage.
- (iii) Residential subdivisions shall have direct access to existing maintained roads. Multi-lot residential subdivisions shall be encouraged to locate in proximity to paved County roads or provincial highways.
- (iv) Where a subdivision for residential purposes is proposed, the developer shall be required to enter into a development agreement with the County wherein the developer agrees to be responsible for all the costs associated with the subdivision and development.
- (b) Residential development will be prohibited in those areas which are too close to sour gas facilities, in accordance with Provincial legislation and regulations, in accordance with the provisions in the County's Land Use Bylaw.
- (c) Multi-lot residential subdivisions should be clustered or grouped to reduce potential land use conflicts and minimize service costs.

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

5.2.12 Farmsteads

- (a) Farmstead subdivisions shall be in accordance with the policies in this Section and consistent with the applicable regulations of the County's Land Use Bylaw.
- (i) Only one vacant lot separation or abandoned farmstead separation will be allowed per quarter section without requiring an amendment to the Land Use Bylaw. (See **Figure 5**)
- (ii) Vacant subdivisions shall normally be located within those portions of a titled area which consist of the poorest quality agricultural land which is still developable within the quarter section.

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

Figure 5. Farmstead Separations



5.2.13 Non-Residential Development

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

- (a) The County will support proposals for clustered non-residential development that incorporate sustainable subdivision and development practices, consistent with the provisions in the County's Land Use Bylaw.
 - (i) Multi-lot non-residential subdivisions should be clustered or grouped to reduce potential land use conflicts and minimize service costs.
- 1. Multi-lot non-residential subdivisions and developments shall meet the applicable policies under **Section 3.0** of this Plan.

5.3 Goal: Thriving Natural and Cultural Landscapes

Objective

1. Promote the value of the County's significant cultural landscapes.
2. Enhance the quality of life and sense of belonging that the County's unique natural features and rich cultural landscapes provide to residents and visitors alike and their contribution to the overall landscape perception and character.

Policies

- 5.3.1 Historical or archaeological Sites identified as Historic Resource Value pursuant to the Alberta Historical Resources Act shall be protected in accordance with Provincial legislation and regulations.
 - (a) Subdivision and Development applications in locations where the proposal may impact significant cultural landscapes will require preparation of a Heritage Resource Impact Assessment by a qualified historic resource professional.

5.4 Goal: Environmental Management

- (b) The use of historic resources to promote tourism will be encouraged, where appropriate.
- (c) Proposed Subdivisions and Developments on main streets of hamlets shall protect built heritage and enhance the historic significance and character of these areas.

5.4 Goal: Environmental Management

The County of Vermilion River includes a range of valuable and unique environmental features. This natural capital supports not only the County's ecosystem but also the economic, social and cultural systems throughout the County. Recognizing that a successful and sustainable future is dependent on the vitality of all of the interconnected systems (built and natural environment, economic, social and cultural) the County has adopted a strong approach, for environmental management.

The County recognizes that the goal of environmental protection cannot mean total ecological integrity. Simply put, a municipality cannot reasonably expect to maintain the full structure of the ecosystem and still have roads and buildings. Rather the goal must be the achievement of an environment which does not show symptoms of stress such as:

- Decreased water quality; and/or
- Significantly reduced biodiversity.

The following objective and policies have been adopted by the County, relating to environmental management.

Objectives

1. Ensure that the cumulative impact of development decisions affecting the ecological, social and heritage assets of the County will be mitigated to ensure that any negative environmental impacts are as low as is reasonably possible.
2. Encourage sustainable development in all areas without unduly impacting ecosystem health, working landscapes or the County's cultural landscapes through low net environmental impact approaches to environmental management, which will help to ensure that over all the County's natural and built heritage and the processes that connect them will prosper well into the future.

Policies

- 5.4.1 Identify and provide for the preservation of significant ecological sites throughout the County.
 - (a) Encourage the protection of native vegetation and biodiversity in agricultural land management through support of such programs as ALUS, Cow's and Fish, Agricultural Service Board, and similar activities.

5.5 Goal: Efficient Municipal Servicing Planning

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

- (b) Wildlife habitat protection practices are encouraged through identification and conservation of natural areas such as woodlots, wetlands, ravine systems and creeks/rivers.
- (c) Endeavour to establish environmental quality goals to direct future development within the County and to provide specific points of reference for facilitating management decision making.
- (d) An Environmental Impact Assessment or evaluation will be required for any proposed development that may have an impact on an identified natural or environmentally sensitive feature.
- (e) Endeavour to identify cumulative impact issues and set goals to mitigate and restore identified issues, consistent with a Regional Plan. Once the goals are set, approval for new projects will be approved with reference to these limits.
- (f) Work with provincial and non-government partners to identify and monitor established wetland and upland quality goal to determine if development and County operations are within the established goals. Monitoring is critical for evaluating the suitability of developments in different areas over time and will help to ensure the accuracy of predictions regarding future states and to refine land use and development policies and regulations.

5.4.2 Development on sandy or unstable soil may only be allowed if measures to control erosion are implemented, to the satisfaction of the Development Authority.

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

5.5 Goal: Efficient Municipal Servicing Planning and Management

Objectives

1. Ensure efficient resource management and effective strategies to provide quality services to meet the needs of our community in a competent, safe, fiscally and environmentally responsible manner.
2. Plan ahead for expansion of capacities and extensions of the areas of service in accordance with growth projections and the establishment of future growth areas.

Policies

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

5.5.1 The County will develop and adopt Management Plans, Master Plans, Area Structure Plans, and Strategies that align with the vision and direction of the County's Municipal Development Plan (MDP) and the Regional Growth Management Strategy (RGMS) that can offer developers and prospective business and residents predictability in terms of the areas identified for future growth and extension of infrastructure.

- (a) The County will develop and implement:
- (ii) an Infrastructure Master Plan,

5.5 Goal: Efficient Municipal Servicing Planning

- (iii) a Transportation Master Plan,
- (iv) a Community Services (water/sewer) Master Plan,
- (v) a Community Facilities (cemeteries/libraries/open space/recreation) Master Plan, and
- (vi) a Storm Water Master Plan

these plans will support current infrastructure needs and to address future identified growth and development areas. Until such Master Plans are in place, implement interim Infrastructure Management Strategies that focus on maximizing the existing network performance, minimizing overall County risks and adhering to current County Standards and policies.

- (b) The County will develop and implement an Economic Development Master Plan to encourage, promote, and support a competitive, diverse, and adaptable local economy that creates a hospitable and attractive environment for businesses and encourages growth.
- (c) The County will develop and implement a Cultural Master Plan that provides an understanding and appreciation of the County's history and culture, including features such as historic sites, sites of local significance, and any notable structures. The Plan is to promote and protect heritage places, which provide a strong sense of identity and place.
- (d) The County will develop and implement an Environmental Management Plan supportive of the guiding principles outlined within the MDP. The Plan should identify, prioritize and establish management practices for sites of environmental significance within the County.

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

5.5.2 The County will encourage Responsible Subdivision and Development Practices through the establishment of policies and procedures that give due regard to federal, provincial, and municipal requirements and that promote community vitality.

- (a) Subdivision and development proposals shall meet the requirements under the Municipal Government Act, the Subdivision and Development Regulation, and the applicable provisions under the County's Land Use Policy at the discretion of the relevant Authority.
- (b) The County shall ensure that the distribution and timing of future development coincides, and is contiguous with, infrastructure improvements.
- (c) The County shall ensure that both subdivision and development meet or exceed the standards outlined within the County's General Municipal Servicing Standards. Standards should be reviewed and updated along with other County regulatory policies to coincide with innovations in the industry.

5.6 Goal: Cost-Effective Transportation and Infra

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

- 5.5.3 Proposals that incorporate an ecosystem approach that follows Eco-Logical concepts and components consistent with provincial regulation, Land Use Policies, and other applicable statutory plans will be generally supported.
- (a) Developers and service providers are encouraged to incorporate Ecosystem-Based Mitigation in infrastructure projects when addressing cost-effectiveness of mitigation and/or reclamation.
 - (b) Simultaneously, advanced mitigation should be targeted to fulfill regulatory requirements early on in the development of infrastructure projects, ensuring efficient project delivery by avoiding costly delays that can sometimes occur with permitting processes.
 - (c) Eco-Logical ecosystem approach goals to shall be met when developing infrastructure, which are:
 - (i) conservation: Protection of larger scale, multi-resource ecosystems;
 - (ii) connectivity: Reduced habitat fragmentation;
 - (iii) predictability: Knowledge that commitments made by all parties will be honored: that the planning and conservation agreements, results, and outcomes will occur as negotiated; and
 - (iv) transparency: Better public and stakeholder involvement at all key stages in order to establish credibility, build trust, and streamline infrastructure planning and development.
 - (d) Subdivision and development proposals should incorporate Eco-Logical concepts and components promote an ecosystem approach to comprehensively manage land, water, and biotic and abiotic resources to equitably promote conservation and sustainable use in all newly developed and adopted statutory plans.
 - (i) changing priorities, opportunities and threats should be accommodated over time and across landscapes through an adaptive feedback loop that includes:
 - 1. Integrated Planning, for determining regional ecosystem conservation priorities.
 - 2. Mitigation Options, these are recommended approaches that may be used to offset adverse impacts.
 - 3. Performance Measurements serve to assess whether the outcomes met the goals of conservation, connectivity, predictability and transparency as infrastructure projects addressed in the ecosystem approach are completed.

5.6 Goal: Cost-Effective Transportation and Infrastructure

Objectives

5.6 Goal: Cost-Effective Transportation and Infra

1. Effectively manage and maintain all municipal assets for future generations, while being mindful of today's needs.
2. Ensure that required infrastructure is constructed by developers.

Policies

- 5.6.1 The fragmentation of working landscapes associated with the development of linear transportation, communication, or utility facilities and services shall be discouraged.
- (a) Transportation, communication, or utility facilities and services will be encouraged to locate in a manner that:
 - (i) minimizes impacts on working landscapes;
 - (ii) minimizes the fragmentation of land, and/or the creation of fragmented parcels;
 - (iii) follows road allowances wherever feasible;
 - (iv) uses corridors to integrate a number of utilities;
 - (v) minimizes disruption of recreation, wildlife, and historic resources; and
 - (vi) avoids disruption of existing or future urban centres.
 - (b) Only those proposals which minimize fragmentation, where land is taken for roads, rail lines, pipelines or other transmission lines, shall be endorsed.
- 5.6.2 Reduction and mitigation of conflicts between transportation, communications or utility facilities and other land uses is encouraged.
- (a) High-voltage power lines and high-pressure pipelines shall be encouraged to locate away from residential areas.
 - (b) Consider the establishment of a Dangerous Goods Route when it is considered that dangerous goods are being transported on County roads in sufficient quantity to be a significant hazard to the travelling public.
 - (c) Screening and/or buffering as deemed appropriate to minimize any negative impacts shall be required as a condition of development, where proposed transportation and utility lines and facilities may adversely affect adjacent lands or land uses.
 - (d) Subdivision or development proposals adjacent to transportation and utility lines and facilities shall be required to provide such screening and/or buffering as deemed appropriate.
 - (e) Wireless communication facilities shall be encouraged to consider facility planning and design best practices so as to have the least impact on the natural environment, and the least visual impact on

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

5.6 Goal: Cost-Effective Transportation and Infra

nearby residents. Developers of wireless communication facilities shall be encouraged to provide an opportunity for public consultation.

- (f) The co-location of multiple devices on wireless communication facilities is preferred. Where appropriate, new facilities should be built to standards to accommodate multiple devices. Individual facilities are strongly discouraged. Should co-locations not prove feasible, the clustering of wireless communication facilities is desired.
- (g) Roads shall be developed as follows:
 - (i) Service roads adjacent to Provincial Highways in the County shall be considered as local internal subdivision roads and developed to appropriate standards
 - (ii) The roads shown on **Map 1** as Arterial Roads shall be considered as arterial roads and developed to arterial road standards relating to width, grades, site lines, and access.
 - (iii) The roads shown on **Map 1** as Collector Roads shall be considered as collector roads and developed to collector road standards relating to width, grades, site lines, and access.
 - (iv) Service roads for Arterial and Collector Roads shall be considered to be local internal subdivision roads and developed to appropriate standards.
 - (v) All other roads in the County shall be considered either local County Roads, or local internal subdivision roads, and developed to appropriate standards.
 - (h) Direct access from private property onto Arterial Roads shall normally not be allowed.
 - (i) Direct access from private property onto Collector Roads shall normally be limited.
 - (j) In order to minimize safety hazards and land use conflicts around airports, regulation of building heights in the areas around all publicly licensed and paved airports in the County shall be encouraged.

5.6.3 Ensure that municipal services and utilities are provided in an economical and efficient manner and are reflective of need, environmental constraints, land use considerations and existing infrastructure.

Amended by
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- (a) Subdivision and development proposals shall provide and maintain infrastructure capacity in line with growth and service demands.
- (b) Land use adjacent to the Provincial Highways and their associated accesses shall conform to the Access Management Guidelines as outlined by Alberta Transportation. As well, the County's system of collector and arterial roads shall be afforded a similar level of protection from encroachment and proliferation of direct access.

5.6 Goal: Cost-Effective Transportation and Infra

- (c) All municipal infrastructure systems, such as new roads, sewage collection and water distribution systems created as a result of private development, which may include dedication to the County or subdivision, shall only be assumed by the municipality if the system has been constructed or upgraded to a standard which is acceptable to the County and which meets or exceeds all appropriate Provincial and Federal standards.
 - (d) Should a regional piped water supply system be developed, the County will include as one of the criteria in making its land use decisions (such as decisions respecting the approval of multi-lot country residential development) based on whether the development is to be provided with water supply services from the regional system. As well, the County will encourage landowners near the regional system to connect to the system.
 - (e) The County will develop and implement a program of maintenance and improvement for local roads designed to enhance traffic flow.
 - (f) The County will endeavour to guide Development to make the most efficient use of existing roadway facilities.
 - (g) Developments with the potential for substantial road impact (high traffic volumes or heavy trucks) will be directed to those roads that are designed and constructed to accommodate such development.
 - (h) Direct access from private property onto Provincial Highways shall be discouraged and limited wherever possible, especially where access onto local roads is available.
 - (i) Subdivision shall be specifically designed to minimize accesses onto Provincial Highways and local arterial roads through the use of service roads or redesigning the subdivision boundaries to redirect accesses onto local roads. The cost of consolidation or service roads and the costs of resolving all of Alberta Transportation's concerns with respect to access to the Provincial Highway will be the responsibility of the developer.
 - (j) Development will be encouraged to utilize identified haul roads and enter into haul route agreements with the County.
 - (k) Encourage availability of rail service to future industrial areas to improve industrial developments' accessibility to markets.
- 5.6.4 Encourage other levels of government and their agencies to provide safe, reliable transportation routes through the County.
- (a) Encourage the Province of Alberta to improve and maintain highways through the County that connect to major industrial and commercial centres in the province.
 - (b) Encourage the federal government, its agencies, and rail operators to improve and maintain existing rail corridors to ensure safety, and to

5.7 Goal: Recreation Opportunities

encourage economic opportunities for rail-dependent industries within the County and the region.

- (c) Encourage agencies and rail operators to improve railway crossings within the County.

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

5.6.5 Subdivision and development proposals shall account for the timely provision of public facilities and services relative to the demand for them.

- (a) The County will develop and adopt a concurrency policy to address the impacts of new development on transportation and community infrastructure in order to ensure there is enough capacity to serve each proposed development.

