

**HAMLET OF SMITH  
AREA STRUCTURE PLAN**

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## HAMLET OF SMITH AREA STRUCTURE PLAN

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this Plan is to provide a formal strategy for future community growth and development in the Hamlet of Smith. The Plan is intended to serve as a guide to the decision-making process on all planning and development related matters in order to ensure that future Hamlet growth occurs in a logical and efficient manner.

The Hamlet of Smith Area Structure Plan addresses the following matters:

- a) potential location of future land uses and road system;
- b) topographic constraints to development;
- c) local community development issues and aspirations; and
- d) expansion of Hamlet boundaries.

#### 1.2 Plan Preparation

The preparation of this Plan was initiated by the South Advisory Council of Improvement District No. 17 East in response to increasing levels of regional natural resource extraction activities. This was prepared by a planning committee that consisted of local community members, as well as staff from Improvement District 17 East and the Planning Branch of Alberta Municipal Affairs.

#### 1.3 Plan Format

This Area Structure Plan establishes several general long range goals which form the basis for the Hamlet's development strategy. The Plan's objective statements and specific policy directions, which were derived from issues identified by the Planning Committee, are intended to be consistent with the community's planning goals.

The location of proposed land uses and roads are illustrated on Schedule A - Hamlet of Smith Development Concept.

## 2.0 COMMUNITY PROFILE

### 2.1 Location

The Hamlet of Smith is located approximately 50 kilometres southeast of the Town of Slave Lake. It is situated at the confluence of the Athabasca and Lesser Slave Rivers. The Hamlet is within the administrative area of Improvement District No. 17 East (Figure 1 - Regional Location).

### 2.2 Historical Background

In the early 1900's, the Athabasca River served as a major transportation route through northern Alberta. Around 1910, a new town of Mirror Landing was established on the north side of the confluence of the Lesser Slave and Athabasca rivers. Dredging of the Lesser Slave River made it possible for steamer ships to navigate the Lesser Slave River to Lesser Slave Lake.

The Hamlet of Smith originated on the south bank of the Athabasca, across from Mirror Landing, when the railway was constructed a few years later. Smith was named after Rathbone Smith, the chief engineer with the Edmonton, Dunvegan and British Columbia Railway. By about 1917, the railroad had replaced steam freighters as a viable form of transportation to Lesser Slave Lake and the Peace River region. Mirror Landing, which once consisted of about 40 business operations, gradually disappeared as people and businesses moved to Smith in order to be closer to the railroad.

### 2.3 Population

Smith, according to the most recent results from Statistics Canada (1986), has about 250 residents. The Hamlet's population, however, has varied considerably during the past 30 years. Between 1966 and 1971 Smith's population increased by nearly 235 percent. By 1981, the Hamlet's population decreased to about one half its 1971 peak size. This decline resulted primarily from the closure of a sawmill operation that had employed approximately 100 people.

Table No. 1 shows the population changes in Smith change between the years 1961 and 1986.

TABLE NO. 1  
Hamlet of Smith Population Change

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>% Change from Previous Census</u>
1961	85	-
1966	133	+ 56%
1971	445	+235%
1976	353	- 21%
1981	216	- 39%
1986	251	+ 16%

