



TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	2
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 WHAT IS A MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN?	2
1.2 PLANNING FRAMEWORK	2
1.3 PREPARING THE PLAN	3
1.4 INTERPRETATION – HOW TO READ THE PLAN	4
2. PLAN VISION	6
2.1 VISION FOR THE NEXT 20 YEARS	7
2.2 PLAN PRINCIPLES	7
2.3 PLAN GOALS	7
3. COUNTY SNAPSHOT	9
3.1 REGIONAL CONTEXT AND GEOGRAPHY	10
3.2 HISTORY	10
3.3 DEMOGRAPHICS	10
3.4 SIGNIFICANT LAND USES	13
3.5 MUNICIPAL INFRASTRUCTURE	15
3.6 ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES	15
4. RESPONSIBLE GOVERNANCE	17
4.1 SERVICE DELIVERY	18
5. COUNTY POLICIES	20
5.1 RURAL CHARACTER	21
5.2 LOCAL ECONOMY	23
5.3 ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP	26
5.4 RECREATION AND CULTURE	29
5.5 INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES	32
6. LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT POLICIES	36
6.1 AGRICULTURE	37
6.2 COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT	45
6.3 VIBRANT COMMUNITIES	48
7. IMPLEMENTATION	52
7.1 RELATIONSHIPS	53
7.2 MONITORING THE PLAN	54
7.3 CONSISTENCY WITH OTHER PLANS AND BYLAWS	55
8. MAPS	56
8.1 REGIONAL CONTEXT	57
8.2 FUTURE LAND USE MAP	58
9. APPENDICES	59
9.1 APPENDIX A. MAPS	60
9.2 APPENDIX B. GLOSSARY	72

1. INTRODUCTION

The County of Vermilion River Municipal Development Plan (MDP) guides how our community will grow over the next generation. The MDP is a framework for preserving **what we value** and **achieving our desired future**.



1.1 What is a Municipal Development Plan?

The Municipal Development Plan (MDP) is the County of Vermilion River's principal long-range land use planning document. It is a guide for decision-makers, residents, and developers, providing strategic land use direction to manage growth and development. The MDP describes a vision and desired outcomes for the County together with policy to guide land use decisions, development processes, infrastructure investment, programs, and regional and community partnerships.

The MDP is a statutory plan, adopted by bylaw. The authority for municipal land use planning is set out in Part 17 of the Municipal Government Act (MGA) which provides for the preparation and adoption of plans, subdivision and development approvals, and a variety of tools through which municipalities can achieve land use planning objectives.

As required by the MGA, this plan addresses:

- The future land use within the County of Vermilion River.
- The manner of and the proposals for future development in the County.
- The coordination of land use, future growth patterns and other infrastructure with adjacent municipalities where there is not an Intermunicipal Development Plan.
- The provision of the required transportation systems either generally or specifically within the County and in relation to adjacent municipalities.
- The provision of municipal services and facilities either generally or specifically.
- Policies compatible with the subdivision and development regulations to provide guidance on the type and location of land uses adjacent to sour gas facilities.
- Policies respecting the provision of municipal, school, or municipal and school reserves.
- Policies respecting the protection of agricultural operations.
- Policies respecting other matters as they relate to the future development of the County.

The MDP is also a strategic document that provides the County with direction and guidelines on matters of social, economic, and environmental importance. The plan is designed and intended to be read and used in a comprehensive manner. Sections and policies are closely connected to each other and need to be read in context and not in isolation from one another.

1.2 Planning Framework

The Government of Alberta has established a variety of planning documents and legislation that provide direction to municipalities regarding land use planning and development.

The MGA establishes the roles and responsibilities of municipalities and elected officials and identifies matters that statutory plans and land use bylaws must (and may) address.

The MDP is a highly integrated plan intended to:

- **Consider community needs, values, opportunities, and constraints.**
- **Provide policy direction to guide land use and mobility decisions.**
- **Provide a means for community members, agencies, and adjacent municipalities to contribute to the planning process.**

The County is required to ensure that all land use and development actions within its boundaries are consistent with provincial legislation and policies.

The Planning Hierarchy table below (Figure 1) identifies where the MDP fits within other provincial acts, frameworks, plans, and policies that affect land use and development in the County. The figure is intended to provide an overview of the planning framework; it is not a complete list of all federal and provincial legislation affecting land use and development in the County.

Alberta Land Use Framework (ALUF)	Provincial Vision for Land Use
Alberta Land Stewardship Act (ALSA)	Provincial Tool
Municipal Government Act (MGA)	Provincial Tool for Municipal Powers
North Saskatchewan Regional Plan (NSRP)	Regional Vision
Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework (ICF) / Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP)	Sub-regional Vision
Municipal Development Plan (MDP)	County Vision
Area Structure Plan (ASP) & Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP)	County Vision for Local Areas
Land Use Bylaw (LUB)	County Tool for Regulating Land Use

Figure 1. *Planning Hierarchy for Municipalities in Alberta*

Map A1 Planning Context shows the boundaries of the plans identified in the figure that apply to County lands. The North Saskatchewan Regional Plan has not been prepared or approved by the Province of Alberta at the time of writing the MDP. It is included in the graphic as a placeholder in the event that the province implements a Regional Plan for the watershed during the lifespan of this MDP.

Policies in the MDP guide how specific land use and development activities are regulated in the Land Use Bylaw.

Through regular review and (where necessary) amendments, the County strives to ensure that all planning documents are consistent with one another and reflect the current development trends and aspirations in the County.

1.3 Preparing the Plan

The County’s previous MDP, Bylaw 19-03, was adopted in 2019. Since then, strategic direction and development pressures have changed significantly.

The County recognizes the need to update the MDP regularly. Doing so ensures the plan reflects the evolving regional conditions, the aspirations and vision of residents, and current provincial and municipal policies, agreements, and priorities.

In 2021, the County engaged Municipal Planning Services (MPS), the County’s planning advisory services provider, to assist the County in updating its MDP to reflect the County’s vision and goals for the future.

Public input is vital to ensuring the County’s planning documents accurately reflect the values and interests of residents. Public engagement activities were held during the preparation of the MDP. These events include in-person workshops, online surveys, and two open houses to introduce and refine the MDP prior to Council’s formal approval process.

1.4 Interpretation – How to Read the Plan

The MDP is intended to be easily read and used by County Council, Administration, residents, and development proponents. This section provides greater clarity regarding abbreviations, acronyms, common terms, and policy language used in the plan.

For terms that may be unfamiliar or need further explanation, a glossary is included in **Section 6.2 Glossary**.

1.4.1 Common Abbreviations and Short Forms

The table below outlines commonly used abbreviations and short forms used in this document. For a comprehensive list of abbreviations used in the MDP, see the Glossary.

ALSA	Alberta Land Stewardship Act
ALUF	Alberta Land Use Framework
ARP	Area Redevelopment Plan
ASP	Area Structure Plan
COUNTY	County of Vermilion River
ESA	Environmentally Significant Area
ICF	Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework
IDP	Intermunicipal Development Plan
LID	Low Impact Development
LUB	Land Use Bylaw
MDP	Municipal Development Plan
MGA	Municipal Government Act
NSRP	North Saskatchewan Regional Plan
THE REGION	The County of Vermilion River and its neighbouring municipalities and jurisdictions.

1.4.2 Plan Policies and Maps

Policies are found in sections 4 to 7 of the MDP. The maps in Section 8 illustrate where policies apply to specific areas within the County.

1.4.3 Policy Structure

The MDP is structured in such a way to communicate how the County’s vision translates into specific action.

The MDP’s guiding Plan Vision in Section 2 is an aspirational statement describing the County of Vermilion River for the life of this plan. Supporting this vision are Preferred Outcomes, which describe in greater detail how the County wishes to achieve the vision.

Section 4 provides policy direction to guide land use and development decisions. It is arranged into eight sections to reflect the priorities for the County: rural character, local economy, vibrant communities, growth nodes and corridors, environmental stewardship, infrastructure and services, and relationships. Each policy section is further divided into subsections that each set out an objective and specific policies directing how the County will work towards that objective using tools such as land use decisions, development management, investment, programs, and relationship-building.

1.4.4 Policy Language

Policies in the MDP are written in the active tense using four types of language:

MANDATORY policies align with prevailing statutory requirements and are critical to achieving the goals of the MDP. These policies use words such as **REQUIRE, ENSURE, PROHIBIT, SHALL, MUST, or WILL**.

PERMISSIVE policies facilitate achieving the goals of the MDP. Although compliance or implementation is generally discretionary, in the case of proposed development, applicants are expected to demonstrate why a relevant permissive policy is inappropriate or unreasonable. These policies use words such as **ENCOURAGE, SUPPORT, PROMOTE, ALLOW, SHOULD, or MAY**.

RESTRICTIVE policies are intended to limit practices or actions that are contrary to the goals of the MDP, although compliance or implementation is generally discretionary. These policies include words such as **AVOID, DISCOURAGE, LIMIT, or MINIMIZE**.

ACTION-ORIENTED policies identify important initiatives, generally led by the County, that will support the goals of this plan. These include words such as **ADOPT, COLLABORATE, CONSIDER, COOPERATE, DEVELOP, ESTABLISH, EVALUATE, MONITOR, MANAGE, MAINTAIN, PREPARE, or UPDATE**.

In the MDP, certain terms have definitions that are specific to the Plan. These terms are defined in the Glossary. Words not defined in the MDP may be defined in the *Municipal Government Act* or other higher-order legislation and plans or the County's Land Use Bylaw (LUB). Words not specifically defined in either the MDP, other statutory documents or the LUB have their usual and customary meaning.

Locations and boundaries shown in the MDP are approximate and for general illustrative purposes. Property lines, rights-of-way, or other distinguishing physical features generally form the boundaries of areas and features included in the maps. Boundaries and locations will be refined through subsequent stages of planning, including statutory plans, the Land Use Bylaw, and subdivisions. When further refining locations and boundaries for these areas, the approval authority and applicant shall have regard for existing development, natural features, and infrastructure. Such changes may not require an amendment to the MDP, provided the intent for the areas affected is maintained.

For further clarification on how to interpret the policies and maps of the MDP, consult the County's Planning Administration.

2. PLAN VISION

The County of Vermilion River is a **sustainable and diverse community of communities** that fosters opportunities for all its residents.



2.1 Vision for the Next 20 Years

The Vision articulated in the County of Vermilion River's last Municipal Development Plan continues to resonate and has been carried forward in this plan.

2.2 Plan Principles

The MDP is rooted in fundamental principles. These principles guide the creation and ongoing use of the plan's direction. They are derived from both provincial legislative requirements and the ongoing work of the County to reflect the values of our communities, our residents, and our region.

The following planning principles inform each of the MDP's objectives and policies. **The following principles reflect the legislative requirements in the MGA as well as the Provincial Land Use Policies.** These principles inform each of the MDP's objectives and policies.

1. Land use and development will respect the local agricultural heritage and social history of the County of Vermilion River and the wider region.
2. In fulfilling planning responsibilities, the County of Vermilion River will assess impacts on residents, the environment, and the economic viability of the municipality.
3. Planning decisions will ensure the efficient use of land, infrastructure, and public facilities.
4. The County of Vermilion River will conduct planning activities in an open, consistent, and equitable manner.
5. Successful collaboration and communication between municipalities and neighbours will benefit the County of Vermilion River.

2.3 Plan Goals

The goals, objectives, and policies of this MDP support the future sustainability of the County by:

- Promoting efficient forms of land use and infrastructure;
- Fostering local and regional economic development; and
- Supporting communities so that they can be welcoming places for people to live, play, work, and farm.

The following goals correspond with the policy sections in the MDP.

Responsible Governance

The County demonstrates excellence in its day-to-day operations, based on: transparency, respect, equity, good judgement, and the responsible stewardship of public resources.

Rural Character:

The County is a thriving rural community with a rich rural heritage that supports agricultural innovation and diversification.

**A Vision for the Future:
The County of
Vermilion River is a
sustainable and diverse
community of
communities that fosters
opportunities for all its
residents.**

Local Economy

The County encourages economic development, diversification, and renewal by supporting traditional and innovative economic development opportunities.

Environmental Stewardship

The County values its role as an environmental steward.

Recreation and Culture

The County encourages recreation and tourism development that enhances the quality of life for residents and visitors and supports opportunities to conserve unique heritage resources within the region.

Infrastructure and Services

County infrastructure is safe, reliable, and efficient.

Agriculture

The County is a leader in agricultural production, diversification and innovation, supporting a vibrant rural economy and stewarding land for future generations.

Commercial and Industrial Development

Commercial and industrial sector growth supports economic development and employment opportunities within the region.

Vibrant Communities (Hamlets)

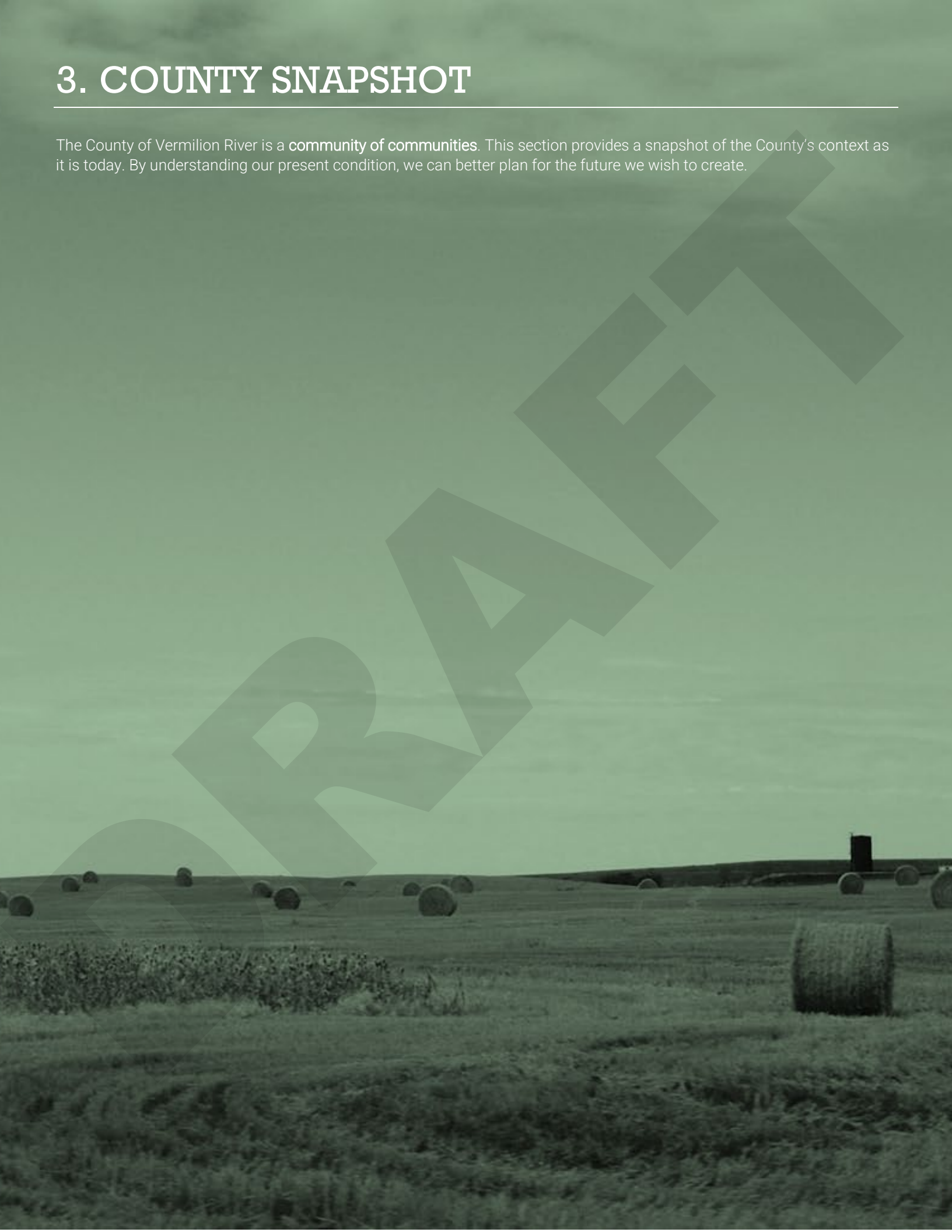
Neighbourhoods and hamlets within the County are thriving communities serving the broader rural population, growing where infrastructure and service capacity allows.

Implementation & Regional Collaboration

County planning documents are current and responsive to changing economic trends, legislative requirements and planning best practices. Collaboration with regional partners is encouraged to provide quality services effectively and efficiently.

3. COUNTY SNAPSHOT

The County of Vermilion River is a **community of communities**. This section provides a snapshot of the County's context as it is today. By understanding our present condition, we can better plan for the future we wish to create.



3.1 Regional Context and Geography

The County of Vermilion River is a rural municipality located in east-central Alberta, approximately 165 km east of Edmonton to its western boundary and adjacent to the City of Lloydminster and the Province of Saskatchewan to the east. See **Map 1 Regional Context**.

The County shares its boundaries with the following jurisdictions:

- County of St. Paul
- County of Two Hills
- County of Minburn
- Municipal District of Wainwright
- Town of Vermilion
- City of Lloydminster
- Village of Kitscoty
- Village of Marwayne
- Village of Paradise Valley
- Province of Saskatchewan
- Frog Lake First Nation
- Onion Lake First Nation
- Fishing Lake Metis Settlement

Several major transportation corridors connect the County to other major regions. These include:

- Freeway Highways: 16 (Yellowhead)
- Primary Highways: 17, 41, and 45
- Secondary Highways: 619, 631, 640, 641, 893, and 897

The County's transportation network provides access to hamlets within the County and other urban centres. Key corridors connect the County to the Edmonton metropolitan region, the City of Lloydminster, and smaller centres throughout the region.

The CN Rail line runs generally along Highway 16, providing east-west rail service to the region and beyond.

3.2 History

The lands within the County of Vermilion River have sustained people since time immemorial. The area was home to First Nations peoples including the Nehiyaw (Cree), Anishinaabe (Saulteaux), Niitsitapi (Blackfoot), Nakoda (Stoney), and Denesuliné (Dene). The lands and waters within the County supported thousands of years of First Nations use, including settlement, hunting, ceremony, and trade. The descendants of these First Peoples continue to live in the region and use its lands and waters.

With the signing of Treaty 6 beginning in 1876, the region was opened to European settlement. Some of the earliest European settlers in the Vermilion River region were British immigrants drawn to the area as part of the Barr Colony. Arriving in 1903 as members of a settlement scheme proposed and organized by the Reverend Isaac Barr, approximately 1,960 British colonists established homesteads around what is now the City of Lloydminster.

Successive waves of immigrants, including Ukrainian and Scandinavian settlers, were drawn to the region by ambitious federal settlement initiatives. The extension of rail lines by both the Canadian Pacific Railway and Canadian National Railway allowed for continued settlement of the region. Small communities were established at regular intervals along the rail lines to serve the growing agricultural community.

In 1943, the Municipal District of Vermilion River No. 450 was established by the merger of six municipal districts: Merton No. 451, Grizzly Bear No. 452, Wellington No. 481, Vermilion Valley No. 482, Streamstown No. 511, and Ethelwyn No. 512. Two years later, the District was renumbered as the Municipal District of Vermilion River No. 71. The Municipal District was incorporated as the County of Vermilion River No. 24 in 2006.

3.3 Demographics

The demographic data was compiled from the Statistics Canada census data. Figure 2 shows the historical population trends for the County of Vermilion River and the Town of Vermilion.

The County's population has been slowly increasing since 2001. However, from 2016 to 2023 (the approximate timeframe of the current MDP and LUB), there has been a small decrease in the County's population. Based on current population trends, the population of the County is expected to increase marginally or remain steady.

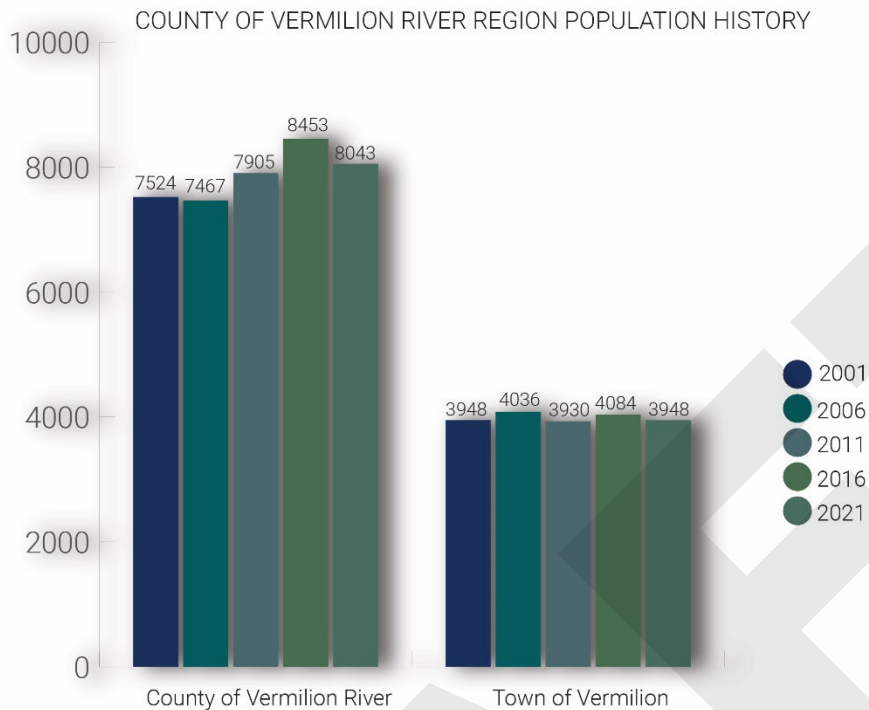


Figure 2. County of Vermilion River Region Population History

Figure 3 shows the population change from 2011 to 2021 for the County's hamlets. From 2011 to 2021, the population of Blackfoot, Islay, McLaughlin, Rivercourse, Streamstown, and Tulliby Lake increased. During this same period, the population of the hamlets of Clandonald and Dewberry appears to have decreased.

