



Municipal Development Plan Bylaw #406/13

2013

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PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 PREAMBLE

The Woodlands County Municipal Development Plan is intended to provide a long term land use planning framework for the future growth of the municipality. This Plan reflects the intent of the County for decision making by Council, Administration and its Agencies. The plan will also provide direction to corporations or individuals wishing to participate in the future development and growth of the County.

Although this Plan is primarily a land use planning document, it also addresses a number of related municipal activities. The intent of the County is to coordinate activities in a manner that encourages consistency with the goals of this Plan.

The main purpose of this Plan is to facilitate the primary provision of the Municipal Government Act's land use planning regulations:

- 1) *to achieve the orderly, economical and beneficial development, use of land and patterns of human settlement; and*
- 2) *to maintain and improve the quality of the physical environment within which patterns of human settlement are situated in Alberta;*
without infringing on the rights of individuals for any public interest except to the extent that is necessary for the overall greater public interest.

1.2 MUNICIPAL SETTING

Woodlands County is located 150 km (93.21 mi) northwest of Edmonton. The municipality is approximately 7 600 km² (2,934.38 mi²) in area. Much of the land within the municipality is Crown Owned; patented lands are generally located in the Anselmo, Whitecourt, Cottonwood, Goose Lake, Topland, and Timeu areas. Woodlands County features a large variety of land uses including large forest reserves, resource extraction areas, agriculture, recreation, wildlife and settlement areas.

1.3 CONFORMANCE WITH LEGISLATION

This Plan has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Government Act R.S.A 2000 and amendments thereto, and is consistent with the Minister of Municipal Affairs: Land Use Policies.

Section 632.1 of the Act states that a "*council of a municipality with a population of 3,500 or more must, by bylaw, adopt a municipal development plan.*" Section 622(1) of the Act requires a municipality to adopt a planning framework that is *consistent "with the Land Use Policies"* set out by the Province.

Council recognizes that other provincial and federal statutes will have a role to play in the future development of the County. The County looks forward to working with all interests in striving to implement the goals of this Plan.

Pursuant to Section 631 of the Municipal Government Act, the Town of Whitecourt and Woodlands County entered into an inter-municipal Development Plan in 1998 to coordinate growth in the fringe area surrounding the Town's municipal boundary. The Inter-Municipal Development Plan and the Municipal Development Plan are to be consistent with each other pursuant to Section 638 of the Act.

1.4 DEFINITIONS

Abandoned Farmstead means a farmyard which was once established that contains some or all of the following: an abandoned residence, a developed potable water source, an established sewage collection system, existing shelterbelts, or any other feature which would indicate a previously developed farmstead.

Agricultural Parcel means a parcel where the principal use is for agricultural purposes.

Agricultural Small Holding means a parcel generally less than 16.0 ha (40.0 ac) in size with or without a dwelling and accessory buildings and uses, and which is used for minor agricultural pursuits.

Confined Feeding Operation 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; (Agricultural Operation Practices Act, Chapter A-7, Revised Statutes of Alberta, 2000).

Country (Rural) Residential Use means the subdivision of land in rural areas for residential use.

Environmentally Sensitive Land means land that features one or more of the following:

- 1) a slope greater than 30%;
- 2) land within a designated Flood Hazard Area or floodplain;
- 3) valleys and ravines with a slope greater or equal to 30%;
- 4) valleys and ravines with less than a 30% grade at the discretion of the approving authority;
- 5) land within 30 m (98.43 ft) of a spring, lake or named watercourse; or
- 6) land within 3 m (9.84 ft) of the bed and shore of an unnamed watercourse.

Farmstead means a developed residential portion of land used in connection with the raising or production of crops, livestock or poultry, and situated on the same quarter-section used in conjunction with the above farming operations.

Multi-Parcel Country Residential Development means the subdivision of land for residential use on a quarter-section or river lot where the residential parcel density shall be greater than two parcels.

1.5 INTERPRETATION

The boundaries of the land use classes described in this Plan's Future Land Use Map are approximate only and are not intended to follow legal surveyed boundaries. Minor adjustments or variances that may be required to land use classes, the location of future roads, quantities or figures shall not require an amendment to this Plan.

The following directions are intended when interpreting the goals, objectives, and policies of this Plan:

- 1) the word should means that the statement is an expression of desire by Council. It refers to what they would like to achieve but does not necessarily mean that the County shall be responsible for the action;
- 2) the word shall means that the action is mandatory;
- 3) the word may means that the action is discretionary.

1.6 PRIMARY GOALS

- 1) The policies in this Plan are largely derived from the former Improvement District No. 15 General Municipal Plan which was prepared in 1991.
 - a) To facilitate growth and development.
 - b) To maintain and enhance the County's economy.
 - c) To maintain effective communication, consultation, and cooperation with the Town of Whitecourt, neighbouring rural municipalities, and other stakeholders on matters of mutual interest.
 - d) To encourage diversification of the local economy.
 - e) To minimize the costs associated with land development.
 - f) To encourage a high standard of development throughout the municipality.
 - g) To maintain a separation between incompatible land uses.

- h) To preserve and maintain the quality of life and to enhance the attractiveness of the County as a place to live and work.
 - i) To maintain land use planning standards which will minimize adverse impacts on the natural environment and preserve significant environmental features for future generations.
- 2) Within the framework of the above goals, the County shall endeavour:
- a) to identify flood prone areas within the plan area and restrict development within those areas to that which a future 1 in 100 year flood will have a minimized impact;
 - b) to establish a standard flood plain elevation of 1 in 100 years for the construction of all future road and building development within flood prone areas;
 - c) to establish a market road system for the Whitecourt Rural area which will allow for the safe and efficient movement of traffic through the plan area;
 - d) to establish areas which will be maintained as an agricultural community;
 - e) to review future re-zoning proposals in an orderly manner;
 - f) to establish appropriate land use policies for areas prone to Wildfires in consultation with Alberta Sustainable Resource Development;
 - g) to establish smart growth guidelines that may be used for new development within the County.

PART TWO: LAND USE POLICIES

2.1 AGRICULTURE

The pursuit of agricultural activities in the County has played an important role in the economy and character of the municipality since its early settlement of the area. Today, agriculture continues to be an important component of the municipality's economy. The purpose of this section is to provide a set of goals, objectives and policies intended to conserve existing agricultural areas, protect better agricultural lands, and to identify areas for future agricultural expansion.

The County is generally limited for field crops due to a limited amount of land which is well suited for field crop production. The constraints that exist for field crops, however, have minimal impact on the production of livestock and forage crops. For this reason, it is important to the County to preserve certain areas of better agricultural land for long term agricultural use.

The objectives and policies contained in this section outline the desire of the County to maintain the agricultural land base within the municipality.

2.1.1 GOALS

- 1) To protect existing agricultural areas and to minimize the loss of better agricultural land.
- 2) To encourage the development of new agricultural areas.

2.1.2 OBJECTIVES

- 1) To protect, conserve, and enhance extensive and intensive agricultural development and use on lands classified as "Better Agricultural Land".
- 2) To maintain the agricultural land base for agricultural use.
- 3) To encourage intensive agricultural development to locate in appropriate locations where conflicts between agricultural and non-agricultural land uses are minimized.
- 4) To minimize the impacts of non-agricultural uses on agricultural lands.

2.1.2.1 Better Agricultural Land

Land which is regarded as better agricultural land in the Plan Area should be reserved for agricultural purposes over other land uses. For the purpose of this Plan, Better Agricultural land is defined as follows:

2.1.2.1.1 Better Agricultural Land (Crop Farming)

- 1) Arable land for extensive agricultural purposes that is considered to possess a Canada Land Inventory Rating of 80% Class IV or better;
- 2) Unimproved agricultural land which would be “Better Agricultural Land” if improved for extensive agriculture purposes; and
- 3) Land which would conflict with surrounding agricultural operations if developed for non-agricultural purposes.
- 4) Cut-off parcels and fragmented parcels which are determined to be unsuitable for extensive agriculture due to size, slope, configuration, or surrounding land use shall not be considered better agricultural land.

2.1.2.2 Better Agricultural Land (Livestock)

- 1) Unimproved land featuring a minimum Canada Land Inventory rating of Class IV or better and that is suitable for livestock grazing; or
- 2) Land which:
 - a) features proper soil structure for Confined Feeding Operations, and
 - b) has minimal potential to adversely impact the natural environment or groundwater aquifers.

For comparison purposes, the Province of Alberta Rural Farmland Assessment Rating of Class Four land is greater than 41%. In determining better agricultural land, RFA soil capability should be used on a site specific basis.

2.1.3 POLICIES

- 1) The development of better agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes shall be limited to:
 - a) agricultural industries which directly benefit and serve the surrounding agricultural area;
 - b) natural resource extraction industries;
 - c) public and quasi-public uses;
 - d) farm accessory uses and farm home occupations; and
 - e) small scale commercial operations.
- 2) The subdivision of better agricultural land to create smaller extensive agricultural parcels should be discouraged.

- 3) The maintenance of the entire quarter-section (160 acre, 64.8 hectare) as a basic farming unit shall be encouraged.
- 4) The fragmentation of better agricultural land by all land users (farmers, residents, government agencies, utilities, etc.) shall be discouraged.
- 5) When reviewing non-agricultural land use proposals in agricultural areas, the subdivision and development authority shall consider:
 - a) the potential for the creation of weed problems;
 - b) conflicts between the proposed use and the sights, sounds, odours, and other characteristics of the agricultural community, and
 - c) conflicts over the use of rural roads.
- 6) The concentration of non-agricultural land uses shall be encouraged to locate away from areas of higher agricultural potential.
- 7) The development of intensive agricultural land uses in areas identified for urban expansion shall be prohibited.

2.1.4 AGRICULTURAL EXPANSION

The County recognizes that there are a number of constraints which must be considered when examining the potential for agricultural expansion. Among these factors for consideration are:

- 1) the disruption to lands which may be environmentally sensitive or which may affect wildlife management areas;
- 2) the loss of land which may have a potential for forestry or private woodlot development;
- 3) the limitation of expansion into the Green Area which encompasses a very large portion of the County; and
- 4) the cost of providing municipal services to the proposed development area.