Source: Census of Canada

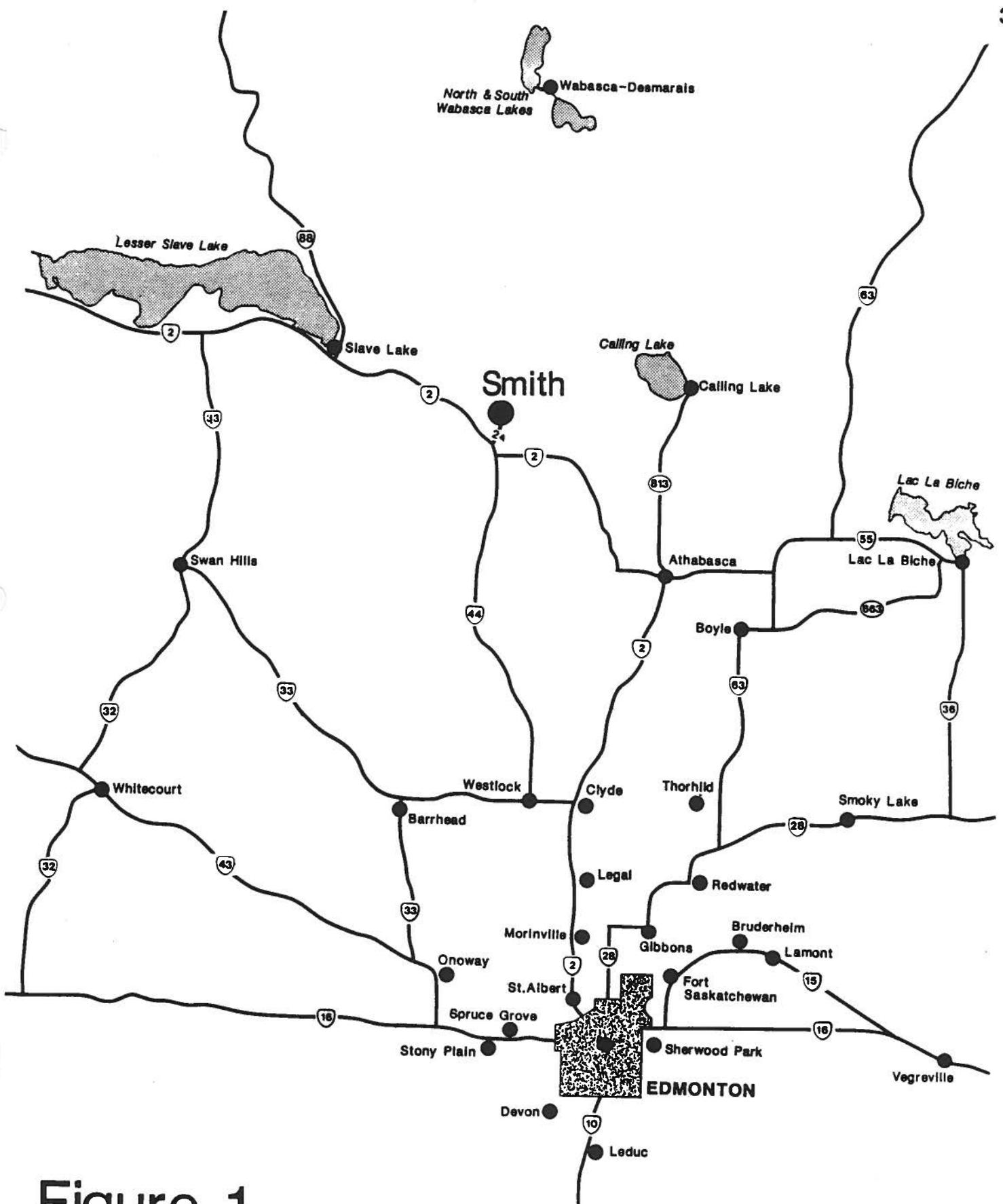


Figure 1:  
Regional Location

In comparison to the rest of Alberta, Smith's population age distribution is relatively young. According to the 1986 Federal Census, about one-half of the Hamlet's residents were under the age of 25 years. By comparison, about 60 percent of Alberta's 1986 population was 25 years of age or older.

#### 2.4 Economic Base

The Hamlet's economic base primarily consists of several commercial and industrial uses, as well as provincial government services. The main industrial related activities include a Canadian National Railways yard and a stake and lathe operation. Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife operate a forest ranger facility in the Hamlet.

#### 2.5 Prospects for Future Growth

Smith is located in an area rich in natural resources. Because of its proximity to the Slave Lake Pulp Corporation mill near the Mitsue industrial park, Smith may realize some growth in population. In order to properly plan for the future, in the event that other industrial facilities locate near the Hamlet, Smith should be adequately prepared for future growth and development.

#### 2.6 Development Constraints

The Hamlet's water distribution has the capacity to accommodate a population increase estimated between 300 and 400 people.

The present sewage disposal system can handle a population increase of about 150 to 175 without further expansion. It should be noted however, that the Subdivision Regulation restricts new residential developments within 1000 feet (300 metres) of a sewage treatment facility.

