



Saddle Hills County

Municipal

Development

Plan

Bylaw No. 429-2024



Get Involved

This Affects You!



Stay Involved

This Affects You!



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Saddle Hills County

Municipal Development Plan

Bylaw No. 429-2024

This document is consolidated into a single publication for the convenience of users. When making reference to this document, users are directed to contact Saddle Hills County for additional amendments. In case of any dispute, the original bylaws should always be consulted.



BYLAW 429-2024
MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

PURPOSE: Being a Bylaw of Saddle Hills County, in the Province of Alberta, for the purpose of adopting a Municipal Development Plan.

WHEREAS Section 632 of the Municipal Government Act, Chapter M-26 R.S.A, 2000, as amended, requires that every Council of a municipality must by bylaw adopt a municipal development plan;

WHEREAS the Council of Saddle Hills County deems it to be in the public interest to repeal the Saddle Hills County Municipal Development Plan No. 323-2018, and all subsequent amendments thereto;

NOW THEREFORE the Council of Saddle Hills County in the Province of Alberta, duly assembled, enact as follows:

1. That Bylaw 323-2018 and all subsequent amendments are hereby repealed;
2. The Saddle Hills County Municipal Development Plan, attached hereto, is adopted;
3. That this bylaw may be cited as the Saddle Hills County Municipal Development Plan;
4. This Bylaw shall come into effect upon the date of the final reading thereof.

FIRST READING 11th DAY OF JUNE, 2024

SECOND READING _____ DAY OF _____, 2024

THIRD READING _____ DAY OF _____, 2024

REEVE: Alvin Hubert _____

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER: Cary Merritt _____

Saddle Hills County

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Section 1.0 |

Introduction



“Balancing protection and creating opportunities for growth.”

1.1 Plan Purpose

The purpose of this Plan is to provide clear direction to Council and Administration for the future growth and development of Saddle Hills County.

This Municipal Development Plan (MDP) guides future development by defining the vision, principles, objectives, and policies of the County with respect to planning matters. The MDP, in addition to applicable Provincial legislation, provides a foundation for the preparation of more detailed land use plans (see Figure 1.1). It is intended to be used in conjunction with the County’s Land Use Bylaw (LUB) to implement the policies of this Plan; and to inform residents and developers of the County’s future land use strategy.

The Plan has been prepared in accordance with Part 17 of the Municipal Government Act (referred to as the “Act”).



Saddle Hills County

Planning Policy Framework

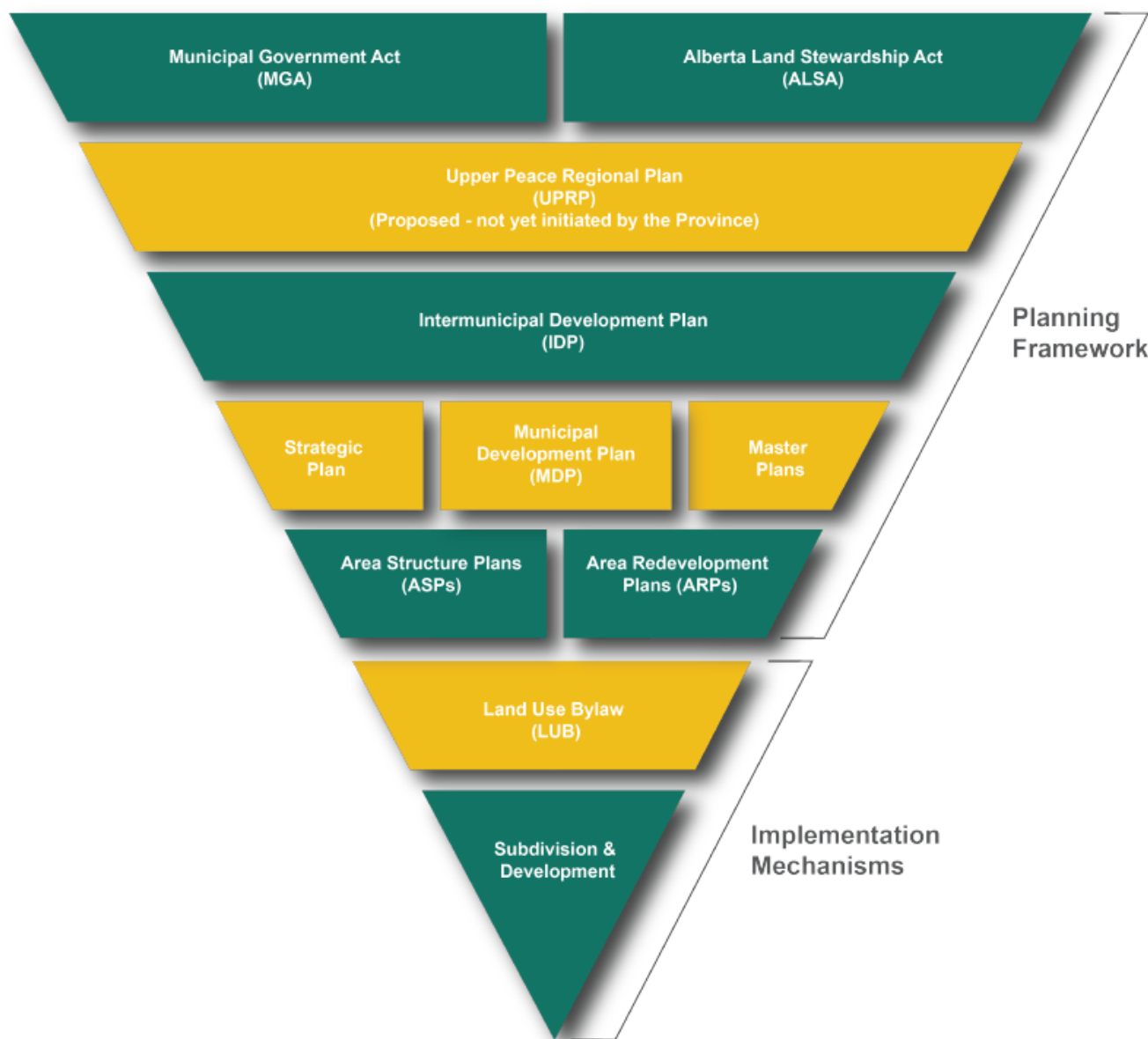


Figure 1.1: Planning Policy Framework

1.2 Interpretation

- 121 For the purpose of interpreting this MDP, the definitions provided in Appendix A shall apply, and all defined terms are highlighted in the text in *italics*.
- 122 All other words or expressions shall have the meanings respectively assigned to them in the Municipal Government Act (Act), the Subdivision and Development Regulation (Regulation), and the Land Use Bylaw (LUB). The land use boundaries identified on the maps in this Plan are approximate and not absolute. Any minor adjustments or variances that may be necessary to land use policy areas shall not require an amendment to this Plan.

1.3 Context

1.3.1 Location

The County, as shown on Map 1 (Page 4), is bordered by the Province of British Columbia to the west, the County of Grande Prairie No. 1 to the south, Clear Hills County to the north, and shares a common eastern boundary with the Municipal Districts of Fairview No. 136, Spirit River No. 133 and Birch Hills County. The City of Grande Prairie is located approximately 40 km to the south of the County. There are no urban municipalities located within the boundaries of the County, but contains a hamlet (Woking) and several settlements.



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Note:
Locations and boundaries are approximate only and
subject to confirmation at time of development.



1.3.2 Municipal Designation

Saddle Hills County began as Improvement District (I.D.) No. 134 on April 1, 1945 after the amalgamation of several smaller Improvement Districts into one. On January 1, 1969, the I.D. No. 134 was renumbered to become I.D. No. 20. In January 1995 the I.D. was incorporated and became known as the Municipal District of Saddle Hills No. 20. On July 1, 1999 the Municipal District changed its name to Saddle Hills County.

1.3.3 Population and Demographics

As of 2016, the County's population was 2,225. Since 1966, the County's population has fluctuated, peaking in 1981 at 3,000 as shown in Table 1.1 & Figure 1.2.

Table 1.1: Historic Population Growth, 1966-2016

Federal Census Year	Population	Net Change	% Change
1966	2,792	-	-
1971	2,730	-62	-2.22
1976	2,667	-63	-2.31
1981	3,000	333	12.49
1986	2,922	-78	-2.60
1991	2,722	-200	-6.84
1996	2,724	2	0.07
2001	2,566	-158	-5.80
2006	2,458	-108	-4.21
2008	2,478	20	0.81
2011	2,288	-190	-7.67
2016	2,225	-63	-2.75



Figure 1.2: Historical Population, 1966-2016

(Source: Statistics Canada, 1966-2016 Federal Census)

1.4 Area Structure Plans

1.4.1 Woking Area Structure Plan

The Woking *ASP* was originally approved in 2006, and was updated and replaced in November 2015, includes 265.5 hectares (656 acres) in area within SE 24-76-6-W6, SW 19-76-5-W6, NE 13-76-6-W6, NW 18-76-5-W6, and also includes a sewage lagoon located east of SW 19-76-5-W6. The Woking *ASP* encompasses an area of 263 hectares for future development of lands within the hamlet for residential, commercial, institutional, recreational and industrial land uses. As a community that is only a 30 minute drive from the City of Grande Prairie, the potential for increased growth in the hamlet and surrounding area exists.



1.4.2 Bay Tree Area Structure Plan

The Bay Tree *ASP*, created in 1989 and was most recently amended by Council in July 2016, provides for future development of lands in the vicinity of Bay Tree for residential, commercial, institutional, recreational and industrial land uses. The Plan boundary applies to 12,000 hectares (29,652 acres) of land adjacent to the British Columbia border, in an area that is bounded to the north by the Henderson Creek Valley and to the south by the Saddle Hills. The *ASP* area is centered on Bay Tree, an unincorporated rural settlement. The major transportation corridors in the area include Highway 49, which bisects the *ASP* area for its entire east-west length and Highway 719, which provides connections to the north. The area has experienced increased development interest due to high levels of oil and gas activity in the area, and its 20 minute drive from Bay Tree to Dawson Creek, BC.



1.4.3 County Complex Area Structure Plan

The County Complex *ASP*, approved by Council in February 2017, provides a framework for the future development of land within the vicinity of the Saddle Hills County administration offices for residential development, commercial, and public service land uses. The Plan boundary is located in the central portion of Saddle Hills County at the intersection of Highway 49 and Highway 725. Council approved the Plan area to include the lands south of Highway 49. The Plan area consists of approximately 221 hectares (546 acres) of land. The Plan applies to the areas adjacent to the intersection of Highway 49 and Highway 725 between Range Roads 83 and 85, located north of the Ksituan River Valley, and is a 16-minute drive from the County Complex to the Town of Spirit River.



Where necessary, these *ASPs* will need to be amended to conform to the provisions of this MDP.

Vision and Strategic Directions



“Council vision and direction put on the ground.”

2.1 Rationale for Review

It is best practice for a municipality to review its MDP on a regular basis to ensure that its policies continue to remain relevant and reflect its priorities. It is also critical that the MDP align with other foundation documents (approved planning documents and ongoing policy initiatives) to maintain a consistent vision for growth and development, and policies remain current and responsive to emergent community trends.

The preparation of this MDP was initiated in the Spring of 2017 in order to:



PROMOTE CLARITY

Bring clarity to some policies in the previous MDP (Bylaw 186-2010 as amended by 260-2016 & 286-2016) that remain valid but require more substance to improve their interpretation and enforceability;



UPDATE POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

Prepare for changing provincial planning policy and regulation, and ensure that planning policies are consistent with the Saddle Hills County Strategic Plan and Recreation Plan;



CLEAR FRAMEWORK

Provide a clear policy framework that facilitates consistent development decisions and reduces the potential for land use conflicts;



CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS

Promote population growth and strengthen local communities;



PROTECT RURAL CHARACTER

Protect *Agricultural Operations* and the rural character of the County;



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Promote economic growth and diversification, and strengthen local communities;



SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESS

Ensure policies support entrepreneurship and small business development in the County, and reflects the needs and priorities of residents, rate payers, and stakeholder groups in the preparation of new policies; and



PROMOTE PARTNERSHIPS

Promote ongoing partnerships with industry, adjacent municipalities, provincial departments and agencies to address future growth needs.

Successful implementation of the MDP is contingent on it being properly aligned with other key strategic planning documents to ensure that all initiatives, decisions, and policies undertaken by the County are consistent.

2.2 Vision and Strategic Directions

The County's vision for future implementation of this plan is to continue supporting quality services and regional initiatives by recognizing the value of its rural lifestyle, and improving its quality of life by protecting its agricultural lands, environmentally sensitive areas, and open spaces. It also directs new country residential, commercial, and industrial development to locations that optimize infrastructure and contribute to the efficient use of County services.

2.2.1 County Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan is the County's guiding document for the immediate term. The key initiatives of the Strategic Plan that guided the development of this MDP are:

Key Initiatives

Governance and Leadership

- The County will have a fiscally responsible program.
- The County will have effective communications with our ratepayers.
- The County will commit to transparency.
- The County will commit to building an exemplary organizational culture.
- The County will build healthy intermunicipal relationships.

Municipal Services and Infrastructure

- The County will provide and maintain quality road infrastructure for all users.
- The County ratepayers will have access to potable water.
- The County residents will have access to effective communication networks.
- The County will provide effective services (e.g. waste management, protective services, agricultural services, recreation and culture).
- The County will provide efficient and respectful administrative services (Public Service Request system, planning and development services, access to information).

Environmental Stewardship

- The County will have effective communications with ratepayers.
- The County will work with residents and industry to develop effective/relevant land use policies.
- The County will develop policy that aligns with federal and provincial programs and regulations.
- The County will promote effective and responsible environmental stewardship.
- The County will demonstrate commitment to environmental stewardship through our own operations.

Community Development

- The County will build family-friendly communities.
- The County will provide adequate recreational and cultural opportunities that will attract people.
- The County will have effective means of ensuring our municipal services respond to the needs of our communities.
- The County will support partnerships with industry and business.
- The County will build partnerships with our municipal neighbors'.





“Think regional, live local.”