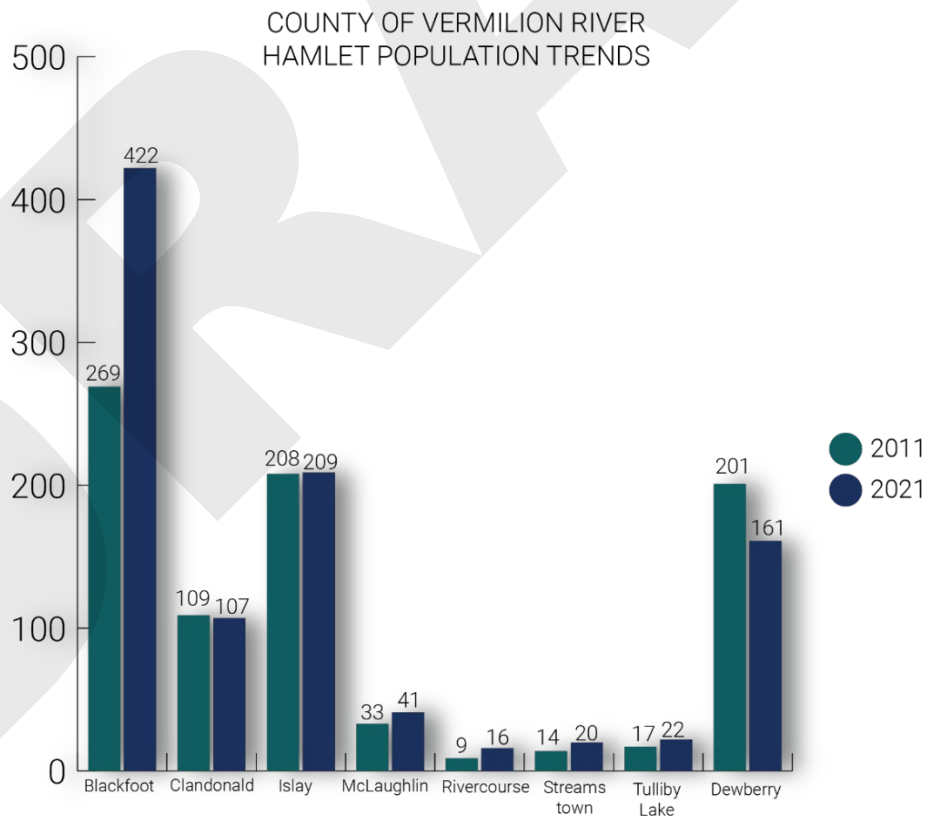


Figure 3. County of Vermilion River Hamlet Population Trends

Additional demographic data from the County's 2021 Census Profile is included in Figure 4. The data indicates 63% of the County's population is within the 15-to-64-year-old cohort, which represents the primary labor force demographic. The most common dwelling type in the County is single-detached dwelling, comprising 91% of all housing forms in the municipality; 91% of private dwellings are owner occupied, while 9% are occupied by renters. Nearly two thirds (61%) of all households are reported to be one or two person households.

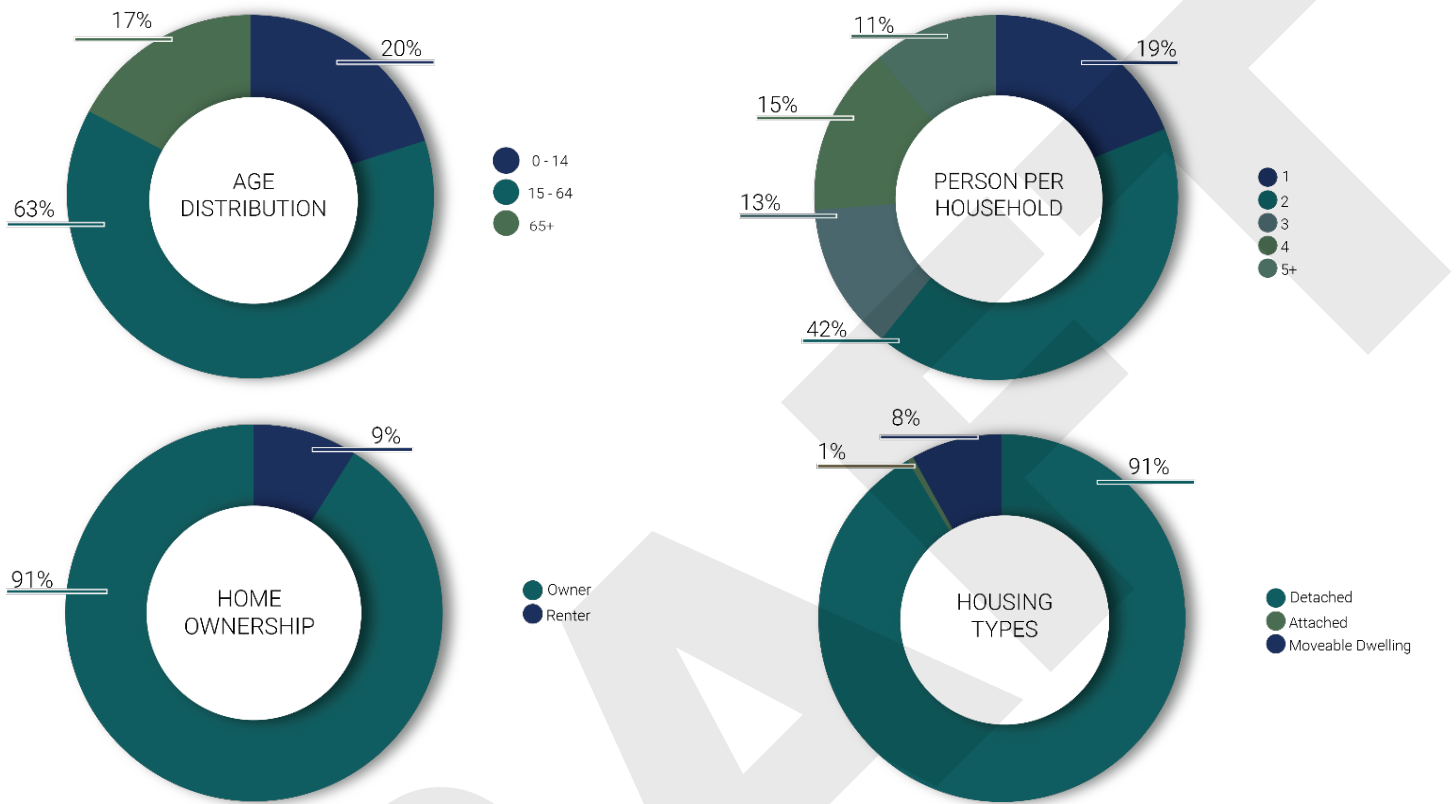


Figure 4. 2021 Statistics Canada Census Data – Household Data

Figure 5 provides information about the labor force and employment of County residents from the 2021 census. Of the residents in the labor force, agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting was the primary employment category (29%). Given that there is little commercial forestry, fishing and hunting within the County, it may be likely that the primary employment category

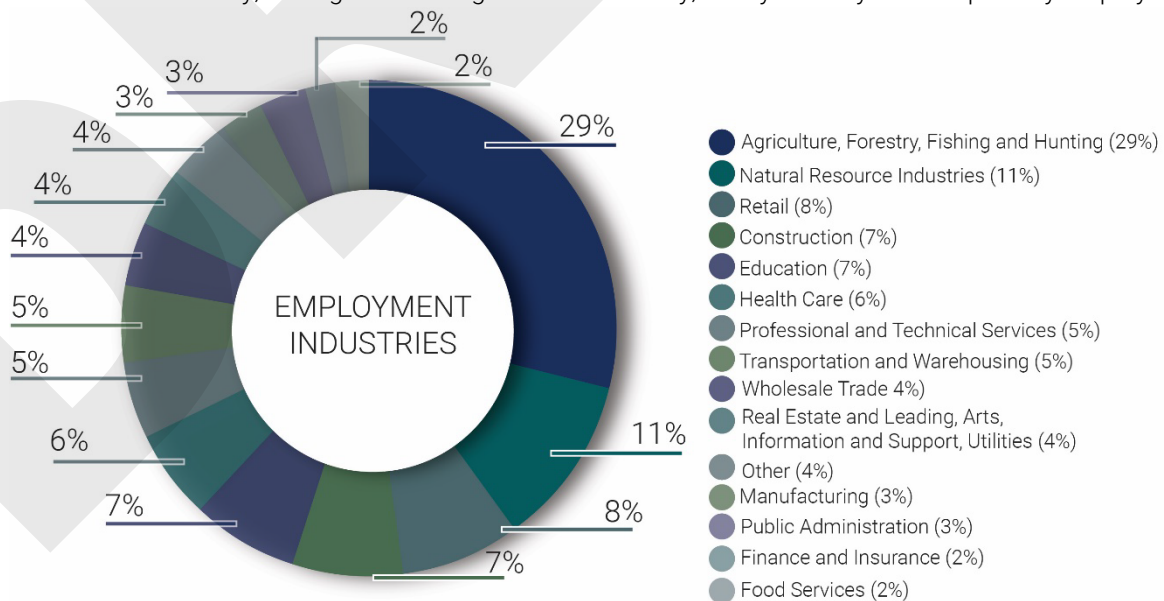


Figure 5. Employment Industries within the County of Vermilion River

is predominately agriculture. Following agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, the next largest employment industries are natural resource industries and retail in the County. These three employment industries account for 47% of occupations in the County.

3.4 Significant Land Uses

The County of Vermilion River’s land base supports a range of different land uses and developments.

3.4.1 Agricultural Land Uses

The most extensive form of land use and development in the County is agriculture. Agricultural operations in the County include:

- Small hobby farm operations on acreage parcels
- Small and medium sized family farms operated for generations or by new farming families
- Large-scale crop and livestock operations
- Agri-industrial developments, and
- Transloading facilities.

In addition to being a significant land use in the County of Vermilion River, agriculture is deeply connected to the history and culture of County residents.

3.4.2 Residential Land Uses

Residential uses are found across the County, generally characterized by three unique types: farmstead separations, multi-lot country residential neighbourhood developments and hamlet residential uses. Farmstead separations are dispersed across the agricultural landscape, consisting of single parcels out of an agricultural quarter section.

Multi-lot country residential developments, primarily located near the City of Lloydminster, include multiple parcels with greater density per quarter section. They tend to serve residents who desire a semi-rural lifestyle and commute to urban areas. There are 18 multi-lot country residential neighbourhoods in the County. Some of these developments are supported by Area Structure Plans and others predate the inclusion of this best practice in the County’s planning process and documents. The following is a list of the existing multi-lot Country Residential neighbourhoods in the County.

Multi-Lot CR Neighbourhood	Division	Location	# of Parcels	# of Vacant Parcels
Aberdeen Plains Estates	4	NW 2-52-3-W4	8	7
Brennan Acres	3	NE 35-50-7-W4	14	4
Clover View Acres	4	SW 16-51-6-W4	32	6
Country Air Estates	5	SE14-50-2-W4	20	5
Creekside Estates	5	SE-24-50-1-W4	9	2
Deerfoot Estates	5	SW 5-50-1-W4	27	4
Denwood Acres	5	SE-4-50-2-W4	9	2
Grandview Estates	3	NE 36-49-7-W4	38	20
Hawkstone Estates	5	NE 21-50-1-W4	30	0
Horizonview Acres	5	NE 36-50-3-W4	27	4
Indian Lake Meadows	4	NE 9-51-7-W4	28	4
Lakeview Estates	5	SE 19-49-1-W4	36	5
Morning Gold Estates	5	NE 4-50-2-W4	43	7
Ravine View	5	N ½ 27-51-1-W4	21	5
Robinwood Acres	5	SE 33-49-1-W4	12	3
Sandpiper Estates	5	NE 1-52-1-W4	19	5
Silver Willow Estates	5	S ½ 33-51-1-W4	30	7
Willow Creek	5	SW 24-50-1-W4	33	7
TOTAL			436	97

Table 1: Multi-Lot CR Neighbourhoods

Hamlet residential uses are also found in the County of Vermilion River’s eight hamlets: Blackfoot, Clandonald, Dewberry, Islay, McLaughlin, Rivercourse, Streamstown, and Tullibly Lake. The fastest growing Hamlet in the County is Blackfoot. The Hamlet

of Dewberry is the County's newest Hamlet. The former Village of Dewberry dissolved and became a part of the County on January 1, 2021.

3.4.3 Business Development

The County has a strong business sector which includes a range of commercial and industrial business developments. Industrial developments, including oilfield support businesses, transloading facilities, manufacturing, warehousing and storage, are found primarily along Highway 16 and in proximity to urban centres. The County is also home to several multi-lot business parks and industrial park development which provide a range of commercial and industrial development opportunities to support economic growth in the region. Business and industrial parks are primarily located near the Highway 16 corridor between the City of Lloydminster and the Village of Kitscoty. Business developments within the County diversify the County's economic base and provide employment opportunities for the Vermilion Region.

The following is a list of the existing business and industrial parks in the County.

Business/Industrial Park	Division	Location	# of Parcels	# of Vacant Parcels
Blackfoot Business Park	5	E ½ 20-50-2-W4	5	1
Corridor Business Park	5	N ½ 33-49-1-W4	16	5
County Energy Park	5	SW 4-50-1-W4	36	11
Devonia Business Park	5	NW 31-49-1-W4	36	9
Kam's Industrial Park	5	NE 31-49-1-W4	24	11
Reinhart Business Park	5	SE 5-50-1-W4	11	4
Reinhart Industrial Park	5	NW 9-50-1-W4	8	0
TOTAL			136	41

Table 2: County of Vermilion River Business/Industrial Parks

*Reinhart Business Park also includes leased units which are not registered as Parcels.

3.4.4 Resource Extraction

Resource extraction includes oil and gas development, aggregate, sand and gravel operations, peat extraction and forestry.

Oil and gas development is a significant land use impacting the County of Vermilion's land base. Extraction operations and pipelines are found across the County, shown on **Map A9 Oil and Gas Infrastructure**. These facilities generally result in little impact on surrounding agricultural operations but may impact future land use and development on the site and adjacent lands.

Aggregate extraction, consisting of sand and gravel operations, can be found in several locations across the County of Vermilion River, as shown on **Map A10 Current and Potential Aggregate Extraction Areas**. Known deposits of sand and gravel may be preserved from certain developments until such time as the resource can be extracted or may require further study prior to determine the feasibility of development to preserve those resources for future use.

There are limited peat extraction and forestry activities within the County of Vermilion River located in the northern portion of the County.

3.4.5 Transportation Network

Transportation infrastructure serves to support the wide range of uses across the County, as shown on **Map A6 Transportation Network**. Highway 16 serves as the primary east-west Provincial highway throughout the County of Vermilion River, serving as a major regional and interprovincial connector. Highway 41 provides a north-south connection to Wainwright to the south and to the northern communities of St. Paul, Cold Lake, and Fort McMurray. Secondary highways 619, 631, 640, 641, 893, and 897 provide access to the rest of the County, its hamlets, and internal and surrounding communities.

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

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

3.5 Municipal Infrastructure

3.5.1 Waterworks Systems

There are a number of waterworks systems within the County that provide service to different areas within the County. Some are operated and maintained by the County while others are operated as a partnership between the County and the Alberta Central East (ACE) Regional Waterline. The Hamlets of Blackfoot, Islay, Dewberry and Clandonald are connected to the ACR Regional Water Line.

The County also operates and maintains community water wells and Community Water Well Tank Loader Facilities to minimize the impacts of drought on the region. Community Wells provide non-potable water and are located in Paradise Valley, Preston, Alcurve, Riverton and on Highway 640.

Households in the agricultural area are primarily serviced by private wells.

3.5.2 Wastewater

Municipal wastewater services are available in four of the County's Hamlets. Blackfoot, Clandonald, Dewberry and Islay are serviced by a piped municipal collection system, lift stations and lagoons for sanitary sewer. The other Hamlets rely on private sewage disposal systems for waste collection, storage and treatment.

3.5.3 Waste Management

Solid waste management in the County of Vermilion River is managed by the Vermilion River Regional Waste Management Services Commission. There are seven solid waste transfer sites, located throughout the County, as shown on **Map A8 Municipal Servicing and Infrastructure**. There is an additional Satellite Transfer Site in Lloydminster that may be used for the disposal of household waste. Additionally, the commission offers pick-up services for household waste within the hamlets of Blackfoot, Islay, Dewberry and Clandonald.

The province has established minimum development setback requirements for some uses from active and reclaimed landfill sites. The location and approximate setback areas are identified on **Map A8 Municipal Servicing and Infrastructure**.

3.6 Environmental Features

3.6.1 Natural Regions

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

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

North of the North Saskatchewan River the County is identified as a Dry Mixed-wood Sub-region, characterized by short summers, long winters, and sweeping expanses of deciduous, mixed-wood and coniferous forests intermixed with fens and wetlands. About 50% of this Sub-region is suitable for cultivation, particularly barley and forage crops.¹

3.6.2 Soils and Land Capability

The County of Vermilion River contains a range of agriculturally productive soils, as shown on **Map A2 Agricultural Land Soil Classification and CFOs**. Much of the County consists of Class 2 and 3 soils. These soils have slight to moderate limitations on cultivation and support crop production and livestock operations. Lands with more severe limitations on crop production are better suited to support livestock operations. Lands north of the North Saskatchewan River are generally poorer quality for cultivation.

¹ Natural Regions Committee (2006). Natural Regions and Sub-regions of Alberta. Compiled by D.J. Downing and W.W. Pettapiece. Government of Alberta Publication No. T/852.

3.6.3 Watersheds and Waterbodies

The County of Vermilion lands are divided between two major watersheds. The northern portion of the County, generally lying north of Highway 16, is within the North Saskatchewan River Watershed. The southern portion of the County is within the Battle River Watershed. The major watersheds within the County are shown on **Map A4 Watersheds and Water Features**. Land uses within these watersheds may result in impacts on water quantity and quality downstream of the site in addition to any local impact.

The North Saskatchewan River and its tributary, Vermilion River, are within the northern portion of the County. The Battle River forms a portion of the southern boundary of the County. The County contains many smaller watercourses tributary to the North Saskatchewan and Battle Rivers. In addition, there are many medium and small lakes within the County. Significant lakes include: Campbell, Clarke, Kenilworth, Pasatchaw, Raft, St. Ives, and Vermilion Park Lakes.

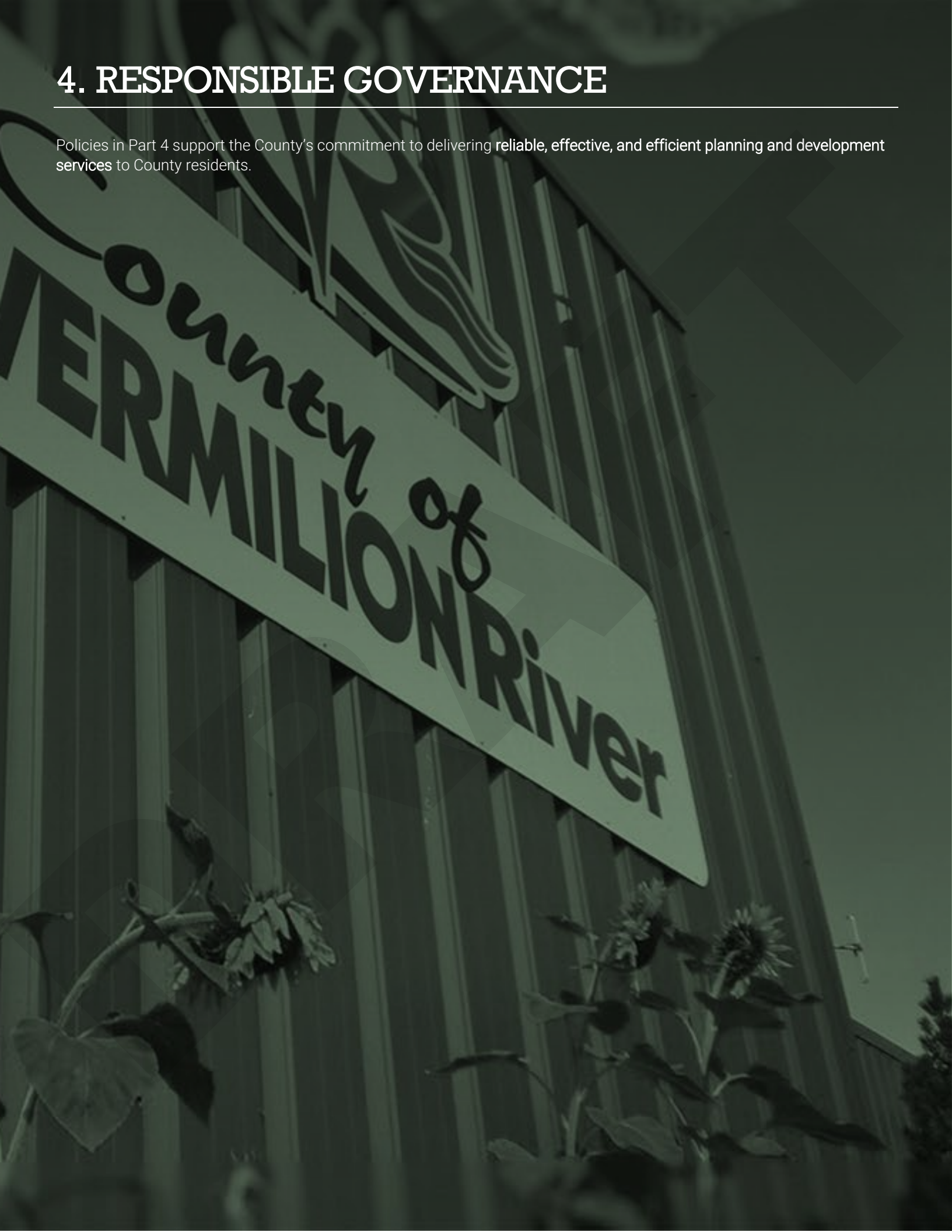
3.6.4 Environmentally Significant Areas

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

The County of Vermilion River has a number of ESAs within its boundaries, affecting 7.9% of the County's landmass. The ESAs include areas of national and provincial significance concerning elements of conservation concern, focal species habitat, important wildlife habitat, riparian areas and natural areas. They represent Boreal, Parkland and grassland Sub-region ecosystems. All of the County's identified ESAs are shown on **Map A3 Environmental Features**.

4. RESPONSIBLE GOVERNANCE

Policies in Part 4 support the County's commitment to delivering **reliable, effective, and efficient planning and development services** to County residents.



4.1 Service Delivery

The County's service delivery model promotes continuous improvement, the value of hard work, and strengthening relationships. The County is committed to delivering reliable, effective, and efficient services to County residents.

The County's service delivery model reflects the following core values²:

Honesty and Integrity	Promote integrity, honesty and accountability in all our dealings.
Respect	Promote mutual respect and dialogue between Council, staff, and residents.
Accountability	Promote accountability for our actions to honour obligations and expectations.
Transparency	Promote transparent and honest communication about County services, decisions, and actions.
Open Mindedness	Recognize new ideas and differing opinions can lead to better decision-making.

GOAL:

The County demonstrates excellence in its day-to-day operations, based on values of respect, equity, good judgement, and the responsible stewardship of public resources.

These values guide the organization's day-to-day operations and how we plan for the future of our land and resources.

4.1.1 Organizational Culture

Objective: Demonstrate excellence in organizational efficiency and service delivery.

- POLICY 4.1.1.1 Regularly update the County's Strategic Plan and Corporate Plan to align key performance indicators across its strategic documents.
- POLICY 4.1.1.2 Ensure the County's land use planning documents are reviewed and amended as necessary to remain consistent with the priorities of the Strategic Plan and Corporate Plan.
- POLICY 4.1.1.3 Encourage efforts to develop and maintain a culture of high performance by its staff, elected officials, and committee members.
- POLICY 4.1.1.4 Encourage innovation, responsiveness, and service-oriented practices from its staff, elected officials, and committee members.
- POLICY 4.1.1.5 Encourage efforts to develop and maintain informed Council and Committees, highly-engaged employees, strong recruitment, staff retention, and succession planning.

4.1.2 Transparency

Objective: Demonstrate transparency and open communication.

- POLICY 4.1.2.1 Prioritize engagement with County residents, businesses, community organizations, and industries to better understand community values and expectations.
- POLICY 4.1.2.2 Develop and maintain communication strategies to ensure prompt and transparent reporting.
- POLICY 4.1.2.3 Incorporate innovation and technology in data management and data sharing to provide access and clarity in development processes, requirements, considerations, and decisions.