Natural gas servicing is not available in the Hamlet. The cost of alternative sources of energy hinders the growth of the community.

The old landfill site will eventually be reclaimed, in accordance with Alberta Environment's requirements, and will be used for community recreation purposes.

Topographic constraints to development have been identified in Schedule A - Hamlet of Smith Development Concept. One significant development constraint is the gully that exists adjacent to the railway on the east side of the Hamlet. In addition, Alberta Environment has recommended, on previous applications for subdivision, that a 100 foot (30 metre) wide buffer strip be designated along the river bank.

### 3.0 PLANNING GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

#### 3.1 Community Goals

The Hamlet of Smith Area Structure Plan is a strategic land management tool to help guide future growth and development in the community. In order to provide a general direction for this Plan, several "goals" were identified.

The purpose of a goal is to state ideal community aims or desires that the Plan should endeavour to achieve. All objectives and policies should be consistent with the goals stated in this Plan.

The following goals form the basis of the Hamlet of Smith Area Structure Plan:

- 1) To establish a logical land use strategy to guide future growth and development in the Hamlet of Smith.
- 2) To increase the availability of community-related services and facilities within the Hamlet.
- 3) To enhance local autonomy and public awareness of the planning and development process.
- 4) To generate economic development opportunities in Smith and promote community expansion.

### 3.2 General Development Guidelines

The Planning Committee identified several development issues that it perceived should be addressed in this Plan. It expressed a concern that a significant amount of land in the Hamlet is presently controlled as Crown lands. Because of the restrictions placed on public lands, the Committee believed that future development in Smith could be somewhat limited without more local control over such lands.

Municipal water and sewer services have been installed under roadways; however, services have not been extended to property lot lines. As a result, it becomes relatively expensive to extend municipal services to properties since existing roads will have to be excavated.

#### 3.2.1 Objectives:

- 1) To increase local awareness and control over land development in the Hamlet.
- 2) To extend municipal services in a logical manner.

#### 3.2.2 Policies:

- 1) The Improvement District should make arrangements with the Public Lands Division, Alberta Forestry, Lands and Wildlife regarding the transfer of control over Crown Lands, to the I.D. within the Hamlet's boundaries.
- 2) The Improvement District shall require future roads and land use development in accordance with Schedule 'A' Hamlet of Smith Development Concept.
- 3) In order to ensure a long term supply of land and orderly Hamlet expansion, the Improvement District should arrange to expand Smith's existing boundaries in accordance with Schedule "A".
- 4) The Improvement District will require the developers of future subdivisions to install municipal sewage and water services to the property line of individual lots.
- 5) No development will be permitted within 100 feet (30 metres) of the top of bank of the Athabasca River.
- 6) All applications for subdivision approval shall be evaluated in terms of satisfying such factors as:
  - a) appropriate storm water management system;
  - b) protection of natural vegetation;
  - c) compatibility with the Hamlet's water distribution and sewage collection system; and
  - d) topographic and soil conditions.

- 7) The Improvement District shall promote the clean up of all poorly maintained vacant lots by warning affected property owners of this concern, and if necessary, make arrangements for such improvements and subsequently add the expenses to respective municipal tax assessments.

### 3.3 Residential Development

Residential development in Smith, in 1990, consisted of 52 single family houses, 11 multiple family dwelling units and 29 mobile homes. Mobile homes have only recently been a housing trend in Smith. For example, of the eight development permits issued for residential dwellings in the Hamlet since 1984, seven permits were issued for mobile homes.

The direction of future residential expansion is relatively limited. According to Alberta's Subdivision Regulation, no new residential subdivisions can be located within 1,000 feet (300 metres) of a sewage treatment facility. Because of this constraint, as well as the railway tracks, future residential development is basically confined to the lands situated west of Highway No. 2A.

At present there are very few vacant serviced lots available in the community for residential development. In order to attract new growth, additional residential lots are required. Any new residential development should allow for a variety of housing types, as well as be sensitive to the natural environment and compatible with adjacent land uses.

#### 3.3.1 Objectives

- 1) To promote the development of residential areas in a logical and orderly manner.
- 2) To ensure that new residential subdivisions are sensitive to the natural environment.
- 3) To encourage residential infilling and proper maintenance in existing developed neighbourhoods.