3.1 MDP Planning Process

Saddle Hills County Council and Administration initiated the MDP planning process in the Spring of 2017 and provided the following opportunities for the public and other stakeholders to make suggestions and provide feedback (see Appendix C):

- A public notice was established on the County website during June 2017 to provide links to planning documents and the project launch, as well as project bulletins, and event updates;
- An online and hard-copy Community Planning Survey was undertaken in May and June of 2017 and sent to all residents in Saddle Hills County to obtain feedback on key issue areas;
- A background report titled “MDP Policy and LUB Gap Review” was completed in July 2017. The purpose of this document was to evaluate the impact of new legislation, emerging trends in renewable energy, and best practices;
- A series of four community open houses were conducted in Woking (June 14, 2017), Blueberry Mountain (June 15, 2017), Bonanza (June 28, 2017) and Savanna (June 29, 2017) to discuss issues of concern. In total, 25 residents attended the open houses, and the County received a total of 220 completed surveys; and
- Four public open houses were convened in Woking (March 13, 2018), Blueberry Mountain (March 14, 2018), Bonanza (March 27, 2018) and Savanna (March 28, 2018) to solicit input on the draft MDP. In total, 41 residents attended the open houses to review the draft documents. A comment form was distributed to solicit feedback on the future land use concept and draft policies of the MDP and the LUB. The County received a total of 19 completed comment forms.



3.2 Strengths, Themes and Guiding Principles

The MDP review process identified community strengths, major themes for future development, and guiding principles for the County.

3.2.1 Community Strengths

Four community strengths emerged in this process and demonstrated that the County:

- Values its rural lifestyle;
- Values the preservation of its agriculture lands;
- Values the preservation of its natural resources and amenities; and
- Values its local business and economic development.

3.2.2 Major Themes

Participants in the review process overwhelmingly described the County as respectful and adaptable, offering opportunities to work in collaboration to achieve environmental stewardship while enjoying all the recreational assets and rural lifestyle the County has to offer. Major themes were identified from the review process and conveyed that participants:

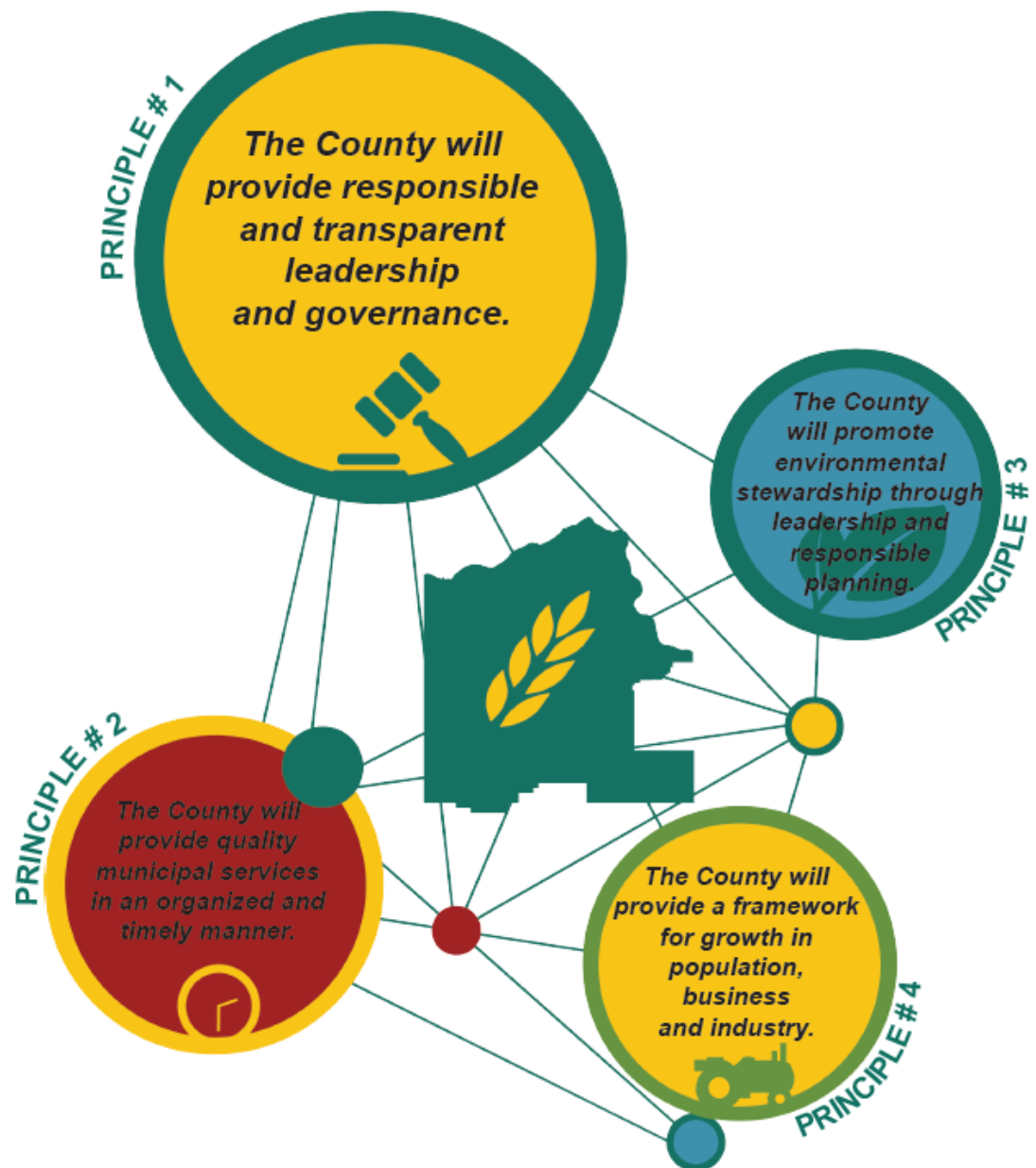
- Value the preservation of unsubdivided agricultural land in the County, but support opportunities to enhance growth and development;
- Support residential subdivision on lower quality agricultural lands, but only in locations that optimize existing infrastructure and County services;
- Support industrial and commercial development to be concentrated in specific locations in the County to maximize the efficient use of land and infrastructure;
- Encourage future commercial and industrial development to attract amenities and services including grocery stores and food services, gas stations, recreational facilities, health and personal services for seniors' care;
- Identified monetary incentives, grants, promoting arts and culture, amateur sports, large-scale alternative and renewable energy, and investing in marketing and communications as ways to attract growth in the County; and
- Indicated the greatest challenge in the County is balancing new development and services to attract and maintain a steady population base, while still preserving the rural lifestyle valued by its residents.



“ Renewable energy projects. Development that will employ people in the community. Development that will benefit community members. ”

3.2.3 Guiding Principles

In order to succeed in encouraging new development and local business, while maintaining environmental stewardship of important agricultural lands and natural features in the County, all decisions made by Council or Administration must recognize the above community strengths and major themes, as well as the following guiding principles, which were identified in the review process:



These principles are the core activities that reflect the character of the community as identified in the plan review process and the Saddle Hills County Strategic Plan, and shall provide a foundation for the goals, objectives, and policies of the MDP.

Section 4.0 |

General Development Strategy



The general development strategy focuses on the County's quality of life and describes a pattern of strategic growth and development. The strategy protects the County's agricultural lands, environmentally sensitive lands, open spaces, and provides development and location criteria for new country residential, commercial, industrial, and other non-agricultural uses. In general, the MDP reflects the County's past land use patterns, current community values, and desired future.

4.1 General Policies

Conform with Legislation

- 4.1.1 The County shall conform to the policies of the Province of Alberta, the Provincial *Land Use Framework (LUF)*, Alberta Land Stewardship Act (ALSA), and any subsequent Regional Plan when considering MDP updates, MDP amendments, LUB amendments, or other development proposals.

Policy Areas Map

- 4.1.2 Future development in the County shall generally conform to the Policy Areas (Map 2, Page 17). The map is designed to provide the County with a broad framework for development (and is not intended to be interpreted on a site-by-site basis).

<i>Growth Areas</i>	4.1.3 <i>Growth Areas</i> and <i>Potential Growth Areas</i> are identified on the Land Use Concept (Map 2, Page 17). It is intended that the County direct future residential, commercial and industrial development to these areas in accordance with the policies of this MDP.
<i>Area Structure Plans</i>	4.1.4 The County may require that an <i>Area Structure Plan (ASP)</i> , be prepared by the developer in accordance with Section 633 of the Municipal Government Act (Act), as a prerequisite to approval of a commercial, industrial, or a country residential subdivision if the proposal exceeds five or more lots or a cumulative lot density of six lots per quarter section. Terms of reference for individual plans shall be prepared by the County, but should generally address the following issues as deemed appropriate by the County: <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) conformity with this Plan, other <i>Statutory Plans</i> and the LUB;(b) impacts on adjacent uses and mitigation methods, such as the provision of any suitable buffers or setbacks;(c) proposed land uses and population projections;(d) proposed methods of water supply, <i>Stormwater Management</i> and sewage disposal;(e) access and internal circulation;(f) allocation of municipal, environmental, and conservation reserve;(g) suitability of the development site in terms of soil stability, groundwater level, and drainage;(h) fire safety and emergency planning;(i) a method by which developers pay for off-site costs; and(j) any other matters identified by the municipality. Notwithstanding the above, the County shall direct that an <i>ASP</i> be prepared if required by Alberta Transportation.
<i>Development Agreement</i>	4.1.5 When land is developed or redeveloped, the County may require developers to enter into a development agreement as a condition of approval.
<i>Costs of Development</i>	4.1.6 The developer shall be responsible for the costs incurred for the construction of internal roads and other infrastructure required to serve or accommodate a proposed subdivision or development.
<i>Lot Size</i>	4.1.7 The County shall not approve any subdivision application that results in the creation of a country residential lot under 0.8 ha (2 ac) in size, or a commercial or industrial lot under 0.2 ha (0.5 ac) in size unless the proposed lots are serviced by municipal or communal water and sewer systems.

Land Use Bylaw

- 4.1.8 The LUB shall establish standards for development in the County and implement the policies of this Plan.

Development Phasing

- 4.1.9 The order of development phasing will give first priority to infilling or existing serviced areas followed by areas where infrastructure can be extended efficiently. *Infill* development of any land use type should be of a similar scale and design to the surrounding properties to integrate the proposed development into the existing areas.



LAND USE CONCEPT MAP 2

ADMINISTRATIVE BOUNDARIES + FEATURES

- Approved Area Shading Plans
- Saddle Hills County
- County Boundary
- Intermunicipal Fringe Area
- Settlements
- Waterbody

LAND USE POLICY AREAS

- CR1 Country Residential One
- CR2 Country Residential Two
- RC Rural Commercial
- RL Rural Light Industrial
- RH Rural Heavy Industrial
- HR1 Harvest Residential One
- HR2 Harvest Residential Two
- HC Harvest Commercial
- HI Harvest Industrial
- Future Public Utility
- Future Institutional
- Future Industrial
- Environmentally Sensitive Area
- Future Commercial
- Future Country Residential
- Future Market Residential
- Future Harvest Estate Residential
- Future Public Service

PROVINCIAL HIGHWAYS + RAILWAYS

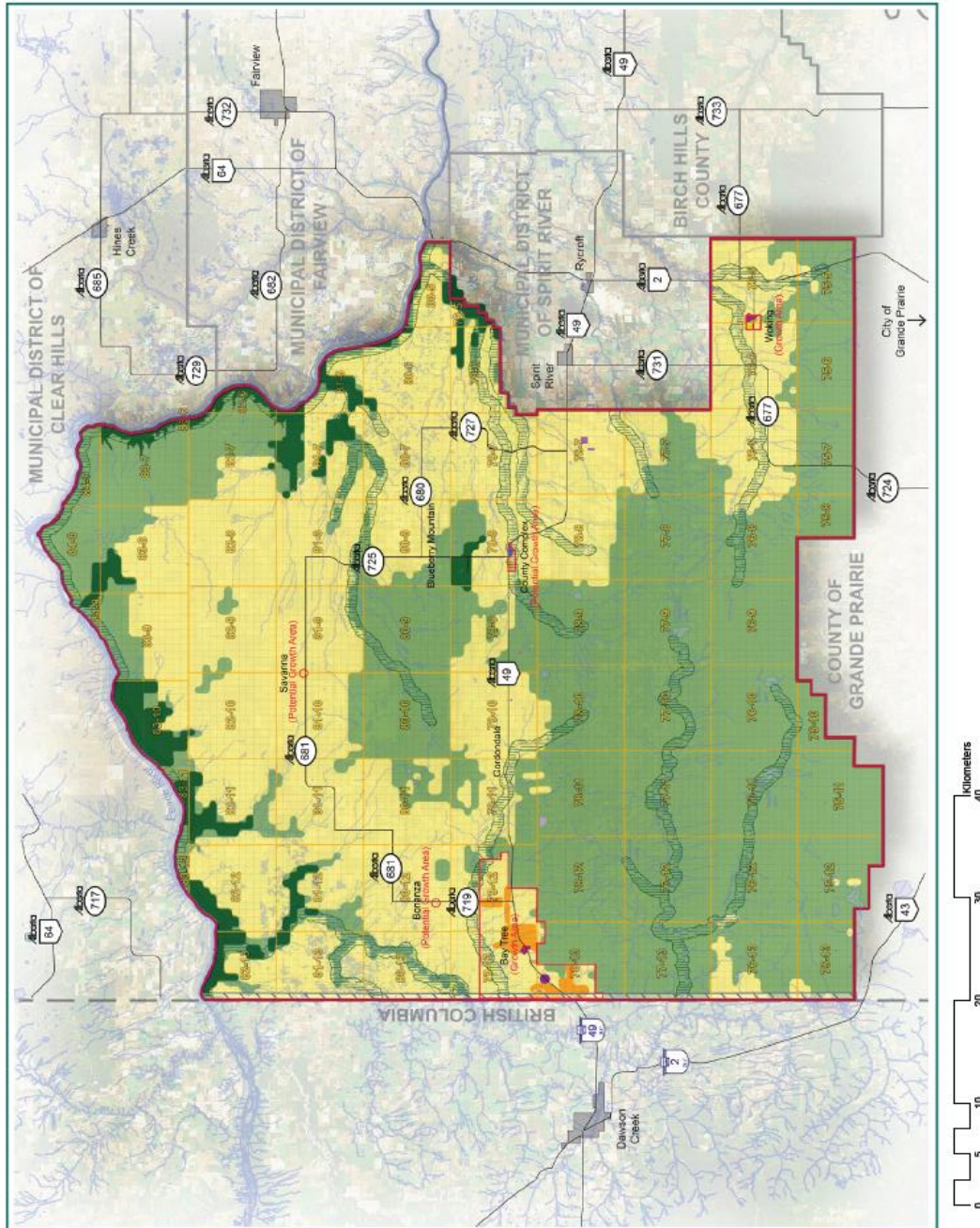
- Highway
- Railway



Scale 1:400,000



Map Prepared: April 2018
 Data Source: Saddle Hills County
 Base: Alberta Base Map
 MWD 1003 107M QM15
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Agriculture



Agriculture is a dominant economic and land use activity in the County, both in terms of grain and livestock production. The County's land base is extensive, approximately one third of which is characterized by good soil quality. It is the intent of this Plan to preserve the County's agricultural land base and protect Agricultural Operations, but in the interest of balance promote economic diversification and rural development that is compatible with agricultural activities.