2.1.4.1 Objectives

- 1) To encourage the expansion of agriculture on patented and Crown Land where considered appropriate by the County.
- 2) To encourage the improvement of vacant and unimproved pasture lands for agricultural expansion.

2.1.4.2 Policies

- 1) The County shall work together with the Province of Alberta to review areas where it is considered feasible to convert Crown Land to patented land for agricultural purposes.
- 2) The County shall encourage the expansion of agricultural land where municipal services cannot be provided to the proposed agricultural area in an economical and efficient manner.
- 3) The County shall encourage the conversion of unimproved land for agricultural expansion where the conversion shall not adversely impact the natural environment or adjacent land uses.

2.1.5 WHITECOURT RURAL AREA

2.1.5.1 Soils

As shown on *Map 2: Soil Types*, much of the land in the Plan Area is not listed under a favourable soil type. The land near the Hamlet of Blue Ridge is predominantly Class Four. The land near the Athabasca River along the Flat's Road is a high Class Three rating. The Old Ferry Road area is not highlighted as it is a mixed Class Three and Class Four area with neither soil type being predominant.

The Class Three Plan Area generally corresponds to the area where there is a risk of flooding.

It should be noted that the Canada Land Inventory Index, upon which the map is based, is intended to be a general survey of soil capability in the Study Area. For specific and detailed soil analysis it is suggested that the rating issued by the County Assessor be used.

2.1.5.2 Grazing Lands

As shown on *Map 4: Grazing Leases*, there are many such leases within the Plan Area. These lease areas have been classified into two categories under the County Assessment.

Grazing leases are on Crown Owned Land. In some areas, these lease areas are bounded by privately owned lands which are used for agricultural or country residential purposes.

Extensive agriculture in the form of cattle farming is a very important aspect of the local economy. It is important to ensure that new development in the Plan Area is conducted with consideration to the agricultural economy so that conflicts can be minimized.

2.1.5.3 Implementation Of Agricultural Policies

The Plan area has been broken into two distinct areas for agriculture. The primary differences between the two areas are the parcel density guidelines and flood plain considerations. To implement this Plan, the creation of three additional land use districts in the Land Use Bylaw will be required.

2.1.5.3.1 Agricultural Flood Plain Areas

The intent behind this land use designation is to minimize the potential for flood damage along the known flood plain lands within the Plan Area. This includes the land adjacent to the McLeod and Athabasca River systems.

Should a proposal be received to develop land which may be subject to a flood risk, it shall be shown at the developer's expense whether or not a suitable building site exists above the 1 in 100 year flood plain and that the site can be adequately serviced.

As the specific area that could be subject to flooding is not accurately defined, all land adjacent or within a single quarter-section distance for the river lands will be subject to a review for flood potential upon receipt of an application for subdivision or development.

2.1.5.3.2 Agricultural Rural Areas (3 Parcels)

The intent behind this land use designation is to allow one subdivision out of a quarter-section and to restrict the further fragmentation of the agricultural land base for land under this designation.

For this designation, the existing Agricultural (2) District from the Land Use Bylaw will be applied. Under this District, a landowner will be allowed a maximum of two parcels out of a quarter-section, including fragmented parcels. The maximum parcel density will therefore be three parcels.

Where a building site is incorporated into the proposed subdivision, the parcel boundaries shall be determined so that the loss of agricultural land is minimized. In other cases, small farms and smaller agricultural parcels may be considered on a discretionary basis.

2.2 COUNTRY RESIDENTIAL

Residential development contains many forms of settlement including hamlets, multiple parcel country residential, single lot country residential, manufactured home development, and farmsteads. Much of the residential development pressures encountered by the County are located in the Town of Whitecourt Urban Fringe area, and in the Goose Lake, Blue Ridge and Fort Assiniboine areas. The purpose of this section is to provide policy direction for a variety of residential development options within the District, while recognizing their constraints relative to other land uses.

Residential development in the County is generally classified as follows:

- 1) farmstead and abandoned farmstead separations;
- 2) small agricultural holding;
- 3) single parcel country residential;
- 4) multiple parcel country residential; and
- 5) condominium and manufactured home parks.

The following goals, objectives and policies apply to country residential development in the Plan Area.

2.2.1 GOALS

- 1) To provide opportunities for small agricultural holdings in the County in a manner that shall complement the agricultural community.
- 2) To promote country residential development in a manner that shall benefit the County.
- 3) To minimize land use conflicts between country residential development and other land uses.

2.2.2 OBJECTIVES

- 1) To encourage a full range of housing types and styles which meet the needs and desires of the rural community.
- 2) To minimize the cost of providing public services such as road maintenance, school bussing, utilities, fire protection, ambulance and police service to country residential properties.
- 3) To establish country residential developments in areas which are suitable for residential development.
- 4) To allow the expansion of country residential districts at a rate which reflects market demand.
- 5) To minimize conflicts between country residential and incompatible adjacent land uses.
- 6) To accommodate the separation of a farmstead or abandoned farmstead from a quarter-section.

- 7) To accommodate small agricultural holdings development in a manner that shall effectively allow for the use and not unduly impact surrounding land uses.
- 8) To encourage country residential development to locate in appropriate areas.
- 9) To encourage the development of attractive multi-lot country residential parcels within the County.
- 10) To direct manufactured home parks, manufactured home subdivisions, and condominium development to areas which are deemed compatible to support the proposed use.

2.2.3 POLICIES

- 1) The County shall provide a variety of land use districts to accommodate a full range of housing types and lot sizes. These land use districts shall include:
 - a) a district to allow for larger lots with minor agricultural pursuits, home occupations, and storage as accessory uses. A full range of housing types shall be allowed in this district;
 - b) a district which shall be restricted to stick-built dwellings only. Accessory uses to be limited to those which are directly related to the principal use on the lot; and
 - c) a district which shall allow for stick built dwellings and minor accessory uses such as a home occupation and other uses which shall not adversely impact adjacent properties or uses;
 - d) the development of smart growth housing where common water and sewer services can be utilized while still maintaining a rural lifestyle may be considered under the direct control district.
- 2) Opportunities for the establishment of manufactured home subdivisions or manufactured home parks shall be considered in the Agricultural District.
- 3) Each land use district shall include a detailed description of site criteria such as parcel area, yard setbacks, developable area, and on-site servicing criteria.
- 4) Country residential developments shall be encouraged to locate in areas where municipal services can be effectively provided by the municipality.
- 5) On-site servicing such as a water supply for fire-fighting or the provision of access to rivers and other water sources that can aid in fire-fighting shall be encouraged.
- 6) Access to parcels should be located in a manner that minimizes travel and allows for safe turn-a-rounds for school bussing.

- 7) Internal subdivision roads shall be designed in a manner that minimizes the infrastructure and maintenance costs associated with municipal roads.
- 8) Prior to subdivision or development approval, all country residential development shall:
 - a) require a suitable on-site potable water source and sewage disposal system;
 - b) require a legal access to the satisfaction of the County;
 - c) be deemed suitable for the proposed residential use;
 - d) have an adequate building site; and
 - e) conform to other land use planning criteria as specified by the Subdivision and Development Approving Authority.
- 9) The County shall encourage lot infilling and development of existing country residential areas prior to designating additional land for country residential development.
- 10) Council may consider first reading of a bylaw to rezone land which has been redesignated for country residential use if, after a year since the approval of the rezoning it cannot be shown to the satisfaction of the County that sufficient progress has been made on the proposed development.
- 11) New country residential development shall, with the exception of a farmstead separation (existing residence), not be allowed within the minimum separation distance of an approved confined feeding operation, industrial, or resource extraction land uses.
- 12) New country residential development shall not be allowed in areas where the development would have a significant adverse impact on surrounding land uses.
- 13) Country residential parcels shall not be less than 1.0 ha (2.47 ac) or greater than 4.0 ha (9.88 ac) in size. Where warranted due to site considerations and valid land use planning reasons, the subdivision approving authority may vary the above area restrictions.
- 14) Through specific land use districts under the Land Use bylaw, country residential parcel areas may be more strictly defined (i.e. no greater than 2.02 ha [5.0 ac] in area).
- 15) Where a proposed subdivision will result in the re-subdivision of an existing residential multi-parcel subdivision, all landowners in the subdivision shall be notified of the proposed re-subdivision and be requested to submit comments on the proposal.

2.2.3.1 Farmstead/Abandoned Farmstead Separations

- 1) The County shall approve the subdivision of a farmstead from an unsubdivided quarter-section provided it has a satisfactory legal access, an adequate building site, and can be supplied with the necessary on-site and municipal services.
- 2) Proposals for an abandoned farmstead separation shall be reviewed in terms of the servicing available to the site, existing on-site servicing, adjacent land uses, and the suitability of the site for the proposed use.
- 3) After the creation of a farmstead separation, the subdivision shall be considered a country (rural) residential parcel for the purpose of calculating parcel density and future on-site land uses.
- 4) Farmstead/abandoned farmstead separations shall be kept to a minimum size to accommodate the proposed use. When reviewing proposals for a farmstead/abandoned farmstead separation, the County may consider existing shelterbelts, accessory buildings, and other features that may complement the proposed use if included within the proposed subdivision.
- 5) Where practical, farmstead/abandoned farmstead separations shall not exceed 4.0 ha (9.88 ac) in area, subject to sub-section (4) above.

2.2.3.2 Small Agricultural Holdings

- 1) The Subdivision Approving Authority may allow for the subdivision of a small agricultural holding from a quarter-section, provided that the proposed parcel is:
 - a) located on lands which are not regarded as better agricultural land; and
 - b) can be adequately supplied with potable water and on-site sewage disposal system.
- 2) Consideration shall be given to proposed small farm developments with accessory buildings or structures which are related to small farm development.
- 3) Small agricultural holdings shall be limited to a parcel size which is adequate to support the proposed use. Agricultural small holdings shall have a minimum size of 5.0 ha (12.35 ac) and shall not exceed 16.0 ha (39.54 ac) in area.

2.2.3.3 Single Parcel Country Residential

- 1) Undeveloped single parcel country residential subdivision proposals shall be directed to that portion of the quarter-section where there is an adequate building site, satisfactory access to the local road network, and the proposed subdivision shall have minimal impact on surrounding agricultural lands.
- 2) The development of minor agricultural uses, commercial, or industrial storage as secondary uses may be allowed on large country residential parcels.

