Town of Rocky Mountain House

Municipal Development Plan

Bylaw 2020/20

Contents

1 Introduction and Plan Purpose

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Municipal Development Plan (MDP) is to guide future growth and development in the Town of Rocky Mountain House over the next 20 years. To do this, the MDP provides policies to direct future land uses, infrastructure, and the physical development of the community. The intent of this MDP is to support well managed and sustainable growth and development that will ensure a high quality of life for the Citizens of Rocky Mountain House now and in the future.

Specifically, this MDP has been created to:
» Describe the Town of Rocky Mountain House's preferred direction with respect to land use, infrastructure investment, provision of services, and future development patterns.
» Guide policy creation and planning tools regarding land use, transportation, and infrastructure investment decisions.
» Provide an overarching document to assist in the coordination of municipal bylaws, policies, programs, and investments.

This 2020 MDP update revisits the goals and vision of the 2011 MDP to re-establish and re-envision the Town of Rocky Mountain House's future land use and growth. The MDP's vision, guiding principles, and goals were affirmed through town-wide public engagement to ensure that the vision and priorities of Rocky Mountain House's residents and leaders were accurately reflected.

1.2 Plan Authority

The Alberta Municipal Government Act (The Act) requires all municipalities to adopt and maintain a Municipal Development Plan. As identified in Section 632 of The Act, Municipal Development Plans must provide policy direction for the following key items:

» Future land use within the town and how it is intended to be developed.
» Coordination of land use, growth, and infrastructure with adjoining municipalities.
» Policies regarding provision of transportation systems and municipal servicing.
» Guidance on land-use compatibility and regulation near sour gas facilities.
» Policies regarding municipal and school reserve.
» Policies respecting the protection of agricultural operations.

The Municipal Development Plan must also be consistent with the Intermunicipal Development Plan between Rocky Mountain House and Clearwater County.

As per The Act, Municipal Development Plans may additionally address environmental matters, development constraints, financing of municipal infrastructure, municipal programs, financial resources, economic development, conservation reserve, and other programs or matters relating to the physical, social, or economic development of the municipality.

This Municipal Development Plan is a high-level statutory plan. As such, all other Town Plans and Strategies must be consistent with the MDP and its policies. As part of the municipal planning process, the Town may develop more specific Area Structure Plans (ASP) and Area Redevelopment Plans (ARP) to provide detailed direction for smaller areas within the town. These ASPs and ARPs must be consistent with the policies and land use concept of the MDP.

A major review of the MDP should be undertaken every five (5) years to ensure that the goals, policy directions, processes, and actions reflect current growth forecasts, market trends, overall community values, and the Town's financial capacity.

Clear and consistent direction for the implementation of this plan is required in order for the Town to achieve its vision. The responsibility for the implementation, monitoring, and review of the MDP rests with the Town Council, committees of Council, administration, and the residents of Rocky Mountain House.

This Plan replaces the former Municipal Development Plan, which was completed in 2011.

DOCUMENT TYPE

- ☐ Legislation
- ☐ Statutory
- ☐ Non-Statutory

ALBERTA LAND STEWARDSHIP ACT (ALSA)

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT ACT (MGA)

LAND USE FRAMEWORK (LUF)

» North Saskatchewan Regional Plan (NSRP)

MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (MDP)

INTERMUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (IDP)

» Rocky-Clearwater Intermunicipal Development Plan

COUNCIL ADOPTED POLICY

» Transportation Plan

» Recreation Master Plan

» Trails Plan

» Etc...

AREA STRUCTURE PLAN/ AREA REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

(ASP)

LAND USE BYLAW

OUTLINE PLAN

REDESIGNATIONS

SUBDIVISIONS

DEVELOPMENT PERMITS

1.3 Project Process and Public Engagement

The Town of Rocky Mountain House is committed to meaningful engagement of its citizens regarding decisions that affect the Town. As part of the renewal of the Municipal Development Plan, there were three Stages of Public and Stakeholder Engagement: Imagine, Create, and Review. The engagement was conducted as part of the joint project to modernize both the Town's MDP and Land Use Bylaw, which was initiated by Council in January 2019. A summary of the engagement is provided below. For the full Engagement Report, see Appendix A.

Stage 1: Imagine

Project work began in May 2019 with a visioning session with Town Council and staff. The objective of the session was to establish priorities for the project and identify initial constraints and opportunities facing Rocky Mountain House. Following this, members of the public were invited to an open house and to complete an online survey about their vision for the future of Rocky Mountain House. To reach a broader audience, Pop-up feedback stations were also set up at the Market on Main and a "sounding board" was set up outside of the Christenson Sports and Wellness Centre for people to leave comments. In a separate session the team met with invited development and real estate stakeholders to discuss community priorities. The feedback and insights gained from this stage of engagement were incorporated into the draft vision and guiding principles of the MDP.

Stage 2: Create

In Stage 2, the project team conducted an online survey to gather input on the draft vision, guiding principles, and policy directions of the Plan. The initial land use concept map was also presented for feedback. In order to advertise for the survey and gather additional input, the project team attended the September recreation sign up "smorg". The results of this phase of engagement were incorporated into the first draft of the Plan.

Stage 3: Review

In Stage 3, the public was asked to provide comments on a full draft of the Municipal Development Plan. An online survey asked for feedback on the proposed changes to the priorities of the MDP, the location and intent of land use areas, and proposed changes to the distributions of core commercial, local commercial, and downtown transition areas. Feedback gathered throughout Stage 3 was incorporated into the final revisions of the MDP.
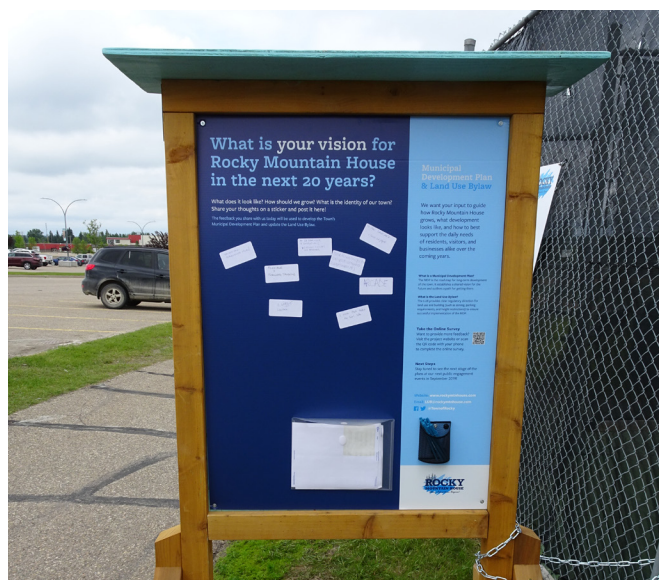
Figure 2: Engagement Timeline

Stage 1: Imagine			Stage 2: Create		Stage 3: Review			
JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	Q1 2020	
	Public Engagement		Public Engagement		Public Engagement		Council Approval	

Population 7,300
Established in 1799
Elevation
987m / 3241 ft.

Twin Town of
Kamikawa, Japan

ROCKY
MOUNTAIN HOUSE
Where Adventure Begins!

2 Community Context and Trends

2.1 Regional Context

The Town of Rocky Mountain House is located in Central Alberta west of the QE2 highway corridor. It is bisected by Highway 22/11 running north - south and Highway 11 A and Highway 598 running east – west. Highway 752 also runs north-south through the southwest quarter of town. The town is further bordered by the North Saskatchewan River to the west and is surrounded by Clearwater County.

In addition to access by highway, Rocky Mountain House has access to rail and air transportation. The CN railway runs through the south of town across Highway 11, connecting to Edmonton. The Rocky Mountain House Airport is located just north of town in Clearwater County.

2.2 History

Rocky Mountain House has a rich, diverse history spanning many generations and cultures. The primary significance of the area is drawn from its position at the confluence of the North Saskatchewan and Clearwater Rivers, which served as a vital transportation network for both Indigenous communities and European settlers before the creation of roads, railways, and airports.

Since time immemorial, Indigenous communities relied on the North Saskatchewan River Valley as a place for hunting, fishing, and gathering. Rivers provided important transportation routes, servings as highways for small watercraft including canoes. The area now known as the Town of Rocky Mountain House is within the traditional territory of the Blackfoot peoples.

Between 1799 and 1864, both the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company established fur trading posts in the area, recognizing the value of the connecting rivers and the access they provided for trading with Indigenous communities. The North West Company post became the base camp for noted explorer David Thompson in the late 1700s. Thompson is known for exploring and mapping the West, including routes through the Rocky Mountains and the entire length of the Columbia River. He was also known for documenting the culture and practices of the Indigenous communities he met.

About thirty years after the end of fur trading at the posts in 1875, Europeans began to settle and cultivate crops in the area, beginning to shape the foundations of the Town that stands today. Coal deposits found in nearby Nordegg sparked the extension of rail through Rocky Mountain House between 1912 and 1914, bringing more people and jobs to the area. By 1939, Town of Rocky Mountain House was incorporated with approximately 800 people. It continued to grow as agricultural, oil, natural gas, and other natural resource industries expanded in the surrounding area.

Rocky Mountain House's history is a valuable resource. The stories of the past have helped to build the Town's sense of place which residents and visitors alike may enjoy today by visiting the National Historic Site and wandering along the North Saskatchewan River.

Main Street Rocky Mountain House, early 1900s.
Source: Prairie-Towns.com

2.3 Growth Trends

2.3.1 Demographics

Currently, the town has a population of about 6,670 people (Statistics Canada, 2016). This is relatively evenly split between males and females. The population of Rocky Mountain House saw continuous growth from 1975 until 2011; however, from 2011 to 2016, it decreased by 4.3 percent. This coincided with the provincial economic downturn in 2014.

Moving into the future, the Alberta Ministry of Health projects a relatively low compound growth rate of approximately 0.90% in the Rocky Mountain Health Region over the next 20 years (2018). Applying this projected growth rate to just Rocky Mountain House, this would mean an increase of 18.52% total, or a population increase of about 1323 people by 2039. The resulting total population would be approximately 8,080 people. However, as the primary urban centre in the area, Rocky Mountain House may see a larger share of the region's population growth of approximately 4000 people.