5.1 Goal

Conserve agricultural lands and protect *Agricultural Operations* as required in the Act, through sustainable planning, and maintain the agricultural nature and rural lifestyle of the County.

5.2 Objectives



Preserve *Better Agricultural Land* for agricultural land uses.



Minimize the impact of non-agricultural uses on existing *Agricultural Operations*.



Provide policies regarding the establishment of Confined Feeding Operations (CFOs).



Provide criteria for the establishment of non-agricultural uses in agricultural areas.



Provide policies promoting agri-business and responsible environmental stewardship.

5.3 General Policies

<i>Agriculture as a Priority</i>	5.3.1	<i>Agricultural Operations</i> and related activities shall be a priority in the Agriculture Policy Area as illustrated on Map 2 (Page 17).
<i>Right to Farm</i>	5.3.2	The County shall support the Agriculture Operations Practices Act (AOPA) by providing notice of decision to applicants for non-agricultural subdivision and development that agriculture is the primary use in the area, and that <i>Agricultural Operations</i> maintain precedence over any other form of land use.
<i>Basic Farm Unit</i>	5.3.3	Unless otherwise permitted in this Plan, the County shall encourage the quarter section as the basic <i>Farm Unit</i> in the Agriculture Policy Area.
<i>Agricultural Subdivision</i>	5.3.4	Notwithstanding 5.3.3, the County may approve the subdivision of land for agricultural (extensive) purposes regardless of land quality if the proposed parcel is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) physically severed from the balance of the quarter section and is inconvenient to access; (b) to be consolidated with adjacent lands; (c) required to accommodate a pre-existing or authorized use; or (d) in the opinion of the County capable of sustaining a viable agricultural use.
<i>Non-Agricultural Uses</i>	5.3.5	Lands in the Agricultural Policy Area may be developed (or rezoned as required) for non-agricultural industries, country residential development, highway commercial uses, home-based businesses, public uses and utilities, recreational uses, resource extraction industries, greenhouses and rural industrial development provided that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the proposal is in conformity with applicable <i>Statutory Plans</i> and the LUB; (b) existing <i>Agricultural Operations</i> are not disrupted; (c) they are suitable in terms of soil stability, groundwater level, and drainage; (d) they have sufficient road access; and (e) are compatible with environmentally sensitive areas.
<i>Encourage Agri-business</i>	5.3.6	The County shall support development of agricultural related activities and businesses including processing, minor servicing, storage and repair businesses, provided they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) developed in accordance with the policies of this section; and (b) do not disrupt existing <i>Agricultural Operations</i>.

Market Gardens 5.3.7 The County shall support the development of smaller-scale market gardens as a means of increasing production variety within the County, and meet local market demand.

Compatible Recreation and Tourism Uses 5.3.8 The County shall support the development of recreation and tourism uses that are compatible with, or support, agricultural land uses and that diversify the agricultural economy.

Sustainable Practices 5.3.9 The County supports and encourages agricultural practices that are sustainable and environmentally responsible, which reduce impacts on the natural environment. These practices include nutrient management, sustainable grazing and riparian management, integrated crop management, responsible pest management and greenhouse gas awareness.

Conversion of Unimproved Land 5.3.10 The County shall encourage the conversion of unimproved land for agricultural expansion where the conversion shall not adversely impact the natural environment or adjacent land uses.



5.4 Rural Subdivision and Development

<i>Better Agricultural Land</i>	5.4.1	The subdivision of <i>Better Agricultural Lands</i> for non-agricultural uses shall not be permitted, unless otherwise allowed for in this MDP (See Appendix D).
<i>Farmstead Separation</i>	5.4.2	<p>The subdivision of land to accommodate a farmstead separation shall be permitted if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the parcel contains an existing, habitable residence; and (b) the proposed parcel size is the minimum necessary to accommodate on-site improvements and services, amenities, woodlots, and other areas with no agricultural value.
<i>Windbreaks and Shelterbelts</i>	5.4.3	The County shall encourage the retention and/or development of windbreaks between agricultural parcels and shelterbelts around farmstead separations and vacant parcels.
<i>Vacant First Parcel</i>	5.4.4	<p>The subdivision of a vacant first parcel out of an unsubdivided quarter section may be permitted if the proposed parcel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) is a minimum of 2.0 ha (5 ac) and a maximum of 4.0 ha (10 ac) in size; (b) does not, in the opinion of the County interfere with existing <i>Agricultural Operations</i> on the balance or on adjacent lands; (c) legal and physical access is available; and (d) has, in the opinion of the County, a suitable building site.
<i>Size of Vacant First Parcel</i>	5.4.5	Notwithstanding 5.4.4(a), the County may approve a vacant first parcel out of an unsubdivided quarter section that exceeds 4.0 ha (10 ac) in size if the proposed lot is severed from the balance, or as a result of site characteristics, topography, size or configuration, not viable to farm.
<i>Dwelling Density</i>	5.4.6	One dwelling unit shall be permitted per parcel. Additional dwellings may be allowed in accordance with the provisions of the LUB.

Lot Density 5.4.7 In the Agricultural Policy Area, a maximum of one parcel may be subdivided from an unsubdivided quarter section for residential purposes on *Better Agricultural Lands*. A maximum of three parcels may be subdivided from an unsubdivided quarter section for residential purposes if not located on *Better Agricultural Lands* or if the physical characteristics of the site are determined to not practically be used for farming purposes. Subdivisions resulting in the creation of additional parcels shall be rezoned to the appropriate residential district in the LUB prior to approval. The subdivision of a fragmented parcel, or a parcel intended for public use (e.g. cemetery) in the Agricultural Policy Area shall not contribute to the calculation of lot density.

Subdivision for Non-Agricultural Uses 5.4.8 The subdivision of land to accommodate any non-agricultural use in the Agricultural Policy Area shall only be allowed if the proposed parcel is rezoned to the appropriate land use district in the LUB. Exceptions to this requirement are those subdivisions permitted under 5.4.7, and uses listed as Permitted or Discretionary Uses in the Agriculture District of the LUB.

Cluster Development 5.4.9 The County shall encourage applicants for subdivision to incorporate cluster design as a means of preserving agricultural land for agricultural uses, while applying appropriate buffering to reduce land use conflicts.

5.5 **Confined Feeding Operations**

Location of Confined Feeding Operations 5.5.1 The County encourages the development of Confined Feeding Operations (CFOs) at appropriate locations, as a means of adding value to grain crops, and creating employment.

Application Support 5.5.2 The County generally considers CFOs greater than three times the size described in Column 3 of Schedule 2 of the AOPA, Part 2: Matters Regulation (Alberta Regulation 257/2001) as an inappropriate land use and may or may not support their development within the County depending on the nature of the proposed operation.

Internal Referrals 5.5.3 The County shall forward approvals, registrations and authorizations from the *Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB)* to Council, affected internal County departments, and the Agricultural Service Board for review and comment.

Expansion and Setbacks

- 5.5.4 Applications to the *NRCB* for the establishment or expansion of CFOs shall be supported by the County only if they are compatible with adjacent land uses, do not generate adverse health or environmental effects, follow the AOPA guidelines, and meet or exceed the following separation distances:
- (a) 3.2 km (2 mi) from the boundary of a hamlet, settlement, or a *Multi-lot Country Residential Subdivision*, community or public use, or provincial or municipal park;
 - (b) minimum setback requirements from a water body, swamp, gully, ravine, coulee, river, creek, stream or registered drainage ditch shall be in accordance with the regulations under the AOPA and may not be located in an area subject to flooding; or
 - (c) 1.6 km (1 mi) from an adjacent municipality, unless supported by the municipality affected;
 - (d) within an environmentally sensitive area identified on Map 2 (Page 17); or
 - (e) within proximity of other similar areas where a potential conflict may occur.

Surface and Ground Water Protection

- 5.5.5 CFOs should not be established or expanded where there is any risk that runoff will contaminate ground or surface water supplies.

Residential Restrictions

- 5.5.6 The County shall refuse development permit applications for residential dwellings proposed to be located within the minimum separation distance of a CFO operation, as defined by the AOPA for any:
- (a) proposed CFO for which the County has received notification;
 - (b) an existing CFO operation; or
 - (c) an approved CFO.



Country Residential Development



The County is experiencing increased demand for country residential development due to the visual attractiveness of the area, growing economic opportunities, and County efforts to promote growth with investments in infrastructure including road improvements, recreation, communication facilities, water lines and potable water fill stations. The policies of this Plan are designed to facilitate new growth by promoting new and attractive multi-lot country residential development.

6.1 Goal

To encourage and promote the creation of cluster development in appropriately located, designed and serviced residential subdivisions that provide effective and efficient infrastructure capacity.

6.2 Objectives

- ✓ Recognize country residential development as a legitimate land use in the Agricultural Policy Area, while minimizing potential conflicts with non-residential uses.
- ✓ Provide for the establishment of attractive, well-planned and properly serviced country residential development.
- ✓ Direct new multi-lot country residential development to prescribed areas.
- ✓ Establish clear criteria for development of *Multi-lot County Residential Subdivisions*.
- ✓ Reduce the non-agricultural development footprint outside of *Growth Areas* and *Potential Growth Areas*.

6.3 General Policies

Better Agricultural Land 6.3.1 The development of multi-lot country residential subdivisions shall not be permitted on *Better Agricultural Land*, unless required to achieve land use efficiencies through the clustering of development or if in accordance with the provisions of an approved *ASP*.

Incompatible Uses 6.3.2 The County shall direct the development of country residential subdivisions away from incompatible uses such as:

- (a) the setback area of an active or non-operating sanitary landfill or waste water treatment plant in accordance with the Subdivision and Development Regulation;
- (b) the minimum distance setback of an approved or registered CFOs;
- (c) the setback area of existing sand and gravel extraction sites in accordance with provincial guidelines; and
- (d) the setback area of sour gas facilities in accordance with provincial guidelines, or other potentially hazardous industrial operations.

Bareland Condominium 6.3.3 The County shall require that bareland condominium residential developments meet the same requirements and standards as conventional country residential subdivisions, and be developed in accordance with the Condominium Act.

Buffers 6.3.4 Wherever possible, a landscaped or treed buffer should be provided along the boundaries of country residential lots that are located adjacent to non-residential uses.

Livestock 6.3.5 The number and type of livestock allowed in country residential developments shall be in accordance with the LUB.

Infill and Underutilized Land 6.3.6 The County should encourage lot infilling and development of existing country residential areas prior to designating additional land for country residential development.

Secondary Suites 6.3.7 One secondary suite may be permitted on country residential parcels in addition to a primary residence in accordance with the LUB.

Housing Diversity

6.3.8 Through the implementation of its Affordable Housing Strategy, the County shall support the development of a range of residential development types and densities to provide choices in housing types, affordability, and opportunities for local services, amenities, and employment.

Seniors Housing

6.3.9 The County shall encourage the development of seniors housing and residential care facilities (i.e., assisted care facilities, continuing care facilities) to support the ability of residents to age-in-place.

6.4 Multi-lot Country Residential

Subdivision Criteria

- 6.4.1 All *Multi-lot Country Residential Subdivision* proposals shall be evaluated according to the following:
- (a) the applicant shall demonstrate to the satisfaction of the County that the land in question is safe from flooding, erosion, subsidence, groundwater inundation, or other *Hazard Lands*;
 - (b) the development is compatible with adjacent land uses and environmentally sensitive areas;
 - (c) proximity to other *Multi-lot Country Residential Subdivisions*;
 - (d) the applicant has demonstrated the presence of an adequate water supply, and has made provision for sewage disposal in accordance with provincial standards; and
 - (e) access to existing roads.
- Subdivision proposals that do not meet the above criteria to the satisfaction of the County should be refused.
-

Water Supply

- 6.4.2 For any proposal that results in an overall density in excess of five lots per quarter that proposes to use groundwater for its water supply, the applicant shall submit to the County a hydrogeological assessment prepared by a qualified professional engineer in accordance with provincial guidelines.



Section 7.0 |

Economic Development and Tourism



Saddle Hills County is bordered by the Province of British Columbia to the west, the County of Grande Prairie No.1 to the south, Clear Hills County to the north, and shares a common eastern boundary with the Municipal Districts of Fairview No.136, Spirit River No. 133 and Birch Hills County. The County shall work closely with all adjacent municipalities to provide effective means of ensuring that services respond to its residents and industries. It is the intent of this MDP to encourage the coordination and delivery of services with these other jurisdictions in order to provide a framework for growth in economic development, tourism and recreation. While the County has historically relied on traditional goods-producing sectors (agriculture & oil and gas), a growing role for service-producing industries (tourism, recreation, exploring markets for alternative energy practices, including wind, solar, and biofuel) will help create a diversified local economy.

7.1 Goal

Progressive land use and open for business policies that support economic development, and encourage a positive and innovative environment conducive to fostering growth, tourism and recreation.

7.2 Objectives

- ✓ Support regional collaboration, recreational and cultural opportunities to promote the region and attract and retain businesses and industries.
- ✓ Encourage a diversity of commercial and industrial development within the County.
- ✓ Promote effective means of ensuring services respond to the needs of County residents.
- ✓ Facilitate the growth and management of the tourism and recreation industry.