5.7 Goal: Recreation Opportunities

As the demand for recreational land for both public and private use increases, so does the need for planned recreational facilities and areas. Recreation can also form an important component of the tourism potential of the region. Recreation development should be located in areas and under circumstances where it does not adversely affect the agricultural economy and community, or the natural environment.

The following objectives and policies have been adopted by the County relating to recreation in the County.

Objectives

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

1. Encourage local recreational uses based on the capabilities of an area to sustain additional development.
2. Encourage wherever possible the preservation of natural resources and the development and retention of recreation areas and parks, provided that tourist activities or facilities do not threaten the potential development of additional economic activities, the agricultural economy and community, or the natural environment.

Policies

5.7.1 Recreational developments are encouraged to locate in areas which will not impact working landscapes.

- (a) The development of public serving recreational facilities/uses shall be encouraged, where these are:

- (i) compatible with the capabilities of a site or surrounding areas; and/or

- (ii) the site is located near or adjacent to a lake or river, if the proponent can demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the Development Authority, that the proposal is compatible with the lake/river environment.

5.7.2 Ensure that recreational uses are compatible with the environment and surrounding land uses.

5.7 Goal: Recreation Opportunities

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

- (a) Subdivision and development for recreational purposes shall occur in accordance with the following design principles:
 - (i) the density of development shall be directly related to the development capability of the land resource to accommodate the recreational use without limiting or conflicting with other uses;
 - (ii) the design shall be directly related to the site's topography vegetation, soil, and drainage characteristics. In this regard, the development proposal shall include a detailed analysis of the environmental constraints of the site and the means by which the proposal will protect and harmonize with the natural environment;
 - (iii) the design shall protect wildlife habitat; and
 - (iv) the design shall protect, maintain and re-establish, where necessary, cover and maximize the quality of permanent or protected natural features.
- (b) As the Canadian Pacific Lloydminster/Star rail line corridor is abandoned by Canadian Pacific, the County will require that contaminated soils and other materials be removed from the right-of-way. If the County is to acquire the right-of-way, this removal will occur before the County acquires it. The County may retain the corridor for future utility options and may allow for some limited local recreational use of parts of the right-of-way; but limit use so as to not negatively impact agricultural or residential communities along the right-of-way and, further, so that there are no long term financial impacts to the County.
- (c) Parts of the corridor may be incorporated into adjoining agricultural operations, provided that environmental issues related to the historic application of environmentally hazardous materials to the rail right-of-way are addressed satisfactorily.

5.7.3 Recreational developments must minimize associated municipal costs.

- (a) The proponent of a recreational activity shall identify all municipal costs associated with the development. The assignment of these costs shall be the basis for an agreement to be entered into as a condition of subdivision approval or the issuance of a development permit. Normally, however, all development servicing costs associated with the development will be carried by the proponent.
- (b) Subdivision and development proposals for recreational uses shall occur in accordance with the design principles outlined in **Policy 5.7.2(a) above**.
 - (i) In all instances, any financial involvement in recreational trails by the County will be considered by Council of the County on a project by project basis.

5.8 Goal: Promote Tourism

- 5.7.4 Protect and encourage trail development while also protecting adjacent land owners from potential negative impacts through the careful regulation of the recreational use of rights-of-way.
 - (a) Multi-lot residential developments will be required to provide pedestrian multi-modal trail networks to the satisfaction of the Subdivision Authority at time of subdivision.
 - (b) Where trails are provided as part of a multi-lot development, buffering measures within the trail right of way will also be provided to reduce noise, dust and the potential for trespassing on private property as a result of trail use.

5.8 Goal: Promote Tourism

Objectives

1. Support tourism initiatives and encourage the development of local hospitality operations, museums, churches, cultural centers, golf courses, and other special events including special event facilities.
2. Contribute to the diversification of local economies, increase local employment opportunities, and reduce economic leakage by adopting a “local first” approach to developing and promoting tourism in the County.

Policies

- 5.8.1 Support and promote cultural tourism initiatives within the County.
 - (a) Encourage the utilization and/or development of cultural, historic and recreational resources to promote tourism, where appropriate.
- 5.8.2 Support and promote existing tourism destinations within the County
 - (a) Endeavour to promote existing tourism destinations within the County and nearby recreational tourism opportunities.
- 5.8.3 Cooperate with regional partners to encourage local and regional tourism.
 - (a) Co-operate with area tourism groups, municipal neighbours, and tourism zones in promoting local tourism linkages with neighbouring communities.
 - (b) Encourage private sector developers to facilitate tourism development, and may assist in accessing government funding programs to develop new, or upgrade existing tourism attractions.
 - (c) Continue to collaborate with adjacent and neighbouring municipalities to fulfill the Municipal Government Act requirements for Intermunicipal Development Plans and Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks while proactively building collaborative relationships.
- 5.8.4 Support and encourage new tourism developments within the region.

5.9 Goal: Conserve Agricultural Land

- (a) Promote public awareness of significant historic and cultural sites in the region will be promoted as part of heritage tourism efforts.
- (b) Support tourism and recreation opportunities within the County and the region such as ecotourism, enhancements to existing trails, new trail development, historic and cultural areas, and parks and campgrounds that respect agricultural land uses and environmentally sensitive lands.

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

5.9 Goal: Conserve Agricultural Land

Agricultural and resource lands make up the working landscape of the County of Vermilion River and generate significant employment. These working landscapes within the County must be carefully and equitably managed in order to retain the integrity and value of these areas for the benefit of future generations while supporting economic growth within the agricultural community.

In order to encourage the future viability of a diverse range of agricultural operations within the County, the Municipal Development Plan includes objectives and policies to not only protect, where appropriate, but also enhance the agri-based economy and rural lifestyle.

Objectives

1. Preserve existing productive farmland for agricultural use from incompatible, non-farming-related uses and support the continuation of agricultural operations and agriculture support activities in the County.
2. Preservation and retention of the character of rural-agricultural areas central to the collective history, culture, and sense of place of the County's residents.

Policies

5.9.1 Ensure that working landscapes remain an integral and viable component of the regional economy and rural social structure.

- (a) The minimum parcel size for Extensive Agricultural Use, as defined in the County's Land Use Bylaw, shall normally be a quarter section or remainder no less than 32.3 hectares (80 acres), but this minimum size may be adjusted, at the discretion of the Decision Authority, in order to:
 - (i) allow a parcel to follow natural boundaries; or
 - (ii) allow for existing or proposed subdivisions for public or quasi-public uses; or
 - (iii) adjust proportionally where the original quarter section title was less than 64.7 hectares (160 acres).
- (b) Good quality agricultural lands shall be mostly conserved for working landscapes, including agriculture, forestry and resource extraction.

5.9 Goal: Conserve Agricultural Land

- (c) Rural industrial uses will be allowed in the manner provided for in the County's Land Use Bylaw.
- (d) Uses other than Agricultural Uses, may be considered on agricultural lands in accordance with the County's Land Use Bylaw.
- (e) The protection of good quality agricultural land and the location of existing agricultural operations will be considered when applications for Land Use Bylaw amendments or subdivision are being determined.
- (f) Explore the development of a Transfer Development Credits or similar scheme consistent with the provisions under the Alberta Land Stewardship Act.

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

5.9.2 Ensure good stewardship of the land through the provision of information and the use of beneficial management practices will be encouraged to minimize negative impacts of agricultural operations on the quality of the environment and adjacent land uses.

- (a) Provide information to the agricultural community regarding beneficial management practices (BMPs)¹ and other conservation practices that conserve or enhance the health of soil resources.
- (b) Input shall be provided to the Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB) in responding to application for new or expanded Confined Feeding Operations (CFOs) based on the technical and locational merits of each application. The County's policy is that all such confined feeding operations and manure storage facilities must fully satisfy all the requirements and regulations adopted under that Act, specifically the minimum distance separation requirements and the land base requirements.
- (c) Minimum distance separations for CFOs shall conform to standards set out in the Agricultural Operations Practices Act.
- (d) In addition to the minimum distance separation requirements provided through regulations adopted under the Agricultural Operation Practices Act, the County's policy is that confined feeding operations requiring registration or approval and manure storage facilities requiring authorization under that Act must be sustainable within 2.4 km (1.5 miles) of the corporate boundaries of any urban municipality within the County of Vermilion River or within 0.8 km (0.5 miles) of the Community Areas designated on Map 1, which areas shall be considered an urban fringe when calculating the regulations approved under the Agricultural Operation Practices Act.

Revised by
Bylaw 21-17

¹ Beneficial Management Practices (BMPs) are a practice, or system of practices, designed to minimize the impact of agricultural activities on natural resource while at the same time maintain economic viability of the agricultural industry. The Province of Alberta defines a BMP as "any management practice that reduces or eliminates an environmental risk."

5.10 Goal: Efficient Resource Extraction

- (e) CFO's will be discouraged from locating in environmentally sensitive areas where slope instability and or groundwater contamination may be of concern.
- (f) In addition, for the purposes of implementing the regulations adopted under the Agricultural Operation Practices Act, the policies of Area Structure Plans within the County of Vermilion River respecting confined feeding operations shall apply in addition to the Municipal Development Plan policies.

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

5.10 Goal: Efficient Resource Extraction

Sand, gravel, coal, oil and gas are important non-renewable resources in the County of Vermilion River. In order to benefit the County's and the region's economy, these resources must be protected and extracted efficiently, but not at the risk of irreparably damaging working or cultural landscapes within the County.

The County recognizes the significant benefits resource extraction provides locally and regionally. Resource extraction activities can result in increased noise, traffic, dust, and other nuisance issues. Certain developments may not be suitable in proximity to resource extraction uses. For the life of this Plan, the County wishes to prioritize resource extraction, and may limit certain other developments or land uses which may be incompatible.

The following objectives and policies have been adopted by the County relating resource extraction in the County.

Objectives

1. Encourage the utilization of extractive resources in areas of least detrimental impact and to reclaim the land for other productive uses when extraction activities cease.
2. Protect and sustainably manage the County's natural resources.

Policies

5.10.1 Resource extraction industries may be encouraged, where appropriate.

- (a) The developer of a resource extraction industry or activity shall be required at the time of application for a development permit, to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the County, that any necessary provincial permits and approvals pertinent to the development have been obtained.
- (b) Any resource extraction industry that requires a development permit, unless exempted by provincial legislation, shall enter into and abide by a development agreement with the County, to deal, among other matters, with road use and maintenance.
- (c) Development permits for sand, gravel, clay or marl extraction shall not be issued until any necessary approvals are obtained in accordance with Provincial legislation.

5.11 Goal: Adequate Land Dedications

- (d) Development permits for gravel extraction should be issued on the basis of whether the proposed use will fully and efficiently utilize the capability of the deposit. Deposits suitable for construction aggregates should be reserved for that use.
- 5.10.2 Ensure that land disturbed by resource extraction activity is reclaimed to an acceptable standard.
 - (iv)
- 5.10.3 Resource extraction development must minimize associated municipal costs.
- 5.10.4 Resource extraction and resource processing developments should generate a low net negative impact on working landscapes and cultural landscapes.
 - (a) Developers may be required to obtain a Historical Resources Impact Assessment (HRIA) for proposals within areas designated as Historic Resource Value.
 - (b) If an HRIA is required and the HRIA identifies the presence of heritage resources then the developer will be required to take appropriate mitigating measures, to the satisfaction of the appropriate provincial agency, prior to development approval.
- 5.10.5 Resource extraction developments and uses must manage and mitigate conflicts with incompatible or sensitive land uses.
 - (a) Areas that may have high potential for resource extraction development, specifically areas of sand, gravel, and aggregate deposits will be identified.
 - (b) Development on land which has a high potential for resource extraction development, where the development would prevent subsequent extraction until the deposit has been removed and the land has been reclaimed, shall be discouraged.
 - (c) Haul routes for resource extraction developments shall be encouraged to be located in such a way as to minimize the impact on agricultural uses and existing residential developments.

5.11 Goal: Adequate Land Dedications

Objectives

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

5.11 Goal: Adequate Land Dedications

1. Ensure full provision of reserve lands at time of subdivision to serve different purposes, including the provision of public amenities and services, protection of land with development constraints, and the preservation of environmentally significant features.
2. Ensure that development does not occur on hazard lands; significant environmental areas are protected; and the public can access Significant Cultural Landscapes.

Policies

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

5.11.1 Generally the full amount of Reserves owing of environmental, municipal and school reserve dedication shall be taken during the subdivision process, in accordance with the Municipal Government Act (MGA) and County Policy..

(a)

(b) Where it is deemed that Municipal Reserve land is not necessary for the residents of the area, money-in-lieu shall be taken. The money-in-lieu shall be shared with school authorities in accordance with any agreements which may exist between the County and the school authorities, and the rest shall be utilized to acquire and develop tracts of desirable recreation areas in the County.

(c) Subdivision and development applications adjacent to water bodies and watercourses may be required to prepare an engineering and/or geotechnical study to determine an adequate setback based on soil conditions and slope stability.

(d) Municipal Reserves

(i) Municipal Reserve parcels in the County shall be:

1. concentrated in a few large parcels on suitable sites rather than scattered through subdivisions; and
2. evaluated and inventoried with the aim of making more efficient use of the Reserves through consolidation and/or sales.

(ii) Prior to disposing of any Municipal Reserve, Council shall review the applicability and effect of such disposition on surrounding land uses and the area's recreational potential.

(iii) Municipal Reserves may be required as an open space buffer of sufficient size and composition to act as a noise and visual barrier where required between disparate land uses.

(e) Environmental Reserves and Setbacks

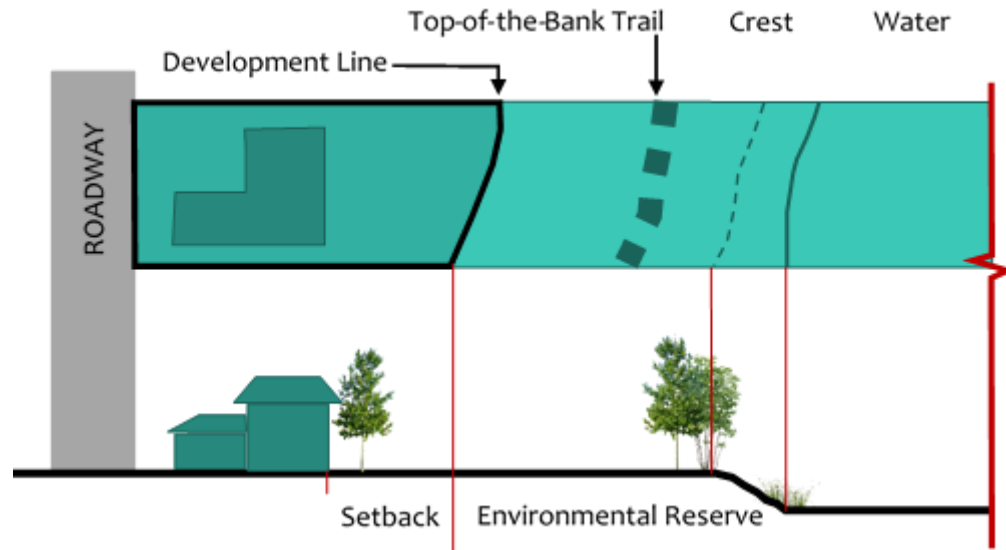
(i) An environmental reserve shall be required adjacent to water bodies and/or lakes and rivers as a condition of subdivision approval, consistent with the provisions of the County Land Use Bylaw and provincial regulations. As a condition of development

5.11 Goal: Adequate Land Dedications

approval where there is no subdivision, a comparable setback shall be required from waterbodies and/or lakes and rivers to the wall of the nearest building. (See **Figure 6**)

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

Figure 6. Recommended Environmental Reserve Setback.