2.2.3.4 Multi-Parcel Country Residential

- 1) Multi-parcel country residential subdivision proposals which involve more than one development phase may require the preparation of an area structure plan or outline plan to be adopted by Council.
- 2) Multi-lot country residential development shall not be permitted on better agricultural land.

2.2.3.5 Condominiums And Manufactured Home Parks

- 1) Bare-land condominiums shall be surveyed and developed in a manner that shall allow for the future creation of a separate parcel for each lease area (lot), if and when desired by the Condominium Association.
- 2) Where the proposal includes lease (lot) areas which are more suited in an urban setting, the proposed development shall be encouraged to consider a location where it may be adequately serviced such as a designated hamlet.
- 3) Where a development proposal includes lease (lot) areas which are country residential in nature, the County may make the proposal subject to the multi-lot country residential policies contained in this Plan.
- 4) Communal water and sewage disposal systems may be permitted in the County.

2.2.4 WHITECOURT RURAL AREA

2.2.4.1 Country Residential (Hamlet Rural Residential)

Under this District, parcels may be created in accordance with Country Residential Districts as described in the Land Use Bylaw. The Land Use Bylaw provides for a variety of options for Country Residential development depending on the desired parcel size, location, environmental constraints and servicing possibilities. Parcel density per quarter-section will depend on the characteristics of the land to be subdivided and the district chosen for the development.

Under this plan, no subdivision may take place without the benefit of an approved outline plan or area structure plan unless the parcel to be created is greater than 16 ha (40 ac) in area. All proposed subdivisions adjacent to hamlets must be designed with consideration of future municipal servicing and parkland as a development component.

2.3 HAMLET DEVELOPMENT

Hamlets play an important role as the centre for activities such as community centres and the provision of commercial services to rural residents in the County. The Hamlet of Blue Ridge serves as a service and community centre for the surrounding industrial, agricultural and residential land uses. Goose Lake on the other hand has developed as a primarily residential hamlet which provides minimal local commercial and community

services to the Hamlet and the surrounding area. The Hamlet of Fort Assiniboine provides a wide range of services to the traveling public and area residents. The Hamlet is becoming an urban focus for the growing coal-bed methane industry in the surrounding area.

In order to maintain and strengthen the function and role of the Hamlets of Blue Ridge, Fort Assiniboine, and Goose Lake, the following objectives and policies are presented to guide existing and future hamlet development.

2.3.1 GOALS

- 1) To encourage a full range of housing types and styles which meet the needs and desires of the community and County.
- 2) To encourage well planned, efficient and economical residential settlement within the County.

2.3.2 OBJECTIVES

- 1) To support and strengthen the role of Blue Ridge as a primary or major hamlet which shall act as a service, community and growth centre for the surrounding industries and residents.
- 2) To support the role of Goose Lake as a residential community that provides commercial and community services.
- 3) To support the maintenance and further growth of the Hamlet of Fort Assiniboine as a service centre for the traveling public and the surrounding area and as a gateway to the recreational opportunities in the Fort Assiniboine Sandhills area.

2.3.3 POLICIES

2.3.3.1 Blue Ridge

- 1) Development which shall contribute to the economic base of the Hamlet of Blue Ridge and enhance the quality of life in the community shall be encouraged.
- 2) Future subdivision growth within the Hamlet of Blue Ridge is encouraged to take place in accordance with Schedule "B".
- 3) Industrial and commercial development shall be buffered from residential areas by landscaping, screening, fencing, or other means to ensure that conflicts between adjacent land uses are minimized.
- 4) Residential development in the Hamlet of Blue Ridge should be urban in nature and developed to urban standards.

- 5) All development within the Hamlet shall be serviced with municipal water and sewer services. The development of new on-site services shall be prohibited.

2.3.3.2 Fort Assiniboine

- 1) The Hamlet of Fort Assiniboine allows for a variety of residential types. The primary residential area in the community should allow for single unit dwellings which may include single detached dwellings, manufactured homes, and modular homes. A secondary residential district along Crescent Drive and Park Drive shall be intended for medium density dwellings such as duplexes and row housing.
- 2) Commercial development which will benefit the community and surrounding area shall be encouraged.
- 3) Commercial development within the community shall be encouraged to locate in a centrally located commercial business district.
- 4) The County shall strive to maintain and enhance institutional and recreational facilities where required to maintain the quality of life for the residents of the Hamlet of Fort Assiniboine and area.
- 5) Future development in the Hamlet of Fort Assiniboine shall take place in accordance with Schedule "C".

The County shall encourage and foster river related activities on the Athabasca River.

2.3.3.3 Goose Lake

- 1) Commercial development within the Hamlet of Goose Lake should be limited to businesses which shall not adversely impact existing and future residential areas.
- 2) Hamlet boundary expansion shall only be considered by Council where it is determined that additional land is required to accommodate further growth.
- 3) All residential properties shall be of sufficient size to accommodate on-site servicing.
- 4) Holding tanks shall be encouraged for use as on-site sewage disposal systems on lake front properties.
- 5) Future development in the Hamlet of Goose Lake should take place in accordance with Schedule D.
- 6) The County shall encourage landowners to restrict livestock from direct lake access or direct access to watercourses in close proximity to Goose Lake
- 7) The County shall encourage and accommodate where feasible, recreational activities on Goose Lake.

2.4 MUNICIPAL FRINGE AREAS

As Woodlands County continues to develop, land near urban areas such as the Hamlets of Blue Ridge, Goose Lake, and Fort Assiniboine, and the Town of Whitecourt will experience development pressures. Similarly, development in rural areas within the County may impact rural neighbours: the Municipal District's of Big Lakes, Opportunity, and Greenview, and the Counties of Yellowhead, Lac Ste. Anne, Westlock, and Barrhead. Future urban growth and the existing pattern of rural development makes planning in these "fringe" areas very important. There is a need for cooperation and consultation between municipal neighbours on areas of mutual interest.

1) Rural Urban Fringe

The rural-urban fringe area around the Town of Whitecourt has experienced the most development activity. The type of development in this area has usually been residential though some commercial development takes place as well. To properly address growth in the Whitecourt area, the County and the Town have entered into an "Intermunicipal Development Plan" which addresses land use planning issues of mutual concern for each community.

The Whitecourt Rural Area has a number of limitations to future development. These range from topographical constraints to servicing limitations. A brief discussion of these characteristics is provided in each pertaining section of this document.

Development also takes place which can have an impact on the Hamlets of Blue Ridge, Goose Lake and Fort Assiniboine. Development which may adversely impact these unincorporated communities shall be reviewed to ensure that these impacts are minimized where possible.

2) Rural-Fringe Areas

Rural fringe areas are defined as those areas that are 800 m (0.5 mi) to the corporate boundary of the rural municipalities surrounding Woodlands County. Subject to other provision of this Section, redistricting, subdivision, and development proposals within the fringe area shall be referred to the respective municipality for review and comment.

2.4.1 GOALS

- 1) To encourage development in municipal fringe areas in a manner that shall not conflict with the long term planning goals of the adjacent municipality.
- 2) To encourage development in fringe areas of hamlets within the County in a manner that shall complement the urban community.

2.4.2 OBJECTIVES

- 1) To minimize adverse impacts through development on urban communities within the County.
- 2) To preserve better agricultural land within the rural-urban fringe areas until the land is required for urban development.
- 3) To facilitate cooperation, consultation, and communication on land use issues within the fringe areas of neighbouring rural municipalities.
- 4) To support the goals and objectives of the Town of Whitecourt and Woodlands County Intermunicipal Development Plan.

2.4.3 POLICIES

- 1) The goals, objective and policies of the Town of Whitecourt and Woodlands County Intermunicipal Development Plan shall apply to the plan area as described in that Plan.
- 2) Where a conflict exists between an intermunicipal development plan which is adopted by Council and this Municipal Development Plan, the respective intermunicipal development plan's policies shall prevail.
- 3) Subdivision and development which would fragment a quarter-section and adversely impact growth opportunities for hamlets shall be discouraged. Exceptions to this policy shall include a first residential parcel out of a quarter-section and physically severed parcels.
- 4) Subdivision proposals within 3 216 m (2.0 mi) of the corporate boundary of an adjacent rural municipality shall be referred to the respective rural municipality for comment.
- 5) Development permit proposals for discretionary uses which are not accessory to an existing use on a parcel shall be referred to all adjacent municipal fringe municipalities for their review and comment.
- 6) Where a subdivision or development proposal is deemed by the approving authority to have an impact on another municipality, the approving authority shall refer the proposal to the respective municipality notwithstanding the above fringe boundary.
- 7) The subdivision and development authority shall carefully review and evaluate proposals to ensure compatibility with present and future land uses in the rural-urban fringe area.

2.5 COMMERCIAL

Commercial development within the County is presently located primarily in the Hamlets of Blue Ridge and Fort Assiniboine, and to a lesser extent in the Hamlet of Goose Lake. This purpose of this section is to develop guidelines for the continued growth of commercial activities to meet the needs of both the residents of the County and the traveling public.

2.5.1 GOAL

To promote and accommodate commercial development in appropriate locations.

2.5.2 OBJECTIVES

- 1) To investigate opportunities for highway commercial development along the provincial highway network.
- 2) To restrict highway commercial development to locate to identified highway commercial locations or the Hamlets of Fort Assiniboine and Blue Ridge.
- 3) To accommodate commercial development that shall provide services to area residents in the Hamlet of Goose Lake.
- 4) To encourage commercial uses to locate where they shall minimize potential land use conflicts to existing and future land uses.
- 5) To direct commercial development to areas where it is most appropriate and away from better agricultural land.
- 6) To direct retail commercial development to urban communities.
- 7) To allow for the diversification of incomes in the rural area.
- 8) To direct retail-type home occupations away from the highway network and to locations where land use conflicts shall be minimized.
- 9) To allow opportunities for businesses that require a commercial setting but not necessarily the full range of services offered by an urban community to establish in a commercial district near the Whitecourt Municipal Airport.

2.5.3 POLICIES

- 1) The County shall encourage highway commercial uses to locate in identified highway commercial areas, or if not practical, in the Hamlets of Goose Lake, Blue Ridge and Fort Assiniboine.