7.3 General Policies

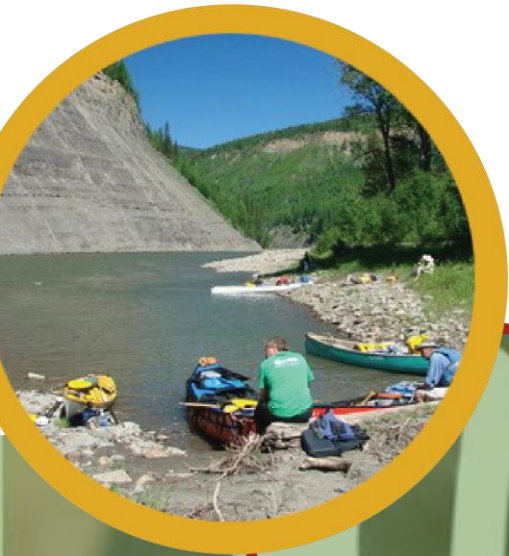
<i>Diversified Economy</i>	7.3.1	The County shall encourage a diversified economy with an appropriate balance between agriculture, industrial areas, tourism and recreational amenities. Alternative and renewable energy (solar, wind, biofuel) shall be promoted to attract new opportunities for its citizens and allow for a level of economic resiliency.
<i>Promotion of Development</i>	7.3.2	The County shall continue to promote local commercial and industrial development through its economic development affiliations.
<i>Support Eco-Tourism and Agri-Tourism</i>	7.3.3	The County supports eco-tourism and agri-tourism as a means to create employment opportunities and diversify the County's economy.
<i>Marketing and Communication</i>	7.3.4	The County may encourage regional marketing opportunities, and develop a Market Strategy for promoting the County's tourism assets, including clear directional signage along Highway 2 and Highway 49, and within hamlet and settlement areas and other communities.
<i>Key Tourism Destination and Asset Inventory</i>	7.3.5	The County may conduct a comprehensive inventory to identify tourism assets to identify strengths and gaps. The County should strive to update inventories on an annual basis.
<i>Off-Road Trail Networks</i>	7.3.6	The County may recognize the tourism potential for off-road (e.g. snowmobile and ATV trail activities, and work with existing trail groups to establish opportunities for improving regional trail access within the County that do not conflict with other uses, the natural environment, or nearby residents).

High-Speed Internet

- 7.3.7 The County may support the expansion of high-speed telecommunication networks into under-served areas of the County as a means to encourage future business opportunities and improve connectivity for residents in accordance with current County policy.
-

Rural Tourist Accommodation

- 7.3.8 The County may support the development of bed and breakfasts and guest ranches as a means to diversify income from agricultural production and to offer alternative accommodation arrangements for travelers and workers throughout the area.



Section 8.0 |

Commercial and Industrial Development



The County supports the continued development of commercial and industrial uses as a means of diversifying the economic base of the municipality. It is important, however, that such development only be permitted at appropriate locations.

8.1 Goal

Promote the development of new commercial and industrial land uses in clustered development in *Growth Areas* and *Potential Growth Areas* in order to optimize resources that meet the needs of residents.

8.2 Objectives

- ✓ Facilitate industrial developments that support agriculture and resource industries.
- ✓ Ensure that commercial and industrial developments are attractive and compatible with existing development.
- ✓ Accommodate the growth and development of home-based businesses.
- ✓ Support the County's role as a centre for natural resource extraction.
- ✓ Promote and diversify the County's economy by emphasizing manufacturing, transportation, and the supply of goods and services.

8.3 Industrial Development

<i>Location of Industry</i>	8.3.1	New industrial development shall be encouraged to locate in proximity to established industrial operations, near highways and other high-grade roads, and in proximity to rail.
<i>Dangerous Goods</i>	8.3.2	The County shall only support the development of industrial uses that store or manufacture dangerous goods if proposed at suitable locations.
<i>Industrial Development</i>	8.3.3	<p>The County may support industrial development in the rural area if the proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) caters to the needs of agriculture or natural resource extraction; (b) has comparatively large land requirements; (c) is not suited to an urban area; (d) does not conflict with adjacent land uses in terms of appearance, emissions, noise, or traffic generation, unless suitable buffers are provided; (e) the site is suitable for the proposed development in terms of soil stability, groundwater level, and drainage; and (f) has minimal servicing requirements.
<i>Industry in Agricultural Areas</i>	8.3.4	<p>All industrial developments proposed in the Agricultural Policy Area or within a hamlet shall be evaluated according to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) conformity with relevant <i>Statutory Plans</i> and the LUB; (b) quality of agricultural land; (c) compatibility with adjacent land uses in terms of appearance, emissions, noise, vibration, dust, odour, traffic generation, environmental <i>Hazard Lands</i> or other safety risks; (d) provision of buffering and/or separation distances and transition between uses; (e) caters to the needs of agriculture or natural resource extraction; (f) the servicing requirements of the proposal; (g) suitability of the site in terms of soil stability, groundwater level, and drainage; (h) provision for access and impacts on the transportation network; and (i) have sufficient on-site water storage or access to a municipal water source for fire protection purposes.

<i>Better Agricultural Land</i>	8.3.5	Industrial development shall not be permitted to locate on <i>Better Agricultural Land</i> , unless: (a) the proposed development has unique site requirements or is location-specific; or (b) the County determines that there is no suitable alternative location; or (c) the development is undertaken in accordance with an approved <i>ASP</i> .
<i>Buffers</i>	8.3.6	At the time of development, the County may require the provision of buffers, such as landscaping, fences, berms, and setbacks to maximize the compatibility of development with adjacent uses.
<i>Risk Assessment</i>	8.3.7	The County may require that developers prepare <i>Risk Assessments</i> , when deemed necessary when considering the location of a potentially noxious industry that may cause environmental contamination or other nuisance.
<i>Impact on Roads</i>	8.3.8	Further to Policy 8.3.4(h), all industrial developments shall be reviewed to confirm that the proposed development is served by a road that has been designed and constructed to accommodate industrial traffic.

8.4 Commercial Development

<i>Location</i>	8.4.1	The County supports commercial developments at appropriate locations.
<i>Limits on Location</i>	8.4.2	With the exception of home-based businesses, commercial development: (a) may be limited to <i>Growth Areas</i> and <i>Potential Growth Areas</i> , unless the proposal has unique site requirements that warrant an alternative location; and (b) shall not locate on <i>Better Agricultural Land</i> unless no suitable alternative location is available.
<i>Review of Commercial Development Proposals</i>	8.4.3	All commercial development proposals will be evaluated according to the following: (a) the type of commercial use proposed; (b) suitability of the site in terms of soil stability, groundwater level, and drainage; (c) provisions for access and impacts on the transportation network; and (d) conformity with relevant <i>Statutory Plans</i> and the LUB.

8.5 Home-based Business

<i>County Support</i>	8.5.1	The County supports and encourages the continued development of home-based businesses.
<i>Land Use Bylaw</i>	8.5.2	<p>The County shall provide for the accommodation of both major and minor home-based businesses in the LUB. The development of home-based businesses may be supported where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the scale of the business is compatible with the uses in the area where it is located; (b) there is minimal impact on the environment, water, and municipal infrastructure; (c) the business is clearly secondary in nature to the residential use of the property; and (d) the business meets the standards established under the LUB.

8.6 Resource Extraction

<i>Proximity to Sour Gas Facilities</i>	8.6.1	The County shall require that development and subdivision applications in close proximity to sour gas facilities meet the standards of the Subdivision and Development Regulation (Alberta Regulation 43/2002) and provincial guidelines with respect to minimum separation distances between sour gas facilities and other land uses.
<i>Natural Resource Extraction Operations</i>	8.6.2	Support for natural resource extraction operations shall be contingent on the mitigation or minimization of the impacts upon adjacent land uses, soil, water, and farming operations.
<i>Limitations on Natural Resource Extraction</i>	8.6.3	<p>Natural resource extraction industries should not be permitted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) in close proximity to <i>Growth Areas</i>, <i>Potential Growth Areas</i>, or other areas of concentrated residential development; and (b) in areas that are known to possess unique historical and/or environmental features that would be disturbed or destroyed by resource extraction or in areas that are deemed to be environmentally sensitive.
<i>Separation from Natural Resource Extraction Activities</i>	8.6.4	The County shall direct new residential subdivision and development away from active and potential surface resource extraction areas to minimize the potential for conflict between incompatible land uses.
<i>Gravel Extraction Permits</i>	8.6.5	The permitting and licensing process for sand and gravel operations shall, as much as possible, be coordinated between the County and the Province.

-
- Site Reclamation* 8.6.6 The development of surface resource extraction operations shall be subject to reclamation in accordance with the Code of Practice for Pits (2004), under the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act, RSA 2000, E-12, as amended and Conservation and Reclamation Regulation (AR 115/93), as amended, or successor documents.

8.7 Energy Development

- Sour Gas Facilities* 8.7.1 The County shall apply provincial guidelines with respect to minimum separation distances between sour gas facilities and other land uses through the subdivision and development process.

-
- Responsible Energy Development* 8.7.2 Encourage the energy industry, as part of the energy resource development and exploration process, to engage in proactive consultation to address the following issues when they propose development within the County, including:
- (a) the potential threat to surface and groundwater and existing water wells;
 - (b) the impact of development on *Agricultural Operations*;
 - (c) dust, noise, and other consequences with potential to affect domestic life; and
 - (d) road safety, road maintenance and the establishment of traffic corridors.

-
- Alternative and Renewable Energy* 8.7.3 The County may explore and support opportunities for alternative energy production in agricultural areas, including but not exclusive to biofuel production, solar generation, and wind energy conversion systems.



Growth Areas and Potential Growth Areas



The hamlet of Woking, the County's settlements (Bay Tree, Bonanza and Savanna), and other community areas are identified as either Growth Areas or Potential Growth Areas as illustrated in Map 2 (Page 17). These communities are primarily residential in nature, but also provide, or have the opportunity to provide, commercial and institutional facilities and services to area residents. The policies of this Plan are intended to enhance the function and viability of these communities.

9.1 Goal

Allow for continued, orderly growth of hamlet, settlement, and other community areas identified as (*Growth Areas* or *Potential Growth Areas*) in the County to provide effective and efficient utilization of infrastructure.

9.2 Objectives

- ✓ To ensure that future development in *Growth Areas* and *Potential Growth Areas* occurs in an orderly and efficient manner.
- ✓ To maintain the viability of all of the County's rural communities.
- ✓ Direct non-agricultural residential growth to *Growth Areas* and *Potential Growth Areas*.
- ✓ Provide for a diverse range of housing options and increase related commercial and public land uses to increase jobs and improve access to services.

9.3 General Policies

<i>Support for Growth Areas and Potential Growth Areas</i>	9.3.1	The County shall encourage commercial, industrial and institutional uses that are intended to serve the rural area to locate in <i>Growth Areas</i> and <i>Potential Growth Areas</i> .
<i>Types of Development</i>	9.3.2	<p>The County shall encourage the following types of development within <i>Growth Areas</i> and <i>Potential Growth Areas</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) residential uses, including single family dwellings and manufactured homes;(b) local and convenience commercial uses;(c) institutional uses such as churches, community halls, and schools;(d) light industrial uses; and(e) recreational uses.
<i>Industrial Uses</i>	9.3.3	The types of industrial uses permitted in <i>Growth Areas</i> and <i>Potential Growth Areas</i> shall be limited to those that can be compatibly located adjacent or near residential developments.
<i>Servicing of Development</i>	9.3.4	With the exception of those developments accessing municipal water and sewer systems, all development in <i>Growth Areas</i> and <i>Potential Growth Areas</i> is required to utilize private systems in accordance with provincial standards.
<i>Seniors' Housing</i>	9.3.5	The County will support in principle, proposals for seniors' housing and assisted living facilities in appropriate locations, to enable seniors to age in place.
<i>Affordable Housing</i>	9.3.6	The County will support in principle, proposals to encourage the availability of affordable or inclusionary housing options through policies, regulations and incentives.
<i>Efficient Development</i>	9.3.7	Development within <i>Growth Areas</i> and <i>Potential Growth Areas</i> shall be encouraged to proceed in an orderly, efficient and contiguous manner. The development of vacant or redevelopment of derelict lots shall be encouraged as an alternative to hamlet or settlement expansion where feasible.

<i>Area Structure Plan</i>	9.3.8	The County may prepare an <i>ASP</i> for <i>Growth Areas</i> or <i>Potential Growth Areas</i> in accordance with Section 4.1.4. The County shall also monitor and update existing <i>ASPs</i> as required.
<i>Removal of Abandoned Buildings</i>	9.3.9	The removal of abandoned buildings and renovations to dilapidated structures is encouraged to improve the aesthetic character of the communities in which they are located.

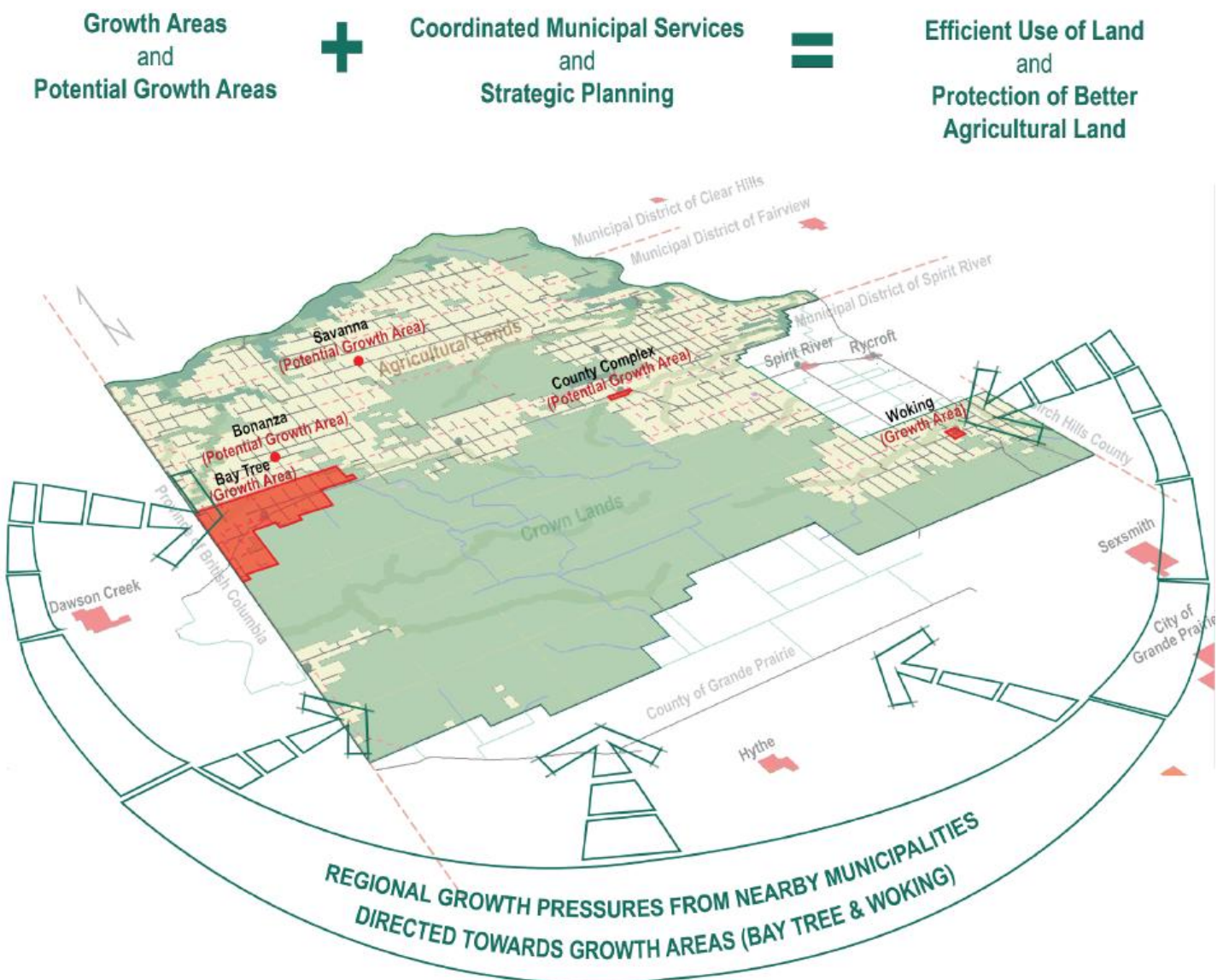


Figure 9.1: Diagram of Planning Rationale for Growth Areas

Section 10.0 |

Environmental Stewardship



Alberta is home to more than 80,000 species including plants, animals, arthropods, bacteria, fungi, and algae. These species and their habitats make up Alberta's biodiversity; they are critical to our health and well-being in ways that are often overlooked. Forest lands grow trees that supply sawmills and pulp mills, agricultural lands grow crops that feed our communities, and natural areas provide opportunities for hiking, hunting, fishing, and trapping. Biodiversity is foundational for active and healthy communities throughout Alberta.

