

## Executive Summary

Growth can be an exciting but tumultuous experience for predominantly rural municipalities such as the County of Vermilion River. On one hand, the County benefits from an expanding economy, an increasing tax base, and more vibrant communities. On the other hand, the County must contend with a series of challenges including meeting future demands for services and environmental protection. The Future Growth Concept, shown on Map 1, shows how the County can support a projected population of up to 14,500 residents by 2052, in keeping with the County's goals of fiscal, environmental and social sustainability.

### 1. EMPLOYMENT GROWTH

Commercial and industrial development has been occurring in and around the Lloydminster IDP area, which will eventually be annexed to the City of Lloydminster. The Growth Concept shows expanded highway commercial development and industrial areas around Blackfoot. This will enable the County to develop a sufficient employment tax base in areas which will not be lost to annexation in the future, helping the County to remain financially sustainable and self-sufficient.

### 2. RESIDENTIAL GROWTH

Residential development activity has historically been, and will continue to be, driven by potential residents that work in urban centres outside or within the County, such as the City of Lloydminster, Town of Vermilion, and Villages of Kitscoty, Marwayne, Dewberry, and Paradise Valley, but choose to reside in a rural setting such as the County. Housing market activity has also been strong in the eastern portion of the County, including around Lloydminster and in Blackfoot.

The growth concept shows how future growth can be accommodated to minimize impacts on valuable farmland without stifling market demand for country residential development. The concept allows for 1/3 of residential growth as rural (country) residential and the other 2/3 of residential growth as urban/suburban/hamlet residential.

### 3. FUTURE GROWTH NODES

Both residential and employment development need to be located in appropriate areas. Five key types of development areas are identified on Map 1 to help to accommodate future growth in the County:

1. *Residential Growth Nodes* represent areas which have been designated as the focus for investment for future residential development. These areas are strategically located in close proximity to major transportation corridors, have the current or planned infrastructure base to support future population growth, and/or have historically been a focal point for residential development activity.

2. *Employment Growth Nodes* represent areas which have been designated as the focus for investment for future employment (commercial and industrial) development. These areas are also strategically located in close proximity to major transportation corridors, have the current or planned infrastructure base to support future employment growth, and/or have historically been a focal point for employment development activity.
3. *Rural Community Nodes* represent areas where existing residential and employment development will be maintained; however, conservation design principles should be used in new subdivision proposals to ensure a smaller development footprint. These areas will not be the focus of County investment for future development; however, existing servicing levels will be maintained.
4. *Potential Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP) Areas* - While the County currently has IDPs with the City of Lloydminster and Town of Vermilion, it does not have any with other Towns or Villages within its borders. To ensure mutually beneficial land uses occur at the borders of neighbouring municipalities, potential Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP) Areas have been designated for areas where joint planning will be required.
5. *Urban Expansion (Area to be ceded in future annexation)* - The Urban Expansion Areas identified in the Lloydminster IDP are continued in the RGMS. The RGMS does not propose accommodating any future growth within the Urban Expansion Area, as those areas must be developed at urban densities, and will eventually be lost to the City.

## THE ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan (Table 6) identifies how the goals and objectives of RGMS can be achieved. It is structured so that actions are related to each of the three goals and eight objectives. Key recommendations contained in the Action Plan include:

1. *Adopt new or updated statutory plans* –updating the MDP and LUB to incorporate the recommendations of the RGMS.
2. *Develop checklists and development guidelines* – to establish clearer requirements for developers consistent with the goals of the County.
3. *Monitor changes* – to allow the County to periodically compare actual population growth with projections, and to adjust its growth strategy if needed