² Derived from "2023 County of Vermilion River Corporate Plan" & "County of Vermilion River 2018-2022 Strategic Business Plan"

4.1.3 Fiscal Prudence

- Objective: Ensure the responsible use of public resources in service delivery.
- POLICY 4.1.3.1 Meet or exceed the needs of community members through efficient resource management and an effective service delivery model.
- POLICY 4.1.3.2 Ensure the effective management of municipal assets to provide stability and cost-effective service delivery.

4.1.4 Culture of Respect

- Objective: Support respectful and inclusive service.
- POLICY 4.1.4.1 Recognize that the County represents a community of communities that are connected, engaged, active, and inclusive.
- POLICY 4.1.4.2 Recognize that partnerships are built on shared trust and mutual respect for differences in backgrounds, beliefs, and values.
- POLICY 4.1.4.3 Support employee training and professional development to improve citizen-facing resources and services.

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5. COUNTY POLICIES

Policies in Part 5 of the MDP are intended to provide **high level direction for planning decisions** affecting development throughout the County.



5.1 Rural Character

The County's most enduring resource is its agricultural heritage and working rural landscapes. Agriculture, forestry, and resource lands generate significant employment, and are central to the collective history, culture, and sense of place of the County's residents.

Working rural landscapes are irreplaceable and contribute to the high quality of life enjoyed by all County of Vermilion River residents. The County recognizes the importance of equitably managing the agricultural land base to retain the integrity and value of these areas for the benefit of future generations, as an economic driver and a vital component of the County's rural identity.

New and innovative agricultural practices are vital to changing environmental and market demands. The effects of climate change and evolving consumer demands for diverse local produce will result in new pressures on the County's agricultural producers. The County encourages continued adaptation in agriculture, including a wide range of land use practices, diverse operation sizes, and value-added endeavours. Policies in the MDP support new and innovative agricultural developments and practices.

GOAL:

The County is a thriving rural community with a rich rural heritage that supports agricultural innovation and diversification.

5.1.1 The Importance of Agriculture

Agriculture is the primary economic and cultural driver within the County. 29% of the County's labour force is involved in agriculture and other resource-based industries.

The following policies are intended to provide direction to support agricultural lands and developments within the County.

Objective:	Ensure rural working rural landscapes remain an integral and viable component of the regional economy and rural social structure.
POLICY 5.1.1.1	Lands within the Agricultural Area, shown on Map 2 Future Land Use Map , shall be used primarily for agricultural uses, forestry, and resource extraction.
POLICY 5.1.1.2	Protect working rural landscapes by: <ol style="list-style-type: none">Restricting land uses that could result in conflicts with agricultural uses, andEnabling higher density and intensity developments in locations where conflicts with agricultural uses are less likely.
POLICY 5.1.1.3	Promote public awareness and a shared responsibility for protecting working rural landscapes in the County.
POLICY 5.1.1.4	Provide notice to applicants proposing non-agricultural uses in predominantly agricultural areas that: <ol style="list-style-type: none">The primary use in the Agricultural Use Area is agriculture;Agricultural uses take precedence over other land uses; andNon-agricultural uses are expected to function within an agricultural environment, consistent with the provisions of the <i>Agricultural Operations Practices Act (AOPA)</i>, as amended.

5.1.2 Agricultural Diversification and Innovation

Agriculture is an evolving industry, adapting to changing practices, technologies, climate conditions, and market demands. This plan provides policy direction to support the continued viability of agricultural practices through innovation and diversification.

Objective:	Support the viability of agriculture throughout the County.
POLICY 5.1.2.1	Support innovations in agriculture that respond to changing market demands and climatic conditions.

- POLICY 5.1.2.2 Encourage economic diversification and provide new opportunities to make agriculture more affordable and profitable for a range of operation sizes and types.
- POLICY 5.1.2.3 Encourage a broad range of innovative agricultural activities including value-added processing and diverse operation sizes to support and diversify the local economy.

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5.2 Local Economy

The County of Vermilion River's economy has historically been tied to agriculture and resource-based industries. This remains the case today and will remain so during the life of this plan. Supporting the County's resource economy remains a primary element of this MDP.

Other industries within the County and the wider region contribute to the tax base and provide employment to residents. Manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade, social services, construction, and business services account for approximately half the County's employment. Supporting the diversity of employment sectors contributes to the continued wellbeing of the County and its citizens.

The County of Vermilion River is a business-friendly community, seeking opportunities to capitalize on access to primary transportation routes, resilient energy networks, dedicated workforce, and regional connections. The County seeks opportunities to encourage new and innovative economic development opportunities, while stewarding existing and established economic drivers. Seeking economic diversification and innovation will help ensure the County's continued economic success over the life of this plan.

Policies in this section provide guidance on how the County will responsibly support economic development through land use and planning decisions.

GOAL:

The County encourages economic development, diversification, and renewal by supporting traditional and innovative economic development opportunities.

5.2.1 Economic Diversification and Innovation

The following policies are intended to provide general direction to support economic diversification and innovation in the County.

Objective:	Support a thriving and resilient local economy through diversification and innovation.
POLICY 5.2.1.1	Collaborate with local and regional economic development entities to identify regional economic objectives.
POLICY 5.2.1.2	Prioritize infrastructure investments that support local and regional economic development priorities to be development ready.
POLICY 5.2.1.3	Support expanding and diversifying employment opportunities through a balance of tourism, recreation, agriculture, residential, commercial, industrial, and resource extraction uses.
POLICY 5.2.1.4	Encourage opportunities for small business and value-added agricultural developments including businesses that provide boutique agricultural services, experiences, and products.
POLICY 5.2.1.5	Allow commercial and industrial uses within the Agricultural Use Area on lower capability agricultural lands where the transportation network can efficiently and effectively support the proposed development.
POLICY 5.2.1.6	Support the clustering of commercial and industrial uses in industrial parks with a view to reduce the potential for scattered industrial development and the loss of agricultural land.

5.2.2 Tourism

The County of Vermilion River is well-situated along the Yellowhead Highway transportation corridor, linking metropolitan regions in Alberta and Saskatchewan. The County supports growing the region's tourism industry to serve the travelling public and diversify the local economy.

This plan supports tourism initiatives and encourages the development of local hospitality operations, museums, churches, cultural centres, golf courses, and other special events and facilities. Development opportunities include the growth of on-farm hospitality experiences, guest ranches, and bed and breakfast operations.

Objective:	Support and promote a diversity of tourism initiatives within the County and the region.
POLICY 5.2.2.1	Promote existing tourism destinations within the County and nearby recreational tourism opportunities.
POLICY 5.2.2.2	Encourage the use and/or development of cultural, historic, and recreational resources to promote tourism, where appropriate.
POLICY 5.2.2.3	Cooperate with regional partners to encourage local and regional tourism.
POLICY 5.2.2.4	Cooperate with area tourism groups, neighbouring jurisdictions, and tourism zones in promoting local tourism linkages with surrounding communities.
POLICY 5.2.2.5	Encourage private developers to facilitate tourism development. Seek opportunities to assist private entities, including accessing government funding programs to develop new, or upgrade existing, tourism attractions.
POLICY 5.2.2.6	Promote bed and breakfasts and guest ranches by creating a separate use category in the Land Use Bylaw to allow such use, on a discretionary basis, in the appropriate districts.

5.2.3 Resource Extraction

Natural resource extraction and development operations include oil and gas development and aggregate extraction. These activities contribute to the economic vitality of the County and its residents, providing tax revenue and employment opportunities. While much of the approval process for natural resource development is outside of the County's authority, municipal land use planning can minimize conflicts with other land uses.

Resource extraction activities can result in increased noise, traffic, dust, and other nuisance issues. Certain developments may not be suitable in proximity to resource extraction uses. The County wishes to prioritize resource extraction and may limit certain other developments or land uses which may be incompatible.

In order to benefit the County and the region's economy, natural resources must be protected and extracted efficiently, but not at the risk of irreparably damaging working or cultural landscapes within the County. This plan provides direction to encourage the utilization of natural resources in areas of least detrimental impact and to reclaim the land for other productive uses in the future.

Objective:	Encourage appropriate resource extraction industries.
POLICY 5.2.3.1	Require developers of a resource extraction industry or activity, at the time of application for a development permit, to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the County, that any necessary provincial permits and approvals pertinent to the development have been obtained.
POLICY 5.2.3.2	Require any resource extraction industry that requires a development permit, unless exempted by Provincial legislation, to enter into and abide by a development agreement with the County, dealing with, among other matters, road use and their maintenance.
POLICY 5.2.3.3	Require proof of all necessary approvals required by Provincial legislation prior to issuing development permits for sand, gravel, or clay marl extraction.
POLICY 5.2.3.4	Issue development permits for gravel extraction on the basis of whether the proposed use will fully and efficiently utilize the capability of the deposit. Deposits suitable for construction aggregates should be reserved for that use.

Objective:	Ensure that land disturbed by resource extraction activity is reclaimed to an acceptable standard.
POLICY 5.2.3.5	Require development agreements in connection with sand, gravel, and other mineral extraction operations that provide for the:

- a. Reclamation of the land that was disturbed to its former agricultural capability or to a post-extractive use, whichever Council feels is more beneficial;
- b. Control of on-site noise, dust, and weeds;
- c. Storage of topsoil;
- d. Separation of the resource extractive operation from any multi-lot country residential subdivision, hamlet, or urban municipality with a suitable open space buffer;
- e. Designation of all aggregate haul roads to reduce noise, excessive maintenance costs, and dust problems; and,
- f. If required by the County, the provision of security such as an irrevocable letter of credit to ensure reclamation will be completed.

Objective:	Minimize municipal costs associated with resource extraction development.
POLICY 5.2.3.6	Require applicants to enter into haul road agreements with the County of Vermilion River prior to approval of development permit applications or approach permits for resource extraction developments at the discretion of the County of Vermilion River.
POLICY 5.2.3.7	Require developers of natural gas or oil well sites to obtain approval from the County regarding the construction, upgrading, and maintenance of access roads.
POLICY 5.2.3.8	Require resource industries which utilize County infrastructure to participate in the maintenance and upgrading of that infrastructure if the need arises, as determined by the County.

Objective:	Limit conflicts between those uses which are incompatible with resource extraction developments and uses.
POLICY 5.2.3.9	Identify areas which may have high potential for resource extraction development, specifically areas of sand, gravel, and aggregate deposits.
POLICY 5.2.3.10	Discourage development on land which has a high potential for resource extraction development, where the development would prevent subsequent extraction until the deposit has been removed and the land has been reclaimed.
POLICY 5.2.3.11	Encourage haul routes for resource extraction developments to be located in such a way as to minimize the impact on agricultural uses and existing residential developments.

5.2.4 Alternative Energy

Alternative energy development supports the County’s resilience and local economy, contributing to a sustainable regional energy supply and lowering the region’s carbon footprint. Providing opportunities to diversify energy production supports the County’s goals of supporting a robust economy and demonstrating responsible environmental stewardship.

While approval for large-scale energy development is under Provincial jurisdiction, this plan provides policy direction in support of energy diversification to benefit the County and the region.

Objective:	Support a range of alternative energy sources to contribute to a diverse, resilient, and sustainable energy supply that contributes to the region’s energy demands.
POLICY 5.2.4.1	Support growth in alternative or renewable energy projects, such as wind, solar, geothermal, waste energy, and similar types of developments, where compatible with adjacent land uses.
POLICY 5.2.4.2	Encourage the incorporation of alternative energy sources to use for power in the municipality and explore opportunities to integrate solar development in major municipal projects.
POLICY 5.2.4.3	Discourage alternative energy development on higher capability agricultural lands, and in important viewscape areas in accordance with Provincial policies and regulations.

5.3 Environmental Stewardship

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

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

The County supports a **Low Net Negative Environmental Impact** approach to environmental management that will help to ensure the County’s natural and built heritage and the processes that connect them will prosper well into the future. By assessing the cumulative impact of development decisions affecting ecological, social, and heritage assets, the County can work to mitigate negative impacts. Adopting a low net environmental impact approach to environmental management allows the County to encourage sustainable development in appropriate areas without unduly impacting ecosystem health, working rural landscapes, or the County’s cultural landscapes.

This plan provides policy direction with the aim of being a leader in implementing municipal best practices in environmental stewardship of County resources.

GOAL:

The County is a leader in municipal environmental stewardship.

5.3.1 General Environmental Policies

The following policies are intended to provide general direction to support environmental stewardship best practices in the County.

Objective:	Support ecological integrity throughout the County
POLICY 5.3.1.1	Require statutory plans, infrastructure plans and development proposals that may impact environmental features to provide supporting environmental and technical studies.
POLICY 5.3.1.2	Require Environmental Impact Assessments or evaluations related to proposed subdivisions or developments that may have an impact on identified natural or environmentally sensitive areas.
POLICY 5.3.1.3	Encourage wildlife habitat protection practices through the identification and conservation of natural areas such as woodlots, wetlands, ravine systems, and watercourses and use of available municipal land use planning and management tools including area structure plans, the Land Use Bylaw, environmental reserves, and environmental reserve easements.
POLICY 5.3.1.4	Endeavor to establish environmental quality goals to direct future development within the County and to provide specific points of reference for facilitating management decision-making.
POLICY 5.3.1.5	Endeavor to identify and monitor cumulative impacts from development on environmentally significant areas in collaboration with provincial agencies and Watershed Advisory Councils.
POLICY 5.3.1.6	Collaborate with provincial and non-governmental partners to identify and monitor established wetland and upland intactness goals and targets.
POLICY 5.3.1.7	Encourage landowners to retain treed buffer areas and to re-vegetate riparian areas adjacent to watercourses and waterbodies.

POLICY 5.3.1.8 Encourage programs that aid in the conservation of environmentally significant areas and highlight the importance of these areas within the County.

Objective: Restrict development on lands with critical development constraints.

POLICY 5.3.1.9 Discourage development in areas where groundwater of sufficient quantity and quality is not available to support the proposed development.

POLICY 5.3.1.10 Discourage development in areas characterized by:
a. wetlands, swamps, muskeg, or saturated soils; and
b. valleys, ravines, or seasonal draws.

Where development is allowed in areas exhibiting these characteristics, the development must adhere to Provincial regulations, guidelines, and wetland management policies.

POLICY 5.3.1.11 Restrict development on lands which are unsuitable for development because of environmental hazards such as:

- a. flood hazard or high ground water table; or
- b. steep slopes (slopes in excess of 15%) and on slopes that are subject to slippage or mass movement; or
- c. on soils that have extremely fast percolation rates and/or which might result in the possibility of groundwater contamination.

During the subdivision process, such lands shall be assessed and dedicated as Environmental Reserves or protected via Environmental Reserve Easements, as eligible.

POLICY 5.3.1.12 Prohibit permanent structures within the 1:100-year floodway and flood fringe of any river, or lake. Non-permanent development and agricultural uses may be allowed within floodway and flood fringe areas where floodproofing techniques are applied to the satisfaction of the approving authority. A report from a qualified, registered professional engineer or geotechnical scientist will be required by the County to confirm that the development can be adequately flood-proofed. Compliance with the recommendations in the report will be a condition of development approval.

POLICY 5.3.1.13 Encourage flood hazard areas to be kept in their natural state.

POLICY 5.3.1.14 Limit new development on municipal lands within flood areas to recreational uses.

POLICY 5.3.1.15 Require development proposals to conform with Provincial guidelines so far as they pertain to setback requirements from valley breaks, ravines, and watercourses.

5.3.2 Environmental Reserves and Conservation Easements

As outlined in the MGA, municipalities can require the dedication of lands as Reserve lands through the subdivision process. Environmental Reserves and Environmental Reserve Easements are included as possible reserve dedications.

Environmental Reserves (ER), Environmental Reserve Easements (ERE), and Conservation Easements are three tools municipalities can use to ensure that:

- a. Development does not occur on hazard lands;
- b. Significant environmental areas are protected; and
- c. The public can access significant cultural landscapes.

Environmentally sensitive areas perform valuable ecological functions within the County that can reduce infrastructure and emergency management costs. Additionally, these areas are often characterized by hazard lands that are unsuitable for some types of development. Environmentally sensitive areas include lands subject to a flood hazard, slope instability, ravines, important wildlife corridors, wetlands, and areas subject to erosion. Policies in this plan provide direction intended to reduce risks associated with development where these features are present and support the conservation of these features to: protect water quality and quantity, preserve natural stormwater management infrastructure to reduce the risk of flooding, and to preserve biodiversity within the County.

Objective: Utilize Environmental Reserves and Conservation Reserves to conserve environmentally significant and sensitive features within the County

POLICY 5.3.2.1 Recognize and conserve areas with significant landscape, environmental and biophysical features through the use of available municipal land use planning and management tools including area structure plans, the Land Use Bylaw, environmental reserves, and environmental reserve easements.

- POLICY 5.3.2.2 Dedicate natural areas, including riparian areas adjacent to water courses and water bodies (creeks, natural drainage channels, ponds, ravines, springs), and wetlands as environmental reserves, in accordance with the Act, Provincial Guidelines, or as recommended by a professional report.
- POLICY 5.3.2.3 Require that Environmental Reserves primarily remain in their natural state. The County may use Environmental Reserve lands for public parks and trails where the use does not negatively impact the environmental condition of the site or adjacent waterbody, wetland, or watercourse.
- POLICY 5.3.2.4 Require an Environmental Reserve of not less than 30.0 m (98.0 ft.) in width from the high-water mark of water bodies and/or the top of bank of lakes and rivers as a condition of subdivision. As a condition of development approval where there is no subdivision, a comparable setback of 30.0 m (98.0 ft.) or greater shall be required from the high-water mark of waterbodies or the top of bank of lakes and rivers to the wall of the nearest building unless a site-specific study by a qualified professional is provided by the development proponent to support the relaxation of the width to the satisfaction of the County.
- POLICY 5.3.2.5 Require additional reserves and/or setback based on the recommendations of any engineering and/or geotechnical study requested by the County. In these cases, the amount of reserves required will be determined using the guidelines for ER width development by the Province.
- POLICY 5.3.2.6 Explore the use of other conservation tools such as environmental reserve easements, conservation easements and restricted covenants to achieve the purpose stated in 5.3.2.1.

5.3.3 Environmentally Sensitive Areas Overlay

The Environmentally Sensitive Area Overlay identifies areas in the County of Vermilion River where the physical characteristics of the land may make development difficult or unfeasible, and/or where developing the land would have a significant impact on recognized ecological features. Development in these areas may require additional information to be submitted by the applicant in order to ensure the suitability of the potential development sites. The Environmentally Sensitive Area Overlay areas are shown on **Map 2 Future Land Use**.

Objective: Protect Environmentally Significant and Sensitive Areas in the County.

- POLICY 5.3.3.1 Encourage the retention of native vegetation and in riparian areas within the Environmentally Sensitive Areas Overlay utilizing resources available through: ALUS, Cows and Fish, Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils and the County’s Agricultural Service Board.
- POLICY 5.3.3.2 Require the preparation of environmental reports (such as a biophysical report, slope stability report, or geotechnical report, prepared by a qualified professional) prior to the approval of a redistricting, subdivision and/or development application, where the land that is the subject of the application includes:
 - a. watercourses, wetlands, steep slopes, flood plains, or wildlife corridors and habitats;
 - b. the shore of a lake or waterbody;
 - c. an Environmentally Significant Areas (as shown on Map 2 Future Land Use); or
 - d. potential contamination from the previous or adjacent uses;
 where the proposed development would result in a significant increase in intensity or density of development.
- POLICY 5.3.3.3 Consider the cumulative effects on both surface and groundwater supplies when approving new subdivisions or development. Both surface and groundwater supplies must not be overcommitted to accommodate one proposed development over another.
- POLICY 5.3.3.4 Support the restoration of environmentally sensitive areas by natural means or their restoration by a third party where a third party has caused an unauthorized change.

5.4 Recreation and Culture

The County of Vermilion River includes a range of recreational, historic and cultural amenities that reflect the region's rich history.

This plan provides policy direction to support and where appropriate enhance these areas to provide recreational and cultural amenities throughout the County.

GOAL:

The County encourages recreation and tourism development that enhances the quality of life for residents and visitors and supports opportunities to conserve unique heritage resources within the Region.

5.4.1 Recreation

Recreational facilities and activities include both public and private land holdings and uses. Recreation opportunities throughout the County play a significant part in improving the quality of life for residents and for visitors to the region. As the demand for recreational land for both public and private use increases, so does the need for planned recreational facilities and areas.

This plan recognizes and encourages local recreational uses based on the capabilities of an area to sustain intensive or extensive development. Recreation developments should be located in areas where they will not adversely affect the agricultural economy, residential developments, or sensitive environmental features.

Objective:	Provide a network of parks, open spaces, and land for recreational facilities and amenities that complement the municipality's natural features and meet the needs of residents and visitors within the Region.
POLICY 5.4.1.1	Require subdivision and development proposals for commercial recreational uses, including recreational multi-lot country residential developments, to be designed in accordance with the following design principles: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. The design and density shall be determined by the site's topography, vegetation, geotechnical features, and drainage characteristics. In this regard, development proposals shall include a detailed analysis of the environmental constraints of the site and the means by which the site design will minimize the disturbance of sensitive environmental features;b. The design shall protect critical wildlife habitat;c. The design shall protect, maintain, and re-establish, where necessary, water bodies, water courses, and tree cover; andd. The design shall maintain the integrity of predevelopment site topography and natural drainage patterns.
POLICY 5.4.1.2	Enable new commercial recreation subdivisions and developments, including multi-lot recreational uses, in locations that exhibit the following characteristics: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Landscape features such as scenic views, treed areas, waterbodies or watercourses;b. Proximity to public recreational amenities;c. Access to developed County roads;d. Situated on poor-quality agricultural land;e. Sufficient availability of water and wastewater services. and,f. Low-impact design that maintains, and re-establishes, where necessary, natural vegetation to minimize impacts on the natural environment.
POLICY 5.4.1.3	Support agritourism developments that celebrate the County's rich agricultural heritage.
POLICY 5.4.1.4	Consider opportunities to acquire abandoned rail line corridors for open space and mobility network connections, subject to any necessary soil contamination and remediation, minimizing impact on agricultural or residential communities, and in a manner that does not result in long-term financial impacts to the County.
POLICY 5.4.1.5	Encourage the development of public recreational uses such as trail systems that do not require permanent structures or have the potential to contaminate soil or groundwater.
POLICY 5.4.1.6	Require multi-lot country residential developments to provide trail networks to the satisfaction of the Subdivision Authority at the time of subdivision.

POLICY 5.4.1.7 Where trails are included as part of multi-lot developments, provide buffering measures within trail rights-of-way to reduce noise, dust, and the potential for trespassing on private property as a result of trail use.

Objective: Minimize municipal costs associated with recreational developments.

POLICY 5.4.1.8 Require the proponent of a recreational activity to identify all municipal costs associated with the development. The assignment of these costs shall be the basis for an agreement to be entered into as a condition of subdivision approval or the issuance of a development permit. Normally, however, all development servicing costs associated with the development will be carried by the proponent.

POLICY 5.4.1.9 Consider any financial involvement in recreational trails by the County by Council on a project-by-project basis.