- 2) Where highway commercial development areas have been identified within the Plan Area, these development proposals may be allowed to locate in these areas.
- 3) Highway commercial development that requires services which are more effectively provided in urban areas shall be encouraged to locate in hamlet communities.
- 4) Examples of highway commercial uses that may be allowed within the County include: truck stops, commercial bulk storage facilities that require highway access but are not appropriate in urban areas due to safety reasons, highway related uses that require a large parking area and that do not require a full range of urban municipal services.
- 5) Highway commercial uses should maintain the functional integrity of the adjacent highway through the use of service road systems or controlled highway access points, which are approved by Alberta Transportation and Infrastructure.
- 6) Uses such as farm subsidiary occupations, home based businesses, public and institutional uses directly associated with agriculture should be permitted.
- 7) Home occupations that would result in a generation of traffic that is considered an unreasonable hazard to the traveling public shall not be allowed in the vicinity of the provincial highway network.
- 8) Commercial uses that utilize large lots and are entirely wholesale based may be allowed to locate within a commercial park development area near the Whitecourt Municipal Airport or other areas as identified by Council.
- 9) Lots which can benefit from proximity to the Whitecourt Municipal Airport shall be reserved for airport related development.
- 10) The County shall contact Alberta Transportation and Infrastructure to review the provincial highway network and to determine appropriate locations for highway commercial development.
- 11) Where identified, an area structure plan shall be prepared for the proposed area prior to any development taking place. This type of area structure plan shall require the approval of the Minister of Transportation for adoption.

2.5.4 WHITECOURT RURAL AREA

Highway Commercial development has been identified for the Cottonwood area. No additional Highway Commercial areas will be allowed unless this Plan is amended in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Government Act.

All commercial development will commence in accordance with the policies contained in this and other statutory plans having jurisdiction in the Plan Area.

2.6 INDUSTRIAL

The majority of industrial development in the County is related to forestry, agriculture, and natural resource extraction industries. It is anticipated that this type of industrial development shall continue and should be supported by the County. The purpose of this section is to provide policies and guidelines for the location of industrial land uses within the municipality.

2.6.1 GOAL

To accommodate industrial land uses which are beneficial and well suited to the municipality while minimizing conflicts with rural or hamlet land uses.

2.6.2 OBJECTIVES

- 1) To minimize conflicts between industrial developments and those existing and future land uses which may be affected. These affected land uses may include but are not limited to residential, recreational, public and quasi-public, and agricultural land uses.
- 2) To encourage and promote rural industrial development and natural resource extraction industries which are beneficial and well suited to the County.
- 3) Industrial development should be directed away from better agricultural land.

2.6.3 POLICIES

- 1) Industrial development shall be directed to lands designated for rural industrial uses, or within hamlet industrial districts in the Hamlets of Blue Ridge and Fort Assiniboine, unless an alternate location is desired and required due to site specific circumstances as outlined below:
 - a) farm home occupations or industries, which by their nature are associated with or are part of the farming operation, and are required to be located on or in close proximity to farm markets;
 - b) natural resource extraction industries requiring a location to access raw materials on-site;
 - c) industries with unique siting requirements which require large tracts of land, transportation considerations, or which by their nature, should be located away from populated areas or other buildings due to emissions and other negative effects; and
 - d) home occupations or industries which are small scale in nature and are secondary to the primary function of the parcel.

- 2) Industrial development should be directed away from country residential development and better agricultural land (with the exceptions considered in [1] above).
- 3) Hamlet industrial development should be of a scale or type which shall not affect adjacent residential uses, and should be screened from residential uses to the satisfaction of the County.
- 4) Subject to land availability and the ability to provide all required services, industrial development which is considered more appropriate in an urban setting shall be encouraged to locate within the hamlet communities.
- 5) In siting large industrial development, special consideration should be given to the impacts on rural infrastructure, including local roads, bridges, traffic flows, and other considerations as identified by the County.
- 6) Natural resource extraction industries may be allowed to locate outside of designated industrial areas where it can be shown that the impacts on other land uses can be reduced to an acceptable level.
- 7) The County shall provide for, where possible and feasible, industrial uses that have unique siting requirements and that due to required lot size, odour, emissions, or other circumstances, are deemed inappropriate in an urban setting.
- 8) Industrial development which requires large lots and a minimum level of municipal services shall be encouraged to locate in an industrial park in rural areas.

2.6.4 WHITECOURT RURAL AREA

A number of areas have been identified for industrial development. Within the Whitecourt Fringe Area, the largest area that is undeveloped is the land surrounding the Whitecourt Airport. Other areas include land near the Swan Hills Highway in the northwest and the site of the Blue Ridge Forest Products Mill.

For the industrial land near Highway No. 43, access requirements are addressed through the service road network which is currently under construction. The topography of the site will limit most development on this land. Currently, this parcel is being used for gravel mining. However, it may be possible to develop this site further as it does have railway access. Any future development will have to be in accordance with the policies contained in other applicable statutory plans.

The airport area is experiencing some strong demands for future development. Future development on these lands will respect the policies contained in the Intermunicipal Development Plan. All development on the airport land will be related to the operation of the airport facility and will take place in accordance with the Airport Management Plan.

2.7 TRANSPORTATION

The future development of the County is greatly dependent on the transportation system of the area, including roads, railways, and air travel. The purpose of this section is to provide direction to ensure that the functions of transportation systems are not compromised by adjacent land uses, and that utility systems are provided economically and with a minimum of conflict with other land uses.

2.7.1 GOAL

To work cooperatively to establish a safe, efficient, and effective transportation system in the County.

2.7.2 OBJECTIVES

- 1) To cooperate with federal and provincial agencies to coordinate the planning of transportation facilities and rights of way.
- 2) To minimize the impacts between transportation facilities and surrounding land uses.
- 3) To provide for an efficient and safe transportation system capable of meeting the needs of the County's residents, industry and the traveling public.
- 4) To ensure that land uses adjacent to the railway and the Whitecourt Municipal Airport are compatible with the safe operation of the two facilities.
- 5) To encourage cooperation and coordination of transportation planning on an intermunicipal basis.
- 6) To establish a hierarchy of transportation routes within Woodlands County.
- 7) To provide standards for hard surfacing of roads within Woodlands County.

2.7.3 POLICIES

- 1) The County shall encourage a co-operative effort with industry, provincial agencies, and neighbouring municipalities to address long term planning issues and to determine effective ways to service the needs of the traveling public.
- 2) The subdivision approving authority shall require as part of the subdivision process, road widening dedications as per the requirements of the respective road authority.
- 3) Future road widenings and transportation routes shall be planned in a manner that shall minimize the reduction of setbacks from existing development to the public road or highway.

- 4) New development shall be planned in a manner that shall accommodate the future growth plans for affected transportation corridors.
- 5) Non-provincial roads in the Plan Area shall be constructed to Municipal Standards where the road is to be used for public use.
- 6) Noise sensitive land uses such as residences, schools, and medical facilities should be located away from major roadways, airports, and railways. Setbacks, buffers and other measures may be required where no alternatives exist for these types of development.
- 7) All primary highway improvements shall be constructed to the standards of Transportation and Utilities.
- 8) Highway development shall be constructed in a manner that achieves safe and efficient access to the municipal road or highway.
- 9) Land uses which are deemed incompatible with the operation of these transportation systems shall not be permitted on adjacent lands or within the Airport Management area as established by Council.
- 10) Further development on or adjacent to the airport property shall consider the future growth opportunities of the airport facility and be compatible with them.
- 11) Development which is considered to have an adverse impact on the airport property or the operation of the airport shall be prohibited.
- 12) Land featuring railway sidings and locations suitable for siding development shall be reserved for development requiring access to the railway line.
- 13) Developers shall be required to contribute towards improvements to local infrastructure that are necessary to support the proposed development.
- 14) All public roadways within a flood prone area should be constructed to withstand a minimum 1 in 100 year flood.

2.7.4 WHITECOURT RURAL AREA

The Whitecourt Fringe Area also has a number of constraints to transportation. These can include river crossings, drainage problems, line of sight and the determination of future market roads. A brief discussion of these constraints is provided below.

- 1) As shown on Whitecourt Fringe Area *Map 3: Market Roads*, no new crossings of the Athabasca or McLeod River are contemplated under this Plan. The existing crossings in the Town of Whitecourt and along Secondary Road 658 are expected to be sufficient into the long term.
- 2) Installing drainage systems in to new subdivisions continues to be a challenge as the topography in the Plan Area can result in the direction of surface water run-

off onto adjacent properties if transportation and drainage systems are not properly planned for. It will be important on future subdivisions to ensure that new road routes consider the impact that the road ditches will have on the local drainage systems and that impacts on neighbouring properties will be reduced.

- 3) Under *Map 3: Market Roads*, a number of roads have been identified for future development as rural “arterial” or “market roads”. These roads will be built to a higher standard to accommodate higher levels of traffic. To date, there are no requirements to widen road right of ways along these roads. However, new standards may be enacted in the future which could impact the number of approaches and require the width of the road right of way to be extended to 30.48 m (100 ft).
- 4) All rural roads have been tied into the provincial highway network through a series of service road connections to Highway No. 43. The twinning of the highway should not pose any problems for highway access.
- 5) In the case of Highway No. 32, where required a service road will be necessary to provide highway access to new subdivisions.
- 6) Secondary Roads will be treated in a similar manner to primary highways in terms of highway access.

In the more hilly or rugged areas of the Plan Area, line of sight for new access poses some challenges. It will be important to ensure that proper sight lines for accesses to new subdivisions are available.

Transportation issues are to be generally addressed through existing statutory plans, bylaw, and the policies adopted by the Department of Public Works for Woodlands County. In addition to those policies, the following guideline shall be applied:

Where practical, a maximum of two (2) approaches per .8 km (.5 mi) shall be developed on "main" county roads. Any access in addition to the above should be accommodated through the use of service roads.

2.8 SERVICING

It is the intention of the County to ensure that all development is adequately serviced. Though many utility services are provided by the private sector, the County has an interest in the provision of suitable water, sewer, and storm water drainage infrastructure.

2.8.1 GOALS

- 1) To provide a cost effective high standard municipal utility system for residents in areas which are provided with municipal utilities.
- 2) To ensure that all development is provided with adequate servicing.