Another important demographic consideration is that Rocky Mountain House's population is aging. The average age of the population is 38.9 years old, which is just slightly older than the provincial average of 37.8 years. This is due to the town having approximately a 3% higher proportion of adults over the age of 65. This population of older adults is anticipated to increase as individuals from the adjacent County retire to the town for better access to health and other services and supports. At the same time Kindergarten to Grade 9 enrollment has been declining since 2013, though High School enrollment has been increasing. Post-secondary enrollment and trades apprenticeships have also been decreasing. An aging population has various implications on Town services, housing, recreation, and accessibility.

Another notable change is that the town is becoming slightly more diverse. In 2016, 9.2% of residents identified as Indigenous, an increase of about 12.1% over the past 5 years. This is slightly higher than the Alberta average of 7.6%. Additionally, 5% of people identified as a visible minority. This is significantly lower than the Alberta average of 23.5% but reflects a significant change in the town itself (a 58.6% increase over 5 years).

Figure 3: Distribution (%) of the Population by Broad Age Groups

AGE GROUP	ROCKY MOUNTAIN HOUSE	ALBERTA
0 to 14 years	19.7	19.2
15 to 64 years	64.7	68.5
65 years + (85 years +)	15.7 (2.7)	12.03 (1.6)

2.3.2   Housing

There are 3016 housing units in the town (Alberta Regional Dashboard, 2017). Approximately 61.7% of all housing in Rocky Mountain House is single-detached housing. Much of this housing stock was constructed between 1981 and 2000. Overall, residential uses make up 74.7% of property assessments in the town (Alberta Regional Dashboard, 2017).

Another housing consideration is ownership. The tenure split of housing in Rocky Mountain House is approximately 12% rental and 88% owned. The rental vacancy rate increased from 2014 to 2016 but decreased to 17.4% in 2018 (Alberta 2018 Apartment Vacancy and Rental Cost Survey).

The average household size in the town is 2.4 people (Statistics Canada, 2016). If household size continues to average about 2 people per household and population increases 18.52% in the next 20 years, the Town will need approximately 600 new housing units by 2039 in addition to filling existing vacant rental units.

2.3.3   Economy

As the primary urban service centre for Clearwater County, Rocky Mountain House plays an important role in the provision of regional economic activities and services. The major industries of the town are oil and gas, tourism, agriculture, and forestry. Due to reliance on these industries, the Town of Rocky Mountain House's economy was impacted by the rapid decline of oil prices in 2014, the effects of which were felt throughout the province. As a possible result of this decline, the median income for families in the Town has been decreasing from 2014, going from $97,360 to $85,010 (a change of about 2.2% in the last five years).

The number of building permits in Rocky Mountain House also declined from 2012 to 2017, going from 114 permits to 49. This was primarily a reduction in residential permits, as commercial, industrial, and institutional permits have remained relatively stable since 2009. In 2018, 58 permits were issued, which reflects a slight increase in residential permits and small increase in commercial permits (Town of Rocky Mountain House Statistics, 2017).

Through diversification of its economic activities, the Town is beginning to see economic growth again. Currently, there are 808 registered businesses in Rocky Mountain House. The number of businesses that were incorporated, which had decreased from 2014-2016, is now trending upwards. In 2018, 93 new businesses were incorporated. Overall in the town 96.7% of businesses are considered small businesses with fewer than 49 employees (Alberta Regional Dashboard, 2017). Additionally, the 2016 census results indicate that about a quarter of residents are working in retail or tourism related industries.

2.4 Land Availability

The 2009 Land Supply and Growth Study anticipated significantly more population growth in Rocky Mountain House by 2039 than Alberta Health (2018) projections. The Growth Study projected a 2039 population of 11,403 people, which is approximately 29% more than the Alberta Health and Wellness projection of 8,080 people. The updated population projection, considered with the rental vacancy rate and number of residential permits, indicates that the Town will require less housing units by 2039 than the Land Supply and Growth Study indicated. As it was already determined that there was enough residential land available to support a higher rate of growth, there should still be an adequate 20-year supply of residential land. There are also opportunities for infill development and increased density of residential areas, which increases the capacity of existing serviced land.

Commercial and Industrial permit rates have stayed relatively level since the 2009 Land Supply and Growth Study. The Growth Study indicated that there would be enough commercial and industrial land availability by 2037 but that more industrial land would be needed after that time. The Town has again consumed less land than it had forecast for both commercial and industrial uses and should still have an adequate supply for the next 20 years.

As a result, with current growth trends, there is sufficient residential, commercial, and industrial land to support the Town over the next 20 years.

FIGURE 4: CHANGE IN DEVELOPMENT PERMITS OVER TIME
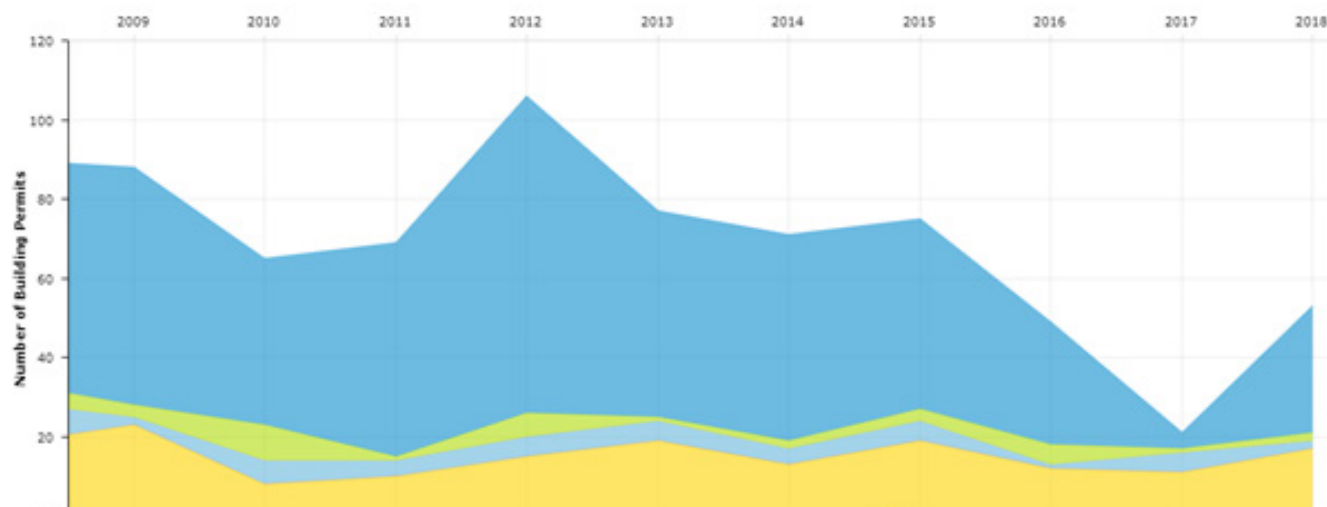
Source: Alberta Regional Dashboard, 2018

2.5 Opportunities and Challenges

There are several natural and human-made features and conditions in the region that influence future patterns of growth of the Town. Some of these features constrain urban development, while others reflect unique opportunities that can be harnessed to increase the vibrancy and resiliency of the Town as it continues to develop.

2.5.1 Opportunities

There are many opportunities for development and economic diversification in the Town. The Town has sufficient zoned residential, industrial, and commercial land to support further development over the next 20 years. It also has established highway, rail, and air transportation connections. This means there is opportunity to market these areas and assets to innovative industries and businesses to further diversify economic development in Rocky Mountain House.

Recent investment and effort has generated activity in the Town's core and improvement of the public realm. There is opportunity to build from this initiative to intensify development in the core, strengthen local business, and develop additional public space to enhance downtown as a centre for public life and commerce. Encouraging additional density in downtown and surrounding transition areas would also serve to diversify the Town's current housing stock, make efficient use of existing municipal services, and reduce the need for new residential expansion areas.

Two of Rocky Mountain House's greatest strengths are its access to pristine natural environments and outdoor recreation and its position on the North Saskatchewan River. There is opportunity to build on these strengths and to market the Town as the "adventure hub" of Alberta. Successful marketing and policy efforts could encourage more recreation ventures and accommodation providers to locate within Rocky Mountain House.
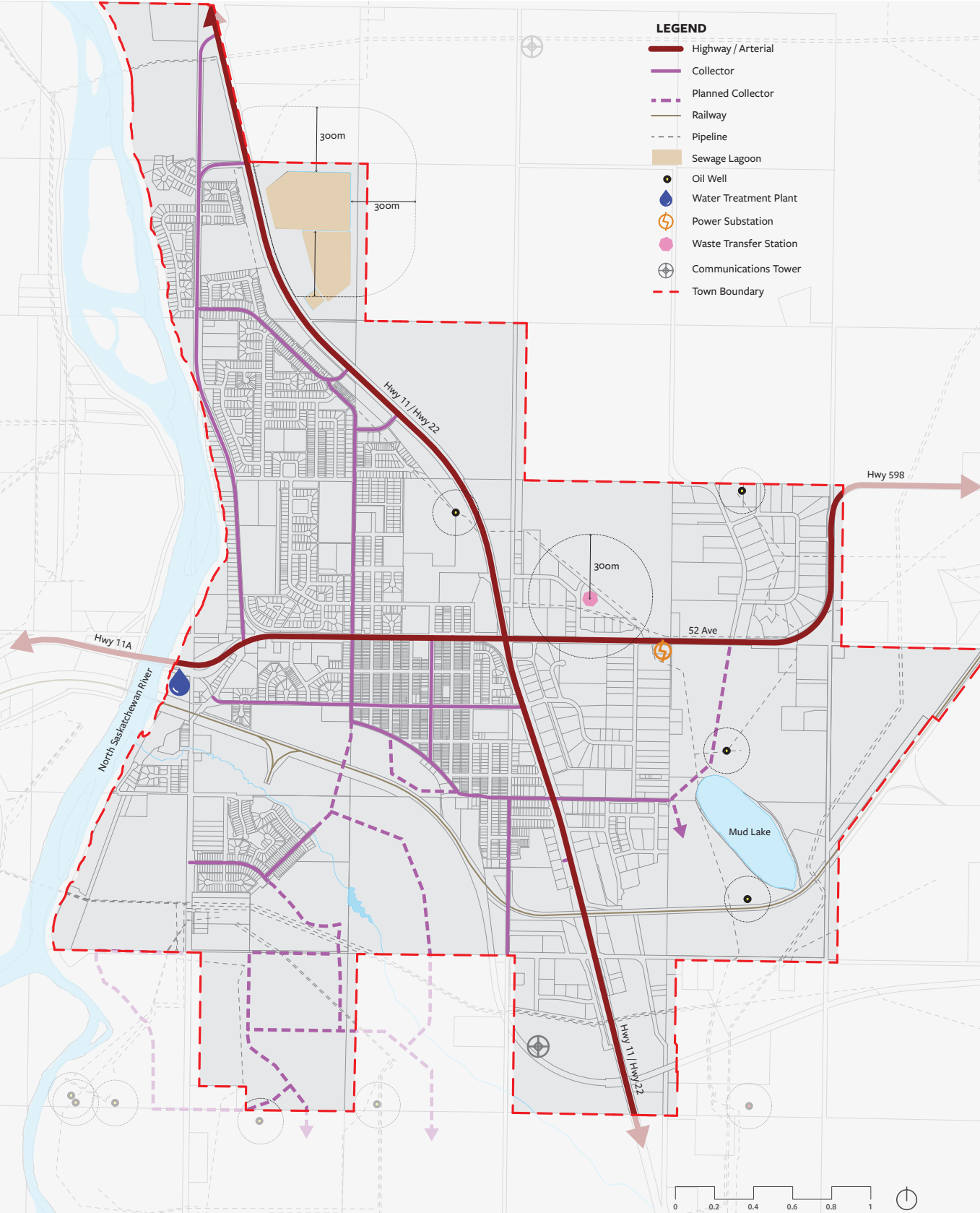
The Town also has the opportunity to further improve public recreational amenities and open space within Town boundaries for residents as well as visitors to the area. This includes connecting existing trails and enhancing public access to the North Saskatchewan River, Mud Lake, and Trapper's Creek. Creation of a large town-wide gathering space could allow for hosting of larger Town-wide celebrations and improvements to North Saskatchewan River Park could increase year-round use and activation. In addition to serving as a draw for tourism, providing additional access to recreation, walkability, and amenities also has the advantage of making the area more attractive for people seeking a place to live, work, and play.