The County is rich in wildlife and diverse landscapes, and is situated within a varied ecological network consisting of the Saddle Hills, Blueberry Mountain, the valleys of the Peace, Ksituan, Burnt and Pouce Coupe Rivers, and Henderson Creek. Numerous small lakes are also found in the County, the most significant of which are Moonshine, Hilltop and Spring Lakes. These environmental areas provide the County with a picturesque and rugged environment, outdoor recreation opportunities, and an ecosystem that benefits residents, visitors, and wildlife. The Municipal Development Plan requires and encourages the responsible stewardship of environmentally sensitive areas and the ecological network. These areas can also pose as hazard lands to development in terms of flooding, erosion, and subsidence, the potential effects of which need to be mitigated.

10.1 Goal

Protect natural environmental resources by utilizing sustainable planning to encourage the County to meet the needs and vision of the present without compromising the needs and vision of the future.

10.2 Objectives

- ✓ Outline the requirements for the planning and development of land within or adjacent to Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs).
- ✓ Identify, protect and enhance natural areas, areas susceptible to flooding, and other significant erosion prone areas.
- ✓ Protect wildlife, waterfowl staging areas, lakes, river shore-lands, valley slopes, unique topographic features, and vegetative types which may be considered environmentally sensitive.

- ✓ Recognize the Peace River valley and other valleys and ravines as important natural features.
- ✓ To encourage and promote the development of outdoor recreational opportunities.
- ✓ Maintain public accessibility to lakes, rivers, and other features through the use of reserves at the time of subdivision.
- ✓ Promote development that follows FireSmart design principles.
- ✓ Support the preservation of historic resources within the County.

10.3 General Policies

Environmentally Sensitive Areas 10.3.1 The policies contained in this section apply to those lands identified as Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) on Map 2 (Page 17), as well as any other lands that the County deems appropriate.

ESA Confirmation 10.3.2 *ASPs* and subdivision applications, as the County deems appropriate, shall:

- (a) confirm the location and geographic extent of any ESA, or historic or archaeological sites. A detailed analysis shall be undertaken by a qualified consultant with all costs borne by the developer; and
- (b) integrate ESAs into the design of developments to form part of the linked and integrated parks and open space system, including the retention of forests, wildlife corridors, muskeg areas, to protect source water, and to provide stormwater ponds and parks to form continuous open spaces.

ESA Protection 10.3.3 The County may, as a condition of subdivision approval, require the protection and conservation of ESAs by dedication of *Environmental Reserve (ER)*, the provision of *Environmental Reserve Easements (ERE)*, *Conservation Reserve (CR)*, *Conservation Easements (CE)*, or by other statutory means as defined by the Municipal Government Act (Act), or the Alberta Land Stewardship Act (ALSA).

Air and Water Quality 10.3.4 The County may develop targets or thresholds for air and water quality to monitor changes to the environment, and may develop methods to mitigate or eliminate a local or regional effect, in accordance with guidelines provided by a Regional Plan.

Fragmentation

10.3.5 The County shall discourage development that results in the fragmentation of natural features and ESAs.

Provincial Guidelines

10.3.6 The County shall require that developers, utilizing guidelines prepared by the province, provide appropriate setbacks from water bodies, watercourses, and slopes to protect against erosion, flooding, loss of fish and wildlife habitat, and damage to natural features.

Building Setbacks

10.3.7 Building setbacks from the top of bank of valleys and ravines shall be provided as per the LUB.

Flood Prone Lands

10.3.8 No permanent development or infrastructure shall be permitted on lands that are contained within a 1:100 year flood plain or otherwise known to be flood-prone, unless the developer provides:

- (a) a certificate from a qualified professional engineer to confirm that the development or infrastructure has been properly flood proofed. For those areas where 1:100 year flood mapping does not currently exist, the County shall require a qualified professional to confirm the 1:100 year flood level of the affected river, stream or lakeshore; and
- (b) indication to the satisfaction of the County that the flood hazard has been mitigated.

Notwithstanding (a) and (b) above, development associated with substances of a chemical, hazardous or toxic nature, which would be an unacceptable threat to public safety if damaged as a result of flooding, shall not be permitted to locate in the 1:100 year flood hazard area.

Steep Slopes

10.3.9 Permanent development shall not be permitted on slopes exceeding 15% or on land that is subject to erosion. Development on such lands may only be considered if the developer provides a geotechnical report, prepared by a qualified professional that demonstrates that the site in question is suitable for development.

Wetland Assessment

10.3.10 The County shall apply the directions of the Alberta Wetland Policy and prioritize wetland avoidance over minimization or replacement by retaining on-site wetlands, whenever possible. The County shall require that the developer provide a wetland assessment, prepared by a qualified professional, for any development that involves the disturbance of a wetland and triggers provincial approval under the Water Act.

Contamination

10.3.11 The County may prohibit developments that may result in the contamination of groundwater, ESAs, or any other feature that is determined to be environmentally

significant. This includes such uses as sand and gravel extraction, CFOs, and major industrial uses.

10.4 Environmental and Conservation Reserve and Easements

<i>Environmental Reserve Required</i>	10.4.1	Where applicable, the County shall require the dedication of <i>Environmental Reserve (ER)</i> lands at the time of subdivision in accordance with the Act. <i>Environmental Reserve (ER)</i> may be dedicated in parcel form or by way of <i>Environmental Reserve Easements (ERE)</i> .
<i>Environmental Reserve to Protect Crown Interests</i>	10.4.2	The County shall work with the Province to ensure that Crown interests in water bodies are addressed as early as possible in the planning process. The County may use <i>Environmental Reserve (ER)</i> to protect water bodies and valley banks that meet the definition of <i>Environmental Reserve (ER)</i> but are not claimed by the Province.
<i>Protect River and Creek Valleys</i>	10.4.3	River and creek valleys shall be preserved as ESAs, wildlife corridors and habitat, and may include recreational uses.
<i>Top of Bank</i>	10.4.4	All lands below the top of the bank of a river or creek valley shall be dedicated as <i>Environmental Reserve (ER)</i> at the time of subdivision. The top of bank may be identified during the preparation of an <i>Area Structure Plan (ASP)</i> , or by survey during the subdivision and development process to the satisfaction of the County.
<i>Development Setbacks</i>	10.4.5	Development setbacks shall be measured from the top of bank of rivers and streams, and/or the high-water mark of wetlands and lakes in accordance with the LUB. The County may require geotechnical or hydrological studies carried out by a professional engineer to determine the top of bank and/or high-water mark, and determine a site-specific setback.
<i>Groundwater Recharge Areas</i>	10.4.6	The County may: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) require developers to identify <i>Groundwater Recharge</i> areas as part of their subdivision applications; and (b) negotiate <i>Conservation Easements (CE)</i>, or require <i>Municipal Reserve (MR)</i> or <i>Environmental Reserve (ER)</i> and/or <i>Environmental Reserve Easements (ERE)</i> covering groundwater recharge areas. If necessary these instruments may be implemented to protect tree cover surrounding groundwater recharge areas.
<i>Conservation Reserve</i>	10.4.7	The County may, as a condition of subdivision approval require the preservation of ESAs or other sites of ecological value through the dedication of <i>Conservation Reserve (CR)</i> .

*Conservation Reserve
Dedication*

10.4.8 The County may require the dedication of *Conservation Reserve (CR)* lands where in the opinion of the County the land has environmentally significant features, but is not eligible for dedication as *Environmental Reserve (ER)*. *Conservation Reserve (CR)* compensation shall be in accordance with the Act.

*No Disposal of
Conservation Reserve*

10.4.9 The purpose of dedicating *Conservation Reserve (CR)* is to enable the County to protect and conserve the land in question. The County shall not sell, lease or dispose of *Conservation Reserve (CR)* and must ensure that the land remains in its natural state.

Conservation Easements

10.4.10 The County shall encourage and promote the use of *Conservation Easements (CE)* as a means of protecting environmentally sensitive features on private lands outside the subdivision process. The use and control of these feature areas shall be clearly stated in the easement agreement.

10.5 FireSmart

FireSmart Design Principles

10.5.1 The County shall encourage developers to recognize *FireSmart: Protecting Your Community from Wildfire* design principles when preparing *ASPs*, multi-lot subdivisions, commercial and industrial development to minimize the potential for wildfire damage through:

- (a) the provision of recreational infrastructure along the outer perimeter of the development so that the developed portions may be separated from ESAs;
- (b) the provision of a fire guard which will serve as a buffer between development and the surrounding ESAs; and,
- (c) the development of trails between developments and surrounding forested lands which may be used in an emergency for fire prevention purposes.

Development Practices

10.5.2 The County shall encourage FireSmart practices as outlined below for all development in rural areas, and may be requested at the time of either subdivision or development approval:

- (a) the provision of adequate on-site water supplies for firefighting purposes;
- (b) the use of fire resistant building methods and materials;
- (c) the installation of spark arresters on all chimneys;
- (d) the provision of an emergency access to developments to help prevent property damage and the potential for loss of life; and
- (e) modifications to road design, including width and length, grade, curves, layout, design, and weight limits to provide adequate and safe emergency access, and roads to function as a potential fire break and fuel break.

10.6 Environmental Reviews

Environmental Site Assessment 10.6.1 A Phase 1 *Environmental Site Assessment (ESA)* may be required for any proposed development at the cost of the developer. The assessment shall be prepared in accordance with the Canadian Standards Association Environmental Assessment Guidelines.

Environmental Impact Assessment 10.6.2 An *Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)* may be required for any proposed development at the cost of the developer.

10.7 Green Initiatives

Green Infrastructure 10.7.1 The County shall encourage the incorporation of significant natural features as part of the overall planning of infrastructure systems. This should include using existing wetlands as *Stormwater Management* facilities and planting and preserving shrubs and trees to improve air quality.

Green Infrastructure Management 10.7.2 The County shall encourage all applications for *Multi-lot Country Residential Subdivision* to protect, manage and enhance any existing *Green Infrastructure* of the County, as well as provide delivery of new infrastructure where appropriate.

Green Initiatives and Rebate Programs 10.7.3 The County shall encourage sustainable policies including:

- (a) treated water usage through the use of water conservation technology such as grey water separation systems and low flow fixtures;
- (b) *Low Impact Development (LID)* techniques for stormwater;
- (c) minimizing material and solid waste through recycling, composting and utilization of biodegradable building materials in existing and new development; and
- (d) Provincial initiatives offering energy efficiency and solar rebate programs.

*Update Engineering
Guidelines and Standards*

10.7.4 The County may revise and update the design standards for transportation and utilities infrastructure to recognize engineering standards for *Green Infrastructure* and Canadian Green Building Council's Sustainable Development Standards to *Low Impact Development (LID)*.

Alternative Energy Projects

10.7.5 When reviewing development applications for Solar Energy Facilities and Wind Energy Conversion Systems, the County shall ensure that the subject facilities Are not located on Better Agricultural Land. In addition, the County shall require the proponent to submit a Decommissioning and Reclamation Plan, and provide the County with sufficient securities to cover the costs of reclamation and Decommissioning.



Recreation, Open Space, and Historic Resources



Saddle Hills County is characterized by an abundance of natural resources that are ideally suited for a variety of outdoor recreation activities. In anticipation of increasing use pressures for these resources, it is the intent of this Municipal Development Plan to encourage recreational development opportunities in appropriate locations and to provide for the acquisition of open space as required to meet the needs of the community.

The *State of Recreation in Saddle Hills County* identified recreation as a major focus in the County. This includes recreation infrastructure and activities for permanent and seasonal residents and visitors to the County. The County is specifically suited for many outdoor recreation activities due to its exceptional beauty and considerable amount of undeveloped land and resource roads.

Open space, obtained primarily through Municipal Reserve (MR) is an important tool for the County to ensure provision of open space and recreational facilities, both from a land and funding perspective. Making sure the guidelines for the provision and use of MR are clear is helpful in attracting development and ensuring consistent decision making for the long-term.

The County may support the preservation of historic resources by identifying sites, and ensuring designated federal, provincial, and municipal historic resources are protected from adverse impacts associated with on-site development and adjacent land uses.

11.1 Goal

Support the development of recreation, park, and tourism facilities and services that address the diverse needs of residents.

11.2 Objectives

- ✓ Continue to support recreational services and opportunities that enhance the quality of life of County residents.
- ✓ Encourage community involvement in the planning and development of open space areas.
- ✓ Ensure that *MR* is acquired and planned in a manner that reflects community goals and needs.