5.4.2 Municipal and School Reserves

The MGA enables municipalities to require the dedication of reserve lands or cash contributions for schools, parks and recreation areas through the subdivision process. These types of Reserve lands are intended to be utilized by municipalities as public parks, public recreation areas, for school authority purposes or as buffers between parcels of land which are used for different purposes.

This plan provides policy to direct how land dedicated as for these purposes is to be identified, prioritized, and used.

Objective: Provide recreational open spaces for current and future generations of County residents.

POLICY 5.4.2.1 Provide a variety of open space amenity areas through Municipal Reserve acquisition to support connectivity, recreation, and open space programming that contributes to health and wellness, social connections, and learning.

POLICY 5.4.2.2 Require dedication of 10% of the parcel of land or 10% of its appraised market value as Municipal Reserve, or Municipal and School Reserves or money-in-lieu, at the time of subdivision, pursuant to the requirements under the Act.

POLICY 5.4.2.3 The County shall take Municipal Reserves as land dedication where the land is suitable for its intended use and is accessible to residents of the area. Where it is deemed that land is not necessary for the residents of the area or the land is unsuitable for Municipal Reserve uses, money-in-lieu shall be taken. The money-in-lieu shall be shared with school authorities in accordance with any agreements which may exist between the County and the school authorities, and the rest shall be used to acquire and develop parcels of desirable recreation areas in the County.

POLICY 5.4.2.4 Acquire and/or assemble Municipal Reserve parcels that are concentrated in a few large parcels on suitable sites rather than scattered through subdivisions.

POLICY 5.4.2.5 Evaluate and inventory Municipal Reserve land holdings to make more efficient use of land resources through consolidation and/or sales.

POLICY 5.4.2.6 Review the applicability and effect of Municipal Reserve disposition on surrounding land uses and the area's recreational potential prior to disposing of any Municipal Reserves.

POLICY 5.4.2.7 Consider Municipal Reserve dedication as open space buffer of sufficient size and composition to act as a noise and visual barrier where required between disparate land uses, and where they serve as active or passive recreation open spaces.

POLICY 5.4.2.8 Require that Area Structure Plans or non-statutory plans (Outline Plan or Development Concept Plan) incorporate and identify the location of the future Municipal Reserve lands within the plan area to ensure new development areas and redevelopment areas include spaces for recreation and gathering. Proponents shall consult with County Administration in determining the location of Municipal Reserves.

POLICY 5.4.2.9 In the absence of an Area Structure Plan or non-statutory plan, identify the location, configuration, quality, and characteristics of the land for Municipal Reserves prioritizing lands which:

- Support active transportation;
- Provide opportunities to enhance wildlife corridors and connectivity;
- Provide opportunities for gathering and community celebrations; and/or
- Create a buffer between less compatible land uses.

POLICY 5.4.2.10 Encourage the dedication of Municipal Reserves in larger sites, or adjacent to existing reserve lands or natural features where larger reserve holdings contribute to improved recreational opportunities.

5.4.3 Heritage and Culture

The County of Vermilion River includes unique natural features and rich landscapes. The County places value on significant cultural landscapes and heritage resources. It supports the UNESCO World Heritage Committee definition of Cultural Landscapes:

“Cultural Landscapes represent the combined works of nature and man. They are illustrative of the evolution of human society and settlement over time, under the influence of physical constraints and/or opportunities presented by their natural environment and of successive social, economic, and cultural forces both external and internal.” (UNESCO/ICMOS, 1995)

The plan provides policy direction to encourage the preservation of the County’s natural and cultural heritage landscapes.

Objective:	Encourage the preservation of significant cultural landscapes and heritage resources throughout the County.
POLICY 5.4.3.1	Require Heritage Resource Impact Assessments to be include with proposed subdivision and development applications in locations where the proposal may impact significant cultural landscapes or heritage resources.
POLICY 5.4.3.2	Encourage the use of historic resources to promote tourism, where appropriate and in a manner that respects the cultural heritage value of the resource.
POLICY 5.4.3.3	Require that proposed subdivisions and developments on the “main streets” of urban areas protect built heritage and enhance the historic significance and character of these areas.
POLICY 5.4.3.4	Preserve historical resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Through the identification and conservation of Municipal Historic Resources;b. By maintaining a Heritage Resources inventory and registry; and,c. Through partnerships with local heritage associations, adjacent jurisdictions, and other regional partners.

5.5 Infrastructure and Services

The development of transportation and utility systems can have a significant impact on land use within the County of Vermilion River. The County does not have the authority to regulate Provincial highways, pipelines, transmission lines, and similar installations that are under Provincial control. Notwithstanding, the County has opportunity to comment on the proposed locations of these facilities. It is Council's intention to encourage the appropriate authorities to have regard for the policies of this plan.

The County participates in the ongoing operation of the Alberta Central East Water Corporation, a regional water system, tying in water supply services from Vegreville to Vermilion and Two Hills. It is the intent of this plan that development be directed, as much as is reasonable, to the areas serviced by the system. New developments near the system will be required to connect to the system.

Other services vital to County residents and economic drivers are within the County's jurisdiction. This plan provides direction for managing road capacity, servicing requirements for new development, and emergency services.

GOAL:

The County's infrastructure services are safe, reliable, and efficient.

5.5.1 Site Suitability for Infrastructure

As much as possible, the County wishes to direct infrastructure and utility services to locations that do not adversely impact rural working rural landscapes or result in conflicts with other land uses.

Objective:	Minimize conflicts between transportation, communications, or utility facilities with other land uses.
POLICY 5.5.1.1	Encourage high-voltage power lines and high-pressure pipelines to be located away from residential areas.
POLICY 5.5.1.2	Consider the establishment of a Dangerous Goods Route to minimize hazards to the traveling public.
POLICY 5.5.1.3	Require new developments to incorporate buffering measures where proposed transportation and utility lines and facilities may adversely affect adjacent lands or land uses.
POLICY 5.5.1.4	Encourage wireless communication facilities to be sited in such a manner as to minimize impact on nearby residents. The County shall encourage developers of wireless communication facilities to undertake public consultation.
POLICY 5.5.1.5	Encourage the co-location of multiple devices on wireless communication facilities. Where appropriate, new facilities should be built to standards to accommodate multiple devices. Individual facilities are strongly discouraged. Should co-location not prove feasible, clustering of wireless communication facilities is preferred.
POLICY 5.5.1.6	Encourage the regulation of building heights in areas around all publicly licensed and paved airports to minimize safety hazards and land use conflicts.

5.5.2 Road Infrastructure

The County of Vermilion River is served by both Provincial highway and County road infrastructure. For the purposes of applying development standards to roads within the County, this plan identifies Arterial, Collector, and Local roads. Servicing and design standards differ depending on the type of roadway.

Provincial highways are the sole jurisdiction of Alberta Transportation (AT). The County will continue to work to ensure development adjacent to or that otherwise affects highways is referred to AT for comment and necessary approvals.

Objective:	Ensure roads are designed, built, and maintained to efficiently serve the travelling public and transportation volumes, while minimizing conflicts with other land uses.
POLICY 5.5.2.1	Consider roads shown as Arterial Roads on Map 2 Future Land Use Map as arterial roads and developed to arterial road standards relating to width, grades, site lines, and access.
POLICY 5.5.2.2	Consider roads shown as Collector Roads on Map A6 Transportation Network as collector roads and developed to collector road standards relating to width, grades, site lines and access.
POLICY 5.5.2.3	Consider service roads for Arterial and Collector Roads to be local internal subdivision roads and developed to appropriate standards satisfactory to the County.
POLICY 5.5.2.4	Consider all other municipal roads not identified in policies 5.5.2.1-3, above, either local County Roads or local internal subdivision roads, and developed to appropriate standards satisfactory to the County.
POLICY 5.5.2.5	Discourage direct access from private property onto Arterial Roads under normal circumstances.
POLICY 5.5.2.6	Limit direct access from private property onto Collector Roads.
POLICY 5.5.2.7	Consider service roads adjacent to Provincial highways in the County as local internal subdivision roads and developed to appropriate standards satisfactory to the County.
POLICY 5.5.2.8	Require developments adjacent to Provincial highways to conform with AB Transportation and Economic Corridors Access Management Guidelines. Compliance with the County's system of collector and arterial roads shall also be required. This includes ensuring that the County and provincial transportation system is protected from encroachment and proliferation of direct access.
POLICY 5.5.2.9	Implement a program of maintenance and improvement for local roads designed to enhance traffic flow. Through the subdivision and development processes, the County shall endeavor to make the most efficient use of existing roadway facilities. Developments with the potential for substantial road impact (high traffic volumes or heavy trucks) will be directed to those roads that are designed and constructed to accommodate such development.
POLICY 5.5.2.10	Discourage access from private property onto Provincial highways and limit such access wherever possible, especially where access onto local roads is available. Application for subdivision in the Agricultural Use Area will be specifically designed to minimize access onto Provincial highways and local arterial roads through the use of service roads or redesigning the subdivision boundaries to redirect accesses onto local roads. The cost of consolidation or service roads and the costs of resolving all of Alberta Transportation's concerns with respect to access to the Provincial highway will be the responsibility of the developer.
POLICY 5.5.2.11	Encourage industrial, commercial and resource extraction development to use identified haul roads and enter into haul route agreements with the County.

Objective:	Discourage the fragmentation of working rural landscapes associated with the development of linear transportation, communication, or utility facilities and services.
POLICY 5.5.2.12	Encourage transportation, communication, or utility facilities and services to locate so they: <ol style="list-style-type: none">Minimize impacts on working rural landscapes;Minimize the fragmentation of land, and/or the creation of fragmented parcels;Locate adjacent to or within road allowances wherever feasible;Use corridors to integrate a number of utilities;Minimize disruption of recreation, wildlife, and historic resources; andAvoid disruption of existing or future urban centres.

5.5.3 Regional and Cross-jurisdiction Cooperation

Infrastructure and utility services fall under the authority of a variety of government levels and involve regional cooperation. The County of Vermilion River works proactively with its regional and cross-jurisdictional partners to develop and maintain effective and efficient infrastructure services.

Objective:	Work collaboratively with other levels of government, their agencies, regional partners, and service agencies to provide reliable infrastructure and utilities through the County.
POLICY 5.5.3.1	Encourage the Province of Alberta to improve and maintain highways through the County connecting to major industrial and commercial centres in the province.
POLICY 5.5.3.2	Encourage the federal government, its agencies, and rail operators to improve and maintain existing rail corridors to ensure safety and to encourage economic opportunities for rail-dependent industries within the County and the wider region.
POLICY 5.5.3.3	Encourage agencies and rail operators to improve railway crossings within the County.
POLICY 5.5.3.4	Cooperate with regional partners to explore opportunities for the upgrading of intermunicipal roadways.
POLICY 5.5.3.5	Cooperate with other municipalities and/or the Provincial government with planning, development, and operation of sanitary waste disposal facilities and sewage lagoons.
POLICY 5.5.3.6	Design new development adjacent to the future Highway 16 Lloydminster bypass to adhere to Provincial requirements regarding siting and access.

5.5.4 Servicing Requirements for New Development

The County of Vermilion River wishes to make the best use of its infrastructure investments, and to ensure all new infrastructure meets any applicable municipal or provincial standards. New development is expected to meet or exceed design standards and connect with existing services.

Objective:	Ensure all subdivision and development conforms to municipal and provincial infrastructure and servicing standards.
POLICY 5.5.4.1	Prohibit subdivision where access to roads established by the County in good condition does not exist, or where construction of a roadway and access to current County standards to the site is not undertaken by the developer. Where roads are not built to the current County standards, the developer shall be responsible for the costs of constructing or upgrading roads as a condition of subdivision approval.
POLICY 5.5.4.2	Ensure all municipal infrastructure systems, such as new roads, sewage collection and water distribution systems created as a result of private development, which may include dedication to the County or subdivision, are only assumed by the municipality if the system has been constructed or upgraded to a standard which is acceptable to the County and which meets or exceeds all appropriate Provincial standards.
POLICY 5.5.4.3	Require new multi-lot subdivisions to be connected to the regional piped water supply system as a condition of subdivision or development approval where connections can be developed cost-effectively and efficiently. The County will encourage landowners near the regional system to connect to the system.

5.5.5 Emergency Preparedness

The County of Vermilion River requires that emergency preparedness be a consideration in the approval of new developments throughout the County. Requiring emergency preparedness measures to be a consideration in the design and approval of new developments will best ensure the safety of all County residents.

Objective:	Ensure high levels of emergency preparedness within a rural context.
POLICY 5.5.5.1	Encourage the use of effective wildfire prevention techniques and the development of on-site firefighting measures to reduce the risk of wildfires resulting from development.
POLICY 5.5.5.2	Refer applications for subdivision and development, where determined appropriate by the approval authority, to the provincial department responsible for forest wildfire management or the local fire department for comment in evaluating the suitability of a site in forested land for development.

- POLICY 5.5.5.3 Consider the following as conditions for approval for development which is too remote to be adequately serviced by existing firefighting services:
- a. The provision of a suitable on-site water supply for firefighting purposes;
 - b. The use of fire-resistant building methods;
 - c. The installation of spark arrestors on chimneys; and/or,
 - d. The removal of trees, shrubs, and fuels in proximity to certain developments.
- POLICY 5.5.5.4 Discourage the development of forested lands in significant wildfire hazard areas.
- POLICY 5.5.5.5 Consider requiring developers to provide for appropriate fire protection measures in an application for development, subdivision, or an Area Structure Plan.
- POLICY 5.5.5.6 Consider requiring the provision of an emergency access to multi-parcel developments in forested areas.
- POLICY 5.5.5.7 Prohibit residential development in those areas which are too close to sour gas facilities, in accordance with Provincial legislation and regulations.

6. LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

The policies in Part 6 provide direction for land use and development decisions.



6.1 Agriculture

Supporting the agricultural working rural landscapes by, conserving productive agricultural land, promoting the County's agricultural heritage, and maintaining the agriculture industry's viability are important considerations for this MDP.

The County has identified areas where agricultural development will be the preferred and priority future land use. In areas, identified on **Map 1. Future Land Use Concept**, in the Agricultural Use Area, the conversion of agricultural land to other uses will be discouraged and developments that negatively impact agricultural activities will not be supported.

Rural residential development is the subdivision of single parcels from agricultural quarter sections. Often, these parcels are original farmsteads that have been separated from the working portion of the quarter section. Many of the residents who occupy rural residential parcels continue to operate or work in agricultural pursuits and are familiar with the day-to-day operations of working farms.

GOAL:

The County is a leader in agricultural production, diversification and innovation, supporting a vibrant rural economy and stewarding land for future generations.

6.1.1 Use of Agricultural Lands

Objective:	Prioritize the long-term viability of agriculture and agricultural lands in the County
POLICY 6.1.1.1	The Agricultural Area is established on Map 2 Future Land Use .
POLICY 6.1.1.2	Enable the conversion of lands in the Agricultural Area to other uses where such conversion is necessary to support the diversification of economic development opportunities within the County and where the intended end use is compatible with surrounding planned or existing land uses.
POLICY 6.1.1.3	Enable the development of resource extraction uses, public utility uses, recreational uses and rural industrial uses in the Agricultural Use Area where provided for in the County's Land Use Bylaw.
POLICY 6.1.1.4	Consider the following in reviewing Land Use Bylaw redistricting proposals for the conversion of agricultural land in the Agricultural Area to a more intensive land use district: <ol style="list-style-type: none">The agricultural capability of the quarter section;Whether the parcel is severed by a physical feature;Whether the proposed land use district includes uses that may negatively impact adjacent agricultural uses;Whether there is suitable access to the provincial or local road network;Whether the landscape makes the site unsuitable for agricultural use;Whether surface water can be effectively and efficiently managed within the site;Whether the site can be effectively and efficiently serviced by potable water and wastewater services) without negatively impacting existing households or adjacent agricultural users; andWhether the proposed site is consistent with an approved applicable statutory plan.
POLICY 6.1.1.5	Require the preparation and approval of an Area Structure Plan and redistricting to an appropriate Land Use District for any development or subdivision that: <ol style="list-style-type: none">Exceeds the maximum parcel density of 4 parcels within the quarter section; orWould result in a significant increase in the intensity of use within the parcel; and/orWould result in potential impacts or require improvements to municipal or regional infrastructure.
POLICY 6.1.1.6	Minimize the fragmentation of agricultural land when locating new roads, rail lines, pipelines, transmission lines, other linear infrastructure, public uses, or for oil or gas wells, or incidental installations.
Objective:	Minimize the premature conversion of rural working rural landscapes to non-agricultural uses and limit the fragmentation of agricultural land through subdivision.
POLICY 6.1.1.7	Require a minimum parcel area of approximately 64.7 ha (160.0 ac.) for extensive agricultural use of a quarter section, less any subdivisions for permitted or discretionary uses.

- POLICY 6.1.1.8 Notwithstanding 5.1.3.1, a single 16.0 ha (40.0 ac.) parcel for extensive agricultural use, value-added agriculture or a hobby farm may be allowed from an unsubdivided quarter section. Where a 16.0 ha (40.0 ac.) parcel has been subdivided from a quarter section, no further subdivisions for country residential or agricultural uses shall be allowed without an amendment to the LUB to redistrict the site to an appropriate land use district and may require to the proponent to prepare an Area Structure Plan for adoption by Council.
- POLICY 6.1.1.9 Allow the subdivision of a fragmented parcel where it is fragmented by reason of one or more railways, public roadways, rivers, creeks or water bodies.
- POLICY 6.1.1.10 Further to policy 6.1.1.9, a natural fragmentation may also be considered to be a barrier to the crossing of cultivation equipment created by substantial topography, such as a ravine or gully. The determination that such a topographic barrier is a natural fragmentation for the purpose of subdivision shall be at the sole discretion of the Subdivision Authority.
- POLICY 6.1.1.11 The subdivision authority may refuse to approve an application that proposes to subdivide a fragmented parcel if:
- in the opinion of the County, the construction and maintenance of the roadway adjacent to the parcel would serve no greater or long-term public interest; and
 - the County is responsible for the maintenance of the roadway upon completion of its construction or upgrading.
- POLICY 6.1.1.12 In the case where another policy of this plan would allow for a subdivision to occur and the subject site also contains a fragmenting feature as described in Policies 6.1.1.9 or 6.1.1.10, and where the fragmented area contains adequate developable area, the developer shall be encouraged to subdivide the fragmented area, as the first subdivision from the subject site.
- POLICY 6.1.1.13 The maximum parcel density within a quarter section in the Agricultural Area shall be four (4) parcels including remnant parcels and fragments, without requiring an amendment to the Land Use Bylaw.
- POLICY 6.1.1.14 Subdivision resulting in more than four (4) titled parcels on a quarter section in the Agricultural Area shall not be approved without amendment to the Land Use Bylaw and the adoption of an Area Structure Plan which demonstrates to the satisfaction of Council that the site can be cost-effectively and efficiently serviced and that there is a developable area on each of the proposed lots. At the discretion of either the Development or Subdivision Authority, a concept plan or outline plan may be accepted if the total development area is under 8.09 ha (20 ac.) in area unless otherwise indicated within an applicable statutory plan.
- POLICY 6.1.1.15 Notwithstanding 6.1.1.13, and 6.1.1.13, additional parcels for public utilities or other provincial or municipal uses may be permitted in addition to the four (4) parcels per quarter section, without a Land Use Bylaw amendment.

6.1.2 Rural Residential Development in the Agricultural Area

Rural residential subdivision is a desirable development with the County. Rural residential or acreage properties provide County residents with the ability to enjoy a rural lifestyle on a smaller parcel. Rural residential parcels provide the opportunity for intergenerational living on a quarter section; supporting family farms and also enables families to provide care and support within the community to family members who are entering the farming industry or transitioning into other phases of their lives.

- Objective:** Rural Residential developments in the agricultural area are located and designed to minimize impacts on agricultural developments and municipal infrastructure.
- POLICY 6.1.2.1 Rural residential development will be allowed within the Agricultural Use Area established on **Map 2: Future Land Use**, subject to the following policies.
- POLICY 6.1.2.2 Require rural residential subdivisions to be located in proximity to gas, electrical, and telephone lines which have existing spare capacity to sustain the additional usage.
- POLICY 6.1.2.3 Refuse rural residential subdivisions which do not have direct access to existing graded and graveled or paved registered roads. Alternately, require, as a condition of subdivision approval, that the applicant or landowner undertake improvements to the road(s) and approach(es) to ensure compliance with current County roadway and approach standards.
- POLICY 6.1.2.4 Refuse rural residential development in those areas which are too close to sour gas facilities, in accordance with Provincial legislation and regulations.
- POLICY 6.1.2.5 The subdivision authority will consider potential impacts on resource extraction, recreation, historical, and archaeological features when determining the suitability of a proposed rural residential development.

- POLICY 6.1.2.6 Restrict new rural residential subdivisions from locating in areas where the proposed rural residential development may negatively impact significant environmental features including:
- c. Ground water quality or quantity;
 - d. Important Bird Areas;
 - e. Environmental Sensitive Areas;
 - f. Key Wildlife and Biodiversity Areas; and/or
 - g. Historic Resources

When an application is received for a site which includes any of these features the subdivision authority shall require the applicant to provide additional information as part of the application process to demonstrate that the proposed subdivision can be designed to mitigate impacts on these features. Historic Resources are identified on **Appendix Map A5 Historic Resources**.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas and Key Wildlife and Biodiversity Areas are identified on **Appendix Map A3 Environmental Features**

- POLICY 6.1.2.7 Require, as a condition of subdivision or development permit approval, that the developer enter into a development agreement with the County, wherein the developer assumes responsibility for all costs associated with the rural residential subdivision or development.

- POLICY 6.1.2.8 Require documentation from the County's safety codes officer, indicating that satisfactory arrangements have been made regarding the development's sewage disposal system as a condition of approval for rural residential subdivisions and development permits.

- POLICY 6.1.2.9 The assessment of the suitability of a proposed rural residential subdivision will not take into consideration required setbacks for private sewage disposal systems. Rather, if a subdivision results in the reduction of setbacks between an existing or proposed private sewage disposal system and a property line then the developer will be required to ensure that the existing or proposed private sewage disposal system conforms to all relevant provincial regulations affecting private sewage disposal systems.

- POLICY 6.1.2.10 Require spatial buffers or setbacks between rural residential uses and adjacent uses which may, in the opinion of the approving authority, be incompatible.

- POLICY 6.1.2.11 Allow the subdivision of a maximum of one (1) vacant rural residential parcel or one (1) abandoned farmstead parcel with a maximum area of 4.04 ha (10.0 ac) within a quarter section in the agricultural area. (See Figure 6)

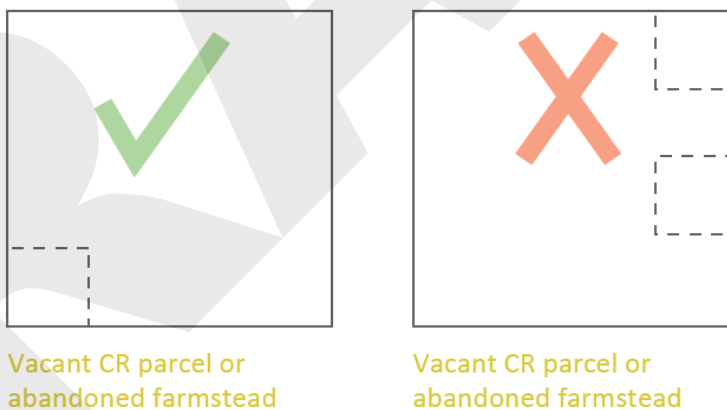


Figure 6. Number of Vacant rural residential parcels or abandoned farmstead parcels allowed per quarter section

- POLICY 6.1.2.12 Notwithstanding Policy 6.1.2.11, vacant rural residential parcels and abandoned farmstead parcels may be larger than 4.04 ha (10.0 ac) to a maximum of 6.06 ha (15.0 ac.), where it has been demonstrated by the applicant, to the satisfaction of the subdivision authority, that the site includes features such as:

- a. treed areas;
- b. steep slope areas;
- c. wetlands, watercourses, riparian areas; and/or
- d. poor quality farmland, (less than 40% ALC value)

In such cases, a Real Property Report or Building Site Certificate prepared by an Alberta Land Surveyor, will be required to verify the locations of the poor quality farmland and/or environmental features which do not support agricultural development and the proposed boundaries.