2.5.2 Challenges

Though a source of significant opportunity for economic development, the presence of Highway 11, which bisects the town north to south, and the rail line place some constraints on development. They create physical transportation barriers within the community, particularly for pedestrian access, and create noise impacts that are not compatible with certain uses, namely residential. Consequently, planning must ensure that appropriate land uses are targeted for lands adjacent to these key transportation links and that there is planned connectivity for all modes of transportation across them.

There are several required development setbacks from infrastructure in Rocky Mountain House that also constrain development in the Town. In the north and east, the sewage lagoon and solid waste transfer station constrain residential development, as both require a provincially mandated setback. Several pipeline rights-of-way, which include development setbacks, are also located throughout the plan area. This infrastructure represents a constraint to development because the corridors are undevelopable and add cost to development because of the need to cross these corridors with municipal services.

FIGURE 5: DEVELOPMENT CONTRAINTS MAP

LEGEND

Highway / Arterial
Collector
Planned Collector
Railway
Pipeline
Sewage Lagoon
Oil Well
Water Treatment Plant
Power Substation
Waste Transfer Station
Communications Tower
Town Boundary

300m

300m

300m

Hwy 11 / Hwy 22

Hwy 598

Hwy 11A

52 Ave

North Saskatchewan River

Mud Lake

Hwy 11 / Hwy 22

0   0.2   0.4   0.6   0.8   1

Though also sources of opportunity, several of the Town's natural features are also development constraints. The North Saskatchewan River presents a development constraint to the west of Town. One reason is the banks are steep on the Town side, which makes it difficult to provide safe public access to the water. Another is the single bridge across the river. There are several low, wet, boggy areas that will affect development, particularly in the south west area south of the CPR line and north east of Highway 11; however, there is the potential for the Town to turn these wetland areas into opportunities for public open space and green infrastructure.

3 Vision, Guiding Principles, and Goals

The vision, guiding principles, and goals are the foundational elements of the Municipal Development Plan. The vision represents the aspirational future for Rocky Mountain House and informs all decision making regarding this plan. The guiding principles are themes that represent the priorities of the community, developed through public and stakeholder engagement. These principles are linked to aspirations within the vision and have informed the policies of this Plan. Finally, the goals provide a series of tangible actions to be completed throughout the life of this Plan to achieve the vision for the Town.

3.1 Vision

The vision provides the foundation for the Municipal Development Plan. The vision provides the imagined future of the Town in 20 years.

Rocky Mountain House is:

» the adventure capital of Alberta, with unparalleled access to pristine river and mountain environments and boundless recreational opportunities and events.

» a forward-thinking, innovative, and prosperous community that supports diverse local businesses and industries and is full of opportunity for growth and change.

» a livable, inclusive community where residents of all ages can access community amenities within walking and cycling distance.

3.2 Guiding Principles

The Guiding Principles are the key ideas that were considered throughout the development of the MDP and its policies. These principles were developed in collaboration with the public and stakeholders and reflect the values that should be incorporated into all Town land use decision making.

Resilient, Diverse Economy: Rocky Mountain House supports a diverse and prosperous economy.

Adventure Hub: Rocky Mountain House is Alberta's adventure hub, which supports a thriving local tourism industry.

Healthy and Connected: Rocky Mountain House is well connected, with a complete network of streets and pathways that link key destinations in Town and the surrounding region.

Complete, Sustainable Communities: Rocky Mountain House is a leader and innovator in sustainable community development.

Vibrant Arts & Culture: Rocky Mountain House supports a vibrant arts and culture community.

Celebrated History & Diversity: Rocky Mountain House acknowledges the area's rich history and its significance to Indigenous Peoples.

Abundant Recreational Opportunities: Rocky Mountain House celebrates its connection to the North Saskatchewan River and boasts a vibrant network of parks, trails, and recreation opportunities.

3.3 Goals

The Goals are a series of actions to be accomplished in the life of the Plan. Throughout the MDP, the goals are indicated as they relate to each policy section.

A. Support a Vibrant, Energized Downtown

Downtown is the heart of civic life and commerce in our Town. The MDP supports the continued redevelopment and intensification of downtown, building upon recent investments to infrastructure and public space. The Town will:

1. Reinforce the downtown core as a business, administrative, and cultural heart of the town.

2. Encourage higher-density residential development in and adjacent to downtown.

3. Activate downtown by supporting mixed-use development, active frontages, events, and vibrant public spaces.

4. Continue to foster a pedestrian friendly retail environment on Main Street.

5. Develop additional public gathering spaces in downtown.

B. Build a Resilient, Diverse Economy

Rocky Mountain House's economy has historically been reliant on major natural resource and agricultural industries. Though these will continue to be an essential part of the local economy, the Town is committed to diversification in order to become more resilient to changing economic trends. Therefore, the Town will support continued growth of commercial service industries, post-secondary education opportunities, and local tourism efforts to align with the Town's vision of becoming the "Adventure Hub" of Alberta. The Town will:

1. Promote a positive and competitive business climate.

2. Foster local business retention and expansion.

3. Attract diverse new commercial and industrial development.

4. Promote Rocky Mountain House as a tourism destination and the "adventure hub" of Alberta.

5. Support investment in education and training programs to retain a skilled labour force.

C. Develop Complete, Healthy Communities

Complete communities are places where residents of all ages can live, work, and play within a walkable distance from home. The MDP supports the development of complete communities that encourage use of active modes of transportation, provide a mix of uses and services, and provide a diverse range of housing types and tenures to support residents in all stages of life. The Town will:

1. Support a mix of housing types and tenures through development in existing neighbourhoods and new communities.

2. Support a greater mix of land uses, in new and established neighbourhoods and employment areas.

3. Ensure neighbourhoods are safe and inclusive living environments.

4. Facilitate the planning and delivery of social programs that support and enhance individual, family, and community quality of life.

5. Preserve and interpret heritage resources to contribute to community identity, pride, and sense of place.

D. Protect Rocky Mountain House's Land, Water, and Air Quality.

One of Rocky Mountain House's greatest assets is its connection to natural features, including the North Saskatchewan River. Protecting these features contributes to the overall wellbeing of the town by providing ecosystem services and allowing residents to connect with nature. The Town will:

1. Recognize the value and contribution of natural areas and their ecosystem functions.

2. Preserve significant natural areas to create and maintain attractive, pristine, and ecologically responsible natural and built environments.

3. Implement environmental design and building principles into all new development and redevelopment.

4. Reduce carbon emissions and implement adaptive measures to increase resiliency to a changing climate.

5. Support programs and initiatives that increase awareness and public involvement in environmental management and conservation.

E. Prioritize Multi-Modal Connectivity

Healthy and connected communities are places where people have many options for getting around, including walking, cycling, or driving. The MDP supports connectivity for all modes of transportation by encouraging the development of complete streets, pathway connections, and other transportation infrastructure. The Town will:

1. Prioritize connectivity and safety for active transportation modes.

2. Increase the mode share of active transportation options through the development of complete streets, pathways, and safe crossings.

3. Improve pedestrian connectivity across town arterials and highways.

4. Establish the built form to support a future transit system.

5. Cooperate in the development and maintenance of regional and provincial transportation networks.

F. Provide Culture and Recreation Opportunities

One of the things the residents of Rocky Mountain House love about their town is their access to recreational opportunities. The MDP supports the continued improvement of the Town's indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, including parks, trails, and other open space amenities. The Town will:

1. Develop a continuous system of pathways with linkages to parks, natural areas, and other key destinations in town.

2. Provide a variety of recreational opportunities in town ranging from passive leisure to active recreation activities.

3. Encourage sharing and multiple use of parks and open space areas among a variety of user groups and activities, including maintaining joint use agreements for facilities with the School Boards.

4. Ensure that the design and development of community sites and facilities are inclusive and accessible to everyone.

5. Maximize the year-round use of recreational developments and facilities.

6. Collaborate with Indigenous communities on the development of cultural and business-related activities for the betterment of the area.