- (ii) Additional Reserve and/or setback may be required by the decision Authority based on the recommendations of any engineering and/or geotechnical study requested by the County. In these cases, the amount of reserves required will be determined using the guidelines for Environmental Reserve width developed by the province.
- (iii) Where Environmental Reserve Lands are not necessary to provide public access to the feature, the Subdivision Authority shall, at the time of subdivision, consider the option of an Environmental Reserve Easement as provided for in the Municipal Government Act.
- (f) School Reserves
 - (i) School Reserves shall be provided at the time of subdivision in accordance with agreements between the County and the relevant School Divisions.
- (g) Conservation Reserves and Easements
 - (i) Subdivision and Development proposals may be required to designate Conservation Areas, consistent with the provisions of the County's Land Use Bylaw and provincial legislation.
 - (ii) At the discretion of the Subdivision Authority, the use of Conservation Easements may be considered as an alternative to traditional environmental reserve during the subdivision process. The use and control of these features and areas shall be clearly stated in the

5.11 Goal: Adequate Land Dedications

easement agreement. Conservation easements are provided for under the Alberta Land Stewardship Act and the Land Stewardship Act.

- (iii) A Conservation Easement may be considered to preserve significant natural features and areas that do not qualify as Environmental Reserve under the Municipal Government Act. The use and control of these features and areas shall be clearly stated in the easement agreement.

5.11.2 Conserve and protect significant cultural landscapes and environmentally sensitive ecological features within the County for future generations.

- (a) Spatial buffers or setbacks shall be maintained between uses that may be incompatible for any reason.
- (b) Subdivision and Development within a designated sensitive or preservation area shall be consistent with the provisions within the County's Land Use Bylaw.

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PART 6.0

RESPONSIBLE GOVERNANCE

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6.1 Goal: Operational Excellence

6.0 RESPONSIBLE GOVERNANCE

The County of Vermilion River is a high-performing local government organization. We know what the community expects, we deliver services as defined, and we deliver outstanding customer satisfaction.

6.1 Goal: Operational Excellence

Objectives

1. Ensure that the County operates in a fiscally sound manner now and into the future.
2. Ensure availability of necessary resources to deliver outstanding customer satisfaction.

Policies

- 6.1.1 Ensure that the County operates in a fiscally sound manner by promoting positive change, transparency, and a best-practices, collaborative approach that allows the County to be accountable to its residents.
- (a) Council will implement strategic decision making through clear land-use planning directives that enable growth that supports the future needs and vision of the County.
 - (b) Council will ensure the necessary resources and timeframes are in place to undertake land-use planning projects in a responsible, thorough and transparent manner.
 - (c) County Council should identify and apply a Land Use Assessment Ratio that facilitates service delivery, promotes investment, ensures competitive advantage, and meets the County's long-term financial expectations.

6.2 Goal: Environmental Leadership

Objectives

1. Establish standards and processes for developers to respect and develop in accordance with land suitability and carrying capacity, preserve, and protect environmental resources and quality, preserve unique natural features, and analyze and mitigate cumulative impacts of development.
2. Ensure that development occurs in ways that minimize degradation of natural and cultural environments through establishment of land use, subdivision, and development standards.

Policies

- 6.2.1 Encourage climate change adaptation strategies to reduce community vulnerability and minimize adverse effects on the environment, economy, and public health.

6.3 Goal: Regional Partnerships

- (a) Diversification of the energy supply for County residents and businesses through the use of Alternative Energy Systems, in accordance with the provisions under the County's Land Use Bylaw and federal and provincial regulations shall be supported.
 - (b) Develop and adopt Climate Adaptation Policies for water & energy resources, ecosystems, and agriculture.
- 6.2.2 Ensure Subdivision and Development incorporates climate mitigation and adaptation strategies and best practices to reduce impacts from development.
- (a) Subdivision and Development proposals shall be consistent with provincial and regional climate adaptation plans, policies, and regulations.
- 6.2.3 Address cumulative effects of Development within the County taking into consideration environmental, social, cultural, and economic factors consistent with the provisions of provincial legislation or a regional plan.
- (a) Subdivision and Development proposals may be required to comply with the environmental objectives outlined within provincial legislation or a regional plan.

6.3 Goal: Regional Partnerships

Objectives

1. Maintain and initiate partnerships with provincial, regional, and intermunicipal partners to collaborate in developing innovative approaches to leverage resources, share innovative ideas, expand service choices, and lower costs that support an improved quality for communities in the region.
2. Promote collaborative approaches in the provision of services and cost and revenue sharing with surrounding municipalities, where possible, to take advantage of economies of scale or scope and reduce per-unit service delivery costs.

Policies

- 6.3.1 Engage in cooperative and collaborative communication with municipal, regional and provincial partners.
- (a) Include and involve neighbouring municipalities within the County's planning processes. To that end the County:
 - (i) will actively consult with any adjacent or nearby municipality during the consideration of amendments to this Plan, amendments to the Land Use Bylaw.
 - (ii) shall request comments from the adjacent municipality and shall give due consideration to such comments when evaluating a proposal for subdivision, or when, in the opinion of the County, a significantly discretionary development proposal for lands within

6.4 Goal: Collaborative Annexation

3.2 km (2 mi) of an adjacent municipality, in accordance with the provisions of the County's Land Use Bylaw.

1. The approving authority will give careful consideration to any matters raised during this consultation; however, the County will not be bound by the recommendations of the adjacent municipality, unless the County has agreed to do so as part of an approved Inter-Municipal Development Plan.
- (b) Collaborate with the urban municipalities within the County in the development and adoption of Intermunicipal Development Plans and Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks.
- (c) Partnerships between local businesses to support the sharing of information, infrastructure, logistics and by-products shall be encouraged.
- (d) Appropriately located and sized home-based businesses, as they are a vital economic contributor and provide residents with a variety of lifestyle opportunities shall be generally supported.
- (e) Collaboration with regional partners to identify opportunities to attract, expand or improve economic activity that supports the growth and expansion of value-added agriculture, manufacturing, advanced energy, transportation and logistics, where the associated development is strategically located, and emerging sectors should be pursued.

6.4 Goal: Collaborative Annexations

Objectives

1. Encourage collaborative annexation processes supported by a Joint Growth Study that has been accepted by all parties to an annexation request.
2. Support annexation processes in accordance with the Municipal Government Board Annexation Principles.

Policies

- 6.4.1 Annexation negotiation processes that are undertaken in a positive, orderly, timely, and agreed upon manner, once a municipality has established a clear and present need through a Joint Growth Study shall be generally supported.
- 6.4.2 A Joint Growth Study shall be developed prior to entering an annexation negotiation process with adjacent municipalities.
- 6.4.3 Only those annexation proposals that they feel are required and justified shall be supported by Council.
 - (a) In determining the timing, size, and location of an annexation area, the outcomes identified through a Joint Growth Study will be considered.

6.5 Goal: Interwoven Equity

6.4.4 A Joint Growth Study will serve to inform the annexation negotiation process regarding the following:

- (a) Justifiable and mutually agreeable current and future growth rates. Growth rates are defined at the rate at which land is consumed for residential, commercial, and industrial purposes normally expressed in acres per year over a 30-year horizon.
- (b) Availability and cost of servicing. The physical and economic feasibility of extending services to specific areas within the County in a logical, reasonable, and cost effective manner.
- (c) Adequacy of transportation systems to accommodate new development. Proposed annexation areas should be either serviced with road network or be able to be serviced with a logical extension of existing road networks.
- (d) Landownership patterns. Proposed annexations should follow legal boundaries or natural features where possible to avoid creating a fragmented pattern of landownership.
- (e) Local support. Proposed annexations should, as much as possible, have the concurrence of the landowners involved.
- (f) Consistent with local plans. Proposed annexations should be consistent with the policies of this IDP, the respective Municipal Development Plans, and any area structure plan or other study. Planning for annexations should consider a 30-year horizon for land needs.
- (g) Logical extension. Proposed annexations should be a logical extension of infrastructure networks and development patterns and may include developed areas.
- (h) Agricultural mill rates. Proposed annexations should not dramatically alter the taxes collected from agricultural lands within the annexation area simply because of annexation. The two municipalities may look at harmonizing their agricultural mill rates.
- (i) Any other matter that both municipal Councils consider necessary.

6.5 Goal: Interwoven Equity

Objectives

1. Retain and support diverse, local businesses, establishments, and industries and work with the region's business associations and economic development agencies to identify strategies to attract desired businesses and industries.
2. Ensure opportunities exist to protect and promote the development of affordable housing that meets the needs of the region's current and likely future work force.

Policies

6.5 Goal: Interwoven Equity

- 6.5.1 Plan for jobs/housing balance that provides a roughly equal number of jobs and housing units (households) within the County's commuter areas to improve access to employment opportunities for County residents.
 - (a) The County will develop and adopt an Inclusionary Growth Strategy for the County.
 - (b) The County should remove barriers in regulations to support innovative, sustainable, and responsible development practices.
 - (c) The County will ensure affordability by facilitating the production of housing at all price points.
 - (d) The County will promote diversity by providing for the development of a wide variety of housing types and formats.
 - (e) The County will ensure equity in the balance of market and affordable units in Plans and proposals.
- 6.5.2 Promote environmental justice meaning the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, in the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.
 - (a) The County will provide all communities and persons across the County with the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards and equal access to decision making processes.
 - (b) The County will ensure healthy environments for all in which to live, learn, play, and work.
- 6.5.3 Promote workforce diversity through the employment of a wide variety of people in terms of age, cultural background, physical ability, race and ethnicity, religion, and gender identity as an economic development strategy.
 - (a) The County shall plan for workforce diversity and development through the development and adoption of a Workforce Diversity Strategy that focuses on people rather than businesses; it attempts to enhance a region's economic stability and prosperity by providing opportunities for job creation that match existing skills within the local workforce or for training workers to meet the labor needs of local industries.
- 6.5.4 Provide accessible and quality public services, infrastructure, and facilities in all communities within the County.
 - (a) The County will support an acceptable standard for infrastructure and facilities as necessary to maintain existing service levels.
 - (b) The County will identify capital improvement needs in community infrastructure and facilities in an effort to determine, prioritize and fund infrastructure upgrades and/or repair/replace obsolete or worn out facilities or infrastructure as required to obtain the strategic goals of the County's Strategic Plan and the Municipal Development Plan.

6.6 Goal: Accountability, Transparency

- (c) The County will pursue coordinated investments through the development of a ten-year Capital Improvements Plan that is meant to guide a five-year Capital Improvements Program and annual budgeting processes for the County, which shall connect the capital improvement needs identified to forecasted revenues for the next ten years.
- (i) The County should identify and prioritize municipal servicing investment based on the findings of infrastructure Life Cycle Costing.
- (d) The County should investigate and implement private/public funding mechanisms for significant public infrastructure investment.
- (a) The County will connect Plan implementation activities to the annual budgeting process.

6.6 Goal: Accountability, Transparency and Public Engagement

Objectives

1. Ensure transparency on how services are delivered and how assets are managed.
2. Engage the private sector, businesses and community organizations in a meaningful way as key regional partners with an intent to collaborate and enable successful regional growth and economic development.

Policies

- 6.6.1 The County is accountable to residents, businesses, stakeholders and visitors, and will conduct all matters related to County business in a transparent manner.
 - (b) The County will regularly evaluate and report on Plan implementation progress.
 - (c) The County will ensure adequate funding from both public and private sources for Plan implementation activities.
 - (d) The County may adjust the plan as necessary based on evaluation.
 - (e) The County should provide for improved levels of organizational communication and coordination through inter-departmental collaboration mechanisms.
- 6.6.2 The County will support the solicitation, consideration, and utilization of public input and suggestions when making public decisions.
 - (a) The County will ensure public engagement meets County Policy.
 - (b) The County will continue to provide public engagement opportunities after the Municipal Development Plan and associated Plans are adopted.
 - (c) The County will use a variety of communications channels to inform and involve the community.

6.6 Goal: Accountability, Transpar

(d) The County will improve access to information for all stakeholders.

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PART 7.0

DEFINITIONS

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7.0 DEFINITIONS

7.1 Interpretation

7.1.1 The following words, terms, and phrases, wherever they occur in this Plan have the meaning assigned to them as follows:

AGRICULTURAL LAND: Means Higher Capability Agricultural Land, as defined in the County's Land Use Bylaw.

AGRICULTURAL LOT OR PARCEL: Means an existing Lot or Parcel that is 16.0 ha (40 ac) or larger in size.

AGRICULTURAL OPERATIONS: Means an Agricultural Operation, as defined in the County's Land Use Bylaw.

AREA STRUCTURE PLAN: Means an Area Structure Plan, as defined in the County's Land Use Bylaw.

COMPLETE COMMUNITY: Means a community that is planned and developed to use less land and reduce the separation of land uses in order to achieve a variety of values including open space protection, community vitality, affordable housing, air quality, transit use, and more walkable places. Complete communities provide housing types and uses in compact form suitable for all ages and income levels, provides non-residential development in proximity that results in easy access to jobs, local amenities, services, community facilities, and access to multi-modal trail and mobility networks.

COMPLETE STREETS: Means a transportation policy and design approach that requires streets to be planned, designed, operated, and maintained to enable safe, convenient and comfortable travel and access for users of all ages and abilities regardless of their mode of transportation.

CONFINED FEEDING OPERATION means a Confined Feeding Operation, as defined in the County's Land Use Bylaw.

CONSERVATION AREA means a Conservation Area as defined in the County's Land Use Bylaw.

CONSERVATION EASEMENT: Means an agreement registered against title whereby a landowner grants to the County (or other government, government agency, or non-profit society with conservation objectives satisfactory to the County) provisions for the protection, conservation and enhancement of the environment including the protection, conservation and enhancement of biological diversity, and natural scenic or aesthetic values, as provided for in the Section 22 of the Environmental Enhancement and Protection Act. A conservation agreement may provide for recreational use; open space use, environmental education use, and research and scientific studies of natural ecosystems.

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

CONTEXT SENSITIVE DESIGN (CSD) also called Context Sensitive Solutions, means roadway standards and development practices that are flexible and sensitive to community values. CSD allows roadway design decisions to better balance economic, social and environmental objectives that support the Municipal Development Plan goals.

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

ECO-LOGICAL means an ecosystem approach to developing infrastructure projects. The Eco-Logical approach organizes current methods for addressing natural resource identification, avoidance, minimization, and mitigation into a systematic, step-wise process that starts at the beginning of the transportation planning process and concludes with establishing programmatic approaches to recurring natural resource issues that are implemented at the project level.

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

ECOSYSTEM APPROACH means, according to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), "the ecosystem approach is a strategy for the integrated management of land, water, and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way" and which aspires to maintain the natural structure and functioning of ecosystems. The concept of an 'ecosystem-based approach' builds on the ecosystem approach. Ecosystem-based approaches address the crucial links between climate change, biodiversity, and sustainable resource management and thus provide multiple benefits. For example, the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions as well as improve biodiversity conservation, livelihood opportunities, and health and recreational benefits.