- POLICY 6.1.2.13 If the Real Property Report or Building Site Certificate does not demonstrate that the additional land is required to accommodate the topographical features then the additional lands will not be permitted. Minimize the conversion of agricultural land with a high farmland assessment value by encouraging vacant rural residential parcels to be located within the poorest quality agricultural land in the quarter section that does not exhibit significant constraints to development.
- POLICY 6.1.2.14 The combined total maximum area of land that may be subdivided from a quarter section for vacant rural residential parcels, abandoned farmstead separations, and developed rural residential parcels shall be 10.1 ha (25.0 ac). (See Figure 7)

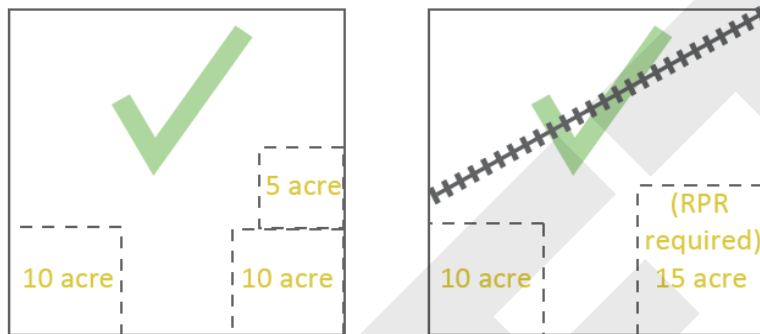
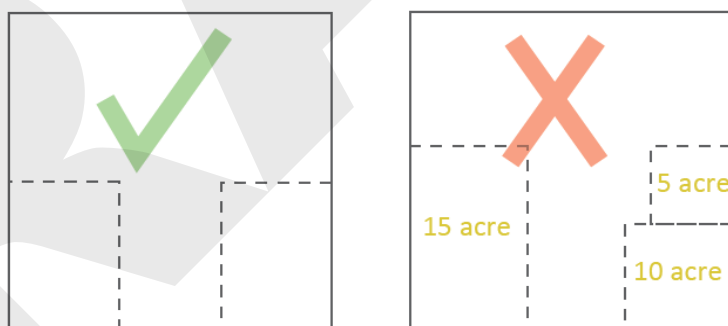


Figure 7. Ordinary maximum area of land that may be subdivided from a quarter section

However, at the discretion of the subdivision authority, where a quarter section contains two (2) oversized, developed rural residential yard sites, a maximum combined area of 12.1 ha (30.0 ac) may be permitted to be subdivided from a quarter section to accommodate the two (2) oversized developed yard sites. In such cases, a Real Property Report or Building Site Certificate prepared by an Alberta Land Surveyor, will be required to verify the locations of all improvements, site features, in relation to the boundaries of the proposed parcel(s).

If the Real Property Report or Building Site Certificate does not demonstrate that the additional land is required to accommodate the topographical features and/or existing yard site improvements then the additional lands will not be permitted. (See Figure 8)



15 acre parcels

Figure 8. Exceptional maximum area of land that may be subdivided from a quarter section, subject to Policy 6.1.2.15

- POLICY 6.1.2.15 Developed rural residential parcels shall normally not be less than 0.8 ha (2.0 ac), and normally no more than 4.04 ha (10.0 ac) in size. However, the 4.04 ha (10.0 ac) maximum area may be exceeded if it can be demonstrated by the applicant that the additional area is required to include the yard site improvements up to a maximum of 6.06 ha (15.0 ac).

Yard site improvements normally include a house, garage, outbuildings, shop(s), access, power pole, well, private sewage disposal system, and established shelter belts. The rural residential parcel may also include: barns, sheds, substantial fences and corrals, dugouts if required by the dwelling to provide non-drinking water, and other similar farm buildings and facilities ancillary to the yard site. In such cases, a Real Property Report or Building Site Certificate prepared by an Alberta Land Surveyor, will be required to verify the locations of all improvements, site features, and proposed boundaries.

If the Real Property Report or Building Site Certificate does not demonstrate that the additional land is required to accommodate the yard site improvements then the additional lands will not be permitted. (See Figure 9)

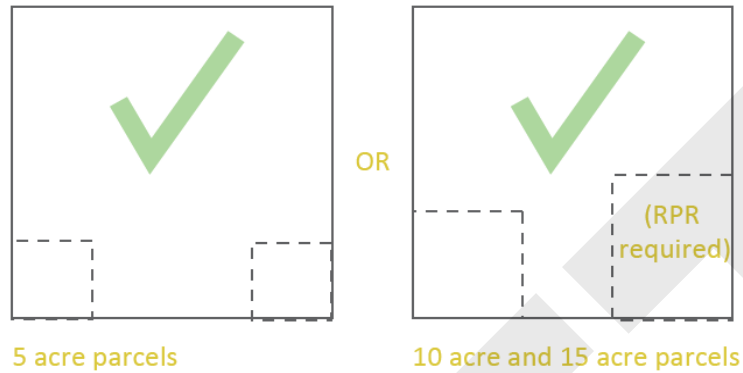


Figure 9. Permitted rural residential parcel sizes.

POLICY 6.1.2.16 Notwithstanding 6.1.2.15 above, developed rural residential parcels may also be larger than 4.04 ha (10.0 ac) to a maximum of 6.06 ha (15.0 ac), to include features such as treed areas, wetlands, and poor-quality farmland, that is, land with a farmland assessment ratio of 30% or less.

Additionally, at the discretion of the Subdivision Authority, developed rural residential parcels may also be larger than 4.04 ha (10.0 ac) to include land which otherwise would be a small area of the remaining farm unit less than 60.0 m (200.0 ft.) in width, between the parcel and a boundary of the quarter section adjacent to a road.

In such cases, the applicant may be required to provide a drawing prepared by an Alberta land surveyor that identifies the location and area of the features and or the area that would be fragmented from the remainder if it were not included in the developed rural residential parcel.

If the drawing does not demonstrate that the additional land is required to accommodate the features, then the additional lands will not be permitted. (See Figure 9)

POLICY 6.1.2.17 The maximum parcel density within a quarter section for rural residential and agricultural use parcels, including fragments shall be four (4) parcels. Additional parcels will not be permitted to be subdivided from the quarter section unless a land use bylaw amendment has been approved by Council. (See Figure 10)

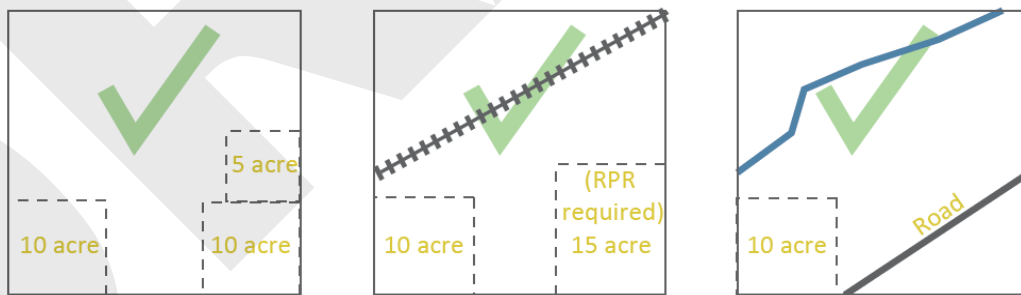


Figure 10. Maximum number of residential and agricultural parcels per quarter section

POLICY 6.1.2.18 An Area Structure Plan will be required prior to approval of a subdivision which would create more than four (4) parcels out of a quarter section. At the discretion of the Development Authority, a Development Concept Plan or Outline Plan may be accepted if the total development area is under 8.08 ha (20.0 ac.) in area unless otherwise indicated within an applicable statutory plan.

POLICY 6.1.2.19 The maximum number of rural residential parcels, including vacant parcels, abandoned farmstead separations and developed rural residential parcels, permitted per quarter section shall be three (3). (See Figure 10)

POLICY 6.1.2.20 Where a quarter section has previously been subdivided into (2) two or more agricultural use parcels then a maximum of one (1) rural residential parcel or abandoned farmstead will be permitted from each agricultural parcel without an amendment to the Land Use Bylaw. (See Figure 11)

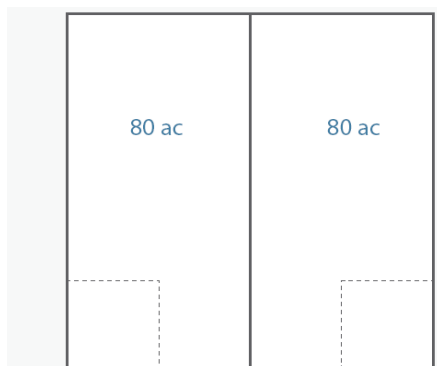


Figure 11. Permitted rural residential parcels or abandoned farmsteads within agricultural parcels

POLICY 6.1.2.21 Notwithstanding the policies listed above, parcels which include areas described as “pan handles”, that is, parcels which consist of lengthy narrow sections leading to a wider development site, shall not be approved by the subdivision authority.

Exceptions to this policy shall be allowed if, in the opinion of the subdivision authority, the proposed subdivision does not interfere with an existing agricultural operation and:

- a. the subdivision is to separate a developed rural residential parcel from the balance of the quarter section; and
- b. the lengthy narrow section is directly adjacent to the property line or quarter section line, whichever the case may be; or
- c. the lengthy narrow section is a minimum of 100 m from the property line or quarter section line, whichever the case may be.

POLICY 6.1.2.22 Country residential development will be prohibited in those areas which do not conform to AER required setback distances from sour gas facilities, in accordance with Provincial legislation and regulations.

6.1.3 Value-Added Agriculture

Value-added agriculture involves manufacturing processes, packaging, marketing, or additional services to increase the value of primary agricultural products. Recognizing the evolving pressures on agriculture, the County supports opportunities for agricultural producers to add or expand their operations to increase their viability. Value-added agricultural operations can include on-farm facilities and processes, or off-site operations.

Policies in this plan support new and innovative agricultural practices that benefit the local agricultural sector and producers within the County and support local food security.

Objective: Encourage innovation and value-added agriculture to diversify the agricultural economy.

POLICY 6.1.3.1 Monitor evolving agricultural practices and processes that may contribute to land use decisions to enable the County to respond proactively through policy and regulation amendments.

POLICY 6.1.3.2 Consider flexibility in Land Use Bylaw regulations to support new value-added operations throughout the County, including both on- and off-farm operations.

POLICY 6.1.3.3 Encourage the expansion of agricultural production and processing operations, small-scale agriculture, and agri-tourism in the Agricultural Use Area in locations that:

- a. Are accessible via the transportation network;
- b. Will not have negative impacts on the transportation network;
- c. Are serviced or serviceable;
- d. Are compatible with existing agricultural operations; and
- e. Are not located in Environmentally Sensitive Areas.

6.1.4 Confined Feeding Operations

Confined Feeding Operations (CFOs) are regulated and approved by the Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB). This process is outside of the County's jurisdiction. However, County policy and direction is considered by the NRCB in deciding on applications for new or expanded operations. The MGA requires the County identify where new CFOs should locate.

The County supports the development of CFOs as an important part of our rural economy. These operations contribute to a resilient and diverse agricultural economy, benefiting the region's capacity for livestock production and creating employment opportunities for County residents.

Objective:	Minimize or mitigate conflict between Confined Feeding Operations and surrounding land uses.
POLICY 6.1.4.1	Support the development of Confined Feeding Operations (CFOs) in appropriate locations, as a means of supporting the local economy and creating employment.
POLICY 6.1.4.2	Require CFOS to conform to the <i>Agricultural Operations Practices Act (AOPA)</i> , as amended.
POLICY 6.1.4.3	Support new or expanded CFOs outside of the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. 2.4 km (1.5 miles) from the corporate boundary of any urban municipality; orb. 0.8 km (0.5 miles) of the Village of Kitscoty, the Village of Marwayne, the Village of Paradise Valley and the Hamlets identified on Map 2 Future Land Use Map. These areas shall be considered an urban fringe when calculating the regulations approved under the AOPA.
POLICY 6.1.4.4	Notwithstanding Policy 6.1.4.3, the County will consider supporting the development of new and expanded CFOs requiring registration or approval and manure storage facilities requiring authorization if the proposed CFO or manure storage facility is accessory to an Institutional Use such as a Public Education Facility.
POLICY 6.1.4.5	Discourage CFOs from locating in environmentally sensitive areas characterized by slope instability, high ground water and/or wetlands.
POLICY 6.1.4.6	Prohibit CFOs in those locations identified in any Area Structure Plan or Intermunicipal Development Plans adopted by the County of Vermilion River where policies are included identifying CFOs as incompatible with the planned land use designations of those plans.

6.1.5 Commercial Development in the Agricultural Area

The County supports the commercial development with the agricultural area in locations that will not have a detrimental impact on working rural landscapes or result in additional municipal infrastructure costs.

Polices in this section enable commercial development in locations where these impacts can be mitigated.

Objective:	To provide opportunities for low impact commercial development in the Agricultural Area where sufficient infrastructure capacity exists to service the development and negative off-site impacts from the development can be mitigated.
POLICY 6.1.5.1	Commercial uses operated as secondary uses to agricultural operations may be allowed within the Agricultural Area as provided for in the Land Use Bylaw.
POLICY 6.1.5.2	Highway Commercial uses and General Commercial uses shall be allowed as discretionary uses in the Agricultural Area as provided for in the Land Use Bylaw.

6.1.6 Conflicting Land Uses

Changes to land use in agricultural areas, when not governed accordingly, may impact or impede the operation or growth of agricultural developments within the County. Likewise, regular and accepted agricultural practices can be considered a nuisance as a result of the generation of noise, dust, or chemical application. To minimize the likelihood of conflicts between agricultural land uses and other land uses, the plan provides policies to minimize where possible, and mitigate as necessary, the potential for conflicts.

Objective:	Minimize conflicts between agricultural and non-agricultural land uses.
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- POLICY 6.1.6.1 Discourage the conversion of agricultural land to multi-lot country residential developments in areas with a higher concentration of confined feeding operations, resource extraction developments and/or industrial agricultural uses.
- POLICY 6.1.6.2 Provide information to the agricultural community regarding beneficial management practices (BMPs) and other conservation practices that conserve or enhance the health of soil resources.
- POLICY 6.1.6.3 Require spatial buffers or setbacks between agricultural uses and those developments deemed incompatible by the approving authority.

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6.2 Commercial and Industrial Development

Commercial and Industrial developments contribute to the County's vitality and economic success.

Supporting a variety of economic drivers is important to the County. Commercial and industrial growth and intensification will generally be directed to locations in proximity to Provincial highways and paved County roads, or where servicing capacity is sufficient, to the hamlets. These locations provide access to transportation and utility corridors necessary to support higher intensity developments. New commercial and industrial developments benefit the region by providing additional employment opportunities for residents.

Retail and local commercial uses will be encouraged to locate in hamlets and urban centers where municipal service is available. These land uses support the local economy and vibrancy of our communities. Highway commercial uses will be directed to locations in proximity to Provincial highways and paved County roads where visibility and access is best suited to the needs of the businesses.

Most of the County of Vermilion River's economic base focuses on the agriculture and resource sectors. The County recognizes that commercial and industrial developments can benefit the County by providing employment, generating tax revenue, and increasing the range and variety of soft services available to County residents.

Policies are intended to support commercial and industrial development in appropriate locations while mitigating potential impacts on valuable environmental assets and adjacent developments.

GOAL:
Commercial and industrial sector growth supports economic development and employment opportunities within the region.

Objective:	Encourage commercial development that contributes to the local economy while mitigating impacts on working rural landscapes, adjacent land uses, and infrastructure and services.
POLICY 6.2.1.1	Commercial Development will be generally directed towards the Commercial Area established on Map 2 Future Land Use
POLICY 6.2.1.2	Encourage commercial development to locate within hamlets or in high-visibility locations adjacent to Provincial highways and paved County roads.
POLICY 6.2.1.3	Encourage Highway Commercial development to locate adjacent to Provincial highways.
POLICY 6.2.1.4	Consider proposals for commercial development that: a. Will not unnecessarily fragment the working rural landscape; and, b. Do not conflict with adjacent land uses.
POLICY 6.2.1.5	Encourage commercial uses to locate on lower capability agricultural land wherever possible.
POLICY 6.2.1.6	Encourage commercial development in hamlets if the resultant servicing requirements do not exceed the servicing capabilities of the hamlet or negatively impact the character of the hamlet.
POLICY 6.2.1.7	Require that appropriate site design standards be followed and that appropriate buffers be located between commercial developments and other existing and future land uses and transportation arteries in order to provide adequate visual or acoustic screening. The expansion potential of commercial development should be considered in determining the required buffer.
POLICY 6.2.1.8	Allow Highway Commercial uses and General Commercial uses within the area close to the City of Lloydminster and the Town of Vermilion, in accordance with applicable Intermunicipal Development Plan or Area Structure Plan policies.
POLICY 6.2.1.9	Manage commercial subdivision and development through Land Use Bylaw amendment to an appropriate district, considering a development's impact on the community and environment, and in accordance with any other applicable statutory plan.
POLICY 6.2.1.10	Require applicants for commercial re-districting to provide information, satisfactory to the County, which: a. Precisely defines the boundaries of the proposed development area;

- b. Identifies the location and dimensions of proposed building sites or proposed parcels;
- c. Demonstrates the functional integrity of the adjacent roads is maintained through the use of service roads and limited access points;
- d. Defines standards of development which may include architectural, landscaping, and sign controls;
- e. Identifies methods and facilities for servicing;
- f. Identifies Significant environmental features;
- g. Identifies Historic Resources and demonstrates that provincial approvals have been acquired (where required); and
- h. Includes information about groundwater and the geotechnical conditions of the site.

POLICY 6.2.1.11 Require the developer of a commercial development to identify all municipal servicing costs associated with the development. The assignment of these costs between the County and the developer will be the basis of an agreement to be entered into prior to a subdivision approval or upon the issuance of a development permit. Normally, however, all development servicing costs associated with the development will be the responsibility of the developer.

Objective: Encourage industrial development that contributes to the local economy while mitigating impacts on working rural landscapes, adjacent land uses, infrastructure and services.

POLICY 6.2.1.12 Industrial Development will be generally directed towards the Industrial Area established on **Map 2 Future Land Use**.

POLICY 6.2.1.13 Encourage industrial development to locate on lower capability agricultural land, in proximity to Provincial highways or paved County roads, and in areas with access to existing water and power services wherever possible.

POLICY 6.2.1.14 Notwithstanding policy 6.2.1.14 above, encourage industrial development to locate in designated industrial areas that are designed and serviced to accommodate industrial development. Industries shall be allowed as a discretionary use within the area close to the City of Lloydminster and the Town of Vermilion, but only in accordance with applicable Intermunicipal Development Plan or Area Structure Plan policies.

POLICY 6.2.1.15 Require, at the County's discretion, submission of a Cumulative Effects Assessment including environmental impact information or a risk assessment (such as that provided for by the Major Industrial Accidents Council of Canada) to assist the County in assessing the impact of the proposed development in relation to the natural and human environments and indicate both if and how any negative matters can be mitigated. The County may require the implementation of any mitigating actions indicated in the information and assessment as a condition of any development approval.

POLICY 6.2.1.16 Require that all proposals for industrial development (including industrial parks) shall:

- a. In the opinion of the Development Authority, NOT conflict with or adversely impact surrounding land uses;
- b. Be considered only in accordance with an Area Structure Plan or, at the discretion of Council, a Development Concept Plan that has been prepared and approved in accordance with the MGA, which Development Concept or Area Structure Plan will address:
 - i. The impact on adjacent land uses;
 - ii. Transportation and access;
 - iii. The provision of water and sewer services;
 - iv. Storm water management and site drainage;
 - v. The provision for Municipal Reserves and/or Environmental Reserves;
 - vi. The impact on community services, including fire protection;
 - vii. The municipal servicing costs associated with the development;
 - viii. Landscaping and buffering;
 - ix. Risk assessment; and
 - x. Any other matters identified by the County.
- c. Not be allowed in close proximity, as determined by the County, to a multi-lot country residential subdivision;
- d. Be accompanied by the identification of all municipal costs associated with the proposal;
- e. Meet all Provincial requirements and obtain a development permit from the County prior to construction; and
- f. Be encouraged to locate near or adjacent to Provincial highways or paved County roads.

POLICY 6.2.1.17 Require that all costs of industrial development are the responsibility of the developer unless the County agrees to share costs.

- POLICY 6.2.1.18 Require all industrial developments to obtain any necessary approvals and permits required by Provincial legislation.
- POLICY 6.2.1.19 Encourage industrial development to locate on land that is physically suited for industrial use, considering factors such as soil, drainage, slopes, and the availability of necessary services.
- POLICY 6.2.1.20 Prohibit industrial development from locating in areas where the use is likely to subject residences, hospitals, schools, or other noise-sensitive use to high levels of noise.
- POLICY 6.2.1.21 Require that appropriate site design standards are followed and that appropriate buffers are located between industrial development and other existing and future land uses and transportation routes in order to provide adequate visual or acoustic screening. The expansion potential of the industrial development should be considered in determining the required buffer.
- POLICY 6.2.1.22 Encourage light industrial development that requires access to municipal services to locate where services are already available.
- POLICY 6.2.1.23 Consider proposals for the development of lands for industrial uses in hamlets only if the proposal is for a light industrial use or a medium industrial use that does not negatively impact the use and enjoyment of residential properties.
- POLICY 6.2.1.24 Allow industries that require urban services only where such services are available from the County or a joint development/servicing agreement between the County and adjacent urban municipality has been finalized.
- POLICY 6.2.1.25 Manage industrial subdivision and development through Land Use Bylaw amendment to an appropriate district, considering a development's impact on the community and environment, and in accordance with any other applicable statutory plan.
- POLICY 6.2.1.26 Require proponents of any new industrial development or expansion of such development to identify any costs associated with providing new services and upgrading existing services made necessary by the proposed development. The apportionment of costs shall be negotiated by the County and be settled within a development agreement which shall be a condition of subdivision or development approval.
- POLICY 6.2.1.27 Consider establishing an area within the County which is designated only for heavy industrial development, which may negatively impact neighbouring lands. Designate such areas through an Area Structure Plan and appropriate Land Use Bylaw district, with regulations applied to substantially regulate both the industry and any adjacent land uses.