7. Partner with community organizations to embrace all cultures in the community.

G. Foster Regional Cooperation

Rocky Mountain House has an important position in the region as an urban service centre. The MDP supports ongoing cooperation and collaboration with surrounding municipalities and organizations to deliver services and enable sustainable development of the region. The Town will:

1. Work with Clearwater County to identify and protect future growth areas for both municipalities.

2. Ensure an appropriate supply of land and infrastructure is available to accommodate future growth.

3. Work with the Government of Alberta, its agencies and other municipalities, in the provision of programs and services that benefit residents and businesses in the region.

4. Work with Clearwater County to ensure orderly development practices, issue resolution, and appropriate management and control of future growth areas adjacent to the Town-County boundary.

5. Protect valuable agricultural land and activities.

6. Maintain Rocky Mountain House's position as an urban service centre.

4 Town-wide Policies

The Town-wide policies establish direction on various subjects that apply to all growth and development in Town. This includes policies on:

- » Growth Management
- » Regional Cooperation
- » Economic Development
- » Environmental Sustainability
- » Development Constraints and Hazards
- » Heritage

4.1 Growth Management

Municipal growth thrives in a safe and predictable environment. The policies within this section ensure that the Town of Rocky Mountain House grows in an orderly, sustainable fashion that coincides with the appropriate provision of municipal utilities and services.

Goals

G2: Ensure an appropriate supply of land and infrastructure is available to accommodate future growth.

G5: Protect valuable agricultural land and activities.

Policies

a) The Town shall monitor the growth of the town and update its Land Supply and Growth Study every five years to ensure a 20 to 25-year supply of commercial, industrial, and residential land.

b) Agricultural land and operations shall be protected from premature fragmentation through the orderly progression of development.

c) The Town shall ensure that new development is contiguous to the existing built-up area.

d) The Town shall prioritize infill development in existing neighbourhoods and the construction of already planned neighbourhoods, prior to expansion of developed areas within town boundaries.

e) The costs of servicing new development shall be borne by the developer as established in formal development service agreements.

f) Area structure plans shall be developed for all new communities.

4.2 Intermunicipal Planning and Regional Cooperation

Intermunicipal planning and regional cooperation is fundamental to the growth of, and planning for, Rocky Mountain House. Therefore, the policies in this section provide direction on cooperative efforts between municipalities and other government agencies to achieve mutual objectives that benefit residents and businesses in Rocky Mountain House. They also help to secure the town's long-term growth.

Goals

E5: Cooperate in the development and maintenance of regional and provincial transportation networks.

G1: Work with Clearwater County to identify and protect future growth areas for both municipalities.

G2: Ensure an appropriate supply of land and infrastructure is available to accommodate future growth.

G3: Work with the Government of Alberta, its agencies and other municipalities, in the provision of programs and services that benefit residents and businesses in the region.

G4: Work with Clearwater County to ensure orderly development practices, issue resolution and appropriate management and control of future growth areas in the areas adjacent to the Town/County boundary.

G6: Maintain Rocky Mountain House's position as an urban service centre.

Policies

a) The Town shall work with Clearwater County to maintain an up to date Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP) that identifies and protects the Town's and the County's long-term growth areas.

b) The Town shall follow all IDP policies for communication, referral, and formal dispute processes with Clearwater County.

c) As required to maintain a 20 to 25-year supply of residential, commercial, and industrial land, the Town shall initiate the annexation of lands from Clearwater County in a manner that:

   i. is consistent with the IDP;

   ii. supports the fiscal, environmental, and social sustainability of both municipalities; and

   iii. discourages the loss and premature fragmentation of agricultural land.

d) The Town shall, in cooperation with Clearwater County, encourage oil and gas facilities and pipelines to be located beyond the Town's identified future growth areas or in other appropriate areas. Where it is not possible to avoid these areas, the Town will encourage the use of alignments and locations that are conducive to future urban development.

e) The Town acknowledges its role within the watershed of the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance and will follow the recommendations of the Integrated Watershed Management Plan.

f) The Town will comply with and implement the North Saskatchewan Regional Plan, once approved, as per the requirements of the Alberta Lands Stewardship Act.

g) The Town will work with Clearwater County, surrounding communities, and relevant agencies to ensure the coordinated delivery of emergency and social services in the region.

h) The Town will work with Clearwater County and other interested parties to create and implement a regional approach to conserving key natural areas and functions.

i) The Town shall work with Clearwater County to ensure the safe and effective operations of the Rocky Mountain House Airport.

j) The Town shall coordinate road and trail connections with the Province of Alberta and Clearwater County to ensure regional connectivity.

k) The Town shall continue to be an active partner in promoting and collaborating on regional economic development opportunities.

4.3 Economic Development

Economic development is essential to the growth of Rocky Mountain House. The policies in this section address diversification of the Town's economic profile, creation of employment opportunities, and the strengthening of local business and tourism industries.

Goals

B1: Promote a positive and competitive business climate.

B2: Foster local business retention and expansion.

B3: Attract diverse new commercial and industrial development.

B4: Promote Rocky Mountain House as a tourism destination and the "adventure hub" of Alberta.

B5: Support investment in education and training programs to retain a skilled labour force.

Policies

a) The Town will actively work to diversify the local and regional economic base by marketing developable land to new and existing industries.

b) The Town will promote access to rail and air transportation as prime opportunities for new commercial and industrial development.

c) The Town will support the expansion of post-secondary education and skills training opportunities within the Town, with a focus on retaining youth in the community.

d) The Town will develop a Tourism Strategy for the town, which identifies priority actions to strengthen the tourism industry and market the town as the Adventure Hub of Alberta. The Tourism Strategy should build upon the work

conducted in the David Thompson Country Regional Tourism Strategy (2017), and Central Alberta Destination Management Plan (2015), tie into downtown revitalization strategies, and involve collaboration with Indigenous partners, local businesses, and community organizations.

e) The Town will support the development of small business through the implementation of flexible and supportive land use policies.

f) The Town will investigate incentives to encourage businesses to locate in downtown.

g) The Town will support and promote community events and seek opportunities to increase the number of events throughout the year.

h) The Town will continue to identify opportunities to pre-service vacant industrial and commercial land to incentivize development.

i) The Town will promote federal and provincial economic and tourism development funding and grant opportunities within the business community and seek partnership opportunities in funding applications.

j) The Town will continue to consider the provision of municipal economic development grant programs to encourage business innovation and start-ups in the town.

k) The Town will promote buying local and consider implementing a local-first purchasing policy for the corporation.

l) The Town will work with appropriate rail companies on the development of an active rail spur.

4.4 Environmental Sustainability and Ecological Management

Environmental and ecological management refers to the identification and conservation of natural systems. Preserving and enhancing natural environments has many benefits both for people and natural systems. Natural environments provide recreational opportunities. They also support a variety of ecosystem services, such as increasing water and air quality. The policies in this section address environmental sustainability and the conservation of natural environments.

Goals

D1: Recognize the value and contribution natural areas and their ecosystem functions.

D2: Preserve significant natural areas to create and maintain attractive, pristine, and ecologically responsible natural and built environments.

D3: Implement environmental design and building principles into all new development and redevelopment.

D4: Reduce carbon emissions and implement adaptive measures to increase resiliency to a changing climate.

D5: Support programs and initiatives that increase awareness and public involvement in environmental management and conservation.

Policies

4.4.1 Environmental Design

a) The Town shall incorporate environmental design considerations into all new Town facilities, including:

i. water conservation;

ii. stormwater management/low impact development (LID);

iii. renewable energy;

iv. energy efficiency;

v. use of recycled materials;

vi. reduction of waste;

vii. adaptive reuse (where possible); and

viii. green roofs (where possible).

b) The Town shall incorporate the environmental design considerations identified in policy 4.4.1a in the retrofit of existing Town facilities, where possible.

c) The Town shall develop Sustainable Community Design Guidelines based on current best practices for environmental design, including:

i. water protection and conservation;

ii. compact built form;

iii. resource conservation/reduction of waste;

iv. protection of locally significant wildlife habitat and ecological systems;

v. connectivity to active transportation networks/walkability;

vi. energy efficiency;

vii. adaptive reuse; and

viii. green roofs.

d) Proposals for new communities must demonstrate adherence to environmental design principles identified within the Sustainable Community Design Guidelines.

e) The Town shall ensure that natural features and environmentally sensitive areas are identified and protected in advance of urban expansion through their designation in area structure plans.

f) The Town will encourage the retention of existing wetlands versus compensation by the Province.

g) The Town will increase the urban tree canopy to reduce the urban heat island effect and to store carbon.

h) Significant mature trees shall be retained wherever possible and replaced if removal is necessary for development.

i) The Town shall naturalize stormwater management facilities wherever possible to enhance their ecological value and community benefit.

4.4.2   Environmental Reserve

a) The Town shall require that lands considered unsuitable for development are dedicated as environmental reserve through the subdivision process, in accordance with the Municipal Government Act.

b) The Town may allow for an environmental reserve easement in place of environmental reserve dedication where there is no public access required or likely to be desired in the future.

c) The Town shall require that any subdivision proposal adjacent to a water body or water course dedicate a buffer from the water body/

course as environmental reserve to protect riparian areas and provide public access. The width of the required dedication shall be established by the Subdivision Authority.

d) The Town may use environmental reserve lands to extend the public trail system, as long as the ecological integrity of the land is retained or enhanced.

4.4.3   Conservation of Natural Features

a) The Town shall prioritize the protection of riparian areas along the North Saskatchewan River, Trapper's Creek, and Mud Lake. The Town shall work with Clearwater County to protect riparian areas along Clearwater River.

b) The Town will consider the use of land purchases, land swaps, leasing agreements, conservation agreements and easements to protect important natural features that do not qualify as environmental reserve land.

c) The Town will identify opportunities to partner with local organizations in the preservation and stewardship of natural areas, including invasive species removal.

d) The Town shall view natural features as green infrastructure, recognizing the economic, social, and environmental benefits that they provide to the Town.

e) The Town will investigate the establishment of a stewardship program to provide education and awareness to citizens on how to naturalize their property and assist in monitoring the health of the Town's natural areas.

4.5 Development Constraints and Hazards

Several development constraints impact the developability of lands in Rocky Mountain House. The following policies address specific requirements of the Municipal Government Act and setbacks required for several development constraints, including Sour Gas Facilities, rail, and waste treatment sites.