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

ECOSYSTEM-BASED MITIGATION means the process of restoring, creating, enhancing, and preserving habitat and other ecosystem features in conjunction with or in advance of projects in areas where environmental needs and the potential environmental contributions have been determined to be greatest.

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

FLOOD FRINGE means a Flood Fringe as defined provincially by Flood Hazard Mapping for Alberta Communities.

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

FLOOD HAZARD AREAS means a Flood Hazard Area as defined provincially by Flood Hazard Mapping for Alberta Communities.

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

FLOODWAY means a Floodway as defined provincially by Flood Hazard Mapping for Alberta Communities.

Amended by
Bylaw 19-20

HIGHER CAPABILITY AGRICULTURAL LANDS means a Higher Capability Agricultural Lands, as defined in the County's Land Use Bylaw

OVERSIZED FARMSTEAD: Means a farmstead larger than 2.02 ha (5.0 ac.), up to a maximum of 6.06 ha (15.0 ac.). Where the additional area is required to include the farm yard up to a maximum of 6.06 ha (15.0 ac.). The farm yard shall normally include a house, garage, access, power pole, well, sub-surface sewage disposal system, and established shelter belts. The farm yard may also include barns, sheds, substantial fences and corrals, dugouts if required by the dwelling to provide non-drinking water, and other similar farm buildings and facilities ancillary to the farmstead. In such cases, a Real Property Report or Building Site Certificate prepared by an Alberta Land Surveyor, will be required to verify the locations of all improvements, site features, and proposed boundaries.

7.2 Other Definitions

7.2.1 Definitions not provided

- (a) Other definitions shall have the meaning provided within the County's Land Use Bylaw., shall Use their discretion in instances where specific definitions are not provided:

7.2.2 Discretionary provisions

- (a) In reference to **Section 7.2(a) above**, the relevant Decision Authority, as identified in **Section 1.11** of the County's Land Use Bylaw, use their discretion when implementing the policies in this MDP to ensure the outcome is consistent with the intent and purpose of this Plan.

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PART 8.0

MAPS

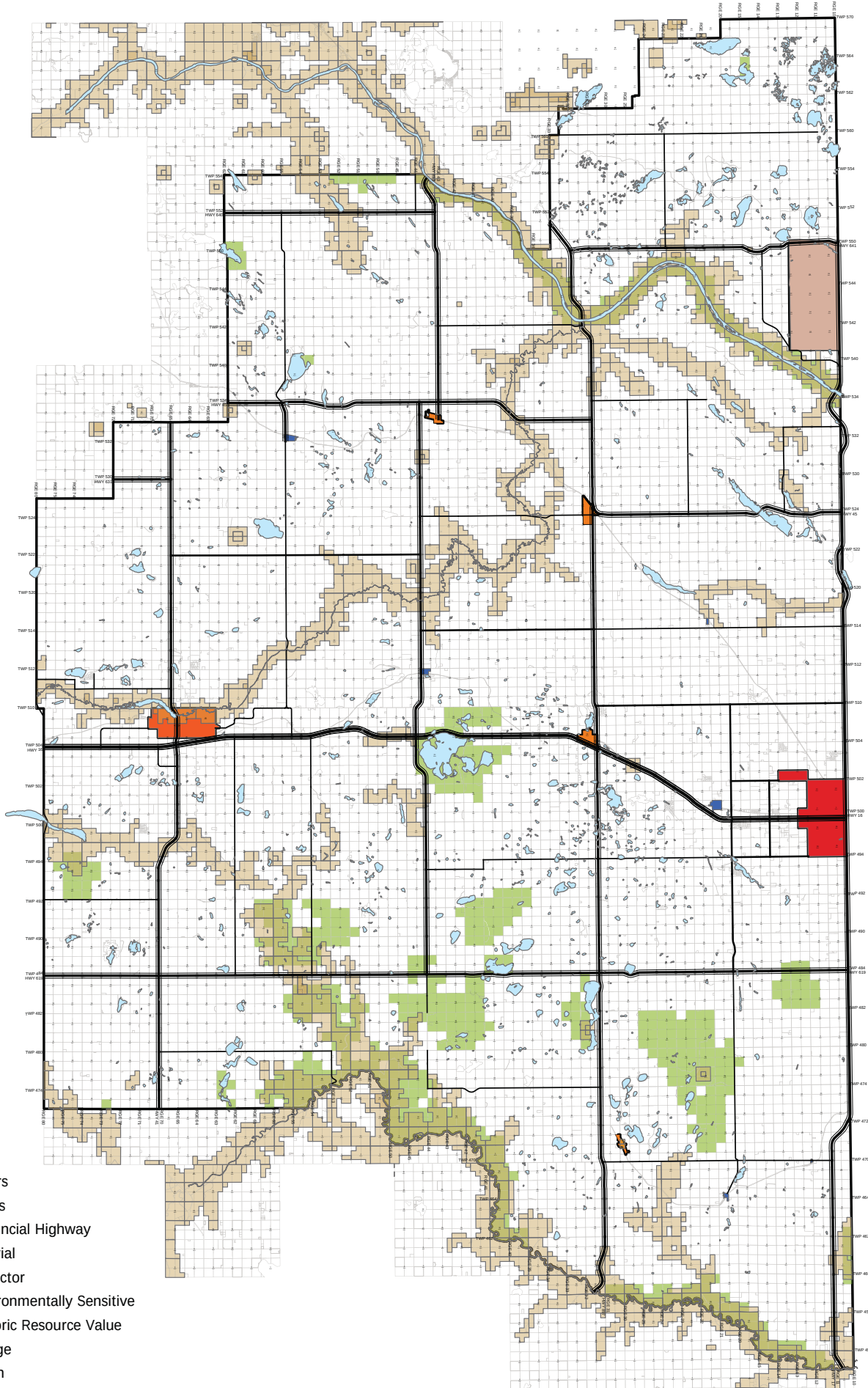
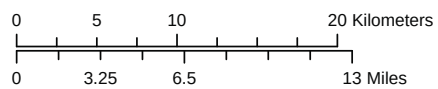
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8.0 MAPS

8.1 Map 1 – Planning Area

8.2 Map 2 – Future Land Use

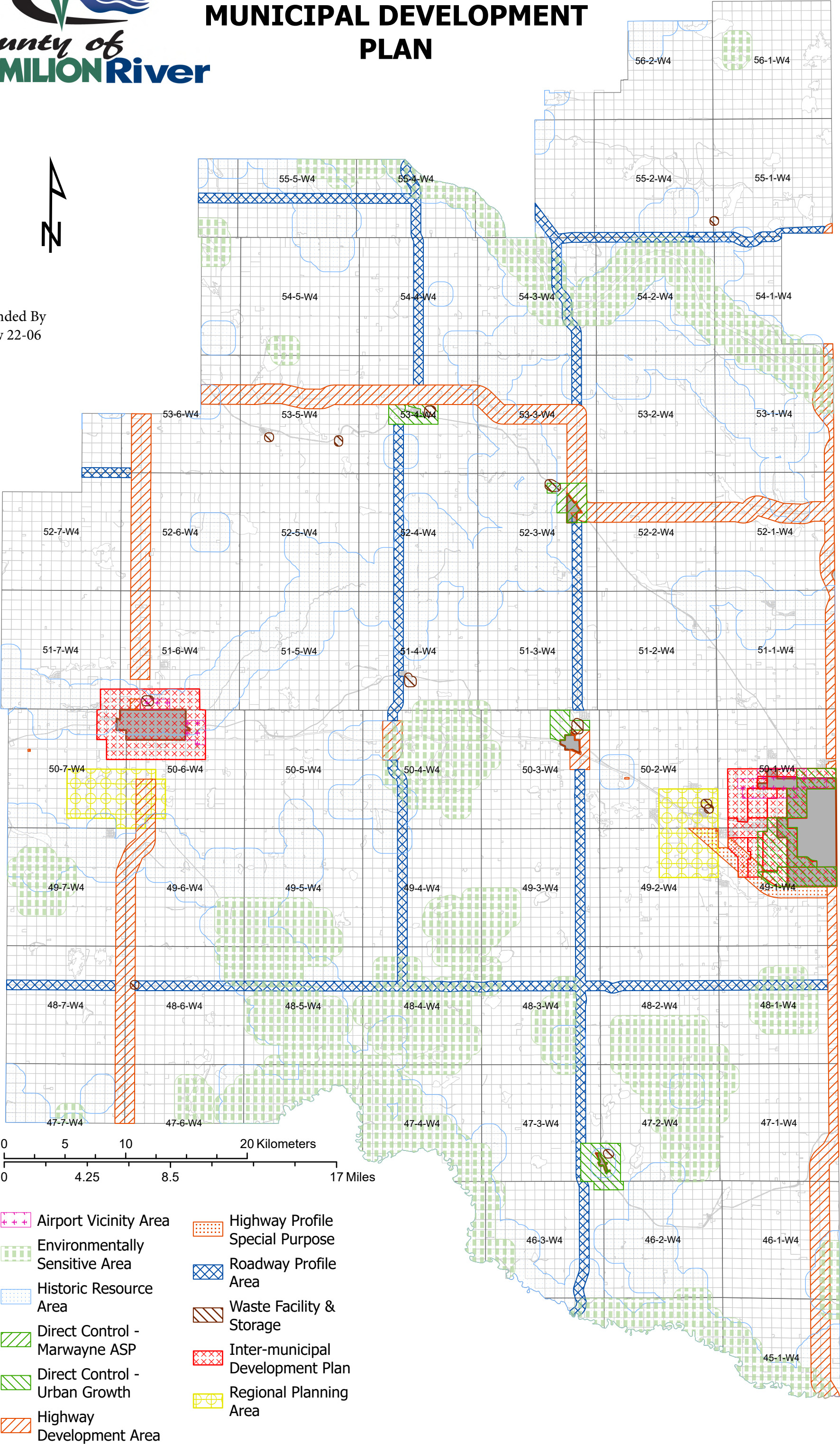
-  Rivers
-  Lakes
-  Provincial Highway
-  Arterial
-  Collector
-  Environmentally Sensitive
-  Historic Resource Value
-  Village
-  Town
-  City
-  Hamlet
-  Countyboundary
-  Parcels
-  Onion Lake First Nation



MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN



Amended By
Bylaw 22-06



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BACKGROUND
INFORMATION AND DATA
MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN



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County of Vermilion River

A Vision for the Future

A Sustainable, Vibrant, and Diversified Community with Opportunities for All

Sustainable. Balance short- and long-term needs and benefits in order to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs as well.

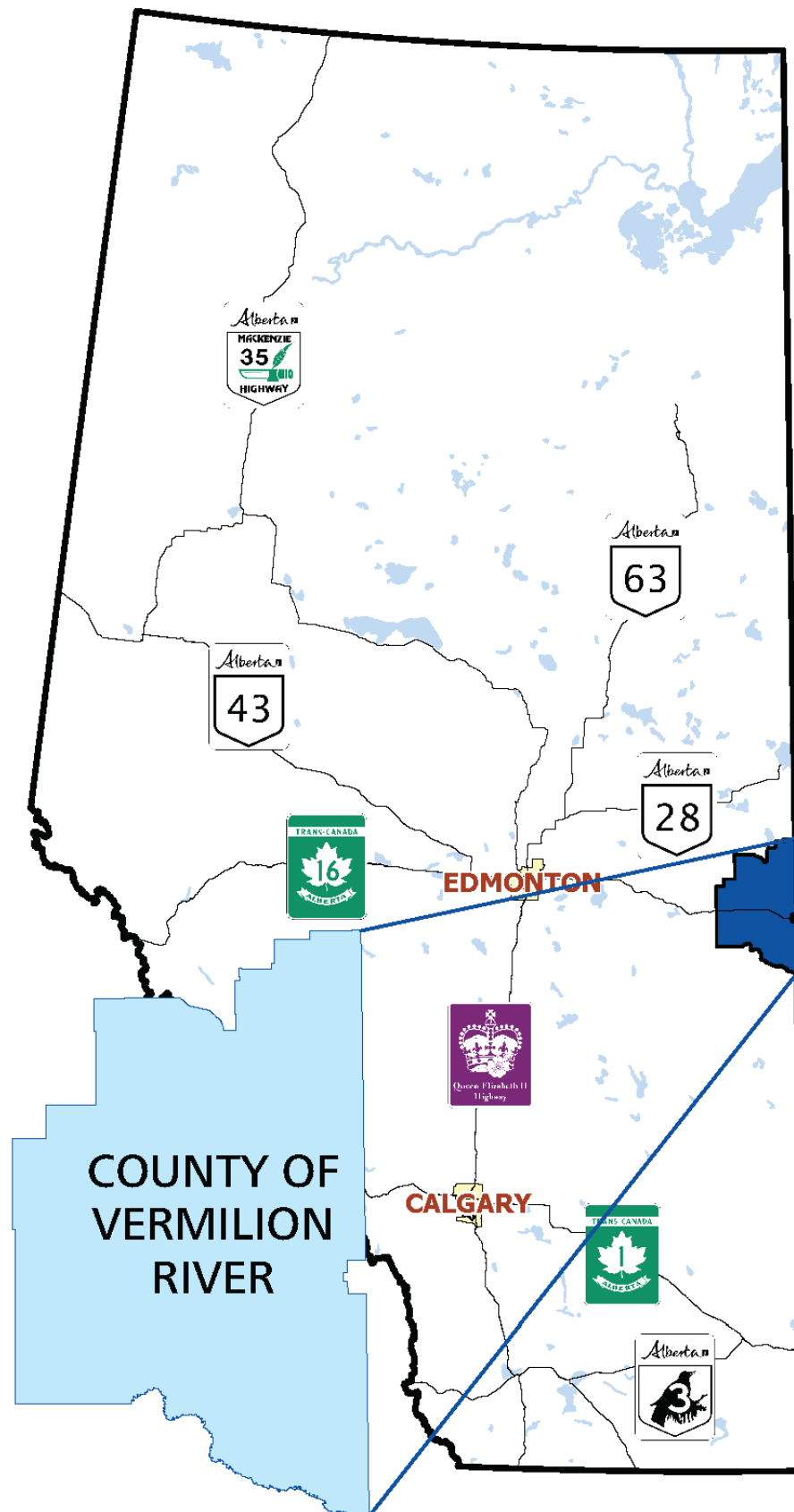
Vibrant. Engaging, creative collaboration between all stakeholders: municipality, community, and businesses.

Diverse. Open to explore new and emerging opportunities and facilitating economic growth and social integration.

Opportunities for all. A place to call home that supports a four-pillar-bottom-line approach to community sustainability:

1. **Socially**, through design guidelines for public spaces and streets that encourage neighbour interactions and serve as catalyst to support a complete community that allows residents the choice to live, work, shop, and recreate in proximity;
2. **Environmentally**, by incorporating planning and development strategies, and forms that contribute to reduce impacts and preserve agricultural lands; apply Low-Impact Development tools that respect natural drainage patterns and wetlands; and enhancement and integration of natural spaces and systems that preserve habitats, corridors, and productive landscapes;
3. **Economically**, through the responsible use of land and leverage of services infrastructure; the concentration of services and roadways for efficient and cost-effective service delivery and management, by providing a robust and dynamic land-use base that can adapt over time to accommodate diverse industry production and employment generating opportunities; and
4. **Culturally**, by strengthening our identity and sense of place, incorporating cultural dynamics (values and aspirations) into the built environment through context sensitive design principles, and participatory processes that promote our communities' well-being by enhancing quality of life and quality of place.