2.8.2 OBJECTIVES

- 1) To ensure that all land uses are serviced with an efficient and effective supply of water, refuse disposal, storm water runoff and sanitary waste disposal at a reasonable cost to the developer and to the County.
- 2) To minimize land use conflicts between utility systems and adjacent and surrounding land uses.
- 3) In rural areas, the preference shall be to service lots with on-site waste water collection and disposal systems.
- 4) Where practical and cost effective, developers shall be encouraged to convert from on-site servicing to municipal servicing (i.e. water and sewer).
- 5) On-site sewage disposal systems that would adversely impact the natural environment or groundwater aquifers shall be prohibited.
- 6) The approving authority should require a percolation test on undeveloped land to determine the types of on-site sewage systems that may be used to service the site.
- 7) On-site services and hook-up to municipal services from the property line shall be the responsibility of the developer.
- 8) Where on-site servicing is allowed in urban communities, water supply shall be limited to well or cistern servicing and sewage disposal shall be limited to an approved holding tank.
- 9) When reviewing development proposals, the County may request from utility companies their existing and future requirements for servicing in and around the area of the development proposal.
- 10) Future waste transfer and disposal systems shall be located in accordance with provincial environmental and health regulations.
- 11) Utility facilities and systems should be located so that there is minimal obstruction to adjacent and surrounding land uses.
- 12) Utility facilities and systems should be protected from encroachment by incompatible land uses.
- 13) All development shall be landscaped appropriately to ensure that surface runoff is contained to the subject property and directed off the lot in a manner that shall not result in soil erosion or adversely impact on surrounding lands.
- 14) At the point of subdivision, lot lines may be adjusted at the discretion of the approving authority to accommodate an existing sewage system's required setback.

- 15) The County shall encourage resident sponsored recycling initiatives.
- 16) Other than a farmstead separation, the County shall not approve a residential subdivision within 0.8 km (0.5 mi) of a landfill.

2.9 THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The County has a wide variety of natural features which make certain areas scenic and attractive for development. Though the development of these areas may be allowed in certain cases, features such as river valley flood plains, unstable slopes, drainage areas, groundwater recharge areas, and land susceptible to erosion must be considered when reviewing all subdivision and development proposals.

2.9.1 GOAL

To encourage development in such a manner that the impact of development on natural features is reduced.

2.9.2 OBJECTIVES

- 1) To protect and direct land use and development away from environmentally sensitive lands such as steep valleys, and areas prone to flooding or soil erosion.
- 2) To ensure that the subdivision and development of land within the County does not have an adverse impact on the on-site or surrounding environment.

2.9.3 POLICIES

- 1) Measures may be taken to identify and protect certain areas that are deemed by Council to be particularly important to wildlife and waterfowl as habitat areas.
- 2) The County shall review conservation proposals that may adversely impact agricultural lands.
- 3) Land Uses which shall adversely impact the natural environment shall be directed to more appropriate locations.
- 4) Development shall be discouraged on land which is deemed environmentally sensitive unless special conditions are attached to the approval that prevent or effectively reduce the potential impacts of the proposed development on the natural environment.
- 5) Flood prone lands may be considered for use for extensive agriculture, public works, or passive recreational purposes. Other development in flood prone lands shall be prohibited unless adequate flood proofing measures are adopted.

- 6) In-filling of existing subdivisions on flood prone lands may be allowed providing that the proposed development conforms to the flood-proofing standards approved by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and the infill is outside of the flood way.
- 7) Alberta Environment should be consulted prior to the approval of development on lands which may have significant environmental impacts on adjacent or surrounding land uses.
- 8) Development which shall adversely impact the water quality of the river systems beyond that which is permitted by Alberta Environment shall be prohibited.
- 9) The County shall require the dedication of environmental reserve lots, environmental reserve easements or environmental conservation easements where considered appropriate.
- 10) Through reserve allocations, the County shall ensure that opportunities for access to natural features, rivers, and other potential public use areas be maintained.
- 11) Developers may be required to prepare an environmental audit as part of the review process for a subdivision application or development permit. Where required, the County may also require an environmental impact assessment to determine whether a proposed development is suitable and how adverse impacts from the proposed development can be minimized.
- 12) Development which may lead to contamination of local groundwater supplies, significant wildlife habitats, watercourses, or other environmentally significant features shall be prohibited, where deemed appropriate by the County.
- 13) Development proposals within or adjacent to environmentally sensitive areas:
 - a) shall complement and be compatible with the natural characteristics of the site as much as possible;
 - b) shall not lead to overuse or deterioration of the natural surroundings;
 - c) shall, if required by the County, be accompanied by an environmental impact assessment that shall determine the extent of the impact of the proposed development on the surrounding natural environment; and
 - d) shall provide for adequate setbacks and rehabilitation of the site as may be recommended or required by provincial departments or agencies.
 - e) Developer shall sign a waiver and register a caveat or covenant against the property in the instance of any variance from the required setback as set out in the Municipal Development Plan or Land Use Bylaw to ensure awareness for future owners.

- 14) The County shall support efforts of the Province of Alberta to establish integrated resource management plans and other planning related measures for Crown Land Management where the County and other stakeholders are involved in the preparation process
- 15) The County shall strive to minimize impacts on municipal identified wildlife management areas, environmentally sensitive areas, scenic areas, or any other types of environmentally significant area through premature or incompatible development.

2.9.4 WHITECOURT RURAL AREA

The Plan Area is also home to two large river systems, the McLeod and the Athabasca. Each of these rivers has a flood plain.

To date, the flood plain has not been mapped through the Plan Area. Instead interpolations or estimates of flood levels are taken based upon a detailed study that was conducted for the Town of Whitecourt and a flood event that took place in 1981.

To limit damage due to flooding, all major development must be located above the 1 in 100 year flood plain. A 1 in 100 year flood is the estimate of the worst flood that could be expected in a century. As a comparison, the flood that took place in 1981 is estimated to be a 1 in 30 year flood. If a flood hazard assessment is completed for some or all of the area in the future, the flood hazard assessment would be the document which governs the location of the specific development proposals in the future.

To limit the potential for property damage, the potential flood plain of the Athabasca River east of the Town of Whitecourt is identified as a potential flood plain area. Other areas along the McLeod River are identified on a site specific basis.

To minimize the potential for flood damage to development and infrastructure, prior to development within a flood prone area, it will have to be determined through a survey whether adequate building sites exist on the subject land. Further, all main buildings shall be located a minimum of 0.5 m (1.64 ft) above the flood plain level.

To ensure that roads and accesses within flood prone areas will be sufficient for travel in the event of a flood, all roads and approaches must be built to a 1 in 100 year flood level.

2.10 RECREATION AND TOURISM

The County features an abundance of opportunities for outdoor recreation and sporting activities, and for discovering through tourism, the history of the region. The intent of this section is to provide a framework for guiding the development and, generally, the better utilization of recreation and tourism potential of the County.

2.10.1 GOAL

To promote and accommodate recreation and tourism land uses in appropriate locations.

2.10.2 OBJECTIVES

- 1) To accommodate and promote diverse recreational and tourism opportunities in the County, including the promotion of large scale natural resource extraction and processing industries as tourist attractions.
- 2) To accommodate recreational and tourism development that is compatible with the capabilities and characteristics of the natural environment.
- 3) To encourage development of recreational and historical resources as a way to promote tourism in the County.

2.10.3 POLICIES

- 1) The County should strive to work with industry to develop industrial facility tours as a tourist and educational resource.
- 2) Subdivision and development proposals in areas that have a high capability for recreation should:
 - a) be compatible with the natural characteristics of the site;
 - b) complement the natural characteristics of the site; and
 - c) minimize conflicts with existing and proposed future land uses.
- 3) The County may develop a recreation and tourism strategy to identify areas that can be developed and/or promoted for recreational and tourism purposes.
- 4) The County shall discourage development which shall have an adverse impact on identified historical, tourism, and recreational areas.
- 5) The County shall encourage development near historical sites in a manner that is compatible with the historical site.

2.10.4 WHITECOURT RURAL AREA

Two recreational areas have been identified in this MDP. The first area is located north of the Town of Whitecourt, the other is at the junction of Old Ferry Road and Highway No. 32.

The land north of the Town is very low and is subject to flooding. No development other than passive recreational use should be permitted on this land.

It should be noted that the flood plain restrictions will likely make it impossible to replace any of the houses that are currently located on this property. It is recommended that on this land a residential dwelling be restricted to a discretionary basis only.

The land adjacent to Highway No. 32 is under a forestry lease and is intended for use by the Whitecourt District Agricultural Society. It is currently under development for recreational grounds. The remainder of the quarter-section is undeveloped and is under bush cover. It is recommended that no development take place on the remaining land unless it is compatible with the recreational site.

2.11 CROWN LAND

Much of the County's forested area is managed by the Province of Alberta. Lands which are classified as "green area" are managed by Alberta Environment while the remaining "white area" is managed by Alberta Sustainable Resource Development.

The County has a vast forested area under which a number of different agencies have an administrative function. The intent of the County is to complement the work of the Province of Alberta and to encourage the appropriate use of these lands. The following policies reflect this intent.

2.11.1 GOALS

- 1) To encourage the appropriate use of Crown Land within Woodlands County.
- 2) To facilitate an environment where industrial users can continue to access Crown Lands while minimizing the impact that industry may have on the natural environment on these lands.
- 3) To encourage the maintenance of access to Crown Land areas for recreational purposes.

2.11.2 OBJECTIVES

- 1) To encourage development on Crown Lands where an alternative location is not feasible.
- 2) To facilitate public access to Crown Land areas, when suitable, desirable and economically feasible.

2.11.3 POLICIES

- 1) The County should pursue discussions with relevant government agencies to ensure that they are fully aware of any future proposed use of Crown Lands. The County wishes to be informed and involved in the decision making process.
- 2) The County may support the conversion of Crown Lands to agricultural land where the subject land can be effectively serviced at a reasonable cost to the municipality and the developer.
- 3) The County should support the use of Crown Land for public recreational purposes and other uses which would not conflict with agricultural pursuits such as grazing.
- 4) The County shall encourage the preparation of an integrated resource management plan between the municipality and Alberta Environment.
- 5) The County should encourage the continued access to Crown Land areas, where suitable, for recreational activities which shall not have an adverse impact on the natural environment.
- 6) The County should encourage the formation of a sound strategy for public access to Crown Land by the appropriate agencies.
- 7) The County shall encourage multi-use activities on Crown Land where the use is practical and adverse impacts on other land uses are effectively reduced.
- 8) The County shall encourage Crown Land leaseholders to prepare and adopt land use management plans with the Government of Alberta.