Goal
C3: Ensure neighbourhoods are safe and inclusive living environments

Policies

4.5.1 Sour Gas
a) The Town shall consult with the Alberta Utilities and Energy Board on any proposed development in the vicinity of existing Sour Gas Facilities.

b) The Town shall refer all relevant development and subdivision applications to the Energy Board, in accordance with the Municipal Government Act.

c) The Town shall not approve any development that does not conform to provincial Sour Gas setbacks, unless given official written direction from the Province authorizing a setback reduction.

d) The Town shall monitor proposals for new Sour Gas and related facilities within or adjacent to the Town's existing and future growth areas.

4.5.2 Required Setbacks
a) The Town shall not approve any subdivision or development proposal for schools, hospitals, food establishments, or residential use within 300 metres of the Town's wastewater treatment plant, as per the Alberta Subdivision and Development Regulation, unless a waiver is obtained from Alberta Ministry of Environment and Parks.

b) The Town shall not approve any subdivision or development proposal for schools, hospitals, food establishments, or residential use within 300 metres of the Town's waste transfer station, as per the Alberta Subdivision and Development Regulation, unless a waiver is obtained from Alberta Ministry of Environment and Parks.

c) The Town shall require that any subdivision and development of land adjacent to the CPR railway tracks incorporates measures to mitigate the impact of rail operations on adjacent uses. The Town may request noise, vibration, visual impact, or other studies be conducted to determine what type of mitigation measures to employ.

4.6 Heritage Preservation

Heritage preservation ensures that the cultural significance of certain elements of built environments and landscapes are maintained, and their significance is celebrated. Preserving heritage is an important way to tell the history of the town and foster a sense of place. The following policies provide direction on heritage preservation in the town.

Goals

C5: Preserve and interpret heritage resources to contribute to community identity, pride, and sense of place.

Policies

a) The Town shall develop and maintain an inventory identifying historically significant buildings and landscapes.

b) The Town will encourage the following:

   i. Adaptive reuse/retrofit of existing heritage structures;

   ii. Incorporation of heritage or complimentary elements into the design of new development; and

   iii. Recognition of the heritage value through art, signage, or other interpretive elements.

c) The Town will cooperate with Indigenous communities, private agencies, and individuals to preserve historic sites.

d) The Town will encourage the protection of identified heritage properties, features, or landscapes through provincial or national designation.

e) The Town shall facilitate the adaptive reuse of historic buildings through consideration of building code equivalencies where necessary and appropriate.

f) The Town will promote community awareness about the importance and value of heritage preservation and shall be an active partner in the establishment of historic walking tours, events, and activities.

4.7 Community and Protective Services

Community and protective services contribute to building a safe, healthy, and inclusive community. The following policies provide direction on the provision of these necessary services.

Goals

C3: Ensure neighbourhoods are safe and inclusive living environments.

C4: Facilitate the planning and delivery of social programs that support and enhance individual, family, and community quality of life.

Policies

a) The Town shall continue to provide emergency and protective services either directly and/or in cooperation with other service providers.

b) The Town will consider developing an annual or bi-annual "community vital signs report" in partnership with community organizations to provide a summary on the various social/health indicators of people, economies, and environment in the Town and monitor progress on social and community goals.

c) The Town will ensure there is adequate funding to maintain town community and protective services and resources, including fire and police services, and to expand services as necessary.

d) The Town shall ensure that development near and adjacent to the Rocky Mountain House Health Centre does not conflict or limit the current and future operations or expansion of the facility.

e) The Town shall work with the Regional Health Authority to facilitate the development of long-term health care services, senior care residences, and aging-in-place facilities in the town to meet the needs of the growing older adult population.

f) The Town will continue to work with community agencies to provide social and support services to Rocky Mountain House residents. In partnership with these community agencies, the Town will prioritize the expansion of services for:

   i. Indigenous peoples;

   ii. Youth;

   iii. Older adults and seniors;

   iv. Persons with disabilities;

   v. New Canadians; and

   vi. Single parent families.

g) The Town will explore opportunities to engage with and include youth in municipal decision making.

h) The Town will work with community organizations and other partners to identify and resolve housing challenges within the community.

i) The Town shall incorporate planning for social and health services, programs, and facilities into area structure plans and area redevelopment plans to ensure that these necessary services are:

    i.   provided in accessible, convenient locations along primary pedestrian routes;

    ii.   co-located with other services into service hubs;

    iii. barrier-free; and

    iv. integrated within the design of the community.

j) The Town will continue to provide mutual aid in the event of a disaster or emergency as part of the CREMA Clearwater Regional Emergency Management Agency.

k) The Town shall maintain their current addressing systems with GPS mapping to facilitate emergency service delivery.

l) The Town will ensure Fire Smart principles are incorporated into statutory plans, non-statutory plans, and the designs of subdivisions and developments where appropriate.

5 Land Use Policies

5.1 Land Use Concept

The land use concept (Figure 6: Land Use Concept Map) illustrates the general intent and land use framework for the Town of Rocky Mountain House. The land use concept accounts for regional context, development constraints, existing development, existing infrastructure, and planned infrastructure. The main land use types within the concept are: Residential, Downtown, Commercial, Industrial, and Open Space.

Residential – Residential includes areas of existing and future residential development in the town. It is divided into Neighbourhood Residential and Residential Acreages. Neighbourhood Residential areas are intended to include a range of housing types from low density types, such as single-detached housing, to medium density types, such as townhouses and apartments. These areas focus around a Local Commercial node and open spaces to provide small scale neighbourhood services and recreation within a walkable distance. Residential Acreages are areas deemed suitable for larger lot residential neighbourhoods.

Downtown – Downtown is the heart of civic life and commerce in Rocky Mountain House. Downtown includes the Downtown Core Mixed Use and Downtown Transition areas. The Downtown Core Mixed Use area is made up of the Town's central business district and commercial main street. It is the key pedestrian-oriented destination for commercial and civic activity in Rocky Mountain House. The Downtown Transition area is a medium density area surrounding the downtown core. The area serves to transition from the higher density commercial nature of the core to lower density Neighbourhood Residential Areas.

Commercial – Rocky Mountain House's Commercial areas provide important economic and employment opportunities for the Town. These areas are either Highway Commercial or Local Commercial areas. Highway Commercial areas include commercial development along the Town's highways and arterials. Though these areas are primarily designed for ease of access by automobile, they also provide a safe and inviting environment for pedestrians as well as provide a welcoming entrance to the town. Local Commercial areas are locally focused commercial nodes, primarily located to serve Neighbourhood Residential areas. These nodes provide neighbourhood scale services and amenities for residents.

Industrial – Industrial areas include several of Rocky Mountain House's key employment areas. Light industrial and heavy industrial uses in these areas benefit from access to major arterial, highway, and rail connections. The Town's industrial areas will support a range of creative uses to diversify the economy and provide additional value for residents. Supportive uses, such as restaurants or other small commercial services are also encouraged in this area to support employee quality of life.

Open Space & Recreation – Open Space and Recreation are important contributors to the health and well-being of Rocky Mountain House residents. These areas include parks, trails, and other public open spaces as well as community recreation facilities.

FIGURE 6 – LAND USE CONCEPT MAP
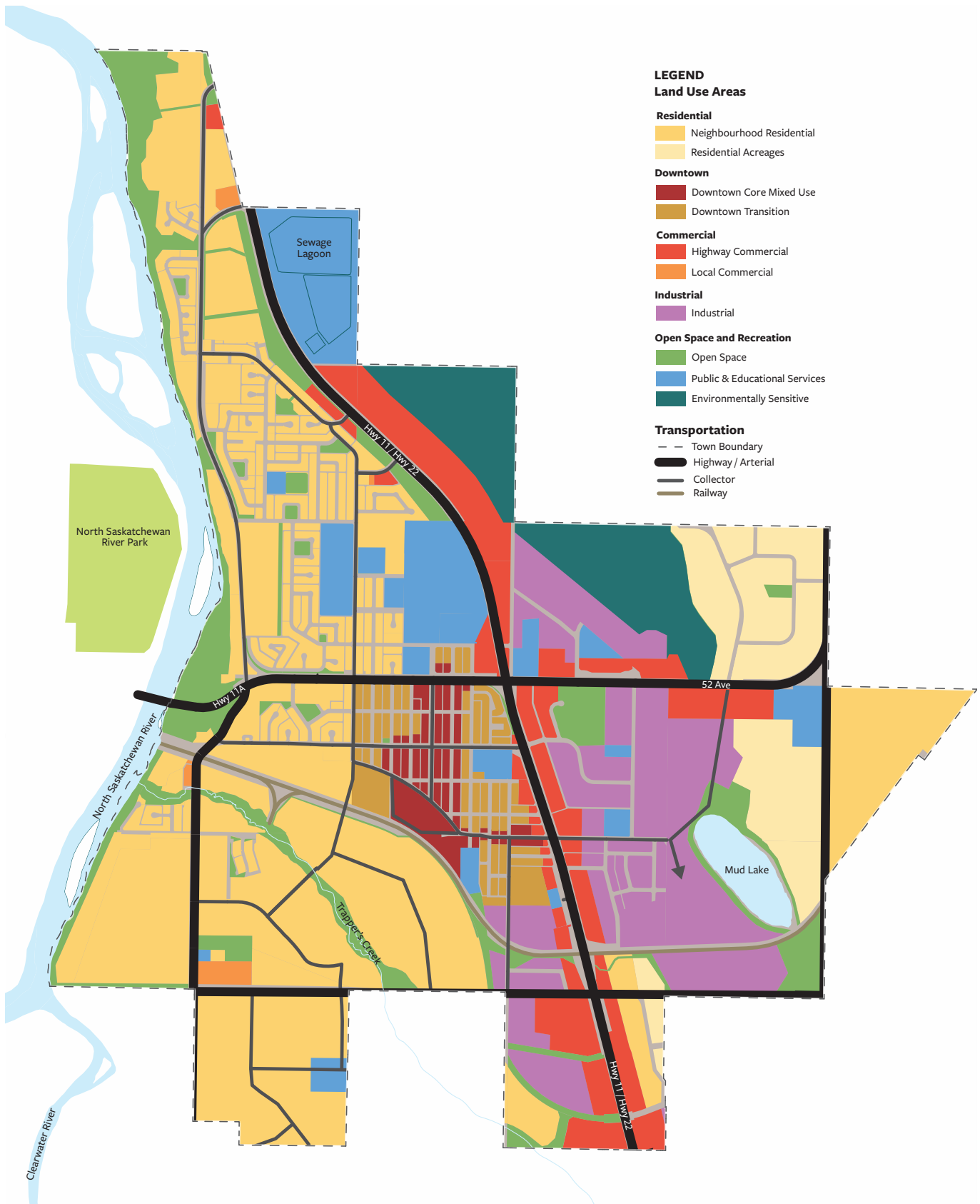
LEGEND
Land Use Areas

Residential
- Neighbourhood Residential
- Residential Acreages

Downtown
- Downtown Core Mixed Use
- Downtown Transition

Commercial
- Highway Commercial
- Local Commercial

Industrial
- Industrial

Open Space and Recreation
- Open Space
- Public & Educational Services
- Environmentally Sensitive

Transportation
- Town Boundary
- Highway / Arterial
- Collector
- Railway

Sewage Lagoon

North Saskatchewan River Park

North Saskatchewan River

Clearwater River

Trapper's Creek

Hwy 11 / Hwy 22

Hwy 11A

52 Ave

Mud Lake

Hwy 11 / Hwy 22

5.2 Residential

Residential areas are where most of Rocky Mountain Houses citizens live. To support a high quality of life, the policies in this section ensure that neighbourhoods are designed as complete, walkable communities.