Map 1. Municipal Context



PART 1.0
INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Legislative Requirements

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The County of Vermilion River is an expansive rural municipality located in east-central Alberta. With traditional agricultural roots, significant natural resource wealth and growing urban neighbours, the County of Vermilion River's future is marked by both promise and challenges.

As with previous Plans, this Municipal Development Plan (MDP) seeks to find a balance between sustainable agricultural practices, resource development, urban growth pressures and ecosystem health.

Agriculture has been the primary economic driver for the County for the past century. The County of Vermilion River continues to foresee agriculture and agricultural services as a major economic force throughout the municipality. Conserving agricultural land and implementing measures to strengthen and diversify agricultural activities remains a priority in this Plan.

Resource development, primarily oil and gas extraction, plays an increasingly significant role in the development and economic success of the County and its residents. Oil and gas development, both within the County and regionally, contribute to improved living standards and service provision in the community. The County of Vermilion River recognizes the importance of resource development to the economic wellbeing of the community, as well as the need to minimize conflicts between oil and gas development and other land uses.

Urban growth in neighbouring centres, especially the City of Lloydminster and the Town of Vermilion, has a significant impact on development levels and demands on land, infrastructure and services within the County. Likewise, development in the County affects its urban neighbours. The County recognizes the importance of inter-municipal cooperation in mitigating potential conflicts between urban and rural development. This Plan seeks to find a balance between preserving the rural character of the County, while still allowing certain urban-style developments where suitable.

The County of Vermilion recognizes the importance of its natural capital. Natural capital means:

“ looking at the County's economy as including: land, natural resources and ecosystem services such as: water recharge areas, ground water and surface water systems, rather than the narrower definition of “economy” as referring exclusively to man-made capital (goods and services).”

The County's Natural Capital is an asset to be maintained and enhanced for future generations because it supports important economic, ecological and social activities. The county recognizes that sustaining natural capital is a precondition for economic prosperity. Well-managed landscapes link economic prosperity to environmental protection for the long-term benefits of clean water, air, aesthetically pleasing landscapes and ecologically sound habitats. Development decision must preserve the County's natural capital and the ability of future generations to enjoy at least the same level of prosperity as today.

1.1 Legislative Requirements

In the face of continued growth, this Plan broadly seeks to maintain the rural character of the County of Vermilion River, enable sustainable economic diversification, and encourage vibrant and resilient communities and to preserve the County's natural capital for future generations.

1.1 Legislative Requirements

The Alberta Municipal Government Act (MGA) gives extensive governing powers to municipalities in relation to land management and land development. The MGA requires municipalities to adopt a Municipal Development Plan (MDP) in order to outline a broad set of goals, objectives and policies which will guide land use management practices within the County for years to come. The province also regulates land use and land management through the Provincial Land Use Policies and the Subdivision and Development Regulation. Additionally, the Land Stewardship Act and the Land Use Framework are provincial statutes and policy documents which direct the province to develop regional plans for each of the province's seven watersheds in order to guide future land use and development. When the North Saskatchewan Regional Plan (NSRP) is finalized and approved by the province it will apply to the County, at this time the NSRP is being developed. The County of Vermilion River MDP supports and is consistent with all applicable provincially legislated requirements.

The main focus of the MDP is to assist Council and the County's approving authorities in achieving and maintaining orderly and efficient land use and development. The MDP takes into account both the past and present human and physical environments. Considering where the community has been, where it is currently and where it wants to go enables the County to set in place a "plan" for how to reach its desired destination. Plan goals, objectives and policies are based on baseline environmental data, available municipal infrastructure information, stakeholder interests and the socio-perceptual concerns identified by the community, administration and Council throughout the Plan review process. This multi-faceted and strategic approach to developing the MDP will help to ensure that the vision enshrined in the Plan represents the needs and objectives of current County residents and stakeholders.

The County of Vermilion River recognizes that other provincial and federal statutes will have a role to play in the future development of the County. In a spirit of cooperation, consultation and communication, the County looks forward to working with government agencies and community stakeholders in the implementation of this plan in order to achieve a pattern of land use and development that is attractive, efficient, sustainable and beneficial to County residents and the larger region.

1.2 MDP Review Process

1.2.1 Plan Development Process

The process for developing of the Municipal Development Plan (MDP) consisted of five phases prior to entering the bylaw approval process by the County.

1.3 Guide to the Plan

This update will replace the existing MDP, which was amended in 2017. The updated MDP will assist the County in planning for the needs of today and the future.

Community wide consultation took place during the summer of 2018 with two open house meetings and in person and online surveys provided to residents and stakeholders.

Figure 1 Open Houses



This Open Houses presented an opportunity for residents and stakeholders to provide comments on the current plan and focus areas required by the province for the updated plan.

The following outlines the process and phasing of the review process throughout 2018.

Figure 2 Process Timeline



1.3 Guide to the Plan

The Municipal Development Plan (MDP) provides long-term strategic guidance on where and what type of development is expected to occur within the County.

The objectives, and policies that comprise the Plan serve as a comprehensive framework both expresses and regulates public policies on community goals and aspirations in terms of community development for the County as a whole. The guiding principles, which serve as pillars for the sustainable development of the County's land base, are the basis for the Plan policy areas.

1.3.1 How the Plan works

Effective land use decisions that support sustainable growth require plans and the planning process to operate at different geographic levels: Provincial, Regional, Intermunicipal, and Municipal. (See Figure 3)

1.3 Guide to the Plan

At the Provincial level the Municipal Government Act (MGA) is the law that empowers Alberta municipalities to make the land use decisions that shape their communities. This document also requires that all municipalities in Alberta have statutory plans to regulate land use and development. In addition, the MGA establishes that statutory plans must be in alignment with the Alberta Land Stewardship Act (ALSA), including its Land Use Framework and Regional Plans, and be consistent with each other.

Regional Plans outline regional growth management strategies as established in the ALSA. The Province of Alberta is pursuing the development of a series of regional plans as part of the Provincial Land Use Strategy. The County of Vermilion River is within the North Saskatchewan Regional Plan currently under way. The County of Vermilion River Regional Growth Management Strategy provides recommendations and strategy options for sustainable growth and development within the County.

The County of Vermilion River has a Planning Framework (see whose policies and regulations that guide development within its boundary, including Intermunicipal Development Plans and Intermunicipal collaboration Frameworks with adjacent municipalities that affect some lands within the County, The Land Use Bylaw, the General Municipal Servicing Standards, a Functional Storm Water Drainage Plan for several basins, a Master Storm Water Management Plan, and a Transportation Master Plan. The aforementioned documents, plans, and policies are available at the Planning & Development section of the County's website www.vermilion-river.com.

For the purposes of land use planning and development, the provisions of the MDP are implemented through the County's Planning Framework at different levels, among other ways, through the County of Vermilion River Land Use Bylaw. All Plans within the County must be consistent with each other and the provincial levels of regulation. This includes any changes to the Land Use Bylaw, which regulates land use and development throughout the County, must also be consistent with the MDP.

Figure 3 Hierarchy of Planning Documents

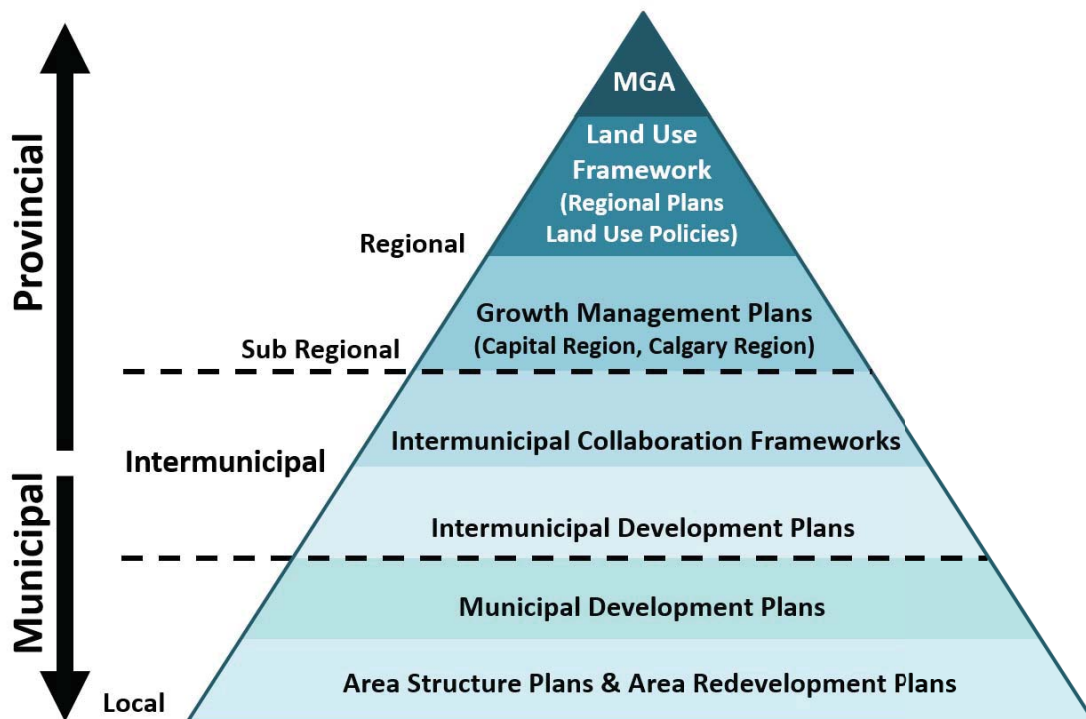
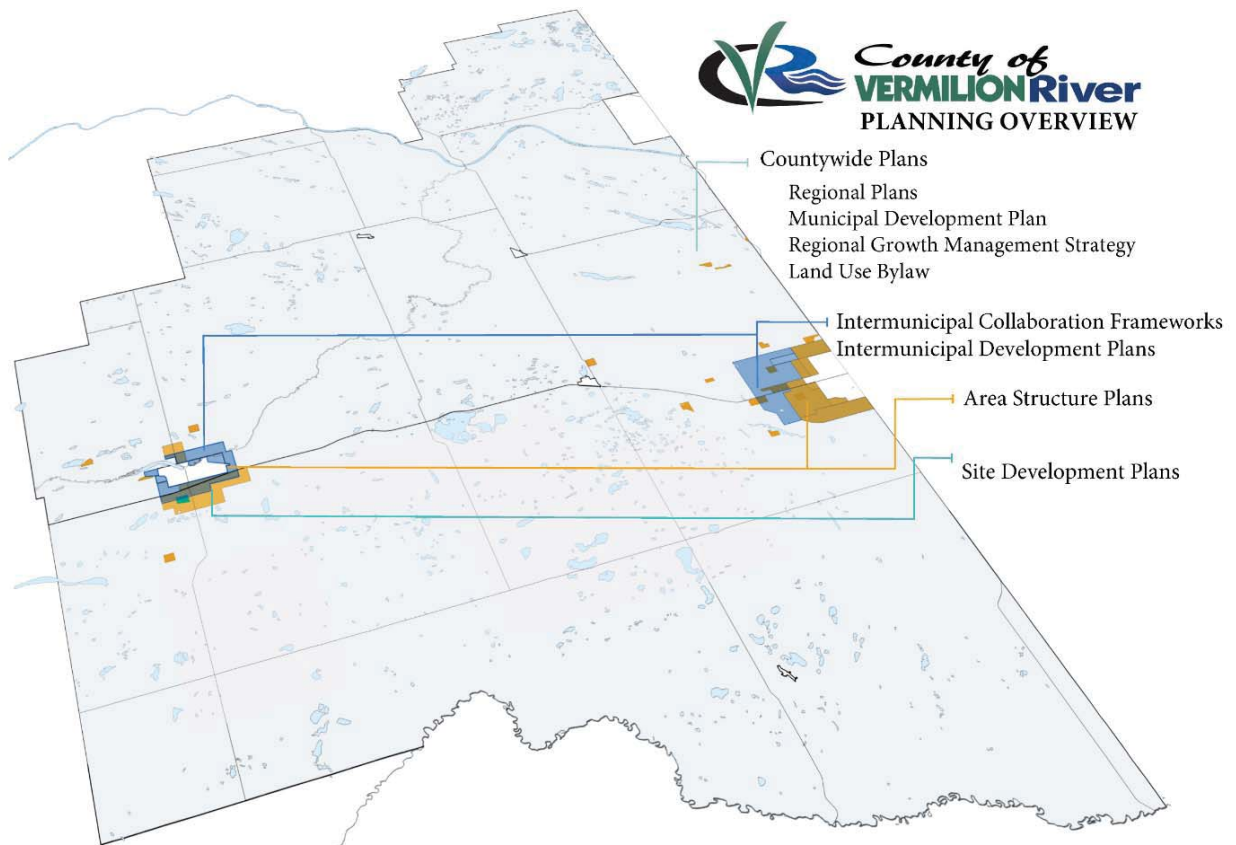


Figure 4 County of Vermilion River Planning Framework



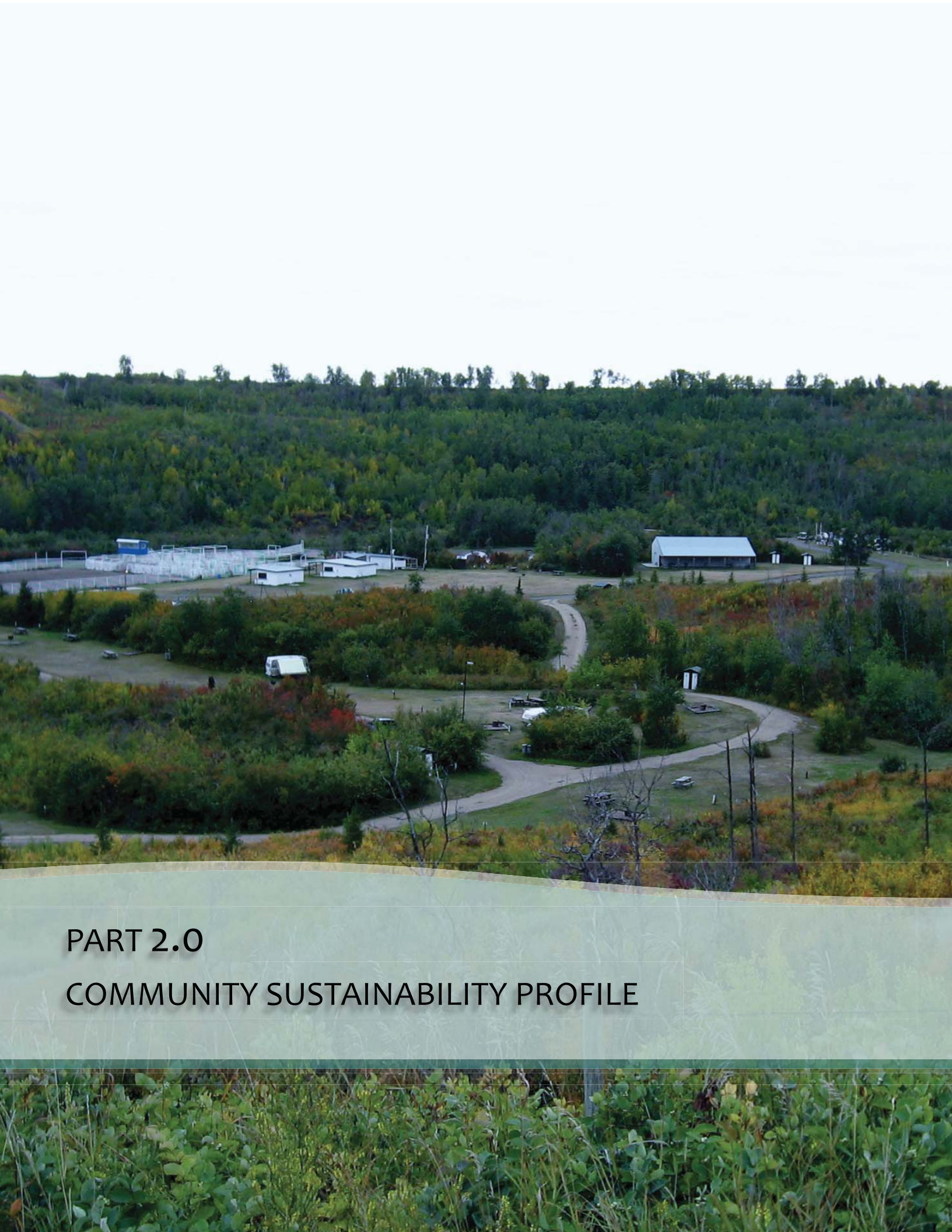
1.3 Guide to the Plan

Proposals for development that do not conform to the MDP will not be approved by the County. However, if a proposed development that does not fully conform with the MDP is felt to be desirable, an amendment to the Plan may be considered by the County.