2.11.4 WHITECOURT RURAL AREA

There is a great deal of land in the Plan Area which is still under the administrative control of the Government of Alberta (*Schedule "F" – Future Land Use – Whitecourt Rural Area*). It is anticipated that no significant transfers of land from the Crown to patented land will take place during the next several years.

As shown in this Plan, much of the Crown Land is under grazing lease. The County will continue to support the principle of using Crown Land for properly managed grazing practices.

Unless it can be shown to the satisfaction of the County that there is merit in the transfer, the County will not support the transfer of more Crown Land to private ownership. When considering future land transfer referrals from the Crown, the following criteria may be used:

- 1) is the land accessible through developed County roads?

- 2) is the land developable?
- 3) is there an identified need for the proposal?

2.12 FIRE SMART DEVELOPMENT

As stated in the previous policy regarding Crown Owned Lands, the County is a large rural municipality with a vast forest reserve. Within the County is a significant amount of development that is located in forested areas and in some cases, too far away from emergency services that can effectively service the development when required.

Where deemed appropriate by the County; residential, industrial, and recreational development may be allowed in remote areas of the municipality. The following goals, objectives, and policies reflect the intent of Council regarding fire smart development.

2.12.1 GOALS

- 1) To reduce the risk of damage that can result from wildfires in areas that are too remote to be effectively serviced by public emergency response services.
- 2) To promote Alberta Sustainable Resource Development's Fire Smart Program with respect to new and existing developments through information pamphlets and voluntary self assessments.

2.12.2 OBJECTIVES

- 1) To effectively manage development in remote areas.
- 2) To preserve the natural state of the forested land.
- 3) To reduce the risk of wildfire within forested areas,
- 4) To reduce the risk of damage to property or loss of life from wildfires in forested areas.

2.12.3 POLICIES

- 1) The County may obtain input from Alberta Sustainable Resource Development and the local fire department when evaluating fire smart development and subdivision proposals.
- 2) The County shall consider the interface between forested and developed land in the preparation of integrated land management plans.

- 3) The County shall encourage commercial and industrial development to locate in more urbanized areas when the proposed development cannot be effectively provided with required municipal services.
- 4) The County shall encourage site development which shall not have an adverse impact on the surrounding forested area or upon the natural environment.
- 5) The County shall encourage the use of effective wildfire prevention techniques and the development of on-site fire fighting measures to reduce the risk of wildfires endangering forested areas.
- 6) The County shall encourage subdivision and/or development practices within hamlets, settlements, and residential subdivisions that are located within the forested areas that shall minimize the potential for wildfire damage through:
 - a) the provision of a fire guard which shall serve as a buffer between communities and the surrounding forested area.
 - b) the development of walk trails between residential developments and surrounding forested lands which may be used in an emergency for fire prevention purposes.
 - c) consideration of the following as conditions for approval for residential development in remote areas that are too remote to be adequately serviced by existing fire fighting services:
 - i) the provision of adequate water supplies for firefighting;
 - ii) purposes;
 - iii) the use of fire resistant building methods;
 - iv) the installation of spark arrestors on all chimneys; and
 - v) the removal of trees, shrubs and fine fuels in accordance with the regulations described in the County Land Use Bylaw.
- 7) The County shall encourage the provision of an emergency access to developments to help prevent property damage and the potential for loss of life.
- 8) The County shall discourage the location of development in remote areas that may be deemed an excessive wildfire hazard.
- 9) The County shall carefully plan for development in remote areas which may excessively limit the capacity of Alberta Sustainable Resource Development to manage the forested area.

2.13 SOUR GAS POLICIES

The County has a number of installations that could have an adverse impact on adjacent lands due to the potential for hazardous emissions and other factors which make these developments a health risk for residents within the County. The following policies reflect the intent of the municipality to reduce the risk of public exposure to sour gas facilities.

2.13.1 GOAL

To minimize the risk of exposure to sour gas and other potentially hazardous developments.

2.13.2 OBJECTIVES

- 1) To ensure that development in proximity to sour gas facilities takes place in a safe manner.
- 2) To ensure that appropriate development standards are maintained to effectively reduce the risk to residents from potentially hazardous development.

2.13.3 POLICIES

- 1) The County shall not permit the development of any land use in close proximity to existing sour gas facilities unless it conforms to the setback standards established by the Alberta Energy and Utilities Board (AEUB).
- 2) The County shall refer, when required or deemed necessary, all subdivision and development permit applications affecting land near existing or proposed sour gas facilities to the AEUB for review and comment.
- 3) Where warranted, the County may increase the minimum setback required by the Act, based upon relevant land use planning and safety considerations.
- 4) The County may require as part of the approval process, the submission of an emergency response plan in a form acceptable to the municipality. The County shall refer all emergency response plans to area emergency services such as the local ambulance and fire fighting authority for their review and comment.

2.14 SUBDIVISION DENSITY

To conform to the spirit and intent of each land use district, it is the intent of Council to regulate the number of parcels that may be created on a quarter-section so that the overall purpose of the land use district is maintained. To help accomplish this purpose, Woodlands County has established the following parcel density limits for all agricultural land in the municipality.

Subdivision density on agricultural lands shall be based in part upon an assessment of the quality of the land to be subdivided. Two classifications shall be used: “Better Agricultural Land” and “Agricultural Land”.

For the purpose of calculating parcel density, residential subdivision includes: farmsteads, abandoned farmsteads, small holdings and single parcel country residential subdivision.

The balance of the quarter-section is included in the following maximum parcel densities.

	<i>Better Agricultural Land</i>	<i>Agricultural Land</i>
Agricultural Use	2	2
Residential Use	1	2
Small Holdings	1	2
Natural Resources*	1	1
	-----	-----
TOTAL DENSITY LIMIT	3	3

* Note: Natural Resource Extraction Industries may be approved where no reasonable alternative location exists, subject to other provisions of this Plan.

- 1) Public Use Subdivisions community halls, cemeteries, fair grounds, municipal reserve, municipal and school reserve, school reserve and environmental reserve lots are not included in parcel density calculations.
- 2) Parcels created for agricultural use shall have an agricultural use as the principal use on the parcel.
- 3) At the discretion of the approving authority, land which would be considered “Better Agricultural Land” if not for fragmentation due to a water body, road, railway, etc., shall be considered as “Agricultural Land” for the purpose of calculating parcel density.
- 4) These density limits may be increased either through a zoning to a more appropriate district, or in a situation such a third agricultural parcel, through an amendment to the Land Use bylaw which shall increase the parcel density on the subject quarter-section to allow for the additional parcel.

2.15 DWELLING DENSITY

In rural areas there are a number of situations where one or more additional residences may be allowed on a parcel. These include such uses as an additional residence to accommodate for family relationship situations such as a “garden suite”, or a request for an additional residence related to an agricultural activity on a parcel.

The following outlines the intent of Council to provide for one or more additional residences where warranted.

2.15.1 GOAL

To allow for an additional residence(s) on a parcel.

2.15.2 OBJECTIVES

- 1) To provide opportunities for development to accommodate family relationships through the provision of “garden suite” development.
- 2) To allow for an additional single detached residence or manufactured home on a parcel.

2.15.3 POLICIES

- 1) The County may allow the placement of a “garden suite”, as provided by the Province of Alberta, for the temporary residence of a family relationship situation. Garden suites are to be serviced directly from the principal residence on the subject property.
- 2) The County may allow the use of a manufactured home on a property for the temporary residence of a family member.
- 3) The County shall require that temporary residences be removed from the property after it is no longer occupied by the person for whom the dwelling was intended. The County may require that a caveat related to the removal of the proposed use be placed on a parcel where a manufactured home is proposed as an additional or temporary residence.
- 4) The County shall carefully review the site suitability of a parcel for an additional residence as part of the development approval process.
- 5) Additional residences are to be located in areas where the loss of agricultural land shall be minimized.
- 6) The County may allow for an additional residence on a parcel where the proposed resident(s) are primarily employed in agriculture on the subject property.
- 7) Where an additional residence is to be allowed on a parcel that cannot be further subdivided under the current land use district, the additional residence must be a manufactured home placed on a non-permanent foundation.
- 8) With the exception of garden suites, all additional residences must be connected with its own utilities and services in a manner that shall allow for possible subdivision of the residence in the future.

2.16 CONFINED FEEDING OPERATIONS – BYLAW 144/02

As of January 1, 2002, the mandate of the Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB) was expanded to assume the responsibility for siting, monitoring and enforcing new and expanding Confined Feeding Operations (CFOs). Although the NRCB has now assumed responsibility for CFOs, the municipality will continue to play a key role in siting new and expanding CFOs. As such, municipalities are mandated to develop land use plans to identify where new and expanding CFOs would not be compatible with current or future land uses. These municipal requirements and recommendations will be a pivotal component in NRCB decisions for siting and expanding CFOs.

2.16.1 GOAL

To minimize the conflict between new or expanding CFOs and incompatible land uses.

2.16.2 OBJECTIVES

- 1) To ensure that potential risks to residents or the environment is reduced.
- 2) To provide opportunities for new or expanding CFOs.
- 3) To provide guidance to the NRCB regarding the provision for municipal infrastructure or other conditions necessary for appropriate operation.

2.16.3 POLICIES

2.16.3.1 Restricted Areas

The following categories encompass the areas that are to be restricted from new or expanding CFO developments within the County. Each of these categories has been graphically defined on the attached *Confined Feeding Operations Restricted Areas Map*.

- 1) Urban Fringe - The County wishes to encourage development in the urban fringe areas of towns and hamlets in a manner that shall complement the urban community. Due to their agricultural/industrial nature, and their propensity for unpleasant secondary effects, CFOs are not seen as a use that will complement the urban quality of these communities. As such, all CFOs will be restricted from urban fringe areas.
- 2) Residential - In order to minimize the conflict between areas of country residential growth and confined feeding operations, all areas identified as country residential within the Land Use Bylaw, the Town of Whitecourt and Woodlands County Intermunicipal Development Plan, and the Municipal Development Plan have been restricted from new or expanding CFO development. A buffer has

also been added around these residential areas to help minimize any potential conflicts.