Goals

C1: Support a mix of housing types and tenures through development in existing neighbourhoods and new communities.

C2: Support a greater mix of land uses, in new and established neighbourhoods and employment areas.

C3: Ensure neighbourhoods are safe and inclusive living environments.

E1: Prioritize connectivity and safety for active transportation modes.

E2: Increase the mode share of active transportation options through the development of complete streets, pathways, and safe crossings.

E4: Establish the built form to support a future transit system.

Policies

5.2.1 General Residential Policies

a) The Town shall direct future residential development to the areas shown on the Figure 6: Land Use Concept Map.

b) All residential development must be connected to municipal services.

c) Residential infill development must be located where existing servicing capacity exists.

d) Residential development should be contiguous with existing developed areas in the Town to minimize servicing and infrastructure costs.

e) The Town of Rocky Mountain House will ensure that sufficient affordable, attainable, and barrier free housing is provided to meet community needs by working with the federal and provincial governments and partnering with private, public, and non-profit organizations.

f) The Town will ensure that all residential development contributes positively to the public realm and the social connectedness of neighbourhoods through high quality, barrier-free, pedestrian friendly design.

g) The Town will encourage the provision of a mix of residential unit types within developments, including but not limited to large family units, single bedroom units, and barrier free units.

h) The Town will ensure that complete community design principles are incorporated in area structure plans, area redevelopment plans, outline plans, and plans of subdivision, including:

   i. designation of local commercial nodes, which include a mix of neighbourhood-scale commercial and public services that are easily accessed by residents and can be connected to transit in the future;

   ii. provision of complete streets which prioritize active modes connectivity;

   iii. a fine grained, well connected network of local streets;

   iv. a diversity of housing types;

   v. high quality parks and open space and protection of natural assets;

vi. designated areas for schools or other necessary public services determined by the Town, in liaison with education authorities;

vii. consideration for and preservation of heritage; and

viii. high quality building and site design.

i) The Town will encourage the use of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles in the design of all development, including:

i. avoiding the creation of isolated or hidden spaces;

ii. providing clear sightlines;

iii. providing sufficient lighting; and

iv. locating outdoor public spaces adjacent to active uses to promote natural surveillance.

j) The Town will encourage the strategic locating of seniors' housing and care within walking distance of shops, services, and amenities.

k) New manufactured home parks may only be located in specific areas identified within an area structure plan.

l) The Town may continue to have involvement in the residential land market through public land banking.

5.2.2 Neighbourhood Residential

a) The residential density for new neighbourhoods is encouraged to be at least 20 dwelling units per gross developable hectare and shall not be less than 12.5 dwelling units per gross developable hectare.

b) The Town will support compact and efficient urban form by encouraging infill development, such as secondary residences, in existing residential areas. Infill development should be contextually sensitive and must be located in areas where servicing capacity supports additional density.

c) Medium to high density multi-family housing shall be encouraged in Neighbourhood Residential areas, particularly in locations adjacent to or near collector and/or arterial roads and adjacent to local commercial nodes.

5.2.3 Residential Acreages

d) The Town may consider future areas for residential acreages, where appropriate.

5.3 Downtown

Downtown is the heart of civic life and commerce in Rocky Mountain House. The policies in this section encourage growth and intensification of Downtown to enhance it as a vibrant mixed-use centre and a focal point for the community.

Goals

A1: Reinforce the downtown core as a business, administrative, and cultural heart of the town.

A2: Encourage higher-density residential development in and adjacent to downtown.

A3: Activate downtown by supporting mixed-use development, active frontages, events, and vibrant public spaces.

A4: Continue to foster a pedestrian friendly retail environment on Main Street.

A5: Develop additional public gathering spaces in downtown.

B2: Foster local business retention and expansion.

B3: Attract diverse new commercial and industrial development.

C1: Support a mix of housing types and tenures through development in existing neighbourhoods and new communities.

C2: Support a greater mix of land uses, in new and established neighbourhoods and employment areas.

C5: Preserve and interpret heritage resources to contribute to community identity, pride, and sense of place.

E1: Prioritize connectivity and safety for active transportation modes.

Policies

5.3.1 General Policies

a) The Town will initiate a Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP) to support and prioritize continued growth and redevelopment of downtown. The Downtown ARP should:

    i.   establish design guidelines for the area;

    ii. coordinate economic development incentives and programs;

    iii. refine the land use concept within the MDP; and

    iv. provide direction on future programming and maintenance of public spaces.

b) The Town will promote opportunities for infill and intensification within the downtown to facilitate a mixed use and compact urban form, utilize existing infrastructure efficiently, and increase the range of services and amenities available to residents and visitors in the downtown area.

c) The Town will support development of higher density housing in the downtown core and surrounding transition area and promote the health and community benefits of living downtown.

d) The Town will encourage high quality urban design in downtown that:

    i.   reinforces the importance of the downtown;

    ii. contributes to a sense of place; and

    iii. creates a pedestrian friendly environment and streetscape.

e) All development in downtown must have direct access and frontage on a public street.

5.3.2 Downtown Core Mixed-use

a) The Town will encourage retail, institutional, office, cultural, and entertainment development to locate in the downtown to foster a vibrant core.

b) The Town will encourage the revitalization and adaptive reuse of existing underutilized or vacant commercial properties. Subdivision of larger commercial parcels to facilitate smaller businesses shall be supported where appropriate.

c) All new development in downtown on Main Street between Highway 11A and 48 Avenue must be a minimum of two storeys above grade or 9 metres to foster a vibrant pedestrian environment.

d) The Town will continue to prioritize the maintenance and upkeep of Main Street furnishings and landscaping.

e) All development along Main Street must have a ground-floor active commercial use, such as retail, restaurant, or consumer services, and is encouraged to have residential uses above the first floor.

f) All development in the downtown core shall be exempt from having to provide on-site parking.

g) The Town will investigate grant opportunities to support downtown events, promotion, programming, and redevelopment.

h) The Town will collaborate with Indigenous communities and organizations to increase the presence of Indigenous placemaking and heritage in the downtown.

i) The Town will ensure that surface parking lots are located in a way that does not impede the pedestrian experience of the downtown.

j) The Town will support temporary street closures to support downtown events and programming.

k) The Town will support the activation of public spaces in the downtown, through art installations, performances, and the creation of temporary public space.

l) Driveways should be shared, and parking access encouraged off of rear lanes, to limit the number of disruptions to the sidewalk.

m) The Town shall maintain and promote public gathering space in the downtown area.

n) The Town will ensure that sufficient public parking is available in the downtown area, through the provision of street parking and public lots. A shared public parking facility in the downtown core may be considered if the need arises.

o) The Town will investigate the creation of facilities and programs to support incubator businesses and pop-up markets in downtown storefronts.

5.3.3 Downtown Transition

a) The Town shall establish a medium density multi-family transition area around the downtown core to increase the residential population living near the core.

b) The Town shall prioritize residential infill development and intensification in the downtown transition area, including the development of multi-family housing and secondary units, to increase the number of residents living downtown.

c) Some commercial uses may be permitted as part of mixed use development to provide amenities and services for downtown residents.

d) The Town shall seek opportunities to expand open space and amenities within the transition area.

5.4 Commercial

Commercial development is integral to the wellbeing of residents. The following policies help to facilitate future commercial development in appropriate areas, improve the attractiveness of existing commercial areas and support a vibrant commercial sector that services both local residents and the regional market.

Goals

B1: Promote a positive and competitive business climate.

B2: Foster local business retention and expansion.

B3: Attract diverse new commercial and industrial development.

C2: Support a greater mix of land uses, in new and established neighbourhoods and employment areas.

E1: Prioritize connectivity and safety for active transportation modes.

E4: Establish the built form to support a future transit system.

Policies

5.4.1 General Commercial Policies

a) The Town will initiate a Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan to support and prioritize growth and redevelopment of downtown and establish design guidelines for the area.

b) All commercial development must be connected to municipal services.

c) The Town will promote opportunities for infill and intensification within the downtown to facilitate a mixed use and compact urban form, utilize existing infrastructure efficiently, and increase the range of services and amenities available to residents and visitors in the downtown area.

d) The Town will support development of higher density housing in the downtown core and surrounding transition area and promote the health and community benefits of living downtown.

e) The Town will encourage high quality urban design in downtown that:

    i.   reinforces the importance of the downtown;

    ii.   contributes to a sense of place; and

    iii.   creates a pedestrian friendly environment and streetscape.

f) All development in downtown must have direct access and frontage on a public street.