When determining the suitability of a proposed MDP amendment, the County will evaluate the amendment in relation to how it conforms to the Plan Goals identified in Sub-section 1.2 of the MDP and the objectives contained within each section of the Plan. Amendments that conform to the Plan goals and objectives may be approved. Amendments that do not support Plan goals and objectives will not be approved.

Decision making on all development permit and subdivision applications must conform to the spirit and intent of the goals, objectives, and policies of the MDP.

The boundaries of the land use classes described in the MDP's Future Land Use Map are approximate only and might not follow legal surveyed boundaries. Minor adjustments or variances that may be required for land use classes, the location of future roads, quantities or figures will not require an amendment to the MDP. In addition, the MDP is periodically reviewed to take into account changing circumstances and municipal preferences.



PART 2.0

COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY PROFILE

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2.0 COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY PROFILE

2.1 Settlement History

Prior to European colonization in North America, the area now within the County of Vermilion River was home to First Nations, including Chipewyan, Slavey,

Blackfoot, and Cree peoples. With the signing of Treaty 6, beginning in 1876, the region was opened to European settlement.

Some of the earliest European settlers in the Vermilion River region were British immigrants drawn to the area as part of the Barr Colony. Arriving in 1903 as members of a settlement scheme proposed and organized by the Reverend Isaac Barr, approximately 1960 British colonists established homesteads around what is now the City of Lloydminster.

Successive waves of immigrants, including Ukrainian and Scandinavian settlers, were drawn to the region by aggressive federal settlement initiatives. The extension of rail lines by both the Canadian Pacific and Canadian National Railways, the latter had evolved in 1921 from the Canadian Northern Railway that was the first railway through the County in 1905, allowed for continued settlement of the region. Small communities were established at regular intervals along the rail lines to serve the growing agricultural community.

In 1943, the Municipal District of Vermilion River No. 450 was established by the merger of six Municipal Districts, Merton No. 451, Grizzly Bear No. 452, Wellington No. 481, Vermilion Valley No. 482, Streamstown No. 511 and Ethelwyn No. 512. Two years later, the District was renumbered as the Municipal District of Vermilion River No. 71. Effective January 1, 1964, the Municipal District was incorporated as the County of Vermilion River No. 24.

2.2 Demographics

The County of Vermilion River Regional Growth Management Strategy (CVR-RGMS) reported in July 2013 that the County could experience an increase in employment “by as much as 2.5% to 3.0% over the next 10 years”. In the same, population growth showed an increase between 1.0–1.5 percent by 2052.¹

2.2.1 Population Characteristics

Since 1991, the population of the County of Vermilion River has remained relatively stable. Between 1991 and 2006, the population declined by approximately 3.3%. However, since 2006, the population has rebounded and surpassed the 1991 census figures to a population of over 8,267.

Table 1 The County of Vermilion River Over Time

Total Population

¹ COUNTY OF VERMILION RIVER REGIONAL GROWTH MANAGEMENT STRATEGY. Kitscoty, Alberta: County of Vermilion River, July 2013.

Year	Population	Percent Change
2016	8,267	+4.6%
2011	7,905	+5.9%
2006	7,467	-0.8%
2001	7,524	-0.4%
1996	7,553	-2.2%
1991	7,722	

The projected numbers for population don't predict any significant changes in the future, as no drastic fluctuations have been seen over the years either. Overall, the recent historic years and the projected years ahead show a steady increase.

A five-year period growth rate as well as a low, medium and high Compounded Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) scenario for the County was calculated using historical data. In order to predict realistic numbers, the three scenarios take into account periods of population decline, shifts in industries effecting jobs, historical highs, and growth:

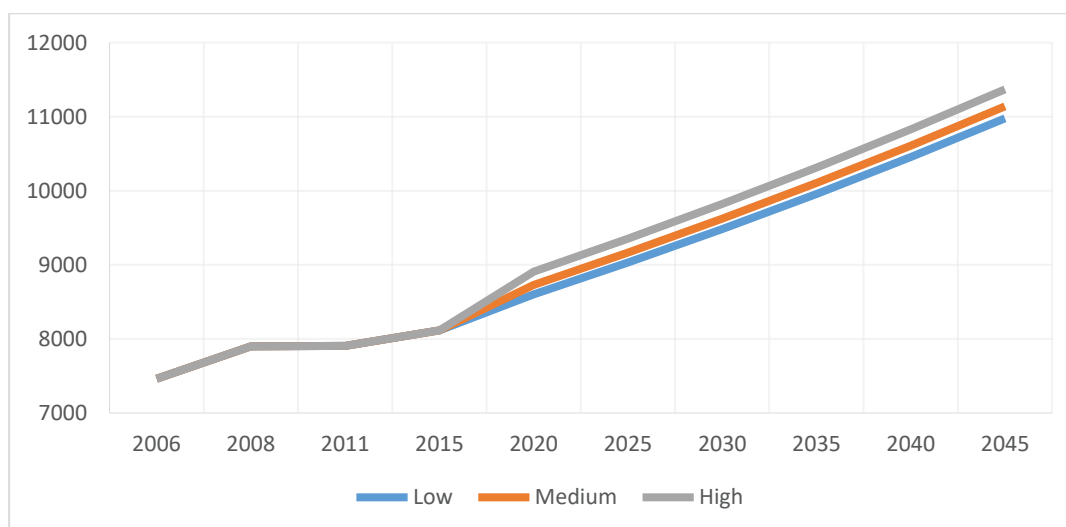
- Low: Compounded Annual Growth Rate (0.93%) population in 2045: 10,977
- Medium: Compounded Annual Growth Rate (2.42%) population in 2045: 11,139
- High: Compounded Annual Growth Rate (4.53%) population in 2045: 11,369

The base year for these projections is 2015 and the horizon year is 2045. The low scenario predicts a population growth of 2,861 people from 2015 to 2045. The medium scenario that represents an average historical trend, is projected to grow to a population increase of 3,023 people from 2015 to 2045, whereas the high scenario predicts a total population growth of 3,253 people.

Table 2 County of Vermilion River Population Scenarios

Scenario	2015 (Base Year)	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	Change %	CAGR
low	8116	8601	9031	9483	9957	10455	10977	35.3%	0.93%
medium	8116	8728	9164	9623	10104	10609	11139	37.2%	2.42%
high	8116	8908	9353	9821	10312	10828	11369	40.1%	4.53%

Table 3 Population Projection 2006-2045



Source: Statistics Canada

2.2.2 Population Growth

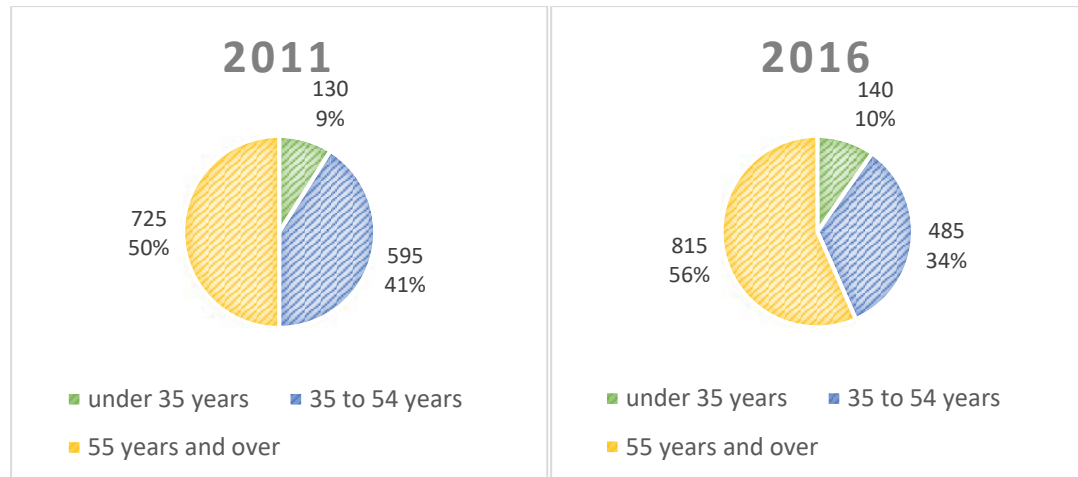
At the time of this Municipal Development Plan update, the median age of the population of the County of Vermilion River is 40.1, which is only slightly older than the median age of the population for Alberta as a whole, at 36.7.

The decrease in County population recorded between 1991 and 2006 may be directly related to the difficulties facing the economic feasibility of the family farm combined with the County's aging demographic. The percentage of farm operators under 35 years of age is low, keeping in mind groups between ages 20 to 39 are on the lower end in population. These factors impact the economic feasibility of the small family farm and threaten the County's traditional agricultural community and the County's economic sustainability. The percentage of farm operators that are 55 years and older continues to grow and makes up the biggest age group of farm operators in the County. People often return to rural areas to farm after retirement, usually to where they were raised which works out well for most with a pension on the side². Overall in Canada, "The number of farm operators 35 years and younger grew for the first time since 1991, 24,120 in

² Barry Wilson. "Average Farmer Age Rises, Says Census." The Western Producer. May 18, 2012. [https://www.producer.com/2012/05/average-farmer-age-rises-says-census /](https://www.producer.com/2012/05/average-farmer-age-rises-says-census/).

2011 to 24,850 in 2016”³. Even with the younger population taking interest in agriculture, in comparison it is much harder for a younger entrant into the industry now with the amount of money required.

Figure 5 Population Projection 2006-2045



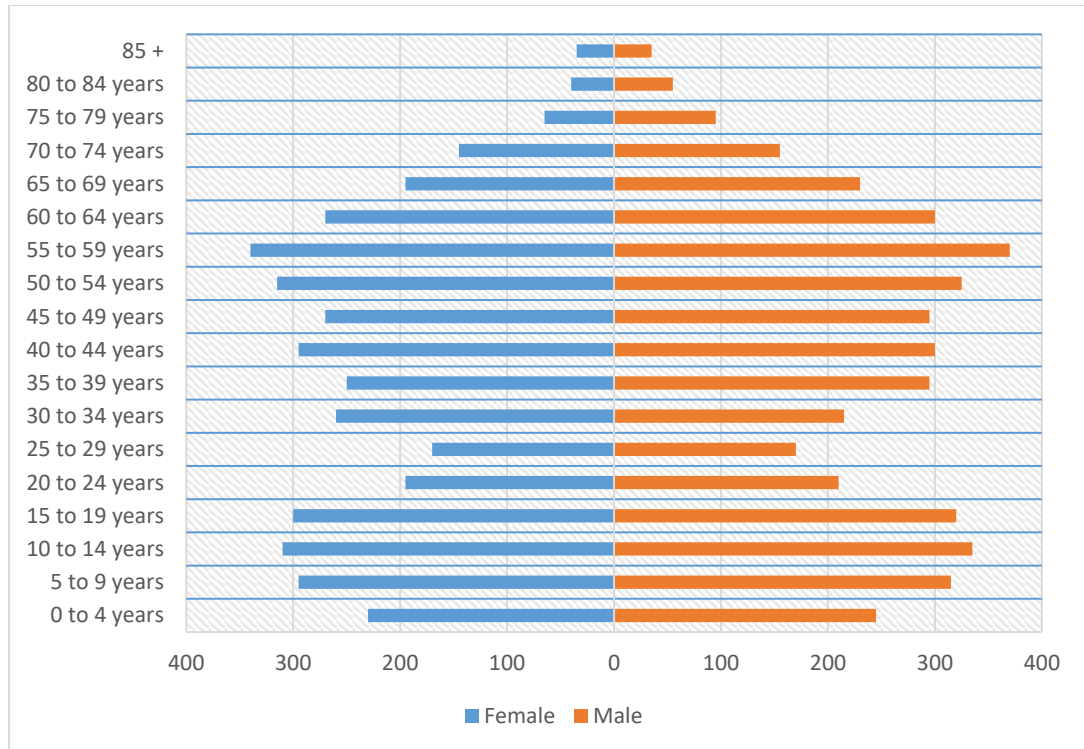
Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Agriculture

The population pyramid in **Figure 4** shows a smaller percentage of residents between the ages of 20 and 39. This represents most individuals within the millennial generation (ages 22 to 37). The decline in this population age range may be indicative of individuals in this demographic range have relocated outside of the County for education or seeking other employment opportunities not available in the region. While the population pyramid demonstrates a high proportion of older residents (50 and older), the number of residents 19 years and younger is relatively large. The slight decrease in the number of children in the 0-4 year cohort may be reflective of declining fertility tendency of younger generations opting to have less children and females choosing to delay parenthood to later childbearing years.

Larger younger populations pose a challenge to sustainability given the current life expectancy. For example, children born in 2020 will be well in their child bearing years in 2045. The impact of the human dimensions are one of the considerations contained within the policies in the Municipal Development Plan. The MDP policies address the interconnectedness of demographic trends, resource use, and development. The policies provide guidance for the development of strategies to mitigate reciprocal impact between human activity and the environment.

Figure 6 Population Distribution for the County of Vermilion River

³ Kelvin Heppner. "Ag Census Shows More Young Farmers, Slower Decline in Number of Farms." Realagriculture. May 10, 2017. <https://www.realagriculture.com/2017/05/ag-census-shows-trends-you-d-expect/>.



Source: Statistics Canada 2016 Census

2.3 Economy

The County of Vermilion River has an excellent transportation system that connects residents, institutions, industries, and businesses to global markets. Highway 16 (TransCanada Yellowhead) runs through the center of the County and is the major northern east/west trade route connecting to the west coast ports. Rail access exists with CN's northern secondary mainline traveling east to west with a terminal point in Vermilion. Air service exists with Airports in Vermilion and Lloydminster.

The County of Vermilion River is a member of the Northeast Alberta Information HUB Ltd, also known as "Alberta HUB", a regional economic development alliance a, which is the northern region of the Eastern Alberta Trade Corridor. The Alberta HUB region features two north-south high load corridors that connect it to markets in the United States and Mexico as part of the Eastern Alberta Trade Corridor (EATC) is a joint initiative of three Regional Economic Development Alliances (REDAs) in Eastern Alberta, Canada's Energy Province, and works in association with the North American Ports to Plains Corridor linking the United States, Canada, and Mexico to lead collaborative investment, marketing, and diversification efforts for Eastern Alberta. The EATC main infrastructure is a 2,300-mile highway system from the Gulf of Mexico through the United States to the Alberta HUB region. The Yellowhead Highway (Highway 16) runs east to west, almost dividing the County in half, connecting the region to tidewater ports in the west, and Canadian and North American markets in the east. Highways 41 and 897 connect the County north to south and intersect with Highway 16.