11.3 Recreation and Heritage Resources

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------|--|
| <i>Recreation Plan</i> | 11.3.1 | The County may review and update its Recreation Plan as required to ensure it is current and reflects the ongoing recreation needs of County residents. |
| <hr/> | | |
| <i>Passive Recreation</i> | 11.3.2 | The County supports the use of lake shores, river corridors and other ESAs for recreational purposes that do not require extensive facility development or involve large concentrations of people. |
| <hr/> | | |
| <i>Access to Shorelines</i> | 11.3.3 | Through the subdivision process, public access to shoreline areas shall be accommodated through the dedication of <i>ER</i> and/or <i>MR</i> . |
| <hr/> | | |
| <i>Historic Sites</i> | 11.3.4 | The County may protect areas which have been identified as having significant historic or recreation potential, and prepare plans to help ensure the long term viability of historic sites and recreation areas. The County may identify and protect local historical sites in accordance with provincial legislation. |

11.4 Municipal and School Reserve

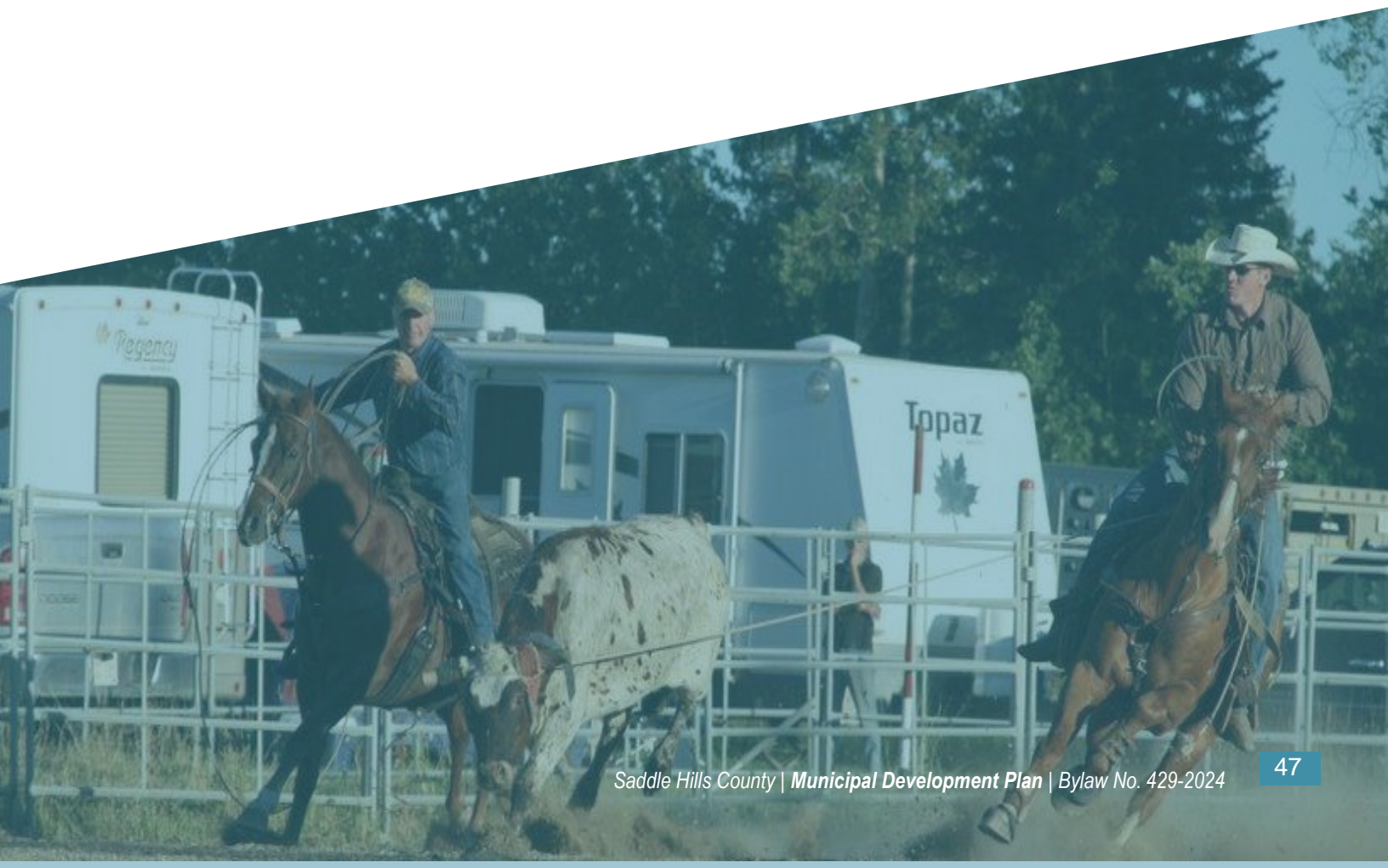
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|---------------------------------------|--------|---|
| <i>Municipal Reserve Required</i> | 11.4.1 | As a condition of subdivision, the County may require that ten percent (10%) of the developable lands be dedicated as <i>MR</i> in accordance with the Act. |
| <hr/> | | |
| <i>Municipal Reserve Dedication</i> | 11.4.2 | <p>In the event that <i>MR</i> is to be dedicated, it shall be acquired as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) where the subdivision results in the creation of a multi-parcel country residential development, <i>MR</i> may be dedicated in parcel form for community open space;(b) in industrial or other non-residential subdivisions, <i>MR</i> may be dedicated in parcel form to serve as buffers from incompatible land uses;(c) <i>MR</i> requirements may be deferred regardless of the nature of the proposed subdivision if required to assemble larger school or recreation sites in accordance with an approved <i>ASP</i>, or if the amount owing is relatively small;(d) dedicated as money-in-place in accordance with the Act and County policy. |
| <hr/> | | |
| <i>Municipal Reserve Connectivity</i> | 11.4.3 | Subdivisions may be designed in such a manner that <i>MR</i> parcels can connect to Crown lands, Environmentally Significant Areas and with <i>MR</i> parcels in adjoining subdivisions. |

Municipal Reserve Land Quality 11.4.4 Land dedicated as *MR* shall be of similar quality as the land that is the subject of development. Land that is deemed undevelopable in its natural state or is otherwise more suited as *ER* will not be accepted as *MR* in accordance with the Act.

Municipal Reserve Funds 11.4.5 The County may use the funds generated through *MR* dedication to acquire or develop lands for recreational purposes.

Disposal of Municipal Reserve 11.4.6 Prior to disposing of any *MR*, Council shall review the applicability and effect of such disposition on surrounding land uses and the area's recreation potential. Disposal of *MR* lands shall be in accordance with the Act.

School Reserve 11.4.7 The dedication of *School Reserve (SR)* shall be allocated in accordance with the Act.



Crown Lands



Provincial Crown Lands comprise a majority of the County's land base, occupying in excess of 55% of its geographic area. These lands, classified as the Green Area, are managed by several provincial departments, non-government organizations, and boards that set and/or administer the rules for land use, and include but are not limited to, Agriculture and Rural Development, Culture and Community Spirit, Energy, Environment, Sustainable Resource Development, Tourism, Parks and Recreation, the Alberta Conservation Association, the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER), and the NRCB. The majority of the Crown land areas are located in the Saddle Hills and Blueberry Mountain areas, as well as major river and creek valleys.

As the Crown is a significant stakeholder in the County, the County will complement the work of the province to encourage the appropriate use of Crown Lands throughout the County. The County, through the referral process, can help ensure that these authorities consider the potential for impacts on adjacent land uses and infrastructure, and that potential adverse effects are considered and mitigated.

12.1 Goal

The County is to communicate, collaborate and ensure accountability between departments to align with provincial and federal processes with consideration to local interests.

12.2 Objectives

- ✓ Encourage the appropriate use of Crown Lands.
- ✓ Facilitate public access to Crown Land areas where deemed suitable and desirable.
- ✓ Facilitate communication and collaboration with the province to ensure local interests are considered when reviewing activities on Crown Lands through the referral process.

12.3 General Policies

Crown Land Development

- 12.3.1 The County shall:
- (a) support the use of Crown Lands for renewable and non-renewable resource development, limited grazing, conservation, and recreational use;
 - (b) pursue discussions with relevant government agencies to ensure that it is fully informed of any future proposed use of Crown Lands;
 - (c) encourage the preparation of integrated resource management plans between the County and the Province; and
 - (d) work with the Province to ensure that Crown interests in water bodies are addressed prior to development.

Coordination with Province

- 12.3.2 As a means of ensuring that the interests of the County are recognized and reflected in the development of Crown Lands, the following measures are supported and encouraged:
- (a) participation and involvement in the province's Integrated Resource Plan or successor process. This includes the identification of areas where new plans are required, and identifying the provisions of existing plans that are in need of review; and
 - (b) involvement and cooperation in provincial approval processes for proposed leases and other dispositions, serving as a means for conveying the concerns of residents to the appropriate provincial agencies, and active participation in provincial review processes.

Disposition of Green Area Land

- 12.3.3 The County shall support the disposition of Green Area lands adjacent to private agricultural land in response to the needs of the agricultural industry.

Lease or sale of White Area Land

- 12.3.4 The County shall support the sale or long-term lease of Crown Land within the White Area for lands considered to have an agricultural value and use for existing *Agricultural Operations*.

Referral Agency

- 12.3.5 The County shall cooperate in provincial approval processes by serving as a referral agency on proposed leases and dispositions involving development, and convey any concerns to the appropriate provincial agency.

Transportation and Utilities



The County's roads play an important role in shaping the community's development, and their design must be treated as an integral part of land use planning. The primary element for road travel in the County is the Provincial Highway network. As a result, land uses along the network serve the Upper Peace region and local traffic. Highways 2 and 49 link the County to neighbouring municipalities, the rest of Alberta, and neighbouring British Columbia, while Highways 677, 680, 681, 719, 724, 725, 727 provide critical primary and secondary connections as illustrated in Map 3 (Page 55). The Provincial Highway network is managed and operated by Alberta Transportation. The residents of the County are also served by approximately 1800 kilometres of municipal roads. Maintaining the integrity, safety and quality of the municipal road network is a high priority.

The municipal services are limited to the hamlet of Woking, where the County operates a water and sanitary sewer system. Truck fill sites are located at Bonanza, County Complex, Woking, and future plans are underway for a truck fill site in Savanna. Future plans to expand County water services from Bonanza to Bay Tree are underway. All other developments in the County are served by on-site water (the majority have dugouts or cisterns) and septic systems. For solid waste management, the County operates a series of seven collection sites and two transfer stations, from which waste is transported to a privately operated regional landfill. This Plan includes infrastructure policies to ensure that all new developments are appropriately serviced and meet the needs of the County's residents.

13.1 Goal

To encourage and facilitate the sustainable, convenient and accessible provision of transportation and utility services.

13.2 Objectives

- ✓ To ensure that the County provides an efficient and effective transportation network for the movement of people and goods.
- ✓ Quality roads in the County that are safe and convenient.

- ✓ Building and sustaining communities with access to potable water.
- ✓ Guarantee sufficient right-of-way provision for roads in order to allow their expansion in the future, if necessary.
- ✓ To ensure that all development is serviced to the satisfaction of the County.
- ✓ Utilizing communication infrastructure, providing high quality internet services as well as maximizing value added services.
- ✓ Ensure the efficient and effective provision of water supply, sewage treatment, stormwater run-off control, and sanitary waste disposal facilities to County residents.
- ✓ Waste and wastewater management that is sustainable, self-sufficient, and accessible.
- ✓ Aim to reduce demand for non-renewable energy resources within the County through the promotion of alternative energy sources.
- ✓ To pursue and promote energy conservation within the County.

13.3 Transportation

Transportation Plan

13.3.1 The County shall prepare a Transportation Plan as a means to determine future transportation network planning and funding needs.

Road Standards

13.3.2 All roads shall be developed in accordance with County policy and standards.

Highway Maintenance

13.3.3 The County shall work with the provincial government to secure funding for the maintenance and enhancement of the highway network.

Alberta Transportation

13.3.4 The County shall refer all *ASPs*, rezoning, subdivision and development applications that include land located within 1.6 km of a highway to Alberta Transportation for comment.

Road Widening

13.3.5 The County shall evaluate subdivision and development proposals to determine if there is a need for widening and/or upgrading of adjacent roads.

Access Required

13.3.6 All proposed lots shall have direct access to a municipal road, and be subject to County policy. Access by easement shall only be considered as a last resort if no reasonable alternative is available. Where no adequate access road exists, residential access road construction will be undertaken in accordance with current County policy.

<i>Internal Subdivision Roads</i>	13.3.7	The County shall require that multi-lot subdivisions be developed with internal subdivision roads in order to reduce the number of direct accesses to township or range roads. Subdivisions shall also be subject to current County policy respecting road right-of-way dedication.
<i>Protection of Highways</i>	13.3.8	Any future subdivisions located adjacent to a highway shall take place in a manner that protects the integrity of the highway corridor and may require a service road, subject to the requirements of Alberta Transportation.
<i>Traffic Impact Assessments</i>	13.3.9	The County may require that a developer provide a Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA), prepared by a qualified professional, to identify the amount and type of traffic to be generated by a development and to determine if upgrades to the municipal road network are required.

13.4 Utilities

<i>Water and Sewer Services</i>	13.4.1	With the exception of development located in areas where municipal water and/or sewer systems are present, all developments in the County are required to provide private water and sewer services in accordance with provincial standards.
<i>Sewage Collection</i>	13.4.2	The County may allow developments to be serviced with central (communal) sewage collection provided such systems are constructed in accordance with provincial requirements and maintained by the owner.
<i>System Setbacks</i>	13.4.3	When a lot containing an existing residence is subdivided from a larger parcel, the County shall determine if the setbacks for the existing sewer system comply with the Alberta Private Sewage Systems Standard of Practice. If it is determined the system is not compliant, relocation or upgrading of the system shall be identified as a condition of subdivision approval.
<i>Water Supply</i>	13.4.4	The County shall require developers to demonstrate proof of water supply if accessing groundwater, or identify proposed method of water servicing, for all <i>Multi-lot Country Residential Subdivision</i> in excess of five lots, and all industrial, and highway commercial developments. Where lots to be served by cisterns, restrictive covenants shall be registered as a condition of subdivision approval, prohibiting the use of wells or other means of groundwater collection.