5.4.2 Highway Commercial

a) The Highway 11 and 598 commercial corridor shall be the primary highway commercial area within the Town.

b) Highway Commercial development proposals along Highway 11 shall demonstrate high quality design by providing:

    i.   accessible and connected pedestrian pathways, crossings, and entrances;

    ii.   paved roads and parking areas with adequate drainage;

    iii.   landscaping adjacent to roads and residential areas;

    iv.   screened storage areas; and

    v.   loading areas to the side or rear of buildings.

c) Where necessary, adequate buffering between highway commercial and adjacent residential areas shall be provided to minimize noise, traffic, light, and visual impacts.

d) When planning for development in the highway corridor, the Town shall take into consideration parking space for larger trucks.

5.4.3 Local Commercial

a) The Town shall support the development of local commercial nodes in neighbourhood residential areas to provide walkable amenities and services for residents.

b) Local commercial areas shall be designed as pedestrian-focused environments integrated with the public realm and streetscape.

c) In local commercial areas, the amount and siting of parking on the lot will be determined through discussion between the developer and Development Authority.

d) On-site parking in local commercial areas should be provided in the rear of buildings so as to not interfere with the streetscape.

e) Mixed use development shall be encouraged in local commercial areas.

5.5 Industrial

Industrial areas are an important source of employment and economic development in Rocky Mountain House. The following policies ensure that there is sufficient serviced industrial land available to attract and accommodate a wide array of industrial development in the future.

Goals

B1: Promote a positive and competitive business climate.

B2: Foster local business retention and expansion.

B3: Attract diverse new commercial and industrial development.

C2: Support a greater mix of land uses, in new and established neighbourhoods and employment areas.

E1: Prioritize connectivity and safety for active transportation modes.

Policies

a) The Town shall direct future industrial development to the areas shown on Figure 6: Land Use Concept Map.

b) All industrial development must be connected to municipal services.

c) The Town shall ensure an adequate inventory of serviced industrial sites of various lot sizes and type to meet the needs of business and industry.

d) The Town will encourage innovative and creative light industrial uses, including but not limited to breweries, studios, and light manufacturing.

e) In industrial areas, parking location shall be determined through discussion between the developer and the Development Authority.

f) Heavy industrial activities or activities involving dangerous goods shall be directed away from the existing commercial and residential areas to mitigate use conflicts. Lower impact industrial development may be located adjacent to an existing or planned residential area if it is adequately screened or buffered.

g) The Town will encourage high standards of site development, including the screening of storage yards, site landscaping, pedestrian pathways, and the attractive design of buildings.

h) The Town will consider industrial land banking as a viable option depending upon the opportunity, demand, and the quantity of land available for this purpose.

5.6 Open Space and Recreation

Open spaces contribute to the well-being and quality of life of residents, providing opportunities to be active and connect with nature. The policies in this section are intended to create an integrated, high-quality, and cost-effective open space and parks system that encourages active living and supports a broad range of recreation and cultural opportunities.

Goals

F1: Develop a continuous system of pathways with linkages to parks, natural areas, and other key destinations in town.

F2: Provide a variety of recreational opportunities in town ranging from passive leisure to active recreation activities.

F3: Encourage sharing and multiple use of parks and open space areas among a variety of user groups and activities, including maintaining joint use agreements for facilities with the School Boards.

F4: Ensure that the design and development of community sites and facilities are inclusive and accessible to everyone.

F5: Maximize the year-round use of recreational developments and facilities.

E5: Cooperate in the development and maintenance of regional and provincial transportation networks.

Policies

5.6.1 Recreation Facilities and Amenities

a) The Town shall continually assess, maintain, and expand municipal facilities to meet growth needs, as identified in the Recreation Master Plan.

b) The Town shall ensure that its facilities are flexible and multi-use to support a variety of recreation opportunities and adapt to changes in recreation services over time.

c) The Town shall work in partnership with other recreation providers to expand recreation amenities and opportunities for youth and older adults in the community.

d) The Town shall ensure that all Town facilities are barrier-free to enable use by all ages and levels of mobility.

5.6.2 Parks and Trails

a) As new areas are planned and developed, the Town shall ensure the provision of high-quality open space and linkages to existing and planned pathways and trails.

b) The Town will develop a large community celebration and gathering space to support various recreational activities and town-wide events.

c) The Town will work collaboratively with Indigenous partners and organizations to identify opportunities to support and incorporate Indigenous culture and heritage into the design and operation of parks and trails.

d) The Town will expand the existing trail network as per the direction of the Trail Master Plan and Concept to connect key destinations and open spaces within the town and link with regional trail networks.

e) The Town will consider development of a public boat launch/water access to the North Saskatchewan River.

f) The Town shall work with Clearwater County to establish the regional Nordegg Trail from Rocky Mountain House to Nordegg along the former rail corridor.

g) The Town shall develop a signature entrance feature along the Highway 11A and 598 corridor.

h) The Town shall work with School Boards in the planning and location of school sites. The Town will support the provision of joint use sites wherever practical.

i) The Town will apply the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) in the development and maintenance of all public spaces, including: encouraging passive surveillance through adjacent active uses and unobstructed sightlines so people can monitor public spaces; and ensuring areas are properly lit at night.

j) Parks and open space shall be designed to create opportunities for area residents to gather and interact with seating, picnic facilities, and other elements that encourage socialization and community building.

k) The Town will increase the use of native and low-maintenance species in the design and maintenance of parks.

l) The Town should consider partnering with community organization in the development of community gardens and other local agriculture initiatives.

m) The Town will continue to partner with community recreational, arts, and cultural groups in the delivery of additional programs and services that promote the health and well-being of town residents.

5.6.3 Municipal Reserve

n) The Town shall require that at least 10 percent of the gross developable land being subdivided, less the land required to be dedicated as environmental reserve or environmental reserve easement, be dedicated as Reserve (municipal reserve, school reserve, or municipal and school reserve) in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Government Act.

o) In residential areas, the Town shall prioritize land reserve dedication over cash-in-lieu.

p) In non-residential areas, reserve dedication may be provided in the form of land, cash-in-lieu, or a combination of land and cash as determined by the Subdivision Authority.

q) Reserve lands, or cash-in-lieu, may be used for school sites, parks, or recreational facilities in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Government Act.

r) The Town will continually review the Reserve Agreement between the Town and the School Boards. Except for environmental reserves, reserve lands shall be allocated between Town and School Board's purposes in conformance with the Reserve Agreement.

s) In recognition that the Town has a limited amount of Reserve dedication and there are several competing demands on Reserve land, the order of priority for which parcels of land may receive credit as part of the ten percent dedication shall be determined in accordance with the Reserve Agreement between the Town and the School Boards and the current Community Needs Assessment (2009).

6 Transportation, Utilities, and Servicing

6.1 Transportation

Transportation systems are integral to how people move throughout Rocky Mountain House. The intent of the policies in this section is to provide for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods, including pedestrian, cycle, and vehicular modes of travel.

Goals

E1: Prioritize connectivity and safety for active transportation modes.

E2: Increase the mode share of active transportation options through the development of complete streets, pathways, and safe crossings.

E3: Improve pedestrian connectivity across town arterials and highways.

E4: Establish the built form to support a future transit system.

E5: Cooperate in the development and maintenance of regional and provincial transportation networks.

Policies

a) Future transportation networks should be provided as illustrated in Figure 6: Land Use Concept.

b) The Town shall prepare and maintain a Transportation Master Plan to guide future improvements and additions to the Town's transportation system. The Transportation Master Plan shall:

  i. establish a mode hierarchy as identified in Figure 7: Mode Hierarchy, which prioritizes active transportation modes;

  ii. establish a compact, efficient street and pathway hierarchy and associated guidelines that are coordinated with the MDP Land Use Concept;

  iii. provide requirements for development of complete streets throughout the town, with design emphasis on compact, human scale environments such as narrowing rights-of-way and turning radii;

  iv. provide direction and phasing for future street improvements and ongoing management of transportation infrastructure;

  v. ensure efficient movement of people and goods; and

  vi. ensure coordinated planning and development with regional transportation networks.

c) The Town will ensure that pathway and road connections are developed in a logical sequence throughout the implementation and phasing of area structure plans to ensure access and connectivity to the existing network.

d) Developments shall support Transportation Demand Management strategies including, but not limited to, supporting alternative modes of transportation, allowing for home occupations and businesses, and managing roadway congestion without having to upgrade roadways.

e) The Town will prioritize connectivity for active modes of transportation by providing an interconnected network of streets, pathways, and trails to support walking and cycling.

f) The Town will promote the design of complete streets (with features such as bicycle lanes or tracks, bump-outs, curb-cuts, patterned paving)
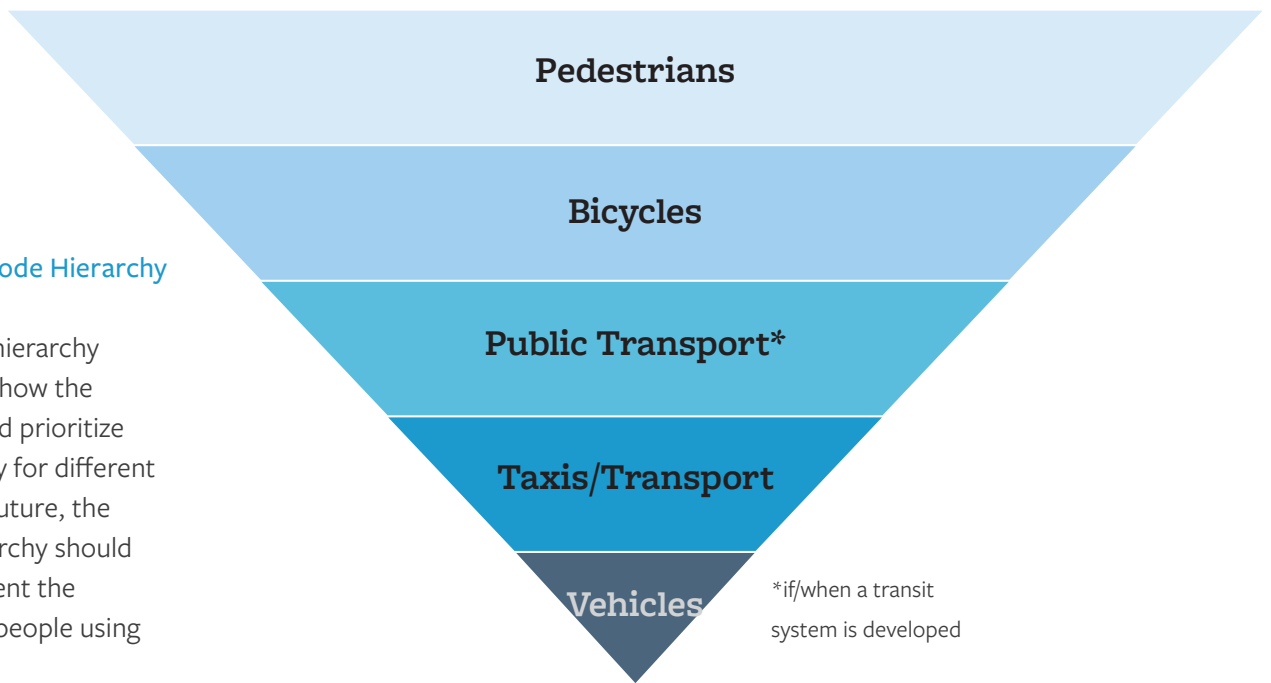
Figure 7: Mode Hierarchy

The mode hierarchy establishes how the Town should prioritize connectivity for different modes. In future, the mode hierarchy should also represent the amount of people using each mode.