6.3 Vibrant Communities

The County of Vermilion River is a community of communities. This plan recognizes that the continued vibrancy of the County's hamlets and localities is vital to ensuring residents can live, work, and recreate.

Vibrant communities include a range of housing types to serve residents in all stages of their lives. The County supports opportunities for a diversity of housing options within its hamlets. Policies within this section support the development of a variety of housing styles to serve the diverse needs of residents.

The opportunity to recreate is vital to supporting balanced and vibrant quality of life. The plan provides policies to support a range of public and private recreation facilities and land uses to meet the recreational needs of the County's residents.

Identifying and securing land for open space is vital to creating a network of spaces for parks and recreation. Policies in this section identify how and when the County will secure land through Municipal Reserve dedication.

Celebrating the County's heritage and culture is an important part of supporting vibrant communities. Policies in this section identify provide direction in preserving cultural and natural heritage resources within the County of Vermilion River.

GOAL:

The County supports a network of supportive communities, meeting the diverse needs of residents.

6.3.1 Diverse Housing Opportunities

Providing a diversity of housing options contributes to more robust and inclusive communities. Diverse housing includes different dwelling types, sizes, and ownership models. The County wishes to enable such diversity to ensure its residents have a range of options that meet their needs over their life cycles and family situations. Issues such as affordability and the ability to age-in place are improved through provisions that support diverse housing.

While the majority of housing stock within the County is single detached dwellings, and this is not anticipated to change dramatically over the coming years, this plan enables the development of other forms of housing in appropriate locations.

Objective: Enable a diversity of housing opportunities within the County that meet the needs of residents of all ages and economic situations.

POLICY 6.3.1.1 Promote innovative housing forms to ensure the provision of a diversity of housing options and affordability levels to County residents.

POLICY 6.3.1.2 Support a diversity of dwelling forms within the hamlets.

POLICY 6.3.1.3 Encourage the development of supportive living facilities and seniors housing developments within the hamlets.

6.3.2 Hamlet Areas

The County's hamlets contribute to the County's vibrancy. These community centres provide residential opportunities and serve as social and economic hubs for the broader rural community. The County supports growth in these locations that aligns with the community's existing character and that can reasonably, and cost effectively be supported by existing municipal infrastructure facilities. New development that requires access to municipal services shall be encouraged in the hamlets that have infrastructure capacity to support growth.

Objective: Encourage orderly growth and residential development within the County's hamlets.

POLICY 6.3.2.1 Discourage development within 1.6 km (1 mile) of an urban area that would adversely affect the urban centre unless, if in the opinion of the County, appropriate measures are taken to mitigate such effects and/or the use is provided for in an approved Intermunicipal Development Plan.

- POLICY 6.3.2.2 Encourage new development and infill development within hamlet areas with infrastructure capacity to support higher density and intensity land uses and developments.
- POLICY 6.3.2.3 Require new parcels and developments in hamlets which do not have access to piped municipal water and wastewater services to be situated and accessed on a parcel in a location that enables re-subdivision to a higher density should municipal potable water and wastewater services become available.
- POLICY 6.3.2.4 Encourage the development of vacant parcels, underdeveloped parcels, and the redevelopment of older buildings within the hamlets, provided that the infill development or redevelopment will not adversely affect the surrounding areas.
- POLICY 6.3.2.5 Require Area Structure Plans or Area Redevelopment Plans to guide new subdivision and development within the County's hamlets where the proposed development area is greater than 8.08 ha (20.0 ac.) at full build out.
- POLICY 6.3.2.6 Support the economic development initiatives and business development within the hamlets.
- POLICY 6.3.2.7 Encourage recreational development and trail development within the Hamlets to improve connectivity for youth and seniors within the Hamlets.

6.3.3 Multi-lot Country Residential Development

The County of Vermilion River has experienced limited multi-lot country residential development outside of the hamlets. However, interest in this type of development is expected to increase with regional growth pressures and increasing demand for rural residential developments.

Generally, multi-lot country residential and recreation residential developments have not connected to municipal sewer or water services, due to distance from infrastructure and the costs associated with extending municipal services.

This plan provides direction to achieve a balance between providing opportunities for residential development while still supporting and preserving the agricultural community, protecting the physical environment, prioritizing existing hamlet communities, and ensuring efficient infrastructure services.

Objective: Provide opportunities for multi-lot country residential development in appropriate locations.

- POLICY 6.3.3.1 Allow multi-lot country residential development in locations that do not adversely affect rural working rural landscapes, environmentally sensitive features, existing resource extraction developments or municipal infrastructure services.
- POLICY 6.3.3.2 Consider any subdivision that will result in five (5) or more parcels for residential and/or agricultural use on a quarter section to be a multi-lot country residential development for the purposes of this plan.
- POLICY 6.3.3.3 Discourage multi-lot country residential subdivision and development:
 - a. Within an area likely to be subjected to high levels of noise from industry, transportation facilities, or other sources of noise;
 - b. In close proximity to a resource extraction operation;
 - c. Within a known 1:100 year flood plain or flood fringe area;
 - d. Within the minimum distance separation between a single dwelling and a Confined Feeding Operation as determined through the application of the Standards and Administration Regulation pursuant to the Agricultural Operation Practices Act;
 - e. Within the setback distance of environmentally sensitive areas or steep banks, as determined by an environmental study;
 - f. Within the setback distance of ravines, steep slopes, unstable soils, or riverbanks as determined by an engineer certified to determine slope stability.
- POLICY 6.3.3.4 Encourage multi-lot country residential subdivisions to locate in proximity to gas, electrical, and telecommunication lines which have existing spare capacity to sustain the additional usage.
- POLICY 6.3.3.5 Require multi-lot country residential subdivisions to have direct access to existing maintained roads. Developments shall be encouraged to locate in proximity to paved County roads or Provincial highways.
- POLICY 6.3.3.6 Require developers of proposed multi-lot country residential subdivisions to enter into a development agreement with the County wherein the developer agrees to be responsible for all the costs associated with the subdivision and development.

- POLICY 6.3.3.7 Require documentation indicating that satisfactory arrangements have been made regarding the multi-lot country residential development's sewage disposal system as a condition of development approval.
- POLICY 6.3.3.8 Require spatial buffers or setbacks between multi-lot country residential uses and adjacent land uses which may be incompatible for any reason.
- POLICY 6.3.3.9 Require a minimum parcel size of 0.2 ha (0.5 ac.) in multi-lot country residential developments, provided that the entire parcel is suitable for development and subject to regulation through the County's Land Use Bylaw and any other applicable statutory plan.
- POLICY 6.3.3.10 Control multi-lot country residential subdivisions through the process of Land Use Bylaw amendment and, where there is an applicable statutory plan, by amendment as needed to the appropriate plan.
- POLICY 6.3.3.11 Require an Area Structure Plan be prepared by a qualified professional planner and/or engineer and approved prior to the approval of any amendment to the Land Use Bylaw to allow a multi-lot country residential subdivision where the land being proposed for development is 8.09 ha (20 ac.) or greater in area, except that the County may require the preparation of a conceptual plan if:
- a. The preparation of an Area Structure Plan is considered by the County to be impractical or inappropriate given:
 - i. The small scale of the lands and parcels proposed for development; or
 - ii. The existing fragmentation of the quarter section in which the development is located.
- POLICY 6.3.3.12 Consider the following criteria in deciding on Land Use Bylaw amendments for multi-lot country residential use development:
- a. The site should possess features such as trees, ravines, hilly terrain, or other topographical features that would provide an attractive residential environment. When the amendment is to allow a currently vacant parcel from a quarter section, the site should not normally include cultivated land or good-quality agricultural land. Where a site is fully or partially treed, all possible means will be undertaken to retain the maximum amount of tree cover.
 - b. The density of development shall be directly related to the development capability of the land resources, such as potable water supply, topography, vegetation, soil, and drainage. In this regard, proponents for multi-lot country residential development may be required to provide the County with an assessment of environmental constraints on the site and the means whereby negative impacts on the natural environment may be mitigated.
 - c. Access to individual parcels shall be provided by internal roads or service roads developed to standards acceptable to the County, and not directly onto Provincial highways or County grid roads.
 - d. There shall be an adequate supply of potable water for the development as proposed. The supply may be provided by wells or by other options, such as hauling or by communal systems, in accordance with Provincial regulations. If the well option is to be considered, the County will ask that the report required under the Water Act for multi-lot country residential subdivisions be provided at the Land Use Bylaw amendment stage for its consideration. If the communal system is to be considered, Council shall require that the creation or expansion of such systems be undertaken at the sole cost of the developer.
 - e. Sanitary sewage shall be treated and/or disposed of in accordance with Provincial requirements. In this regard, Council will ask that information be provide at the Land Use Bylaw amendment stage for its consideration. If a communal system is to be considered, Council will require that the creation or expansion of such systems shall be undertaken at the cost of the developer.

Objective: Encourage multi-lot country development in locations which generate no or low impacts on the County's working and cultural landscapes.

- POLICY 6.3.3.13 Require multi-lot country residential developments to adhere to the following conservation design-based principles in order to mitigate potential negative impacts:
- a. The ecology of the subject site must be considered. Environmentally sensitive lands and working rural landscapes should be left undisturbed wherever possible, but incorporated into the overall development. Wildlife corridors or connections between habitat areas should be maintained wherever possible.
 - b. Development will be directed to lands within the subject site that are deemed by the County to be of lesser environmental and/or agricultural significance.

c. The natural landscape and topography should be considered and incorporated into the overall design of the development.

POLICY 6.3.3.14 Encourage the clustering of multi-lot country residential developments to reduce potential land use conflicts and minimize servicing costs.

POLICY 6.3.3.15 Require buffering measures, to the satisfaction of the Subdivision Authority at the time of subdivision, between residential uses and other adjacent land uses.

Objective: Minimize municipal servicing costs associated with multi-lot country residential developments.

POLICY 6.3.3.16 Require the proponent of a multi-lot country residential development to identify all municipal servicing costs associated with the development. The assignment of these costs between the County and the developer will be the basis of a development agreement to be entered into prior to a subdivision approval or upon the issuance of a development permit. Normally, all development servicing costs associated with the development, including the provision of internal roadway systems to a high standard and the upgrading of other County roads leading to the site in order to provide good access to the residential site shall be the sole responsibility of the developer.

POLICY 6.3.3.17 Ensure the development process for multi-lot country residential development requires that storm water is managed in accordance with good engineering practices and both Provincial and County requirements.

POLICY 6.3.3.18 Consider alternative means of providing municipal services to multi-lot country residential developments, such as through the use of linear corridors.

POLICY 6.3.3.19 Require multi-lot country residential development proponents to pay for the County's review of their proposals, including professional reviewing costs associated with planning, engineering and legal services, to reduce tax-payer burdens associated with the review of applications and their supplementary reports.

POLICY 6.3.3.20 Require documentation indicating that arrangements satisfactory to the County have been made regarding the development's water supply, sewage disposal, and storm water management systems, including access to the systems for maintenance and any necessary easements, as conditions of approval for multi-lot country residential development.

POLICY 6.3.3.21 Consider innovative design in the development of multi-lot country residential development such as cluster or conservation designed subdivision, which reduce as much as possible the development costs while increasing land conserved from development.

7. IMPLEMENTATION

Part 7 describes how the plan will be implemented and monitored to ensure the County achieves its desired outcomes and objectives.



7.1 Relationships

The County of Vermilion River is an active partner in the wider region. Working with our neighbours to collaboratively plan for land use and service provision, sharing resources where appropriate, ensures residents within the County and the broader region receive the best services possible with the wise use of resources.

As the County's urban neighbours grow, it can result in pressures on the County land base and negatively affect adjacent rural uses. It is therefore the intent of this plan to support the continued orderly growth of the incorporated urban centres based on the MDP and in cooperation with our urban neighbours.

To that end, the County has adopted Intermunicipal Development Plans (IDPs) with its municipal neighbours as follows:

- City of Lloydminster (2006)
- Town of Vermilion (2021)
- Village of Kitscoty (2020)
- Village of Marwayne (2021)
- Village of Paradise Valley (2020)
- County of St. Paul (2018)
- County of Two Hills (2018)

These plans provide local direction for lands where the municipalities meet. This MDP provides complementary and consistent direction with the policies of the IDPs.

The County also works with other levels of government, government agencies, non-governmental service providers and neighbouring jurisdictions to proactively address issues as they arise.

GOAL:
County planning documents are current and responsive to changing economic trends, legislative requirements and planning best practices. Collaboration with regional partners is encouraged to provide quality services effectively and efficiently.

7.1.1 Regional Cooperation

The County will endeavour to work cooperatively with its municipal neighbours and other levels of government. It supports a proactive approach to collaboration and communication with adjacent municipalities, First Nations, and other levels of government to ensure land use, development, transportation, and environmental issues are addressed consistently within the region.

Objective:	Cooperate in areas of shared interest with regional partners, including adjacent municipalities and First Nations.
POLICY 7.1.1.1	Cooperate with regional service commissions to provide services in appropriate locations and where cost-effective.
POLICY 7.1.1.2	Collaborate with the Province of Alberta, adjacent municipalities and First Nations to provide services where cooperation is appropriate.
POLICY 7.1.1.3	Collaborate with regional partners to explore opportunities for potable water service expansion.

7.1.2 Intermunicipal Planning

The County and its neighbouring urban municipalities have historically worked cooperatively in planning future land use, development, and servicing of the fringe areas surrounding the urban centres. The County has also worked with adjacent rural

municipalities to plan the areas that border each other. This plan provides direction to ensure continued cooperation in planning for responsible intermunicipal development.

Objective:	Engage in cooperative and collaborative planning with municipal, regional, and provincial partners.
POLICY 7.1.2.1	Ensure that all County statutory plans are consistent with approved Intermunicipal Development Plans.
POLICY 7.1.2.2	As new Intermunicipal Development Plans are adopted or existing plans are amended, the County shall update the MDP and any other applicable statutory plan accordingly.
POLICY 7.1.2.3	Subdivision and development on lands within an approved Intermunicipal Development Plan shall be guided by that plans polices and future land use map.
POLICY 7.1.2.4	In the absence of an Intermunicipal Development Plan, a development proposal in proximity to another municipality should be designed in a manner that considers current and future land use in the adjacent jurisdiction.
POLICY 7.1.2.5	Actively consult with any adjacent or nearby municipality during the consideration of amendments to this plan, amendments to the Land Use Bylaw, proposed subdivisions, or significant discretionary development permits where the proposal is in close proximity to the adjacent municipality or when, in the opinion of the County of Vermilion River, the proposal may impact the adjacent municipality, in order to obtain its views on the proposal. The approving authority will give careful consideration to any matters raised during this consultation; however, the Count of Vermilion River will not be bound by the recommendations of the adjacent municipality, unless the County has agreed to do so as part of an approved Intermunicipal Development Plan.
POLICY 7.1.2.6	Refer subdivision applications and discretionary development permit applications, Municipal Development Plan or Area Structure Plan amendment, or Land Use Bylaw amendment within 1.6 km (1 mile) of an adjacent municipality, First Nation, or Metis Settlement for comment, unless another referral area has been identified within an approved intermunicipal development plan. The County shall give due consideration to such comment when evaluating the proposal.

7.1.3 Urban Growth Areas

The County supports a collaborative approach for managing growth with its urban municipal neighbours. Enabling responsible urban growth allows for cooperative annexations and the best use of land by all municipal partners.

Objective:	Ensure urban municipalities are able to expand in an orderly manner that encourages community sustainability.
POLICY 7.1.3.1	Encourage the municipalities of Kitscoty, Marwayne, Paradise Valley, Vermilion, and Lloydminster to expand into areas which would minimize the removal of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Higher capability agricultural land; Regionally significant natural resources; and, Environmentally sensitive areas.
POLICY 7.1.3.2	Support future urban centre expansion and annexation where: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The lands are immediately adjacent to existing municipal boundaries; The lands are suitable for or can be economically adapted to urban uses and servicing; The lands are needed for urban growth; The lands are predominantly vacant and suitable for urban development; and, The staging of development is in conformity with the urban municipality's Municipal Development Plan.

7.2 Monitoring the Plan

Pursuant to the *Municipal Government Act, R.S.A. 2000, c. M-26, as amended (MGA)*, this Plan shall be adopted by the County of Vermilion River, as the County of Vermilion River Municipal Development Plan. The subdivision, development, and re-development of lands within the County by the municipality and general public shall be in accordance with the provisions of this MDP.

An important part of the planning process is implementation. The primary implementation tool for the MDP is the Land Use Bylaw, which provides detailed development guidelines for the County. Other policy documents can provide guidance for

development in specific areas or on specific issues. Area Structure Plans can provide development concept for land in various sizes – including multi-lot subdivision to more general conceptual development patterns. Through these existing and future policy documents, the County will strive to achieve the MDP Vision and Goals. The County will also seek partnerships from time to time to achieve these goals.

Objective:	Ensure the County's statutory plans reflect the needs of the County and its residents.
POLICY 7.2.1.1	Monitor, review, and update the Municipal Development Plan in order to ensure that the planning needs of the County are being met. A review may be appropriate when: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Changes in economic, social, or technical developments occur;b. A new Council is elected; or,c. A significant amendment to the plan is made. A major review of the MDP should be undertaken at least once every five (5) years.
POLICY 7.2.1.2	Ensure that any proposal for amendment to this plan is in agreement with the plan goals and objectives. Council should require that a request for an amendment be made in writing. The submission should also address the reasons for the amendment and conformity with the plan goals and intent. When reviewing an amendment, Council should consult with any agencies it feels may be of assistance.

7.3 Consistency with Other Plans and Bylaws

In accordance with the requirements of the MGA, all statutory plans must be consistent within the municipality.

Objective:	Ensure that all County statutory and regulatory planning documents are consistent and up-to-date and to conduct reviews and consider amendments to the plan as required.
POLICY 7.3.1.1	Amend, if necessary, the Land Use Bylaw when this plan or any part thereof takes effect to conform to this plan.
POLICY 7.3.1.2	Ensure that any proposal for amendment to this plan is in agreement with the plan goals and objectives. Council should require that a request for an amendment be made in writing. The submission should also address the reasons for the amendment and conformity with the plan goals and intent. When reviewing an amendment, Council should consult with any agencies it feels may be of assistance.
POLICY 7.3.1.3	Comply with all notification and public consultation requirements in the MGA when considering an amendment to the Municipal Development Plan.

8. MAPS



Map 1 Regional Location

Bylaw No. XXXX- DRAFT



Source: Esri, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, and the GIS User Community

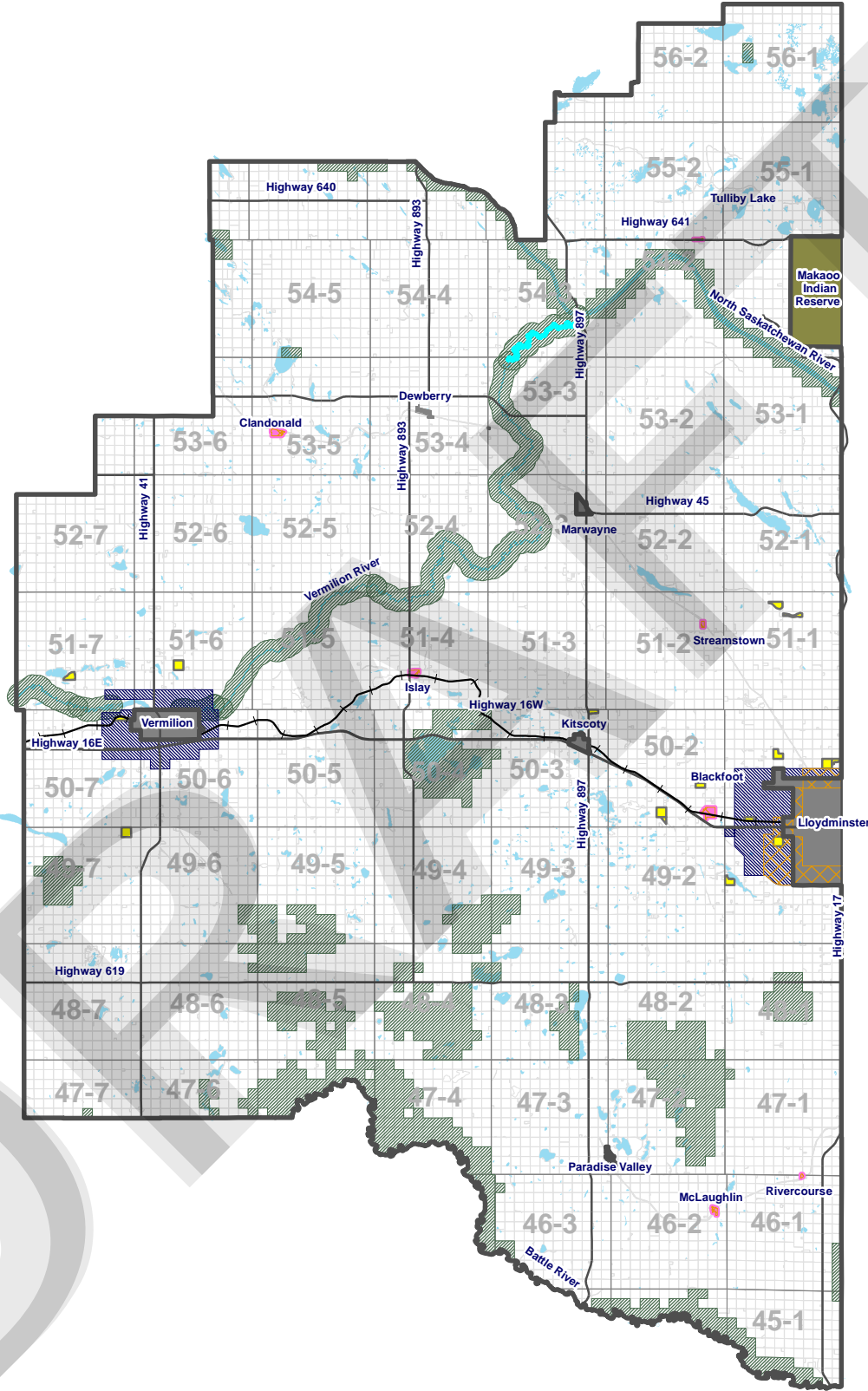
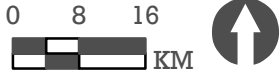
Legend

- Municipalities
- Alberta Highways
- Edmonton Metro Region
- County Boundary
- Water Body



Map 2 Future Land Use

Bylaw No. XXXX- DRAFT



Legend

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|--|
| Railways | Hamlets | Industrial Area |
| Highways | Agricultural Area | Statutory Plan Area Overlay |
| Urban Expansion Community Area | Residential Area | Environmentally Sensitive Area Overlay |
| Urban Municipalities | Commercial Area | First Nation Reserves |