13.5 Waste Management

Landfill System

- 13.5.1 The County intends to maintain its commitment to the disposal of solid waste through the sanitary landfill system. The County should ensure that solid waste disposal sites are located and developed in a manner that shall minimize any impacts on surrounding land uses.
-

Recycling

- 13.5.2 The County is in favour of recycling waste or discarded materials and shall generally support the initiatives of local residents in this regard.
-

Development Setbacks

- 13.5.3 The County shall ensure that all residential subdivision or development proposed in the vicinity of an active or reclaimed landfill site or transfer station, comply with the setback requirements of the Matters Related to Subdivision and Development Regulation.

13.6 Linear Facilities

Use of Corridors

- 13.6.1 The County encourages the creation of shared corridors where possible to minimize land fragmentation and promote efficient land use, while planning for growth and development. Location of utility lines and facilities are encouraged to locate in a manner which:
- (a) Integrates transportation routes and utility lines within defined corridors and, as much as possible, in government road allowances;
 - (b) Discourages the creation of fragmented parcels of land between rights-of-way; and
 - (c) Minimizes the impacts on recreational, historical or wildlife resource areas.
-

Utility Structures

- 13.6.2 The County shall support the development of utility structures such as cellular towers, microwave towers, radio towers, or similar infrastructure provided they are compatible with adjacent development, and meet federal regulations and the requirements of the LUB. The proponent may be required to conduct a public meeting, and provide studies, such as but not limited to a geotechnical report, *Environmental Site Assessment*, and *Environmental Impact Assessment* to support the development.

13.7 Energy Conservation

Alternative Energy

- 13.7.1 The County may allow for a variety of alternative energy developments such as a wind energy conservation systems and solar collectors to be established, provided the developments:
- (a) are compatible with adjacent land uses;
 - (b) conform to the uses and regulations of the LUB; and
 - (c) depending on the scale of the development, provide the appropriate plans and documentation to ensure that the use is compatible with surrounding land uses. Plans may include, but are not limited to a geotechnical report, *Environmental Site Assessment*, or *Environmental Impact Assessment*.

Energy Conservation

- 13.7.2 The County may encourage the promotion of energy conservation practices through educational programs, or public awareness campaigns.



TRANSPORTATION CONCEPT MAP 3

ADMINISTRATIVE BOUNDARIES + FEATURES

- Saddle Hills County
- County Boundary
- Hamlet or Settlement
- Waterbody

PROVINCIAL HIGHWAYS + RAILWAYS

- Major Highway - Paved
- Minor Highway - Paved
- Minor Highway - Gravel
- Railway

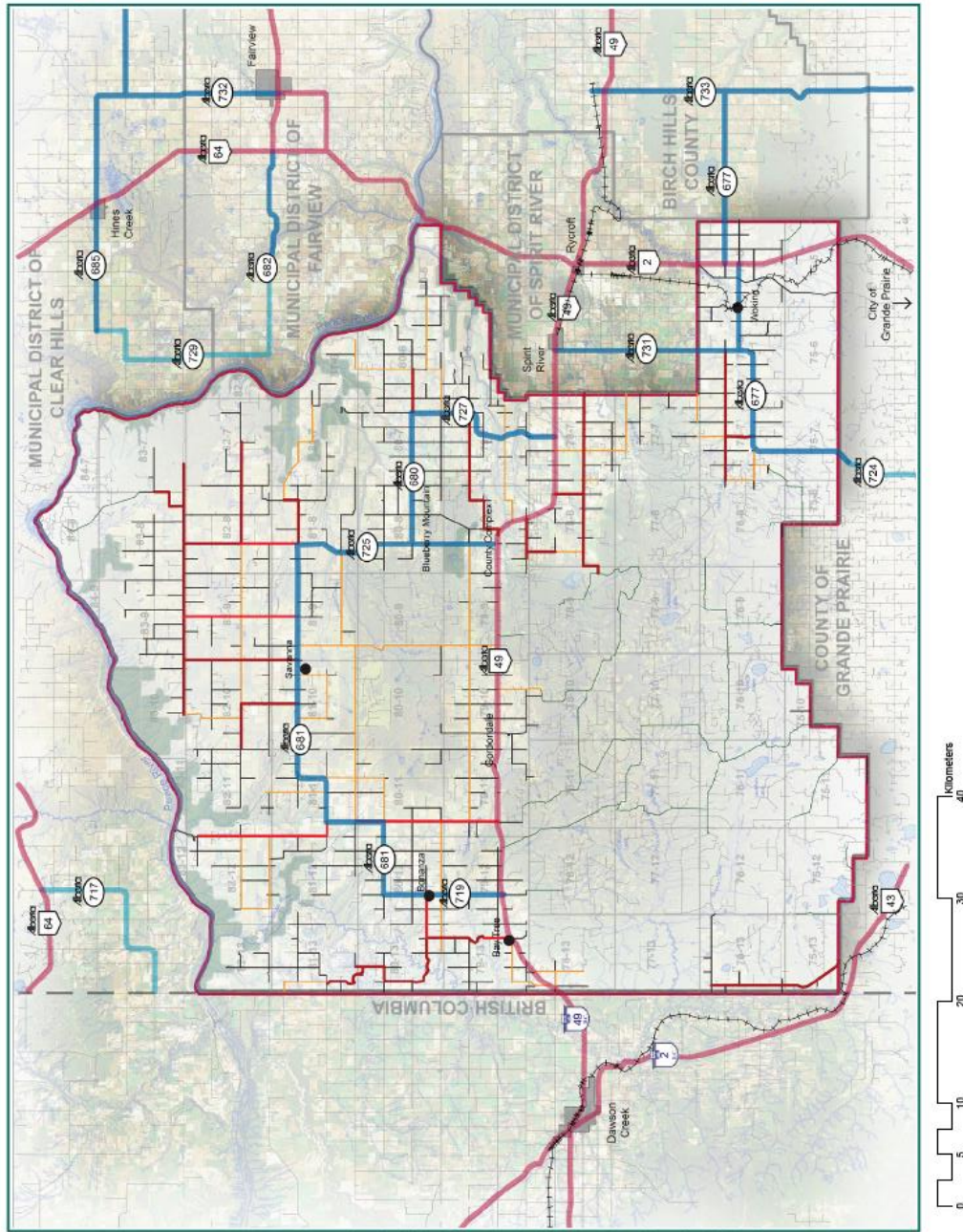
COUNTY ROADS

- County Aerial - Paved
- County Aerial - Gravel
- County Collector
- Range Road
- County Local
- County Lease
- Township Road



Map Updated April 2018
Compiled from the Provincial Titles Mapping Digital
Base, Alberta Data Partnerships
400-1555-1111 (toll free)
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Note:
Boundaries and boundaries are approximate only and
subject to confirmation at time of development.



Intermunicipal Collaboration



Municipalities should focus on their own taxpayers and local interests, but new approaches to infrastructure planning and fostering good governance require municipalities to broaden their interests at a regional scale to encourage greater efficiencies for intermunicipal services. The Act was amended by three bills over a period of three years to reflect the need for greater regional cooperation including: Municipal Government Amendment Act (2015), Modernized Municipal Government Act (2016), and An Act to Strengthen Municipal Government (2017). These mandatory changes to the Act require implementing regional planning mechanisms for land-use planning, and require municipalities to work together regarding service delivery and cost-sharing. The County supports a proactive approach to fostering cooperation with its municipal neighbours and other levels of government, and improving communication on land use and related issues. Future development within the County and involving the G5 Partnership in the Upper Peace region will be required to create cooperative approaches through planning efforts, increased regionalization, regional service provision, and creating Intermunicipal Development Plans (IDPs) and Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks (ICFs) with adjacent municipalities.

A focus on creating IDPs and ICFs will address intermunicipal land-use planning, as well as regional service delivery and funding among all neighboring municipalities.

14.1 Goal

Regional collaboration through local initiatives will promote communities and organizations to work together and enhance services, prosperity and capacity.

14.2 Objectives

- ✓ Maintain mutually beneficial relationships with adjacent municipalities, as well as provincial and federal agencies to achieve the objective of regional cooperation and planning.
- ✓ Implementation of *IDPs* and *ICFs* in accordance with the Act.
- ✓ Facilitate intermunicipal communication and the referral of planning and development applications.

14.3 General Policies

Regional Planning

- 14.3.1 The County shall have regard for regional planning by participating in the proposed Upper Peace Regional Plan, and complying with the Provincial *Land-use Framework* and approved *Statutory Plans* or joint agreements when considering MDP amendments, LUB amendments or other development proposals.

Intermunicipal Referrals

- 14.3.2 The County shall establish a 1.6 km (1 mi) fringe zone adjacent to its boundaries with the Province of British Columbia as illustrated in Map 2 (Page 17). In this zone, the County shall circulate the following to the affected municipality for review and comment:
- (a) subdivision applications, with the exception of applications for farmstead separations, boundary adjustments and public uses;
 - (b) *ASPs* and amendments;
 - (c) development permit applications for discretionary uses under the LUB; and
 - (d) LUB amendments.

Intermunicipal Development Plan

14.3.3

The County may consider the continued use of Intermunicipal Development Plans with neighbouring municipalities as a means of coordinating land use and development.

*Intermunicipal
Collaboration
Framework*

14.3.4

The County supports the continued use of Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks and intermunicipal agreements with neighbouring municipalities as a means of delivering services in a cooperative manner.

Watershed Management

14.3.5 In keeping with Alberta's "Water for Life" initiative, the County shall work with provincial agencies and neighboring municipalities to protect watersheds and maintain the water quality of surface and groundwater systems.



Monitoring, Review, and Implementation



The MDP will guide decisions about the future growth and development of the County. More detailed planning is required through subsequent stages of the planning process, including the preparation or amendment of ASPs as necessary, the implementation of the LUB, and the subdivision and development approval process. Conformity between the MDP, the LUB, and intermediate planning documents must be achieved.

15.1 Monitoring and Review

The MDP must be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that it adequately deals with new and evolving planning and development trends and demands on the land. The County's Council and Administration must be prepared at any time to consider proposed amendments to the MDP in order to deal with unanticipated conditions, or proposals contrary to this MDP, but deemed desirable by Council. If amendments are required, they shall be carried out through a transparent public consultation process.

MDP Review

- 15.1.1 To ensure that this MDP continues to be current and relevant, it should be reviewed at five year intervals unless changing conditions warrant a review prior to that time. MDP reviews may reflect such factors as legislative change, changes to the local development climate, the impact of new major projects, or Council philosophy. In undertaking such a review, consideration should be given to:
- (a) reviewing annual land use changes and issues;
 - (b) reviewing best practices and new development trends; and
 - (c) communication and consultation with stakeholders.

MDP Amendments

- 15.1.2 If an amendment to this MDP, an *ASP*, or the LUB is required to accommodate a proposed subdivision, the amendment shall receive third reading from Council prior to subdivision approval taking place.

15.2 Plan Consistency

Consistency with MDP

- 15.2.1 As the Act requires that all *Statutory Plans* be consistent, the County shall amend all existing *ASPs* as required to ensure consistency with this MDP. In addition, all new *Statutory Plans* and amendments to existing *Statutory Plans* shall include a statement addressing compliance with this MDP.

LUB Amendments

- 15.2.2 All amendments to the LUB shall be consistent with this MDP. If a proposed amendment is not consistent with this MDP, and Council wishes to approve the amendment, this MDP shall be amended coincidentally with the LUB.

LUB Consistency

- 15.2.3 The LUB shall be amended to ensure consistency with this MDP in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

15.3 Amendments to this Plan

MDP Amendments

- 15.3.1 If a significant change in policy direction is desired, or if subsequent studies indicate the need for a change to this Plan, it shall be amended in accordance with the Act.

Amendment Applications

- 15.3.2 The County or a landowner may initiate an amendment to this Plan. An application to amend this Plan shall include information respecting:
- (a) the purpose of the amendment, and proposed amendment text and/or mapping;
 - (b) an explanation of the rationale for the amendment; and
 - (c) a statement outlining the effect of the proposed amendment on adjacent land uses and municipal infrastructure and services.

Appendix A |

Definitions



All other words or expressions shall have the meanings respectively assigned to them in the Municipal Government Act (Act), the Subdivision and Development Regulation (Regulation), and the Land Use Bylaw (LUB). The land use boundaries identified on the maps in this Plan are approximate and not absolute. Any minor adjustments or variances that may be necessary to land use policy areas shall not require an amendment to this Plan.

A

“AGRICULTURAL OPERATION” means an agricultural activity conducted on agricultural land for gain or reward or in the hope or expectation of gain or reward, and, as defined by the Agricultural Operation Practices Act.

“ALBERTA ENERGY REGULATOR (AER)” is the single regulator of energy development in Alberta and ensures the safe, efficient, orderly, and environmentally responsible development of hydrocarbon resources over their entire life cycle. This includes allocating and conserving water resources, managing public lands, and protecting the environment while providing economic benefits for all Albertans.

“AREA STRUCTURE PLAN (ASP)” means a long-range land use and servicing plan adopted by bylaw and prepared

in accordance with the Act for a large land base, typically with a longer than five-year anticipated build out and covering more than two quarter sections of land. It provides a high-level framework for future land use patterns and infrastructure provision. ASPs may be initiated by the County or required from the developer in accordance with the policies of this Plan.

B

“BETTER AGRICULTURAL LAND” means those lands in the rural area which are rated at 28% or higher by the Rural Farmland Assessment (RFA) system. Parcel(s) or portion(s) thereof with a RFA in excess of 28% may be considered exempt from this definition at the discretion of the Development Authority if they are adjacent to non-agricultural land uses, which are compatible with the proposed non-agricultural use, or subject to slope, configuration, or size constraints (see also Appendix D).

C

“**CONSERVATION EASEMENT**” means a voluntary legal agreement defined in the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act between a landowner and government or conservation agency. The easement agreement is intended to protect the natural values of the land by giving up all or some of the rights to develop the land.

“**CONSERVATION RESERVE (CR)**” means land purchased by a municipality, in accordance with the Act, for the purposes of conserving environmentally significant features (e.g. wildlife corridors, significant tree stands) which would not qualify as Environmental Reserve. Conservation reserve must be maintained in its natural state and any proceeds from the disposal of conservation reserve must be used for conservation and related purposes.

E

“**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**” means a study through which the environmental impacts potentially resulting from a proposed development are identified and assessed in the planning process, and identifies steps that can be taken to avoid negative environmental impacts or reduce them to acceptable levels before they occur.