Pedestrians

Bicycles

Public Transport*

Taxis/Transport

Vehicles

*if/when a transit system is developed

during new, redevelopment, or repair projects in order to improve public safety, encourage alternative transportation, accommodate a range of users, and enhance overall livability.

g) Traffic calming measures shall be used to slow vehicular speeds, and minimize collisions, particularly at major pedestrian and bicycle intersections, and to increase the safety and enhance the livability of communities.

h) The Town will prioritize snow clearance on sidewalks and active transportation routes.

i) Design of new development within Neighbourhood Residential shall provide a high degree of road connectivity to allow for shorter travel distances between destinations and a dispersal and flow of traffic on suitable roads.

j) The Town will consider the provision of a transit service, particularly to address the needs of youth and aging adults.

k) The Town will explore collaborative opportunities to provide a regional transit connection.

l) Improve the safety of pedestrian crossings along all major arterials and highways, prioritizing access and a more pedestrian friendly environment on and across Highway 11.

m) The Town shall coordinate the planning and construction of transportation infrastructure and development, to maximize the utilization of available and planned transportation capacity.

n) The Town shall ensure the provision of appropriate transportation infrastructure in commercial and industrial areas, to accommodate both the movement of truck traffic and the travel needs of employees and customers.

6.2 Utilities and Servicing

Utilities and services include a diverse range of Town infrastructure that provides residents with key services such as water, communications, and power. The intent of the policies in this section is to provide quality, equitable, environmentally responsible, safe, efficient, and reliable utility systems to serve the needs of the Town.

Goals

G2: Ensure an appropriate supply of land and infrastructure is available to accommodate future growth.

Policies

a) The Town shall provide high quality utility services to residents and businesses in Rocky Mountain House, in accordance with federal and provincial standards.

b) The Town shall ensure its utility systems are adaptive to changing technologies.

c) The Town shall maintain, fund, and implement a comprehensive long- term plan for utility infrastructure and establish budget priorities. Decisions regarding utility infrastructure must consider the multi-year capital infrastructure plan.

d) The Town will promote the principles of reducing, reusing, and recycling materials as well as efficient energy use in all Town facilities and in the broader community through outreach.

e) The Town will encourage the installation of infrastructure and facilities related to broadband telecommunication services in all new developing areas and major redevelopment areas.

f) The Town may consider investigating regional water and wastewater service systems to support and respond to the needs of the Region without being detrimental to the Town.

g) The Town will ensure appropriate storm water management in all development areas. Best management practices, including the integration of existing water bodies and natural areas into storm water management ponds, shall be pursued.

h) The release of storm water run-off from any development area to downstream areas shall be designed and managed in accordance with Alberta Environment requirements.

i) The Town will update its Design Guidelines for the construction and maintenance of infrastructure, rights-of-way, and service connections to ensure they are consistent with the policies of the MDP, including the provision of complete streets.

j) The Town will encourage water conservation through implementation of community outreach programs and monitoring.

7 Implementation

7.1 Plan Implementation

The policies in this section apply to the implementation and use of the Municipal Development Plan. The policies:

» direct implementation of the MDP through other statutory and non-statutory plans and ensure consistency between these plans and the MDP;

» provide guidance on interpreting and applying the MDP policies and directions;

» ensure stakeholders and the general public participation in planning processes; and

» provide for periodic review and amendment of the MDP and monitoring of effort to achieve the MDP goals.

Policies

7.1.1 Plan Interpretation and Monitoring

a) Any public expenditure for improvements or services proposed within this plan shall be subject to the Town's annual operating and capital budgeting process and shall be evaluated in relation to the overall needs of the community and town-wide priorities.

b) The MDP contains "shall," "will, "should", and "may" policies which are interpreted as follows:

　i.　"Shall" and "will" policies must be complied with;

　ii.　"Should" policies mean compliance in principle but subject to the discretion of the applicable authority on a case by case basis; and

　iii.　"May" policies indicate that the applicable authority determines the level of compliance that is required.

c) The Town or a landowner may initiate an amendment to this Plan. The Town shall require the submission of such background information as is considered necessary to support the amendment prior to the start of the bylaw amendment process. Amendment of the MDP shall follow the appropriate procedures as outlined in the Municipal Government Act.

d) In order to ensure that the MDP is current, the plan should be reviewed every five years.

e) To allow ongoing tracking of the impact and effectiveness of the MDP policies, a report should be prepared and submitted to Town Council every two years, to include:

　i.　Land consumption, absorption, and supply for industrial, commercial, and residential areas;

　ii.　Employment statistics;

　iii.　Percentage of greenfield development versus infill development;

　iv.　Residential diversity index (housing and tenure statistics);

　v.　Hectares of natural areas and environmental reserves;

　vi.　Percent of population within 600 metres of a commercial area;

　vii.　Percent of residents that participate in recreation and community programs by age;

　viii.　Crime statistics;

　ix.　Number of residents attending city festivals and events;

    x.   Hectares of parks per resident and number of river access points;

    xi.   Percent of residents within a 10 minute walk of a park; and

    xii. Number of residents using parks and trails.

7.1.2 Preparation of Statutory Plans

a) All statutory plans adopted by the Town shall be consistent with the Municipal Development Plan.

b) The policies of the MDP shall be further refined and implemented through the preparation, adoption and day-to-day application of area structure plans, area redevelopment plans, and the Land Use Bylaw. The Town shall continue to ensure that stakeholders (e.g. school authorities) and the general public are consulted and have input into all detailed plans as these plans are being prepared.

c) Area structure plans and area redevelopment plans may be initiated by the Town or by a private landowner. An ASP or ARP initiated by the Town will be funded by the Town. An ASP or ARP initiated by a private landowner shall be funded by the private landowner and completed to a standard acceptable to the Town.

d) Area residents should be engaged as part of the planning process for area structure plans and area redevelopment plans.

7.1.3 Public Participation

a) As part of the process of managing physical growth and changes in the community, the Town shall facilitate public input on matters of general or specific planning interest wherever possible. The Town shall also continue to advise residents of existing planning policies and the outcome of key planning decisions.

Glossary

Active Transportation/Modes: Walking and cycling, as well as other forms of human powered transportation, including: rollerblading, longboarding, skateboarding, jogging, among others.

Affordable Housing: Housing that is typically subsidized or non-market housing for low-to-moderate income households below the Province's Core Need Income Threshold for Rocky Mountain House.

Attainable Housing: Housing that is provided slightly below market value based on partnering of resources between public and private agencies.

Barrier Free: The design of buildings and public spaces that remove or mitigate physical accessibility barriers for persons with vision, hearing, communication, mobility, or cognition challenges.

Complete Streets: Streets which are designed to enable safe access for all users: pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders, of all ages and abilities.

Complete Communities: Communities that are planned and designed with a mix of uses, within close proximity, to support everyday needs for a variety of lifestyles to live, work, shop, learn, and play. This includes a range of housing options that can accommodate a diversity of incomes and household types for all stages of life, as well as jobs, local services, schools, recreation, and open spaces.

Contextually Sensitive: The design of new development that relates to the existing built form in an area by incorporating similar building elements such as scale, massing, and setbacks.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design: A crime prevention approach that uses the design and use of the built environment to a reduce fear and incidence of crime, and generally improve public safety and a community's quality of life.

Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA): An area that contains environmental features which are important to the long-term maintenance of biological diversity, physical landscape features and other natural processes locally as well as within a larger spatial context. ESAs can be identified by the Town's assessment, through provincial resources such as the Environmentally Significant Areas in Alberta: 2014 Update, and/or through the development process site assessment requirements.

Gross Developable Hectare: All developable land in a specified area, excluding municipal reserve, environmental reserve, and natural features (but includes roads and all other development).

Low Impact Design (LID): A land development and stormwater management approach that focuses on maintaining and restoring the natural hydrology (movement of water) by managing stormwater close to its source. LID can reduce the burden on conventional infrastructure, maintain ecological functionality, and establish a cleaner and more secure water supply. LID practices include bioswales, stormwater collection and reuse, and alternative paving methods.

Mixed Use: Different uses that are in close proximity to each other. This can be in the same building (e.g. residences above retail) or on the same site (e.g. offices adjacent to restaurants or other commercial activities).

Multi-Modal: Design of streets and transportation systems that considers all modes of transportation, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders, of all ages and abilities.

Municipal Development Plan: A statutory document required by the Province of Alberta as specified by the Municipal Government Act (The Act). The MDP is intended to guide the growth and development of the Town of Rocky Mountain House over the next 20 years.

Secondary Residences: A dwelling unit that is an accessory to a single-detached dwelling and is intended for use as a separate and independent residence. The intent of this type of development is to provide flexibility and variety in housing types, as well as increase the density without changing the overall character of the residential neighbourhood.

Stormwater Management: The practice of minimizing the strain that stormwater places on municipal infrastructure and private property; lessening overland flooding during significant weather events; and reducing the impact of polluted water flowing into waterbodies.

Sustainability: The World Commission on the Environment and Development (1987) defines sustainability as "Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

Tenure: The type of ownership of a building or property, such as rental or owned.

Appendices