9. APPENDICES



9.1 Appendix A. Maps

Map A1 Planning Context

Map A2 Agricultural Land Soil Classification and CFOs

Map A3 Environmental Features

Map A4 Watersheds and Water Features

Map A5 Historic Resources

Map A6 Transportation Network

Map A7 Recreation Facilities, Amenities, and Institutional Uses

Map A8 Municipal Servicing and Infrastructure

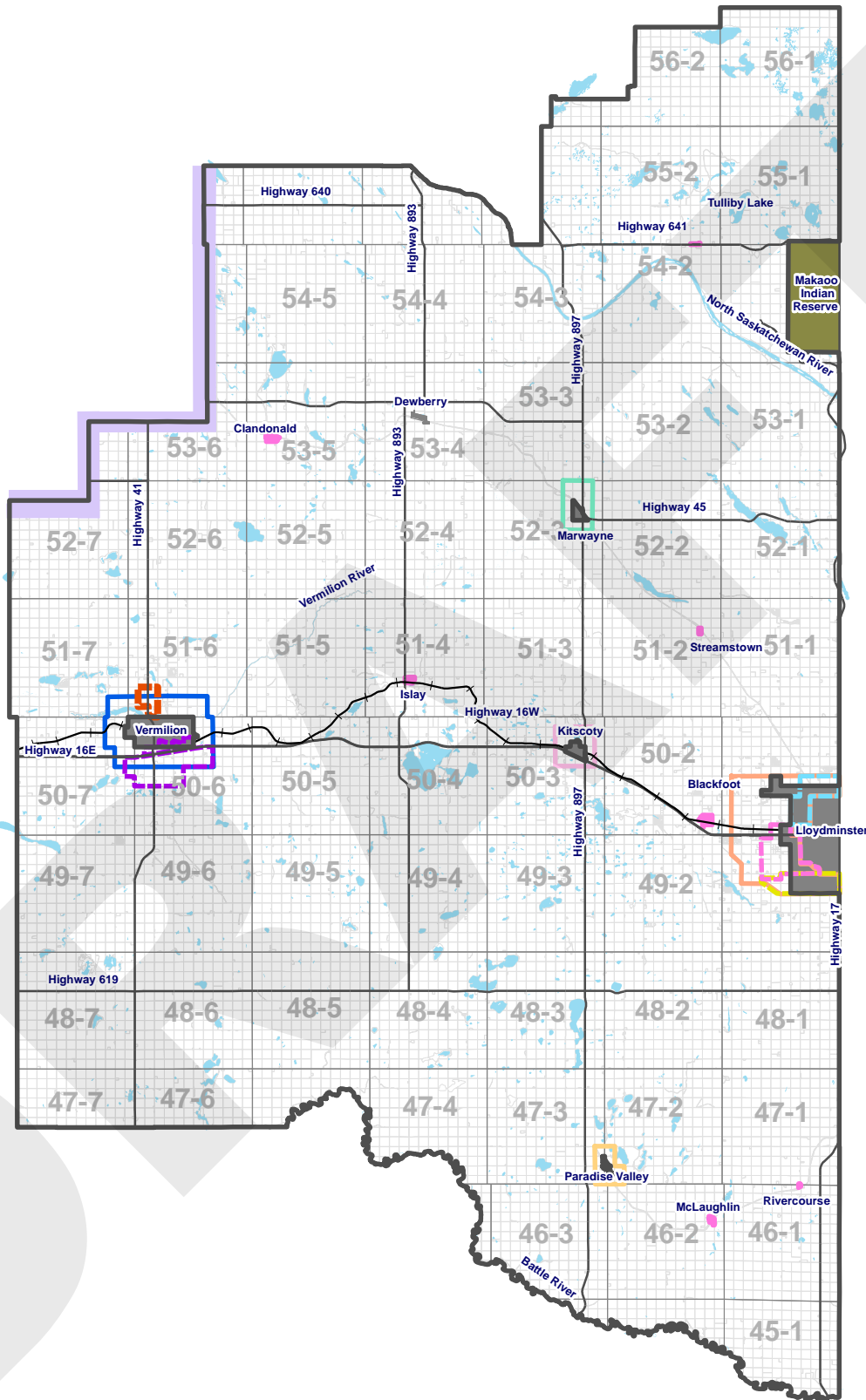
Map A9 Oil and Gas Infrastructure

Map A10 Current and Potential Aggregate Extraction Areas












DRAFT

Map A1 Planning Context

Bylaw No. XXXX- DRAFT



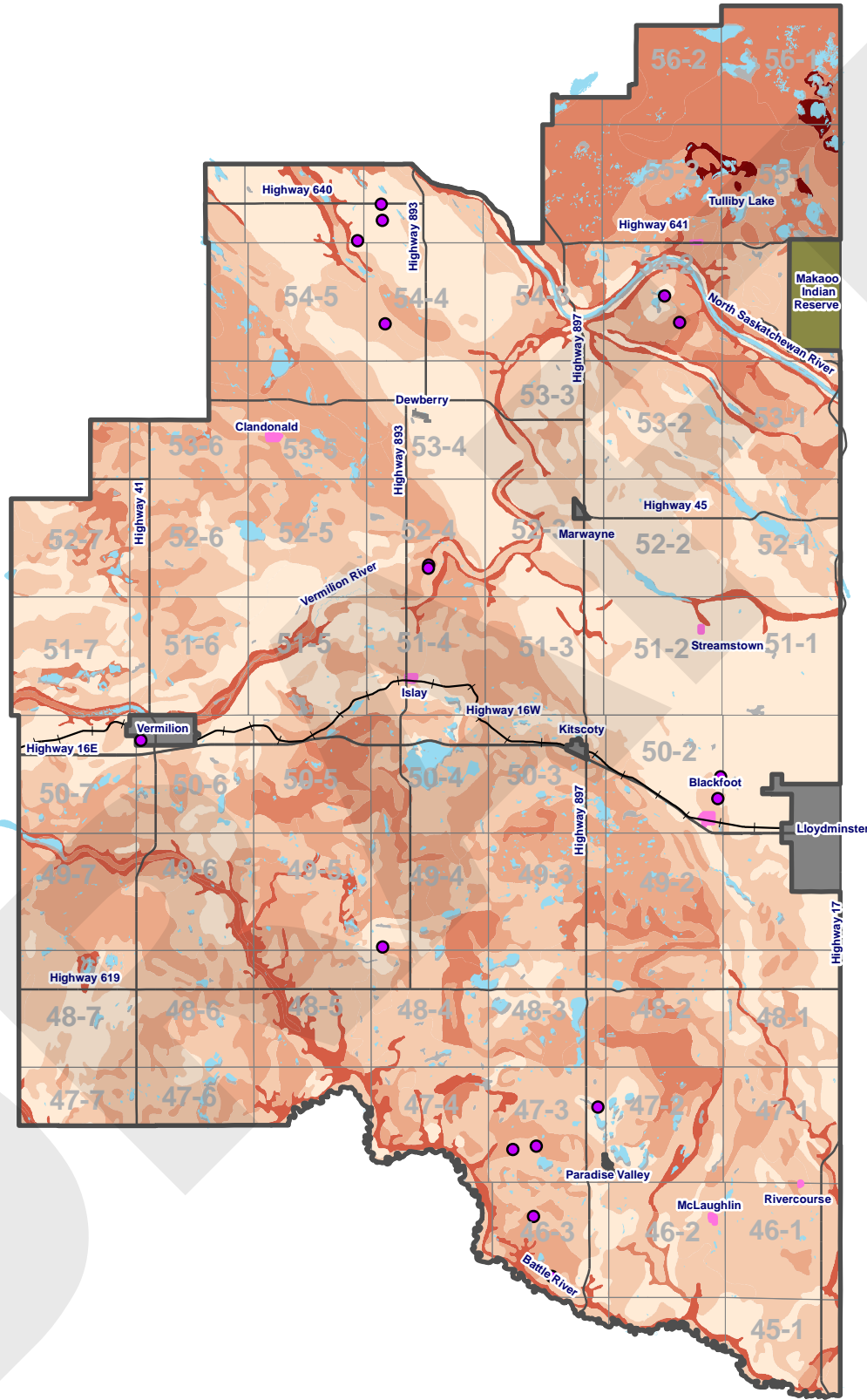
Legend

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
|  Co. of Two Hills IDP |  North Urban Expansion ASP |  Marwayne IDP |
|  North Gateway 41 ASP |  Central Urban Expansion ASP |  Paradise Valley IDP |
|  Highways 16/41 Crosswoods ASP |  South Urban Expansion ASP |  Kitscoty IDP |
|  Vermilion IDP |  Lloydminster IDP | |



Map A2 Agricultural Land Soil Classification and CFOs

Bylaw No. XXXX- DRAFT



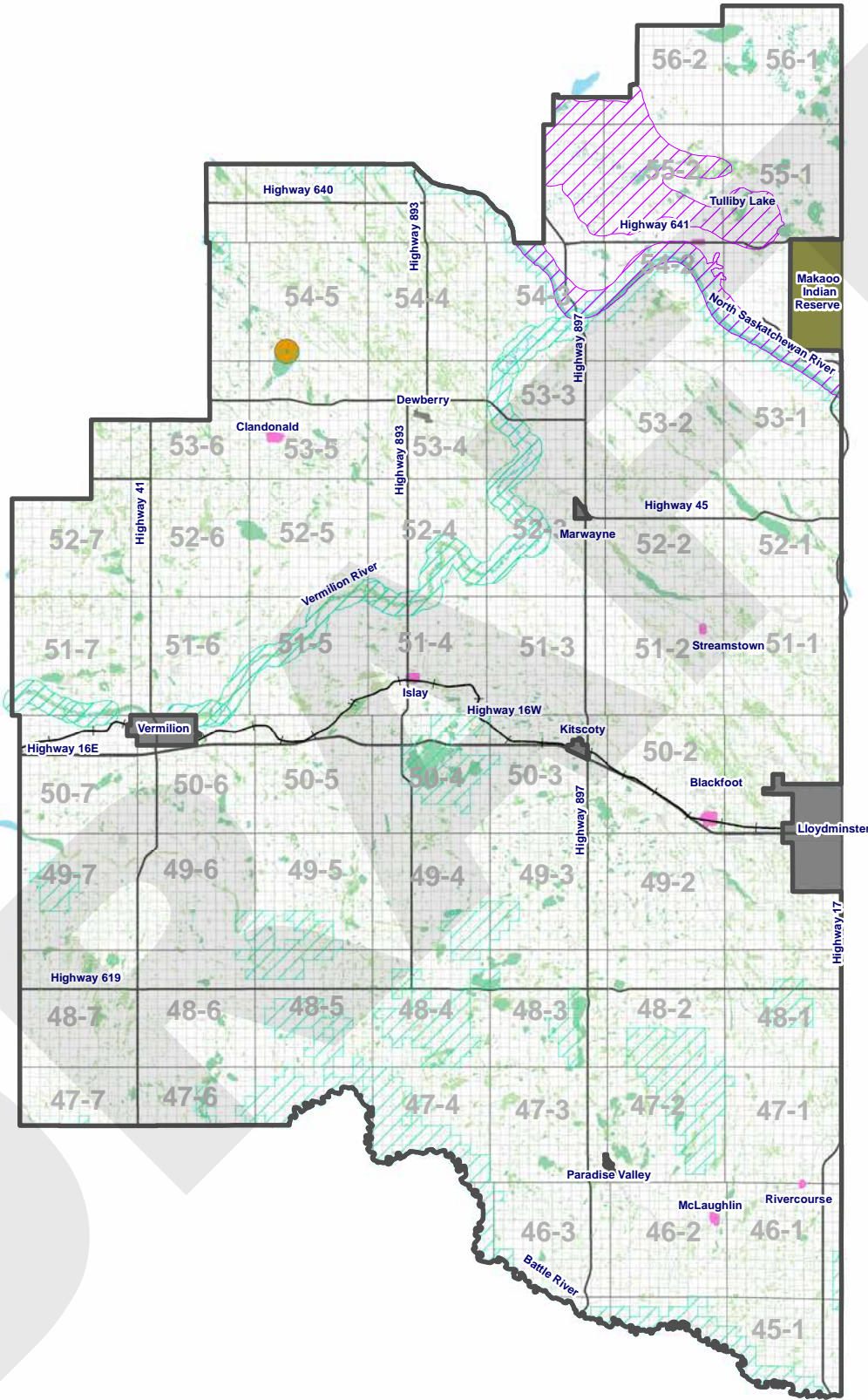
Legend

- Confined Feeding Operations
 - Hamlets
 - First Nation Reserves
 - Rivers
 - Lakes
 - Railways
 - Highways
 - Urban Municipalities
- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>Soil Capability- Class A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 3 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 6 8 O |
|--|--|













Map A3 Environmental Features

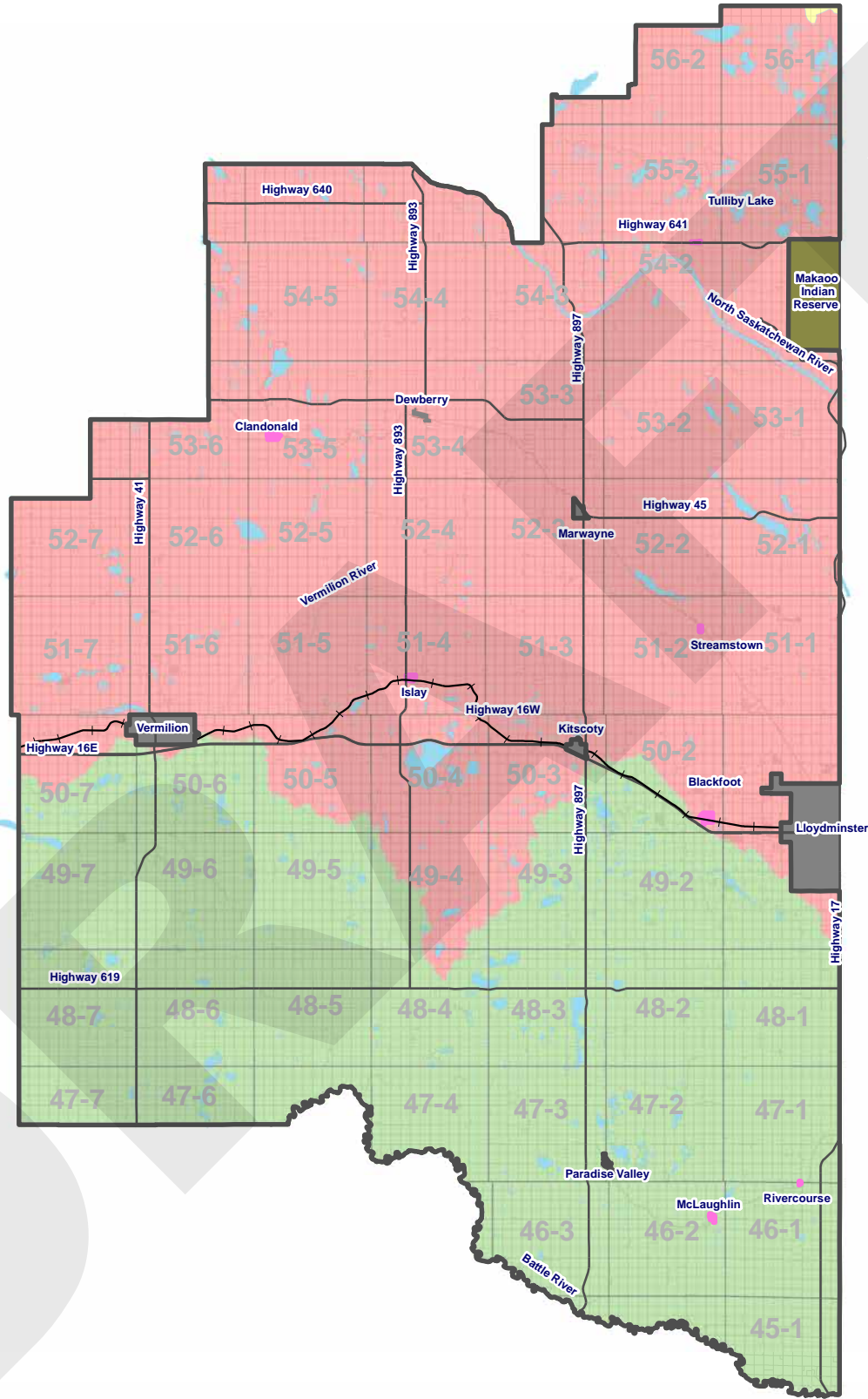
Bylaw No. XXXX- DRAFT



Legend

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|--|-------------------------------------|---|-----------------------|---|------------------------|
|  | Key Wildlife and Biodiversity Zones |  | Highways |  | Rivers and Waterbodies |
|  | Environmentally Sensitive Areas |  | Urban Municipalities |  | Wetlands |
|  | Colonial Birds |  | Hamlets | | |
|  | Railways |  | First Nation Reserves | | |





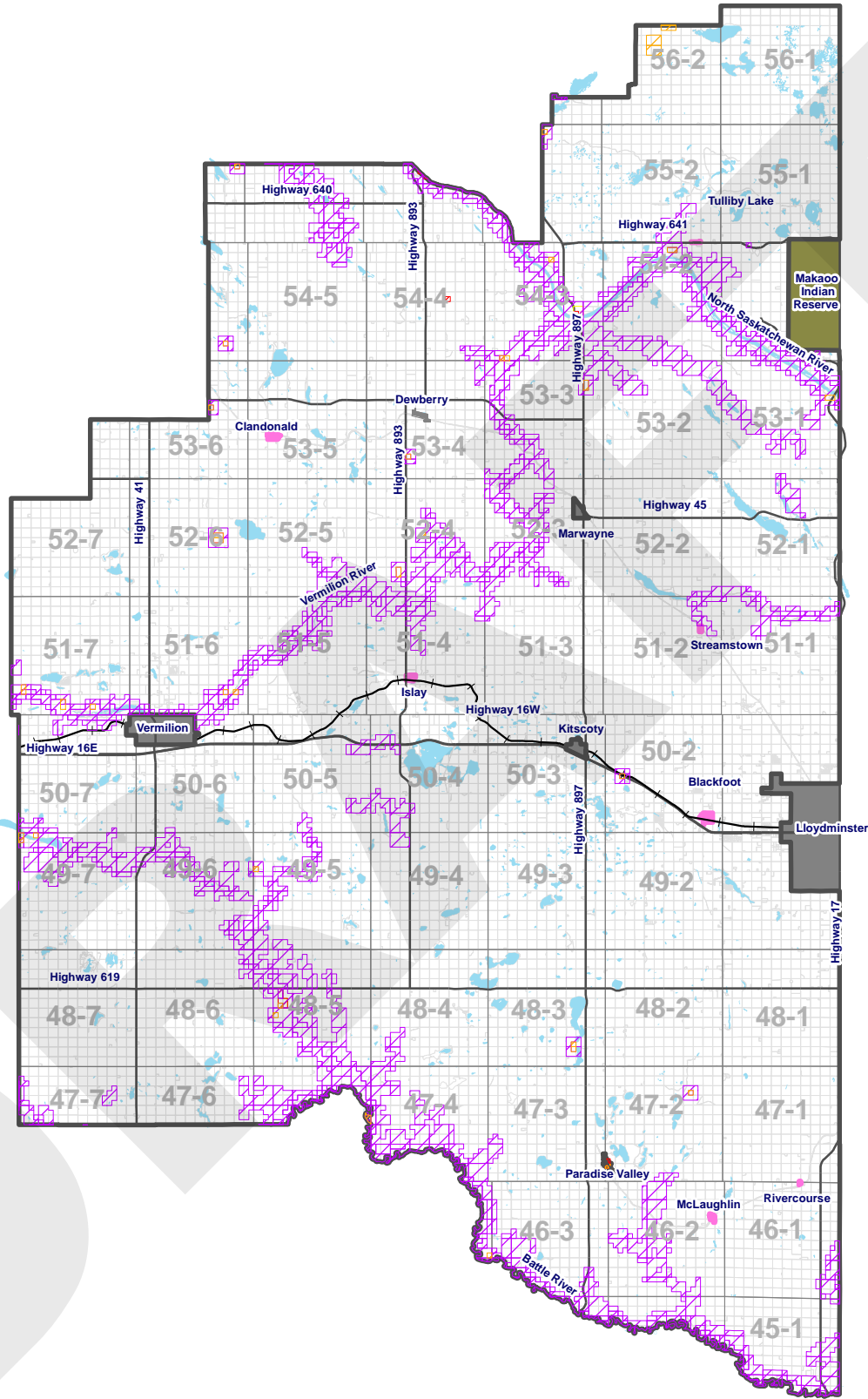
Legend

- | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Railways | First Nation Reserves | Major Subwater Watersheds |
| Highways | Rivers | Battle River |
| Urban Municipalities | Lakes | Beaver River |
| Hamlets | | North Saskatchewan River |



Map A5 Historic Resources

Bylaw No. XXXX- DRAFT



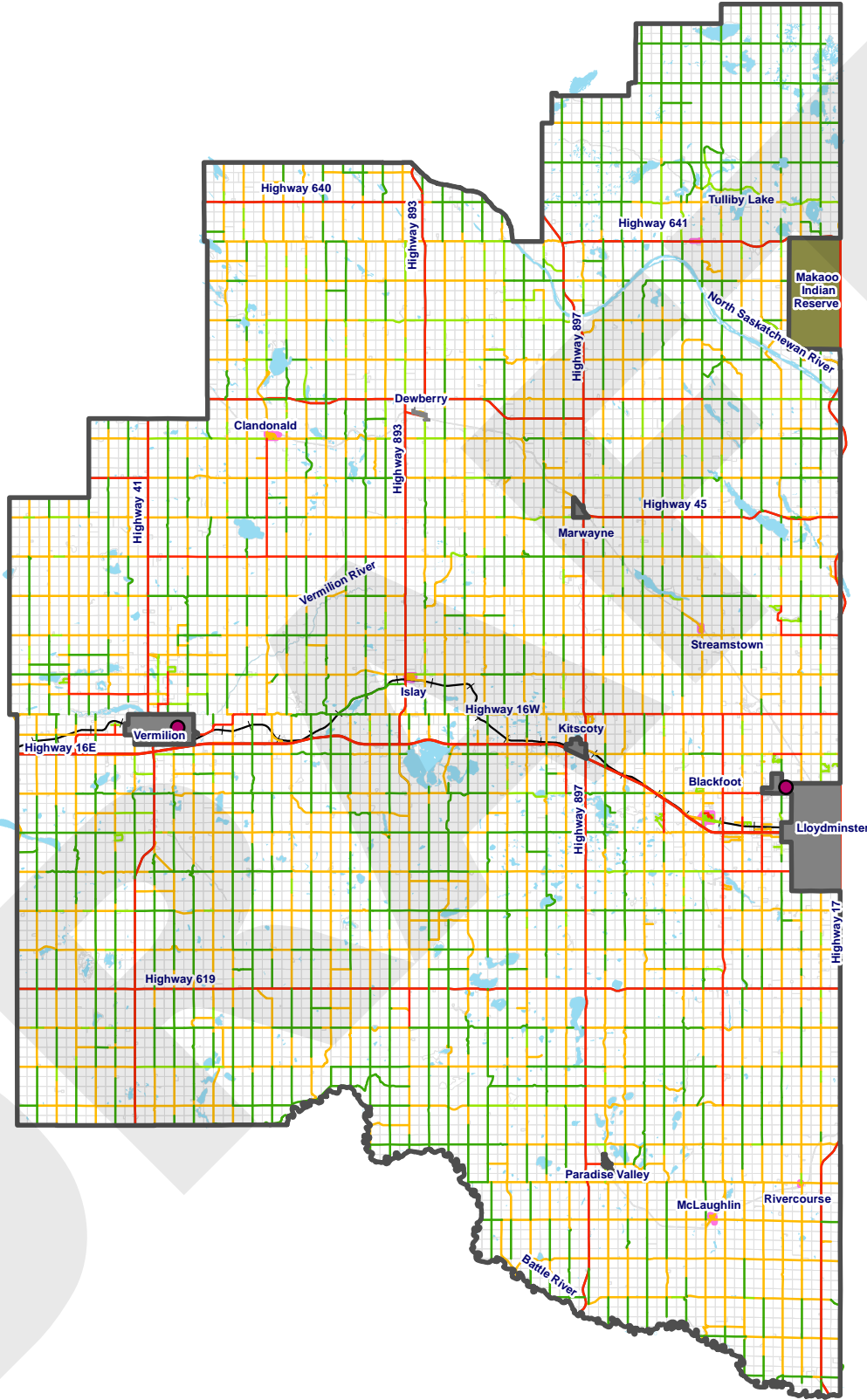
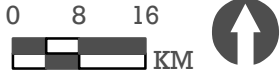
Legend

- | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|-------|
| Railways | First Nation Reserves | Historic Resource Values (HRVs) | |
| Highways | Rivers | HRV 1 | HRV 4 |
| Urban Municipalities | Lakes | HRV 3 | HRV 5 |
| Hamlets | | | |



Map A6 Transportation Network

Bylaw No. XXXX- DRAFT



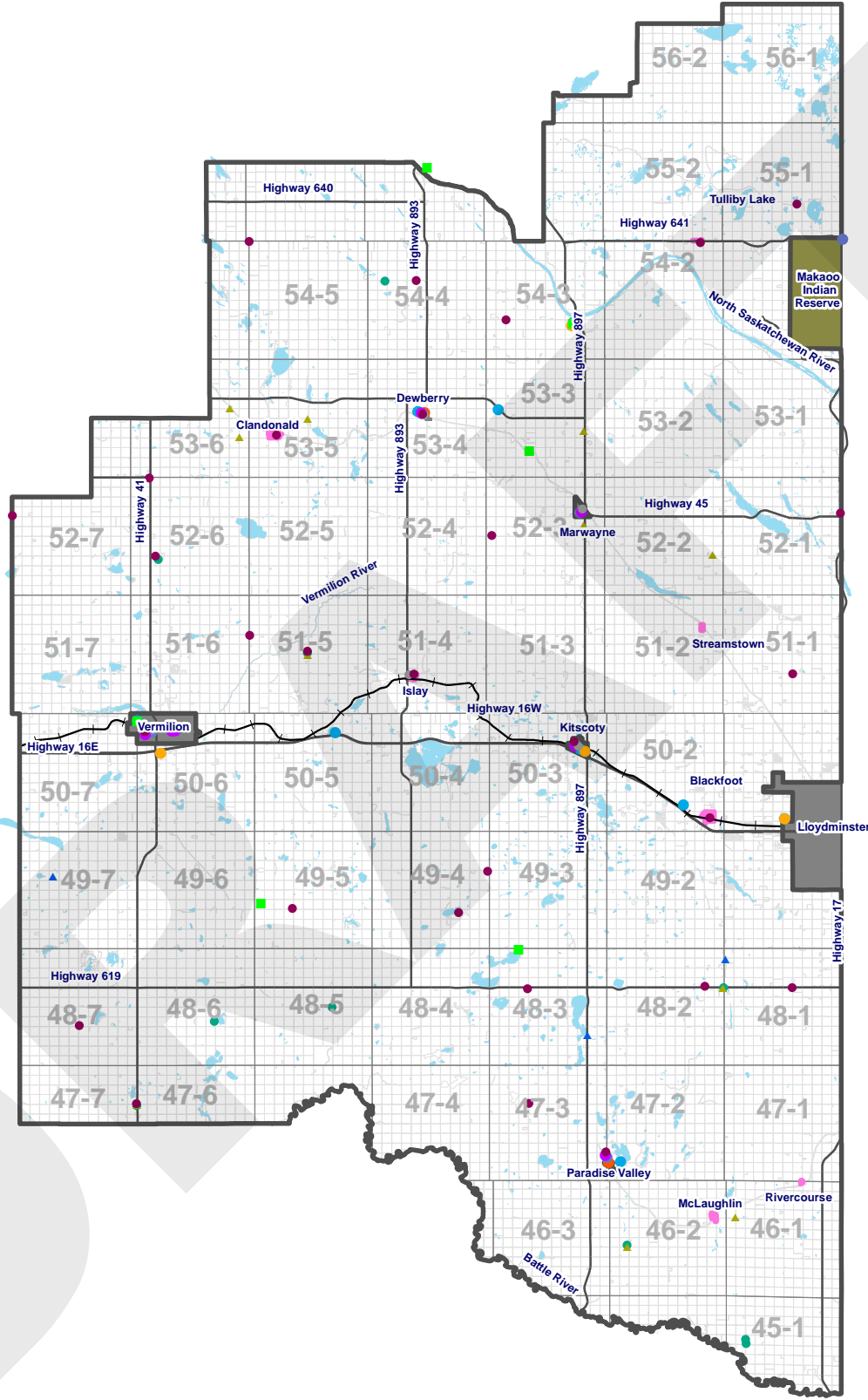
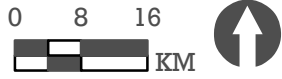
Legend

- | | | | | | |
|----------------------|----------|---------------------|--------|-----------------------|--------|
| Airports | Railways | Road Network | Gravel | Hamlets | Rivers |
| Urban Municipalities | Highways | Asphalt | Oil | First Nation Reserves | Lakes |
| | | Dirt | | | |



Map A7 Recreation Facilities, Amenities and Institutional Uses

Bylaw No. XXXX- DRAFT



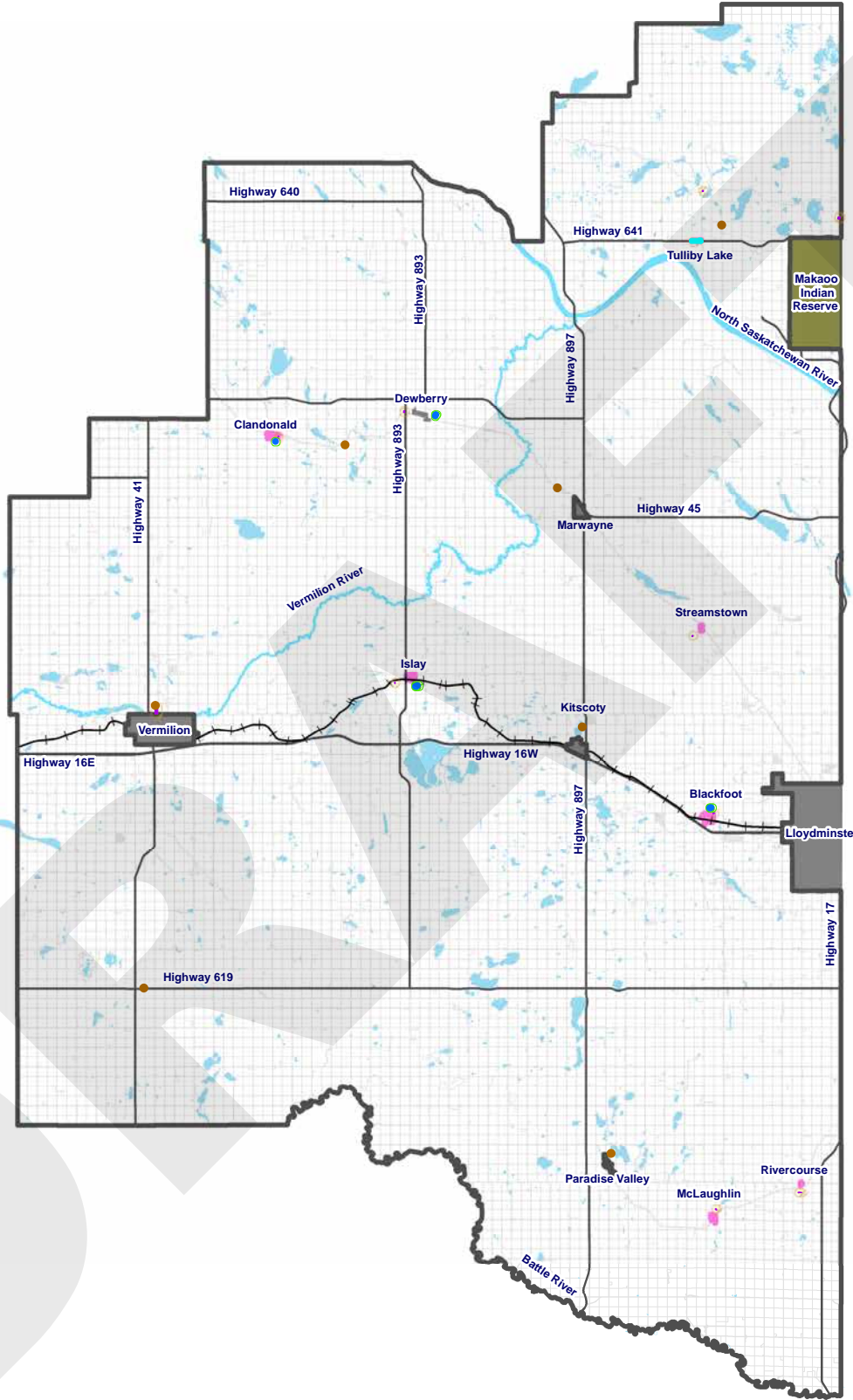
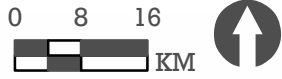
Legend

- | | | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| ● Community Halls | ● Arenas | ▲ B&B, Hotels, Inns & Cottages | ■ First Nation Reserves |
| ▲ Cemeteries | ■ Parks | — Railways | |
| ● Nursing & Seniors' Centres | ● Golf Courses | — Highways | |
| ● Churches | ● Museums | ■ Urban Municipalities | |
| ● Schools | ● Campgrounds & RVs | ■ Hamlets | |



Map A8 Municipal Servicing and Infrastructure

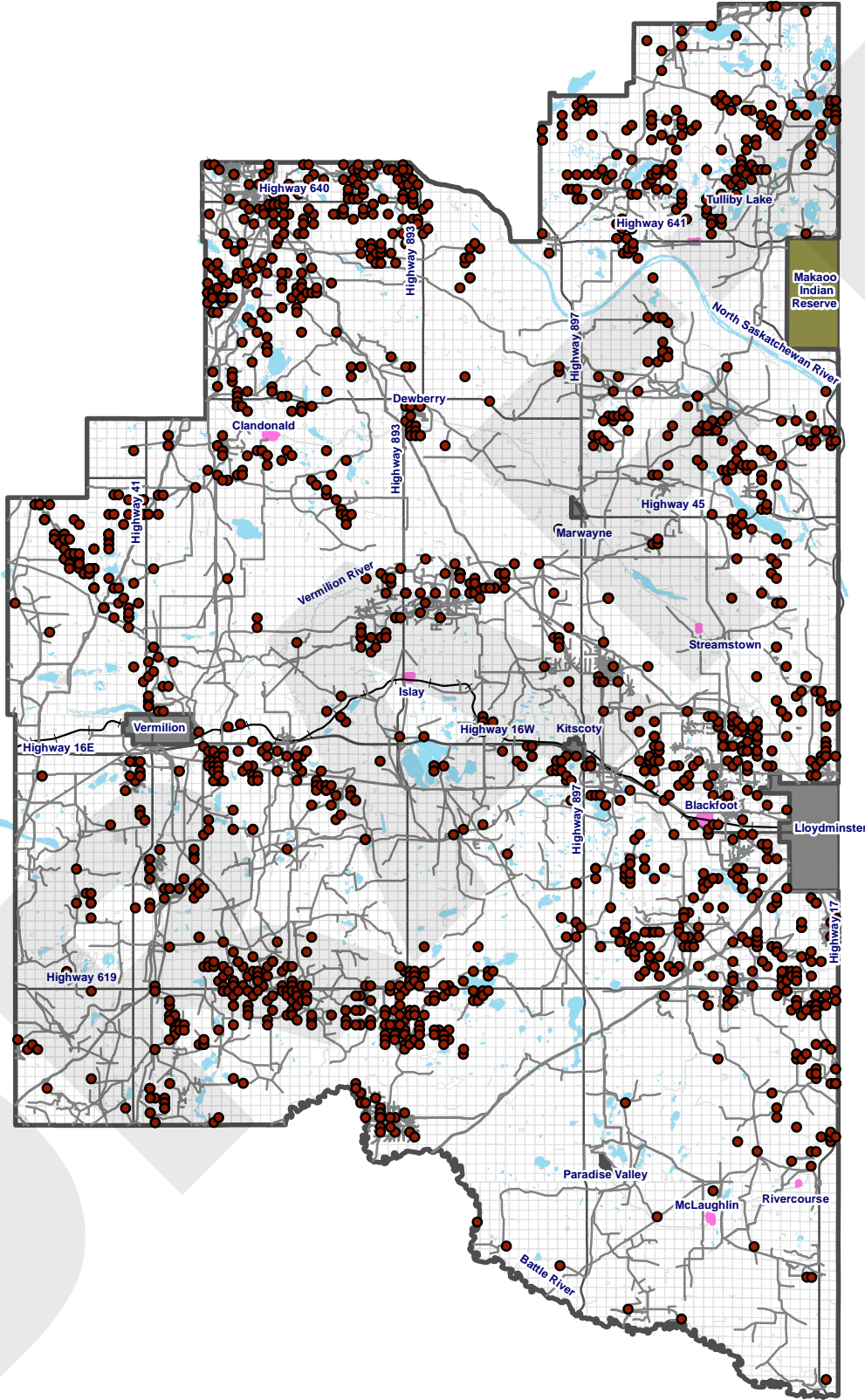
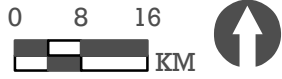
Bylaw No. XXXX- DRAFT



Legend

- | | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Water Transfer Sites | 300m setbacks from Landfills | Hamlets |
| Lagoons | Urban Municipalities | First Nation Reserves |
| 300m setbacks from Lagoons | Railways | Rivers |
| Landfills | Highways | Lakes |





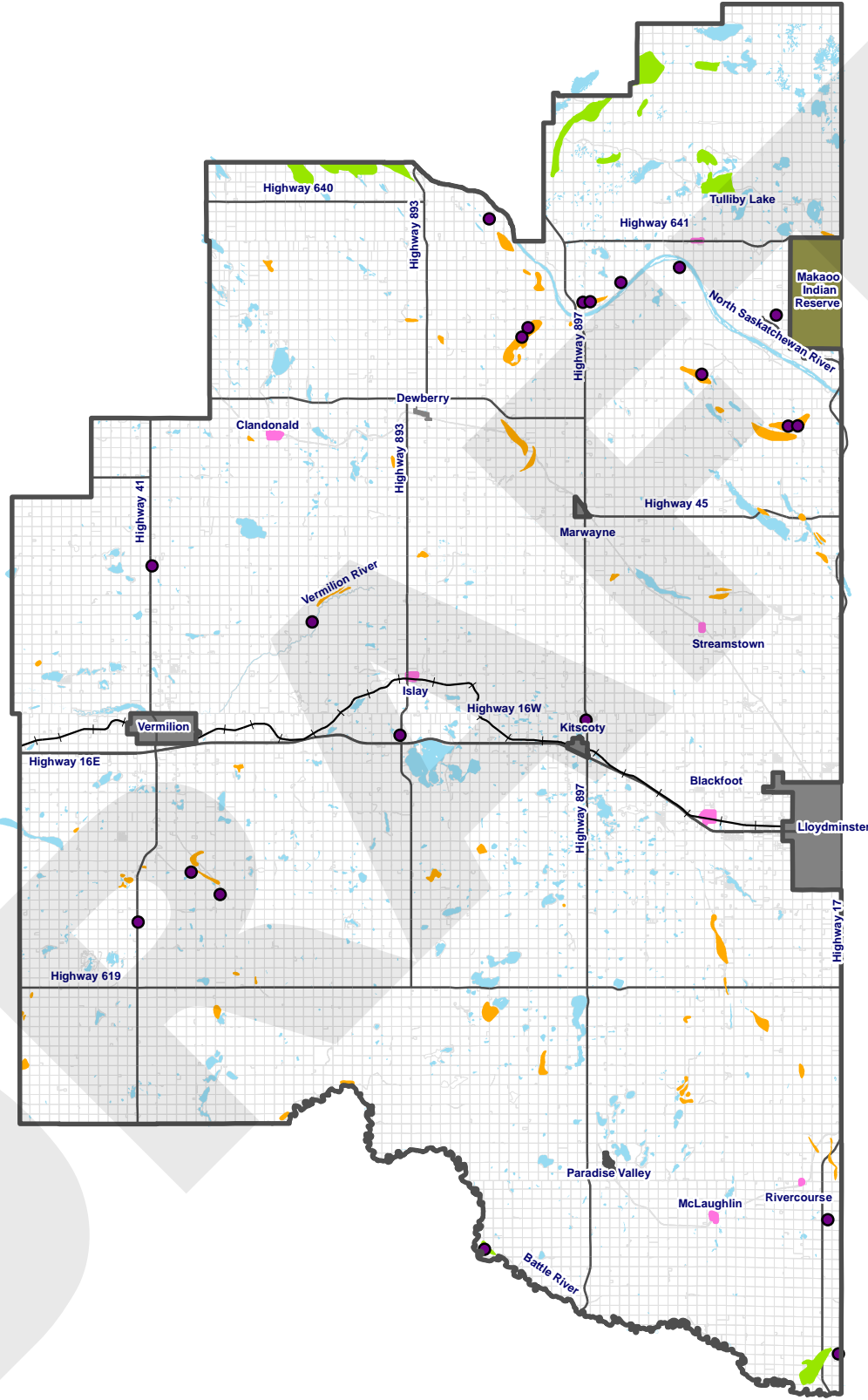
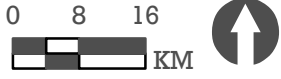
Legend

- Oil Facilities
- Oil Pipelines
- Railways
- Highways
- Urban Municipalities
- Hamlets
- First Nation Reserves
- Rivers
- Lakes



Map A10 Current and Potential Aggregate Extraction Areas

Bylaw No. XXXX- DRAFT



Legend

- Gravel Pits
- First Nation Reserves
- Railways
- Lakes
- Highways

- Aggregate resources in this deposit were confirmed by multiple test holes and sampling.
- Sand and/or gravel with resource potential were confirmed by site investigation and limited sampling and/or testing.
- Assumed to contain sand and/or gravel based on investigation of other sites in the area, remote sensing and/re other resources of information.
- Identified from remote sensing and/or other information without site investigation of the area (potential for sand and/or gravel).



9.2 Appendix B. Glossary

9.2.1 Acronyms and Short Forms

AEP	Alberta Environment and Protected Areas
AOPA	Agricultural Operation Practices Act
ARP	Area Redevelopment Plan
ASP	Area Structure Plan
CFO	Confined Feeding Operation
ESA	Environmentally Significant Area
ER	Environmental Reserve
ERE	Environmental Reserve Easement
IDP	Intermunicipal Development Plan
LUB	Land Use Bylaw
MGA	<i>Municipal Government Act, R.S.A. 2000, c. M-26, as amended.</i>
MDP	Municipal Development Plan
MR	Municipal Reserve
NRCB	Natural Resources Conservation Board
PUL	Public Utility Lot

9.2.2 Definitions

Agriculture, Extensive

Means agricultural uses including but not limited to cultivation of grains, oilseeds, forage, pasture and/or grazing of cattle or other animals.

Agriculture, Intensive

Means agricultural uses which are intensified or specialized in nature. This use includes, but is not limited to, horse breeders and/or trainers, cow-calf operators, exotic animal breeders, greenhouses, market gardens, fruit farms, tree farms, and horticulture operations.

Area Structure Plan

Means a statutory plan prepared pursuant to Section 633 of the Municipal Government Act, prepared by a qualified professional, that applies to a defined area of land and provides a framework for more detailed subdivision and development, staging of development, land uses and infrastructure matters that must be addressed as defined by County Policy.

Confined Feeding Operation (CFO)

As defined by the Agricultural Operation Practices Act (AOPA), means an activity on land that is fenced or enclosed or within buildings where livestock are confined for the purpose of growing, sustaining, finishing, or breeding by means other than grazing, but does not include seasonal feeding and bedding sites.

Developed

Means a parcel or site where development of the principal use has been completed to the satisfaction of the approving authority. In the case of residential sites, “developed” means a dwelling has been constructed and is suitable for occupation.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Means lands that exhibit one or more of the following:

- a. hazardous lands and areas that are unsuitable for development in their natural state (i.e. floodplains, steep slopes (greater than 15%), unstable slopes);
- b. areas that perform a vital environmental, ecological or hydrological function (i.e., aquifer, groundwater recharge areas, or peatlands);
- c. areas that contain unique geological or physiological features;
- d. ecological features or habitat areas that contain significant rare or endangered animal or plant species and/or provide an important link for the natural migration of wildlife; or
- e. Protective notations.

Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs)

Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs) are established by the Province. They are generally defined as areas that are important to the long-term maintenance of biological diversity, physical landscape features and/or other natural processes, both locally and within a larger spatial context (Jennings & Reganold 1991). The ESA Report, which was updated in 2014, provides information about ESAs and how they are determined.

Hazard Lands

Means hazardous lands and areas that are unsuitable for development in their natural state (i.e., floodplains, steep slopes greater than 15%, unstable slopes, etc.).

Multi-Lot Country Residential

Means the subdivision of more than four (4) or more parcels within a quarter section for residential use in an agricultural area, usually served by an internal roadway.

Multi-Lot Subdivision

Means the subdivision of more than four (4) or more parcels within a quarter section for use other than agricultural production.

Productive Agricultural Land

Means land with any one or more of the following characteristics:

- a. Land in production with a farmland assessment value of 30% or more;
- b. Grey-wooded soil producing hay, forage or other crops; and
- c. Land currently used for grazing.

Recreation

Means recreational activities or uses that are publicly accessible, generally for free, and often on public lands. Uses can include provincial and municipal recreation facilities or open spaces.

Rural Residential

Means the subdivision of solitary residential parcels within agricultural areas. Rural residential parcels can include farmstead separations and vacant parcels.

Statutory Plan

Means a plan adopted by a municipality by bylaw in accordance with the MGA and includes Intermunicipal Development Plans, Municipal Development Plans, Area Structure Plans and Area Redevelopment Plans.

Undeveloped

Means a parcel or site that remains in a natural state or is otherwise bare ground. Undeveloped can include cultivated or pastureland for the purposes of this plan.

Urban Municipality

Means a municipality adjacent to the County that is primarily urban in form. These include cities, towns, and villages.

Value-added Agriculture

Means the addition of a process or service to an agricultural raw material being produced by the farmer (producer). This may include some form of processing (milling, drying, cleaning, sorting, slaughtering, distilling, or direct marketing such as farm gate sales, farmer's markets or direct distribution.

Watershed

Means an area of land, bounded by topographic features, where water drains into a shared basin such as a river, stream, lake, pond or ocean. Within each large watershed there are many smaller watersheds.

Working Rural Landscape

Means a cohesive unit of land that is ecologically, socially, and economically connected. They generally represent rural areas where the primary land use is agricultural production, including cultivates or pasture lands and grasslands. However, working rural landscapes also include peatlands, forestry and other resource-based industries.