“**ENVIRONMENTAL RESERVE (ER)**” means land considered, in accordance with the Act, to be undevelopable because of its natural features or location (e.g. unstable slopes or flood prone); or, a strip of land abutting the bed and shore of a body of water or water course, that a developer may be required to dedicate at the time of subdivision. Environmental reserve must be maintained in its natural state or used as park. Environmental reserve may be dedicated to the County or secured by easement agreement satisfactory to the County.

“**ENVIRONMENTAL RESERVE EASEMENT**” means an easement created for the purposes as defined in the Act. Instead of requiring the dedication of all or part of the lands that are classified as environmental reserve, the County and a private landowner can agree that all or part of those

lands will be subject to an environmental reserve easement. An easement is registered against the land in favor of the County and is a condition or covenant that runs with the land.

“**ENVIRONMENTAL SITE ASSESSMENT**” means an investigation in relation to land to determine the environmental condition of a property.

F

“**FARM UNIT**” means the quarter section as the basic farm unit in the Agriculture Policy Area.

“**FRAGMENTED PARCEL**” means a parcel that is separated from the balance of a quarter section by an impassable natural feature such as a permanent watercourse or valley, or a physical feature such as a road, highway, or railway.

G

“**GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE**” refers to the County’s environmental assets which are capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits to the community. Green infrastructure can include semi-natural and developed environments including habitats, wetlands, woodlands, groundwater, river, floodplains, lakes, farmland conservation areas, and habitat corridors. Green infrastructure in hamlets and settlements may be public open spaces dedicated as municipal, environmental, or conservation reserve or recreational lands.

“**GROUND WATER RECHARGE**” means inflow of water to a ground water reservoir (zone of saturation) from the surface. Infiltration of precipitation and its movement to the water table is one form of natural recharge. Also, the volume of water added by this process.

“**GROWTH AREAS**” means hamlets or settlements within the County that due to their locations and proximity to services have experienced growth.

“**HAZARD LAND**” means a natural feature or man-made sewage lagoons, flood plains, high water tables, water courses susceptible to flooding, sour gas sites, high pressure pipelines,

rail rights-of-way, steep slopes (e.g. over 15%), unstable slopes and others.

I

“**INFILL**” means the development of vacant land within an otherwise built-up area, or the redevelopment of an existing site to a higher density than was originally accommodated on the site.

“**INTERMUNICIPAL COLLABORATION FRAMEWORK (ICF)**” means a framework entered into between 2 or more municipalities that have common boundaries in accordance with the Act, and includes any amendments to a framework.

“**INTERMUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (IDP)**” means a statutory plan adopted pursuant to Section 631 of the Act addressing development on lands adjacent to neighbouring municipalities where joint efforts by municipalities for cooperation, collaboration and coordination for a mutually agreed upon outcome.

L

“**LAND USE FRAMEWORK (LUF)**” sets out a new approach to managing our province’s land and natural resources to achieve Alberta’s long-term economic, environmental and social goals. The LUF establishes seven new land-use regions and calls for the development of a regional plan for each. It provides a blueprint for land-use management and decision-making that addresses Alberta’s growth pressures.

“**LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT (LID)**” means land development and stormwater management approaches that work with nature to manage stormwater as close to the source as possible. LID focuses on maintaining and restoring the natural hydrological processes of a site. LID practices may include, but not limited to: rain gardens, naturalized drainage ways, rainwater harvesting for reuse, box planters, green roofs, and bioswales.

M

“**MULTI-LOT COUNTRY RESIDENTIAL SUBDIVISION**” means the creation of a subdivision that exceeds five or more lots or a cumulative lot density of six lots per quarter section.

“**MUNICIPAL RESERVE (MR)**” means land (or money-in-lieu of land) required in accordance with the Act at the time of subdivision for park and/or school purposes.

N

“**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION BOARD (NRCB)**” is an arms-length agency of the Government of Alberta. It was established in 1991 under the Natural Resources Conservation Board Act (NRCBA) to review proposed non-energy natural resource projects. In 2002 it was given additional responsibility for regulating Alberta’s confined feeding operations under the Agricultural Operation Practices Act (AOPA).

“**NATURAL RESOURCE EXTRACTION INDUSTRY**” means an enterprise engaged in the on-site removal, extraction and primary processing of raw materials such as timber, clay, sand, gravel, coal, limestone, oil and natural gas.

P

“**POTENTIAL GROWTH AREAS**” means areas within the County that due to their locations and proximity to services, may experience growth in the future.

R

“**RURAL FARMLAND ASSESSMENT (RFA)**” means farmland is assessed on the basis of its agricultural use value. All farmland is rated on the basis of its ability to produce income from the growing of crops and/or the raising of livestock. The productive value of farmland is determined using a process that sets a value for the best soils, and then makes adjustments for less than optimal conditions such as stones, the presence of sloughs, or topography not conducive to farming practices.

“**RISK ASSESSMENT**” means the overall process of risk analysis (process of identifying hazards and estimating their probability and consequences), risk estimation (process of combining the probabilities and consequences), and risk evaluation (process of evaluating the risk to determine if it can be tolerated or accepted).

S

“**SCHOOL RESERVE (SR)**” means land (or money-in-lieu of land) required in accordance with the Act at the time of subdivision for school purposes.

“**STATUTORY PLAN**” means an Intermunicipal Development Plan, Municipal Development Plan, Area Structure Plan, or Area Redevelopment Plan that is adopted by bylaw in accordance with the Act.

“**STORMWATER MANAGEMENT**” means stormwater management designed to maintain site hydrology and mitigate the adverse impacts of stormwater runoff and non-point source pollution. It manages stormwater runoff by mimicking a project site’s pre-development hydrology using design techniques that infiltrate, store, and evaporate runoff close to its source of origin. Examples include permeable pavement, bioswales, constructed wetlands, and re-use of grey water.

List of Acronyms



AOPA	Agricultural Operations Practices Act	ICF	Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework
AER	Alberta Energy Regulator	IDP	Intermunicipal Development Plan
ALSA	Alberta Land Stewardship Act	LUB	Land Use Bylaw
ARP	Area Redevelopment Plan	LUF	Land Use Framework
ASP	Area Structure Plan	LID	Low Impact Development
CFO	Confined Feeding Operations	MRB	Master Rates Bylaw
CE	Conservation Easement	MDP	Municipal Development Plan
CR	Conservation Reserve	MGA	Municipal Government Act
ER	Environmental Reserve	MR	Municipal Reserve
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment	NRCB	Natural Resources Conservation Board
ERE	Environmental Reserve Easement	RFA	Rural Farmland Assessment
ESA	Environmentally Sensitive Areas	SR	School Reserve
G5	Partnering municipalities of the Central Peace Region	TIA	Transportation Impact Assessment
I.D.	Improvement District	UPRP	Upper Peace Regional Plan

In addition, the policies of this MDP utilize acronyms in place of certain terms and agency names. The following listing is provided for the convenience of the reader:

Community Input and Engagement



Engagement Summary

Saddle Hills County is currently working to update its Municipal Development Plan and Land Use Bylaw. Throughout the month of June, four community open houses were held and a Community Planning Survey (online and hard copy) were used to gather feedback from residents, landowners and stakeholders on issues, opportunities and priorities. Thank you to all County residents and stakeholders who took the time to provide feedback at the open houses or through the survey.

- A series of four community open houses were conducted in Woking (June 14, 2017), Blueberry Mountain (June 15, 2017), Bonanza (June 28, 2017) and Savanna (June 29, 2017) to discuss issues of concern. In total, 25 residents attended the open houses, and the County received a total of 220 completed surveys.
- Four public open houses were convened in Woking (March 13, 2018), Blueberry Mountain (March 14, 2018), Bonanza (March 27, 2018) and Savanna (March 28, 2018) to solicit input on the draft MDP. In total, 41 residents attended the open houses to review the draft documents. A comment form was distributed to solicit feedback on the future land use concept and draft policies of the MDP and LUB. The County received a total of 19 completed comment forms.

Public Feedback Highlights

Agriculture

- Participants agreed that the preservation of unsubdivided agricultural land should be a priority in the County.
- There was also agreement that existing agricultural operations should be protected from encroachment by non-agricultural development.
- Most participants agreed that the County should support opportunities to enhance the growth and development of urban agriculture in areas zoned for County Residential Districts.

Residential

- Participants mostly agreed that more residential subdivision should be allowed on lower quality agricultural lands.
- Most participants agreed that residential development should continue to be limited to designated areas.
- There was also agreement that the County should promote acreage development in lower capacity areas that aren't suited to large farming operations.

Commercial and Industrial

- Respondents agreed for the most part that industrial and commercial development should be concentrated in specific locations and not scattered through the County.
- Ideas for specific types of commercial and industrial development included:
 - Amenities and services for County residents such as grocery stores, gas stations, fitness centres, recreational opportunities, restaurants, seniors' care facilities, etc;
 - Manufacturing, processing and other services that support what currently operates in the County;
 - Local fruit and vegetable production; and
 - Alternative energy and other opportunities that are environmentally friendly.
- Ideas to attract additional business and economic development in the County included:
 - Monetary incentives such as tax credits, infrastructure grants and loans, employee hiring grants, etc.

- Increase attractiveness of living in the County by providing additional opportunities for arts and culture, sports and recreation;
 - Increase communications, marketing and general awareness about opportunities for economic development in the County; and
 - Ensure infrastructure is adequate to attract development.
- Participants were mixed on whether the County should enforce limits on the size of home-based businesses in hamlets, settlements and on acreages.

Alternative Energy

- Most participants agreed that the County should provide opportunities to develop large-scale alternative and renewable energy developments.

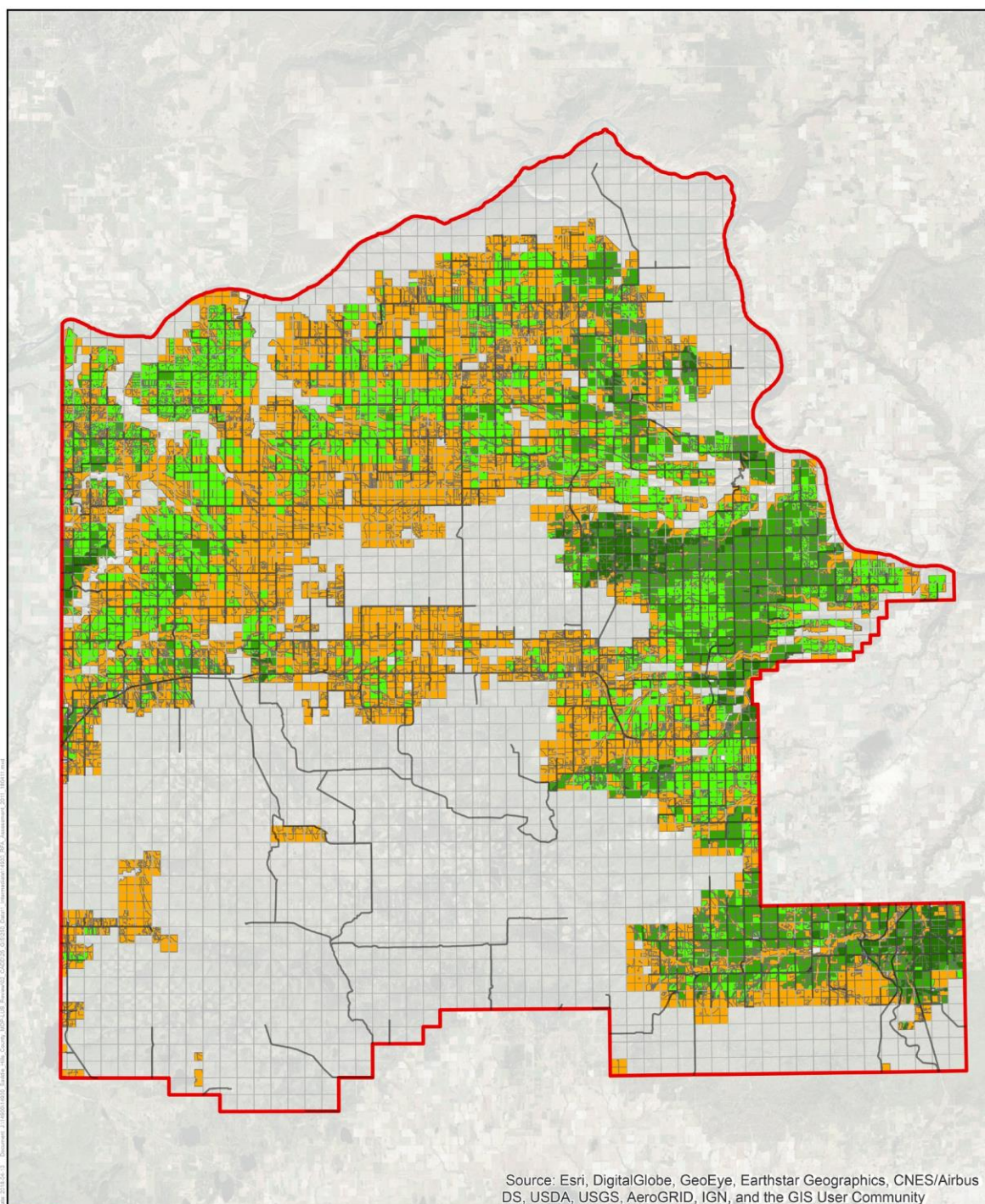
General Comments

- Less regulations for landowners and simplify the process. Ensure
- roadways are maintained.
- Protect and preserve the environment and rural living.

Stakeholder Feedback Highlights

- Should consider prohibitive animal bylaw to prevent the housing of wild boars. Concerns
- about marijuana regulations (location restrictions near schools).
- Interest in more rural residential/acreage development – possibly around Woking.

Appendix D | Rural Farmland Assessment Map



Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community



ISL Engineering
and Land Services



0 4,500 9,000 18,000 Meters

NAD 1983 10TM CM115

County Boundary
ATS Grid

1:500,000

RFA 0 - 27% (159,266 ha / 393,555 ac)
RFA 28 - 37% (73,104 ha / 180,644 ac)
RFA 38 - 47% (37,718 ha / 93,203 ac)
RFA > 47% (9,058 ha / 22,383 ac)

This map is provided for information purposes only, and will need to be confirmed at the time of subdivision and development.



APPENDIX D:
SADDLE HILLS COUNTY
RURAL FARMLAND
ASSESSMENT



Get Involved

This Affects You!



Stay Involved

This Affects You!



Be Involved

This Affects You!



**Engineering
and Land Services**