In addition, the County of Vermilion River has oil activity in Northeast Alberta, with over 14,000 oil wells. There are over 4,300 KM of gas pipelines in the County. This is all connected by a network of major highways like 16 and 45 east-west, and 41, and 897 north-south; and another 5,250 of non-provincial roads – more than enough to cover the distance from Vermilion to New York if laid end to end.

These main corridors are part of the County's transportation infrastructure that serves residents, businesses, and industries within the County region and beyond. Mobility network connectivity play a significant role in sustainable development. It facilitates access for trading activities and workforce mobility.

2.4 Industry

For the purpose of this Municipal Development Plan the term "industry" refers to manufacturing, warehousing and storage; and includes both light and heavy industry. Industries that may have high levels of noxious emissions or noise that may impact adjacent land uses are referred to as heavy industry. Medium industry may have noxious emissions or noise, however, the impact of this type of development on adjacent land uses would be deemed minimum. Light industry is not noxious and is generally compatible with other uses. Natural resource extraction industries include such uses as gravel pits and oil and gas wells.

The County also includes a number of multi-lot industrial developments including: County Energy Park, Devonia Holdings, Kam's Industrial Park, Reinheart Property Management and Corridor Business Park. Most of these multi-lot developments are located with or in very close proximity to the County's IDP areas

2.5 Businesses

Commercial uses within the County can currently be classified as Highway Commercial and Urban Commercial. However, there are also some secondary commercial uses in the rural area which would include welding shops and trucking businesses, many of which operate in association with a rural residence.

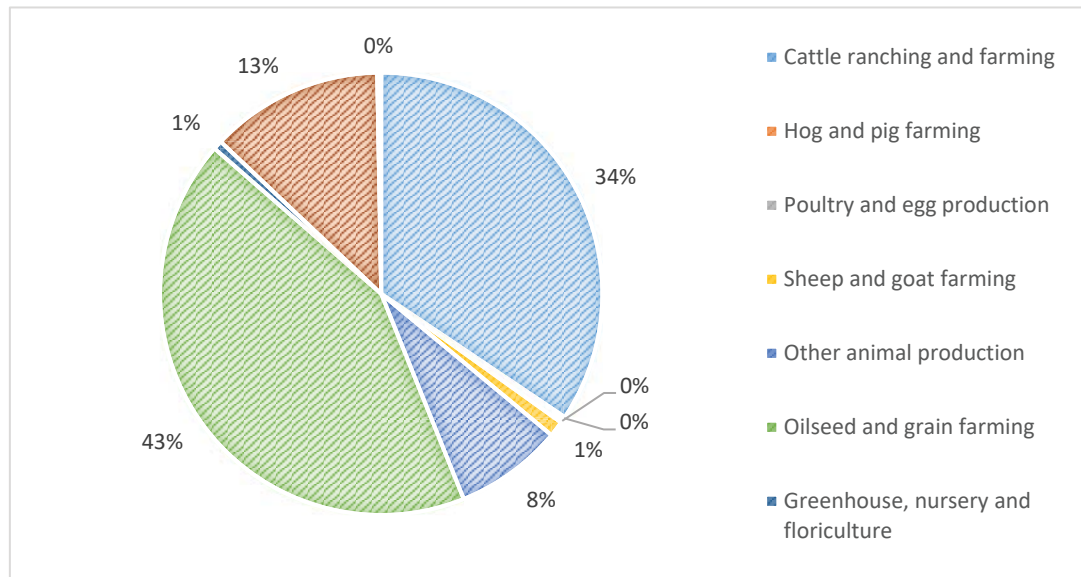
2.6 Agriculture

Agriculture activities including forestry, silviculture⁴ and the provision of services to the agricultural community have traditionally been, and remain, the County's economic backbone. Statistics Canada reported that agriculture and resource based industries are still major employment generators within the County employing approximately 44% of all County residents.

Cattle ranching and farming and oilseed and grain farming comprise the largest types of farming in the County, accounting for approximately 34% and 43% of the agricultural operations in the County, respectively.

⁴ Silviculture means the science and art of cultivating forest crops based on knowledge of the life history and general characteristics of forest trees and on the varying factors at particular sites.

Figure 7 Farms by Type of Farm in the County of Vermilion River and Alberta



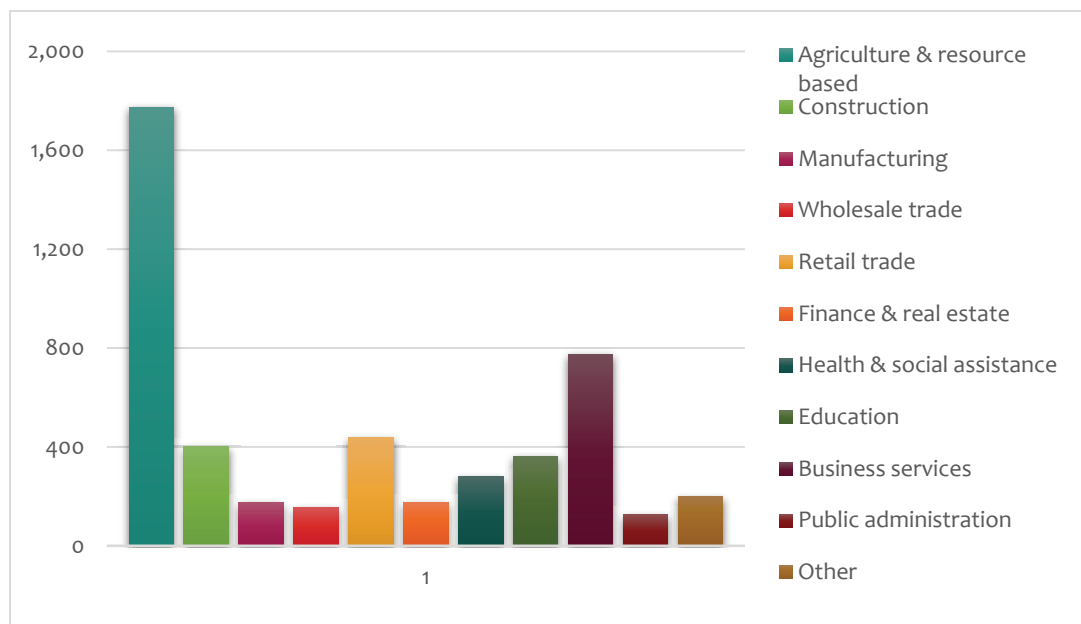
Source: Statistics Canada 2016 Census

There are huge differences in the financial performance of agricultural sectors between provinces. Alberta as recorded in 2015, was at the highest at \$139,000 for average family income in comparison between provinces.⁵ Even with the sector doing well the average age of farmer operators in Alberta was at 55 as recorded in 2016 and at 55.7 for the County of Vermilion River

Agriculture and resource based industries are the economic underpinning of the economy within the County of Vermilion River. The agriculture sector and other resource-based industries generate approximately 36.5% of all County jobs (**see Figure 6**) Other economic sectors have helped support businesses and job creation in the past and are considered to continue in the future.

⁵ Kevin Hursh. "A Look at Income Numbers by Sector Tells Tale." The Western Producer. February 25, 2016. <https://www.producer.com/2016/02/a-look-at-income-numbers-by-sector-tells-tale/>.

Figure 8 The county of Vermilion River Employment by Industry, Age 15+

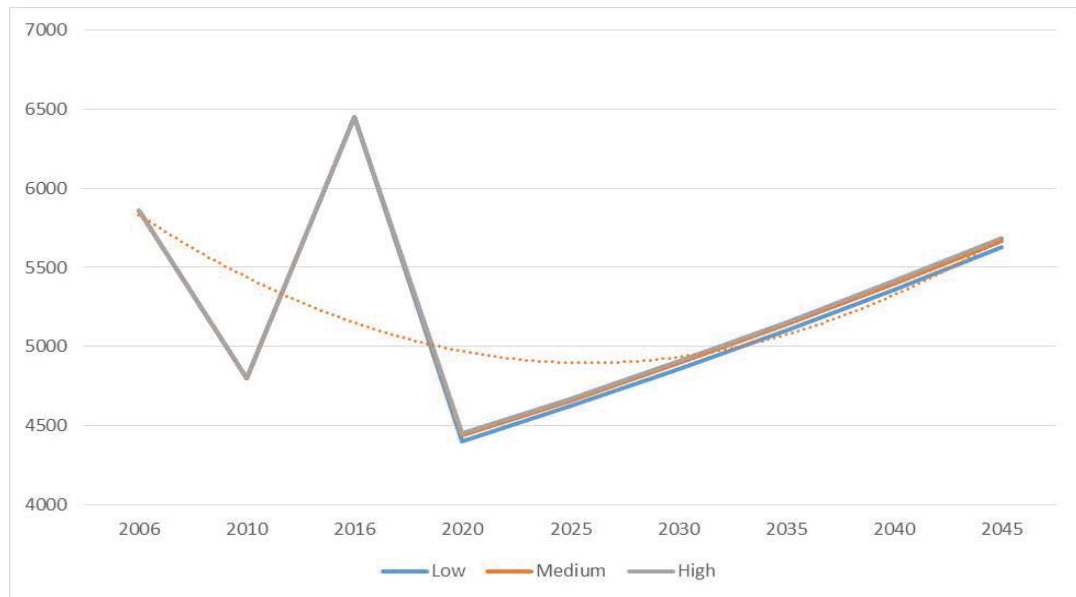


Source: Statistics Canada 2016 Census

The County of Vermilion River labour force projected figures (**see Figure 7**) take into consideration a 70% labour force participation rate and a 5% unemployment rate along with historic trends within the County. The region's labour force projections indicate there could be a growth from 6,450 in 2016 to over 8,577 in 2045. This increase of 33%, will have an effect on the demand for housing and jobs within the county.

Population density exerts significant influence over socioeconomic characteristics and sustainability of rural communities. The policies in the MDP support achieving a balance between the total capacity of the physical environment necessary to support growing population through sustainable development that is fiscally, socially, and environmentally responsible.

Figure 9 Labour Force Projections 2016-2045



Source: Statistics Canada 2016 Census

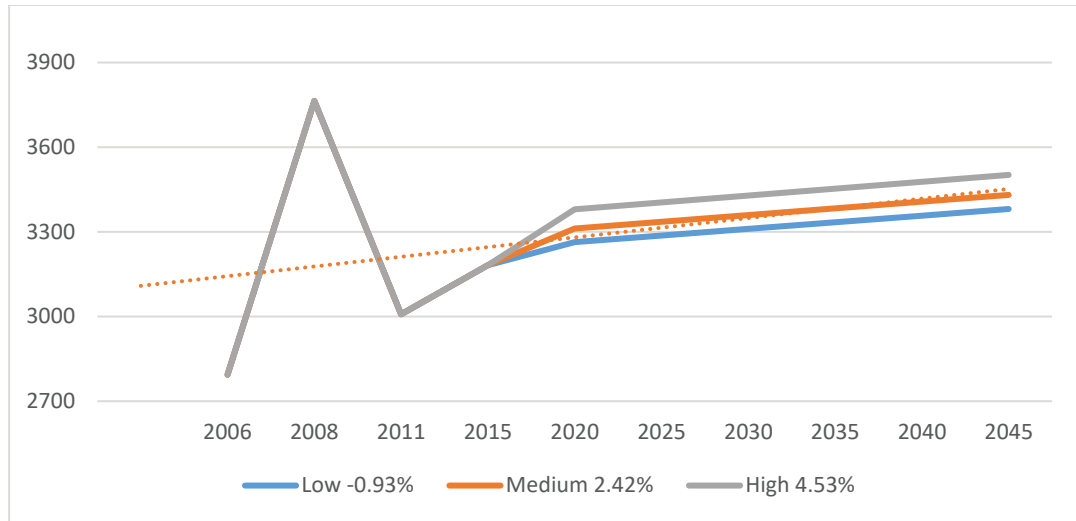
2.7 Housing

Rural communities, like ours, are not exempt from experiencing a shortage of adequate and affordable housing. The County supports quality housing stock through the Province of Alberta's Builder Licensing program, which reduces risks to prospective homeowners, for residential builders within the County.

The County of Vermilion River contains a total of 2,980 dwellings as recorded in 2016, of which the vast majority of the housing inventory is made up of low density single detached houses. Typical of rural Alberta, the county too has a low diversity in the choices of housing, however, with growth predicted in population numbers will produce a demand for a variety of different housing types in the future to accommodate the millennial and aging population better.

There are three types of residential uses that characterize the County. These include: Farmstead separations in the agricultural area, multi-lot country residential developments in recreation communities, as well as residential developments in the County's Hamlet Areas.

Figure 10 Household Count Projections 2015-2045



Source: Statistics Canada 2016 Census

Table 4 Household Projections and Growth Breakdown 2015-2045

Households										
Scenarios	2015 (base year)	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	% Change	CAGR	Total Growth
Low	3182	3264	3287	3311	3334	3358	3381	6.25%	0.93%	199
Medium	3182	3312	3336	3359	3383	3407	3431	7.83%	2.42%	249
High	3182	3380	3404	3429	3453	3477	3502	10.06%	4.53%	320

Source: Statistics Canada 2016 Census

2.8 Infrastructure and Services

Transportation, communication and utility uses include rights-of-ways, and municipal services such as substations, sewage and refuse disposal facilities, water tanks, water treatment facilities, reservoirs, and pumping stations which are normally associated with transportation, communications and/or utilities.

2.8.1 Roadways

The County maintains an extensive municipal road network and works cooperatively with regional and provincial partners to ensure the safety and efficient provision of regional roadways.

The County of Vermilion River is serviced by one primary east-west provincial highway, Highway 16. Traffic along this highway is significant, as it is a major interprovincial connector between the Cities of Edmonton and Saskatoon. Further, the highway provides an important commuter route for County residents to access the City of Lloydminster.

Highway 41 provides a north-south connection to Wainwright to the south, and to the northern communities of St. Paul, Cold Lake, and Fort McMurray.

Secondary highways 631, 641, 893 and 897 provide access to the rest of the County, its Hamlets and internal and surrounding municipalities.

2.8.2 Railway

Access to the County by rail is still well established within the County. One major rail line runs through the County, linking its hamlets and municipal neighbours to markets to the east and west.

2.8.3 Utility right-of-way's and pipelines

Numerous pipeline and utility rights-of-ways exist for the purposes of collecting oil and gas from well sites and batteries; transporting oil and gas products; supplying natural gas to consumers; collecting and disposing of sewage, as well as to connect residents to regional potable water and communications utility providers.

2.9 Natural Environment

The County of Vermilion River is located along the boundary between two Natural Regions, the Parkland Natural Region and the Boreal Forest Natural Region. As this boundary is not defined by major topographical or geological changes, the classifications are general. Local conditions may share characteristics of both Natural Regions. The following broad descriptions are for general information purposes.

The majority of the County, south of the North Saskatchewan River, is within the Central Parkland Natural Sub-region. This Sub-region is characterized by mostly cultivated land with patches of aspen and prairie vegetation. Undulating till plains and hummocky uplands are the primary landforms, with small water bodies scattered throughout.