- 3) Parks - In order to promote and accommodate recreation and tourism while discouraging development that might have an adverse impact on these lands, the County will restrict all CFO development within, and on the fringe of, parks and wild land areas.
- 4) Rivers, Creeks and Drainage Basins - To help ensure the health of residents of Woodlands County and the groundwater aquifer, it is important that the potential for pollutants to enter rivers, creeks and drainage basins is kept to a minimum. The *Confined Feeding Operations Restricted Areas Map* attempts to identify all significant rivers, creeks, floodways and drainage basins within the County, and restricts new or expanding CFO developments from locating adjacent to these areas.
- 5) Lakes - Woodlands County has numerous lakes within its borders, and in order to protect the health of the lake's ecosystem, residents and the groundwater aquifer, these lakes shall be buffered from CFOs. In addition to the environmental concerns, the lakes are also a source of tourism and recreation, and without protection it will be difficult to maintain the long-term viability of these sectors. The *Confined Feeding Operations Restricted Areas Map* attempts to identify significant water bodies within the County, and restricts new or expanding CFO developments from locating adjacent to these areas.
- 6) Environmentally Significant Areas - Several areas within the County have been designated as "environmentally sensitive". These areas are a combination of wildlife habitats and wetlands. CFO development in and around these areas could have an adverse impact on their viability; therefore, it is important that these lands are managed responsibly. One measure the County is taking to protect these areas is by preventing new and expanding CFO development within and adjacent to these lands.
- 7) Risk of Groundwater Contamination - Recently the County had a regional groundwater assessment of potable groundwater study completed by the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration.¹ This report outlined areas within the study region that had medium to very high risks of groundwater contamination. In an effort to protect the groundwater of the region, the County is restricting the development of new or expanding CFOs within areas of high to very high risk. Development of new or expanding CFOs in areas of medium risk will be considered provided that a groundwater assessment indicates that there is adequate water supply to sustain the operation and that there is no risk of groundwater contamination.

In areas not covered by the PFRA study, the County will ask the NRCB to collect such information in their application process as a condition of consent in this Plan.

¹ The Regional Groundwater Assessment of Potable Groundwater in Woodlands County was prepared by the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) in association with AMEC, 2001.

2.16.3.2 Recommended Conditions

- 1) The County shall, in the context of a recommendation to the NRCB, require that the developer enter into a development agreement with the appropriate authority which may include, but not be limited to requirement for the applicant:
 - a) to construct or pay for the construction of a road required to give access to the development;
 - b) to construct, or pay for the construction of:
 - i) a pedestrian walkway system to serve the development, or
 - ii) pedestrian walkways to connect the pedestrian walkway system serving the development with a pedestrian walkway system that serves or is proposed to serve an adjacent development,
 - iii) or both;
 - c) to install or pay for the installation of public utilities, other than telecommunications systems or works, that are necessary to serve the development;
 - d) to construct or pay for the construction of:
 - i) off-street or other parking facilities, and
 - ii) loading and unloading facilities;
 - e) to pay an off-site levy or redevelopment levy;
 - f) to give security to ensure that the terms of the agreement under this section are carried out.
- 2) Additionally to that agreement outlined in subsection (2), Woodlands County may recommend other conditions to the NRCB specific to the details of any individual application for a new or expanded CFO.

2.17 SMART GROWTH GUIDELINES

Woodlands County supports the smart growth concept and looks forward to cooperative efforts with residents and developers. Although not mandatory, the County will inform and encourage development on smart growth concepts.

Smart growth applications may include a variety of characteristics. The following is a description of some urban and rural applications that conform to smart growth principles:

- 1) the use of environmentally friendly construction materials that conform to the Alberta Safety Codes Act, as amended;

- 2) re-use or recycling of potable water and waste water within the development;
- 3) advanced treatment and disposal of waste water within a development;
- 4) site development standards that minimize the development footprint through:
 - a) innovative road design and construction standards,
 - b) use of wet ponds for storm water retention,
 - c) provision of a density bonus in return for over-dedication of parkland,
 - d) using environmental conservation easements and restrictive covenants as a means to protect and preserve the natural environment;
- 5) promoting multi-use structures such as urban commercial/residential development featuring a commercial development on the primary floor and a residential dwelling in the rear or second floor of a building;
- 6) the incorporation of energy efficiency through application of geo-exchange, wind and solar energy system.

2.18 NATURAL RESOURCE AND AGGREGATE EXTRACTION

Natural Resource Extraction is quickly becoming an economic driver and key resource commodity within Woodlands County. In the past, much of this extraction has occurred on public land significantly away from built up areas. However, depletions elsewhere in the province, ease of access to the resource within Woodlands County, and proximity to market are driving extraction closer to built-up areas in the municipality where land use conflicts are likely.

Given the provincial approval requirements prior to extraction, Woodlands County is working with Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resources Development (AESRD) to site future extraction sites and haul routes to minimize potential land use conflicts. Municipal approvals will allow county residents the opportunity to comment on the location of future extraction areas and express concerns to be considered in decision making and mitigation. To achieve this, Woodlands County will amend the land use district to Natural Resource Extraction- Direct Control prior to extraction and issue development permits via a Direct Control approval process by Council.

2.18.1 GOALS

- 1) To ensure that natural resource extraction activities are carried out under Best Management Practices as recognized by the industry leaders and approval authorities.
- 2) Ensure transparency in the municipal permitting process for Natural Resource Extraction developments.

- 3) Protect the social and environmental attributes of the areas impacted during gravel extraction activities.
- 4) To avoid or mitigate potential land use conflicts between extraction and existing residents and/or businesses.

2.18.2 OBJECTIVES

- 1) To support the gravel extraction industry by providing stability and certainty to industry stakeholders.
- 2) To work with external agencies during the approval process to ensure the highest level of operation and end land use planning possible.
- 3) To facilitate the incorporation of local knowledge and interests in natural resource extraction plans.

2.18.3 POLICIES

- 1) Natural Resource Extraction proponents will be required to submit approval packages for land use bylaw amendments and Development Permit Applications as per the NRE-DC district and the Natural Resource Extraction and Processing section in the Land Use Bylaw.
- 2) Area structure planning will be promoted in areas where there are potential conflicts between existing uses and extraction proposals to provide certainty to residents and industry.
- 3) Woodlands County addresses approvals for class one and class two pits equally. Regardless of other approval authorities separation of extraction pit due to size, Woodlands County reserves the right to request any technical information required to ensure municipal goals and objectives are met.
- 4) Woodlands County recognizes the impacts aggregate extraction can have on County roads and residents due to hauling activities. Whenever possible the County will compel the industry to develop new roads or plan haul routes that have the least impact possible on residents and roads.
- 5) Woodlands County recognizes the unique pressures exerted on the residents around Fort Assiniboine and specifically Pride Valley with regards to aggregate extraction activities. As such, a committee with industry, council and resident representation will be assembled to guide local aggregate developments and act as a resource for information sharing.
- 6) Woodlands County supports and adheres to the accepted air quality standards recognized by the appropriate Federal and Provincial regulatory bodies.

PART THREE: RESERVES

3.1 RESERVES - GENERAL

The Municipal Government Act specifies that a subdivision approving authority may, under certain circumstances require the owner of land that is subject to an application for subdivision to provide for any or all of the following:

- 1) Environmental Reserve (ER);
- 2) School Reserve (SR);
- 3) Municipal Reserve (MR);
- 4) Municipal and School Reserve (MSR).

The aggregate amount of land that may be required for Municipal and/or Municipal and School Reserve may not exceed 10% of the area, value, or a combination of the area and value of the land remaining in the proposed subdivision after deducting the land, if any, provided for environmental reserve.

Reserve may be taken as land, or as money in lieu of land (except in the case of Environmental Reserve), or may be deferred pending further subdivision. In all cases, the amounts, types, and disposition of reserve must be specified.

Reserves are intended to serve the following purposes:

- 1) environmental Reserve is to be used as park or left in its natural state;
- 2) municipal, School, or Municipal and School Reserve is to be used for a park, recreation area, school purposes, or to separate incompatible land uses;

With the exception of buffer areas, most reserve lands are intended to service residential areas. For this reason, the amount of land taken for reserve purposes in residential areas may be greater than in commercial or industrial areas.

Land subject to Municipal, School, or Municipal and School Reserve allocations includes all land on the parcel which is subject to subdivision less land which is to be taken for Environmental Reserve.

An Environmental Conservation Easement or Environmental Reserve Easement may be used as an alternative to Environmental Reserves.

3.1.1 MUNICIPAL AND SCHOOL RESERVE

Where reserve land allocations are in a statutory plan, sufficient reserves in the form of land on the subject property shall be taken prior to any reserves in the form of money-in-lieu.

Reserve allocations in commercial or industrial locations will be normally taken in the form of money in lieu as the demand for park space and other reserve land uses is minimal in these areas.

Reserve allocations in rural areas should be taken in the form of money in lieu unless site specific circumstances warrant reserves in the form of land.

3.1.2 ENVIRONMENTAL RESERVE

Environmental Reserve shall be taken where the Subdivision Approving Authority is of the opinion that a buffer area is required to maintain the integrity of a slope, shoreline, watercourse, or other natural feature that is considered environmentally sensitive. Examples of lands which may be subject to an Environmental Reserve allocation include:

- 1) geotechnically unstable property;
- 2) land subject to flooding;
- 3) land adjacent to a swamp, gully's, lakes, or other bodies of water; and
- 4) land deemed unsuitable for development.

Environmental Reserve shall be allocated prior to the determination of other forms of reserve and shall be in accordance with the policies contained in this Plan.

Where land identified for Environmental Reserve is to be left in its natural state and is not subject to future County Improvements or Development, the County may consider an Environmental Reserve Easement as an alternative to the creation of an Environmental Reserve Lot.

The following are the recommended environmental reserve allocations to be used in the County unless other allocations are described in a site specific statutory plan.

- 1) Shoreline areas surrounding named lakes:
All land defined as environmentally sensitive, but in no case less than 30 m (98.43 ft) from the bed and shore of the lake.

2) Valley and Ravines:

All lands defined as environmentally sensitive. Environmental protection along valleys shall include all lands from the bed and shore of the said valley to a point a minimum of 2.0 m (6.56 ft) beyond the upper reaches of the valley.