North of the North Saskatchewan River, the County is identified as Dry Mixed-wood Sub-region. It is typified by short summers, long winters, and sweeping expanses of deciduous, mixed wood and coniferous forests intermixed with fens and wetlands. About 50% of the Dry Mixed Wood Natural Sub region is suitable for cultivation, particularly barley and forage crops.⁶

⁶ Natural Regions Committee. (2006). Natural Regions and Sub regions of Alberta. Compiled by D.J. Downing and W. W. Pettapiece. Government of Alberta Publication No. T/852.

2.9.1 Fish and Wildlife

The Central Parkland Natural Sub-region shares wildlife characteristics with bordering grassland and boreal regions. Within the County of Vermilion River, many of the common fish and wildlife species are boreal species, such as the woodchuck, Broad-winged Hawk and Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Other common species associated with aspen and willow communities include the Red-tailed Hawk, Least Flycatcher, Baltimore Oriole, Red-eyed Vireo, Yellow Warbler, White-tailed Deer, Snowshoe Hare, Northern Pocket Gopher and American Porcupine.

Wildlife diversity in the Boreal Forest Natural Region is highest in the south-central and eastern portions of the region, in which the County of Vermilion River is located. Common avian species in this area include the Yellow Tail, Sedge Wren, Great-crested Flycatcher, Chestnut-sided Warbler and Blackburnian Warbler, and additional species flourish in deciduous, coniferous and/or mixed forests. Common mammal species include the Red Squirrel, Snowshoe Hare, Southern Red-Backed Vole, Cinereous Shrew, Least Chipmunk, Deer Mouse, White-tailed and Mule Deer, Black Bear, moose, Ermine and American Beaver.

Within both Natural Regions comprising the County of Vermilion River, lakes and ponds provide habitat for the ducks, grebes, American Bittern, Marsh wren, boreal chorus frog, wood frog, Canadian Toad, Northern Redbelly Dace, Iowa Darter, Lake Whitefish, Burbot, Goldeye, Lake Chub, Longnose and White Suckers, Emerald and Spottail Shiners, Slimy Sculpin, Ninespine Stickleback, Walleye, Yellow Perch and

2.9.2 Environmentally Significant Areas

Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs), in the context of this plan, refers to those areas within the County that have been designated by Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development as representing places that are vital to the long-term maintenance of biological diversity, soil, water, or other natural processes, at multiple spatial scales. They are identified as areas containing rare or unique elements, or areas that include elements that may require special management consideration due to their conservation needs. The province does not regulate or restrict development within these areas; rather the information has been provided to assist municipalities and other decision makers when they are establishing land management policies.

The County of Vermilion River has a number of ESAs within its boundaries, affecting 7.9% of the County's landmass. The ESAs include areas of national and provincial significance concerning elements of conservation concern, focal species habitat, important wildlife habitat, riparian areas and natural areas. They represent Boreal, Parkland and Grassland Sub-region ecosystems. All of the County's ESA's are identified on **Map: Environmental Features**.

2.9.3 Conservation Areas

Conservation Areas in Alberta are lands which are managed by the Alberta Conservation Association (ACA). The purpose of these lands and the ACA is to manage important wildlife and/or fisheries habitat resources on public and private lands in order to conserve, protect, enhance and provide access to these

habitat resources. Conservation Areas may include lands which have been directly purchased, donated, or leased to the ACA and lands affected by a Conservation Easement in which the ACA has an interest.

All lands identified within the Conservation Site database are available for public use, whether privately owned by the Alberta Conservation Association or its partners, or public lands managed by ACA on behalf of the Crown.⁷

There are currently zero (0) recognized Conservation Areas within the County of Vermilion River. However, in the future the County and residents may decide that it is of value to utilize Conservation Easements to conserve, protect and enhance habitat resources within the County

⁷ "Land Management Program Agreement". Retrieved from: http://www.abconservation.com/go/tasks/sites/default/assets/File/pdfs/02AboutUs/02RolesandResponsibilities/Land_Management_Program_Agreement.pdf. On: 22 December 2009.

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PART 3.0

MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN STRUCTURE

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3.1 Municipal Development Plan Guiding Principles

3.0 MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN STRUCTURE

The County of Vermilion River Municipal Development Plan is organized around the Plan's guiding principles (see MDP Part 1.0) that support the goals priorities of the County's Strategic Plan. The four parts that make up the MDP, namely 1) Community Resiliency, 2) Growth Management, 3) Sustainable Development, and 4) Responsible Governance, give shape to the vision of the County of Vermilion River as:

A Sustainable, Vibrant, and Diversified Community with Opportunities for All

3.1 Municipal Development Plan Guiding Principles

3.1.1 Community Resiliency

- (a) All actions should support resourcefulness in meeting our challenges and needs in a way that is sustainable through collaboration and mutual aid instead of competition.
- (b) All actions should recognize the diverse needs and aspirations of County residents and stakeholders.

3.1.2 Growth Management

- (a) All actions should respect the integrity of the County's land base and water resources.
- (b) All actions should be proactive in directing non-agricultural development to existing hamlets, planned development areas, and existing multi-lot development areas that have the capacity to support additional development.
- (c) All actions should apply Smart Growth principles to promote sustainable development respectful of the County's rural character.

3.1.3 Sustainable Development

- (d) All actions should establish land use patterns which make efficient use of land, infrastructure, public services and public facilities and which contribute to the development of healthy, safe, and viable communities by encouraging appropriate mixes of all land use types and a wide range of economic opportunities.
- (e) All actions should support proactive, comprehensive planning that is carried out in a fair, open, consistent, and equitable manner.

3.1.4 Responsible Governance

- (f) All actions should ensure that the County operates in a fiscally sound manner now and into the future.

3.1 Municipal Development Plan Guiding Principles

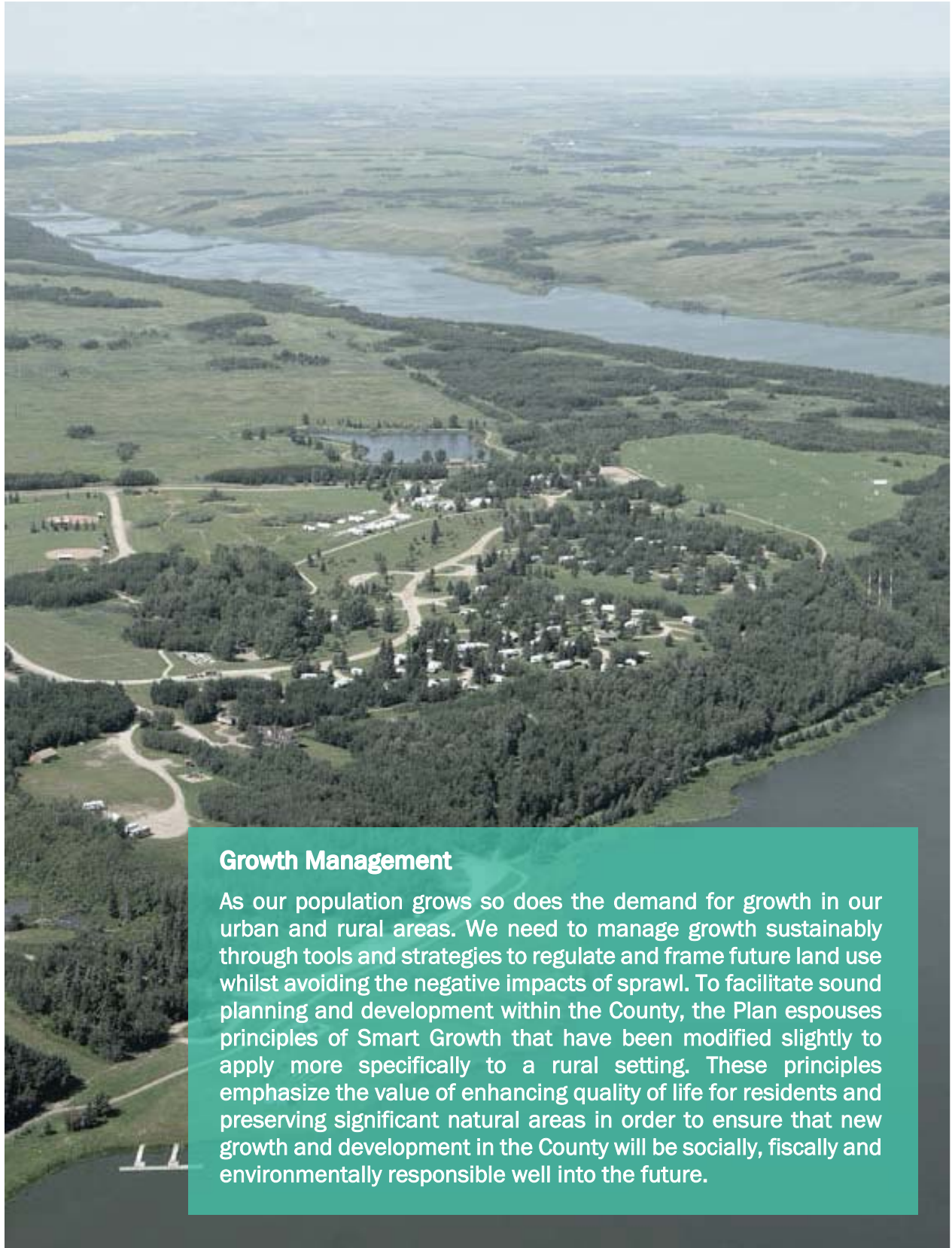
- (g) All actions should promote governmental excellence through consistent and accountable leadership and collaborative and transparent processes.
- (h) All actions should support implementing strategic decision making.

Community Resiliency

Risk can never be fully eliminated and to be able to bounce back and absorb any shocks we must make sure that our communities are well equipped in terms of their physical, economic, governance and social systems to help maintain a balance in case of any future stresses whether they be expected or unknown. For example, stress on one sector can create a negative effect on everything else around it and to create a resilient economy we can do so by supporting many of our small businesses, promoting diversification, encouraging new ideas, and providing our communities with education and training to help our sectors grow.



3.1 Municipal Development Plan Guiding Principles



Growth Management

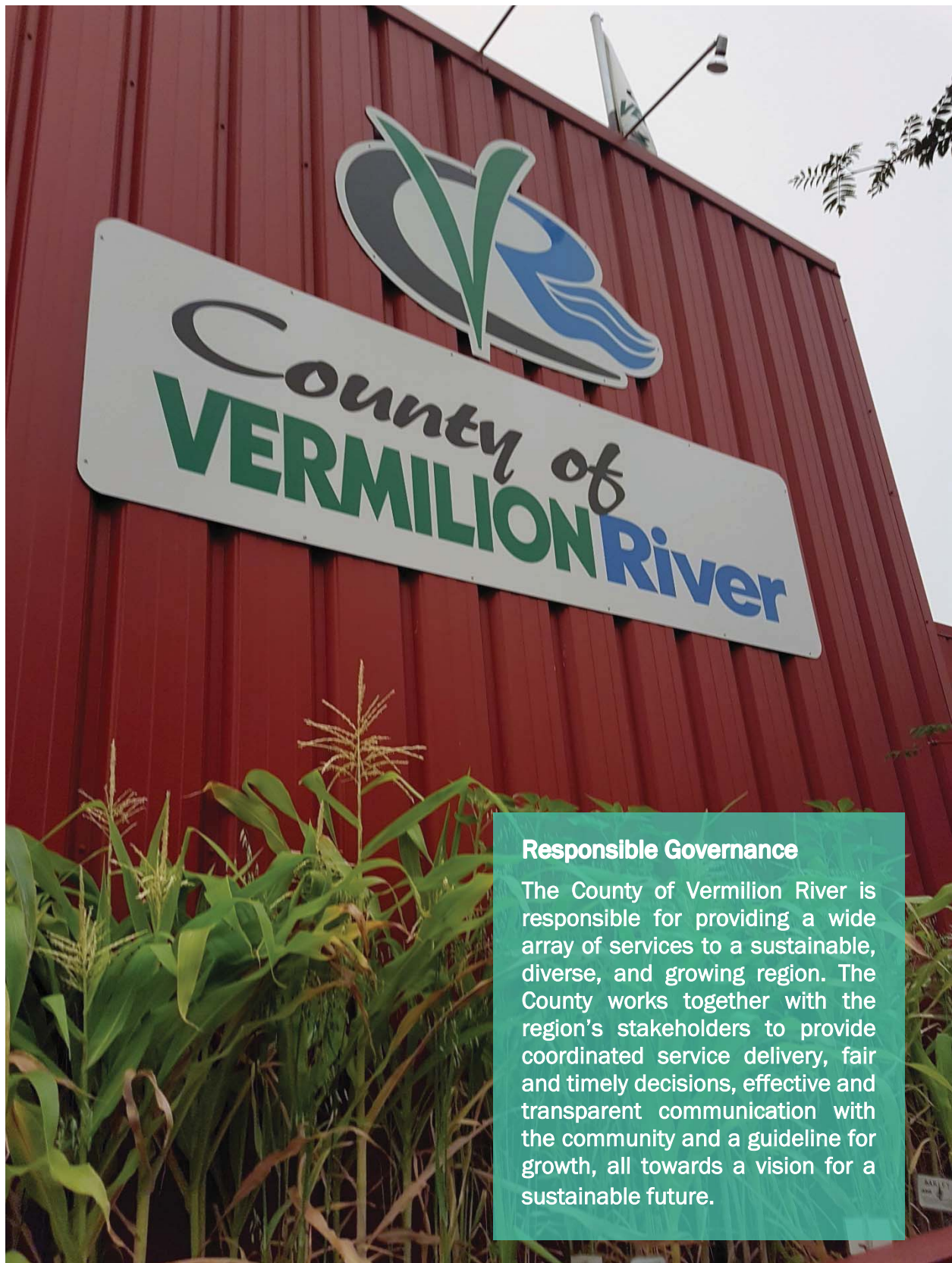
As our population grows so does the demand for growth in our urban and rural areas. We need to manage growth sustainably through tools and strategies to regulate and frame future land use whilst avoiding the negative impacts of sprawl. To facilitate sound planning and development within the County, the Plan espouses principles of Smart Growth that have been modified slightly to apply more specifically to a rural setting. These principles emphasize the value of enhancing quality of life for residents and preserving significant natural areas in order to ensure that new growth and development in the County will be socially, fiscally and environmentally responsible well into the future.

3.1 Municipal Development Plan Guiding Principles

Sustainable Development

While we work to manage growth sustainably, we also work to respect and protect our natural landscapes and the habitats that live within them. With the need for small-scale and large scale agricultural activities, industrial and residential development, the County recognizes that these features, when applied to un-planned multi-lot developments may not be compatible with best planning practices because they can result in developments that consume the forests, wetlands, and agricultural lands necessary for ecosystem health, water security and the long term agricultural capability of County lands. The County's approach to land management requires that the MDP balance the integrity of the rural way of life and small "town" feel of existing hamlet areas and residential subdivisions within the County while creating opportunities for furthering agricultural, commercial, resource based and industrial sector growth by providing policies that facilitate sustainable rural community development and growth.





Responsible Governance

The County of Vermilion River is responsible for providing a wide array of services to a sustainable, diverse, and growing region. The County works together with the region's stakeholders to provide coordinated service delivery, fair and timely decisions, effective and transparent communication with the community and a guideline for growth, all towards a vision for a sustainable future.