3.1.3 VARIATIONS TO ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION STANDARDS

In addition to the above allocations, the County may determine, based upon an analysis of the subject property, that additional Environmental Conservation allocations are required. The above allocation may only be reduced where it can be shown to the satisfaction of the County that a reduced Environmental Conservation will not adversely impact the natural feature that is the subject of the reserve or as identified in an approved statutory plan.

PART FOUR: IMPLEMENTATION

Through the implementation of this Plan, the goals, objectives, and policies contained in this document will have a significant impact on the future growth and direction of land use and development in the County. This Plan will be used to provide guidance and direction when making decisions on subdivision and development proposals. The purpose of this section is to outline the “tools” or ways in which this Plan will be implemented and reviewed.

Upon adoption, the Council of Woodlands County shall ensure that this Plan is made available to the Public.

4.1 INTERMUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Town of Whitecourt and Woodlands County Intermunicipal Development Plan has been prepared as a complementary document to this Municipal Development Plan. The goals, objectives and policies of the Intermunicipal Development Plan should be considered as additional or supplementary to those which exist in the Municipal Development Plan.

In the Intermunicipal Plan Area, where a conflict exists between this Plan and the Intermunicipal Development Plan, the goals, objectives and policies of the Intermunicipal Development Plan shall take precedence.

4.2 LAND USE BYLAW

The County will ensure that the goals, objectives, and policies of this Plan are implemented through Woodlands County’s Land Use Bylaw.

The County may require applicants to enter into development agreements, caveats, performance bonds, letters of credit, restrictive covenants or any other mechanisms described in the Land Use Bylaw to secure performance of statutory plans or land use agreements.

The County will consider pursuing whatever actions are deemed appropriate in order to secure compliance with the purpose and intent of this Plan, other statutory plans, the Land Use Bylaw or any other land use agreement.

4.3 SUBDIVISION

The County’s Subdivision Authority will make decisions on subdivision applications. No subdivision application will be approved that does not conform to the goals, objectives and policies of this Plan.

In order to secure performance with the goals, objectives, and policies in this Plan on matters of subdivision, the County may require that a subdivision applicant enter into a development agreement with the municipality, to the satisfaction of the County.

If a subdivision is approved subject to a development agreement, the County may require within the agreement that the applicant secure performance of the agreement by means of registering the agreement against the certificate of title for the respective parcel through a caveat.

4.4 DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

The County will ensure that all development permits issued are in conformance with the goals, objectives, and policies contained within the Plan.

Any decisions on development permit applications and on development appeals made to the Development Officer, the Municipal Planning Commission, and the Subdivision and Development Appeal Board are subject to the provisions of this Plan.

4.5 AREA STRUCTURE PLANS

In order to provide more specific planning direction for localized areas, the County may require, as provided for in this Plan, that an area structure plan be prepared.

In preparing an area structure plan, the County shall ensure that such plans conform to the purpose and intent of this Plan.

The County will review area structure plans every five (5) years or as required to ensure that these plans remain current and effective.

Where required by Woodlands County, Area Structure Plans shall contain any or all of the following elements at the discretion of the County:

- 1) a description of the logical sequence of development;
- 2) site-specific analysis which can prove the existence of a suitable potable groundwater supply;
- 3) site-specific analysis showing that the soils are suitable for on-site sewage disposal systems;
- 4) illustration of legal and physical access to all parcels on the subdivision, and to the local road network;
- 5) the proposed density of population for the subdivision;
- 6) the location and type of development to be placed on common or park areas;
- 7) designated right of ways for electrical, gas, water, and sewer services;
- 8) the installation of internal street lighting;
- 9) the placement of adequate screening around the perimeter of industrial parks;

- 10) the location of reserve lands;
- 11) the location of bus stops; and
- 12) the location and general design of postal collection and distribution areas.

The Area Structure Plan shall consist of a minimum of four parts:

- 1) a land use policy document;
- 2) land use and phasing policy and maps;
- 3) utilities and drainage criteria and maps; and
- 4) supporting documentation including environmental and geotechnical evaluations.

Details as to the content of the above components shall be determined by the County.

4.6 APPLICATION OF DIRECT CONTROL DISTRICTING

To address land use issues that cannot be accommodated through typical land use regulations, Council may consider the use of Direct Control Districting in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Government Act. Development decisions, with the exception of Stop Orders, may not be appealed under this District where Council serves as the Development Authority.

4.7 TRANSPORTATION IN RURAL AREAS

Multi-parcel country residential subdivision in excess of four (4) parcels should be only approved where the primary access to the proposed development utilizes a municipal road which is classified by the local road authority as a collector, arterial, or highway.

Rural industrial parks shall only be located adjacent to municipal roads which are classified as an arterial road, industrial road or highway.

Based upon site specific criteria, exceptions to the above may be considered at the discretion of the subdivision approving authority.

4.8 INTER-MUNICIPAL AND INTER-GOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

The County supports the preparation and implementation of integrated resource management plans where required to effectively manage certain areas within the Crown Land area of the County for future generations.

The County supports the continued implementation of the Town of Whitecourt and Woodlands County Intermunicipal Development Plan. The County looks forward to

working with the Town to ensure that the Intermunicipal Development Plan remains a current and effective document.

The County looks forward to working together with its rural neighbours on matters of mutual interest. The County will assist with the organization of meetings with adjacent municipalities when desired.

4.9 PLAN REVIEW

It is essential to continually monitor this Plan to ensure that it remains applicable with respect to dealing with subdivision and development issues within the County. This Plan is not intended to be fixed or inflexible. As changing conditions dictate, this document will be revised and amended by Council when required. Any amendment will be enacted in accordance with the Municipal Government Act.

4.9.1 ADOPTING PROCESS FOR AREA STRUCTURE PLANS

Upon receipt of a draft copy of the Plan, Council shall consider first reading of an adopting Bylaw. If the Plan is sufficiently complete and is given first reading, the County shall require the circulation of the draft Plan to all utility companies, school boards, government agencies, and other relevant stakeholders which the County deems may be affected by the draft Plan for their review and comments. Each Agency shall be given adequate time to reply in writing to the County.

Revisions to the Plan may be made before or after the public hearing, based upon input received. Revisions which substantially change the original intent or nature of the draft Plan may require an additional public hearing at the discretion of Council.

Council may require further information as deemed necessary as a result of input received at a public hearing or from commenting Agencies.

PART FIVE: FUTURE LAND USE

Schedule “E”, Future Land Use Map, outlines the preferred locations for future development within Woodlands County. The following is intended as a guide for the general intended land use for the County and not as an absolute. Future Land Use Maps contained in Adopted Area Structure Plans may further define long term land uses.

5.1 AGRICULTURAL

Agricultural areas are to be generally maintained for future agricultural use. Other land uses such as multi-parcel country residential land uses may be allowed on a site specific basis. Development which may adversely impact agricultural uses should be directed to more appropriate locations. Development which complements the agricultural community will be considered on a site specific basis.

It should be noted that the term “agricultural” can include a wide range of land uses. As such, it is important to ensure that a proposed use conforms to the respective policies in this Plan prior to deciding any proposed development or subdivision application.

5.2 CONVERSION OF AGRICULTURAL LAND TO COUNTRY RESIDENTIAL

Land designated as Agriculture for Future Land Use may be re-designated to Country Residential Use through formal amendment to this Plan and in accordance with the following policy. Prior to consideration of the addition of land to the Country Residential Designation under the Future Land Use Schedule of this Plan, in addition to the policies described in Part 2.2 of this Plan, Council shall evaluate the proposal based upon the following criteria:

- 1) distance to an urban centre;
- 2) ability to service the property with on-site servicing;
- 3) impact on surrounding agricultural land;
- 4) ability of the local road network to support the development;
- 5) proposed residential density for the parcel;
- 6) other site-specific considerations as determined by Council; and
- 7) the amenity to be provided.

In accordance with the above criteria, Woodlands County shall adhere to the following limitations:

Country residential development that is incapable of being serviced through on-site waste-water disposal should be prohibited at a distance of greater than 20 km (12.43 mi) distance from a municipal waste-water lagoon.

5.3 COUNTRY RESIDENTIAL

Certain areas of the County are determined to be of a high quality for country residential development, either through scenic qualities, access, quality of building sites, proximity to urban centres, and other reasons. The intended use in areas designated for future country residential use is for single and multi-parcel residential subdivision. A mix of housing types may be permitted subject to conformance to the Land Use Bylaw. In addition, other facilities such as public, institutional, and recreational uses which are required to serve the residential neighbourhood may be permitted.

Areas designated “Country Residential” may be currently used for other types of land uses. Conflicts between agricultural and other land uses should be minimized. Intensive agricultural and other land uses which may significantly impact future country residential development should be directed to more suitable locations.

5.4 HIGHWAY DEVELOPMENT (RURAL INDUSTRIAL & COMMERCIAL)

Proposals for highway development in rural areas may be permitted subject to conformance with the policies contained in this Plan. Highway Commercial development outside of pre-designated areas may be allowed, but will be subject to a more extensive review process.

5.5 CROWN LAND

Crown Land areas are those areas that are under the stewardship of the Government of Alberta. It is intended that development within the County be directed to privately owned lands where possible and that Crown Land be developed only when warranted for site specific reasons.

Where Crown Land is converted to private land, it shall be regarded as Agricultural Land unless re-districted to a more appropriate district at the discretion of the County. Schedule “E” – Future Land Use Map may be amended to reflect changes in ownership of Crown Land without a formal amendment to this Plan.

5.6 HAMLETS AND SETTLEMENTS

Developments in designated Hamlets and Settlements are to be compatible with the urban land uses in the County.

5.7 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Land designated as natural environment are lands which are in close proximity to rivers and lake shorelands. Land designated as such may be environmentally sensitive due to potential for slope failure, flooding, or impacts on the environment through development. Development on or near land designated natural environment must be in accordance with the environmental objectives and policies related and applicable to the subject parcel.

5.8 PARKLAND

Parkland areas are those which have been identified by the Government of Alberta and the County as park areas. Parkland areas include Carson-Pegasus Provincial Park and the Athabasca Sandhills Area. It is intended that Parkland areas be regarded as similar to the Natural Environment area in terms of the application of this Plan.