#### 3.3.2 Policies

- 1) The Improvement District shall promote development through infilling of existing residential lots throughout the Hamlet.
- 2) The Improvement District should ensure that there is sufficient land available in Smith for future residential development requirements.
- 3) Future residential expansion will be encouraged on the lands west of Highway 2A and immediately south and southwest of the Hamlet's existing built-up area.
- 4) A maximum of one single family home will be permitted on residential parcels in the Hamlet.

- 5) All new residential subdivisions shall be located at least 1000 feet (300 metres) from the Hamlet's sewage treatment facility in accordance with Alberta's Subdivision Regulation.
- 6) No residential development shall be permitted within 800 feet (245 metres) of the Alberta Forestry's helicopter pad pursuant to Transport Canada's requirements.
- 7) The Improvement District will investigate the need and feasibility of establishing a mobile home park, within the Hamlet, near existing municipal sewer and water facilities.
- 8) New single family residential subdivisions shall contain a variety of lots sizes with a lot width of at least 15 metres. Irregularly shaped parcels shall have an overall average width of 15 metres.
- 9) The Improvement District will encourage residential subdivision developers to provide lots for such medium density residential dwellings as duplexes and fourplexes.
- 10) New residential subdivisions shall be designed to properly integrate with existing neighbourhoods, natural features, public open space areas and roadways.
- 11) The Improvement District will promote proper maintenance of publicly owned residential properties.
- 12) The Improvement District will initiate required actions towards the condemnation and subsequent removal of poorly maintained or abandoned residential dwellings.

### 3.4 Commercial Development

The amount of commercial development in Smith is relatively limited. There is a small concentration of commercial uses in the Hamlet's central area. The local commercial base primarily consists of two automobile service stations, one hotel and a small grocery store.

There is a perceived need for more commercial land. Smith's central core area should be expanded and promoted as the preferred location for retail business activities. Commercial uses that generally cater to automobile and truck traffic should be encouraged along Highway No. 2A.

#### 3.4.1 Objectives

- 1) To strengthen Smith's importance as a regional service centre by promoting the development of a greater variety of retail businesses and other activities in the Hamlet's central commercial area.
- 2) To ensure that there is sufficient land in the community, in appropriate locations, to accommodate Smith's potential commercial development requirements.

#### 3.4.2 Policies

- 1) The Hamlet's central commercial area as shown on Schedule 'A', shall be promoted as the preferred location for new retail commercial development, professional services, financial services and government offices.
- 2) Commercial businesses that require large outdoor storage areas or provide services to automobile and truck traffic, should be developed on lands adjacent to Highway No. 2A.
- 3) The Improvement District shall ensure that all proposed commercial uses are developed in a manner that achieves:
  - a) minimal automobile and truck traffic congestion on adjacent roadways;
  - b) safe pedestrian access;
  - c) compatibility with surrounding land uses;
  - d) proper buffering or screening from any abutting residential uses; and
  - e) provision of an adequate number of on-site parking spaces.

### 3.5 Industrial Development

Smith's industrial base consists of a sawmill and the Canadian National Railway. Future community growth will depend on expansion of existing industries and arrival of new businesses. To attract new industries, land must be available to accommodate new development.

The location of industrial activities, within a community, is also very important since such activities may not be very compatible with residential areas. Industries that generate noise, smell and safety concerns could adversely affect the quality of life.

#### 3.5.1 Objectives

- 1) To ensure that there is sufficient land in the community to accommodate potential future industrial development requirements.
- 2) To minimize the impact of new development in terms of quality of life in the Hamlet, the natural environment, and existing land uses.

#### 3.5.2 Policies

- 1) The Improvement District shall direct future industrial development in accordance with Schedule A, Hamlet of Smith Development Concept.
- 2) Every development permit application for a proposed industrial operation shall provide the following information:
  - a) type of industry;
  - b) site location;
  - c) landscaping and screening plan;
  - d) building scale and elevations;
  - e) estimated number of employees;
  - f) water requirements and source;
  - g) type of waste effluents produced;
  - h) amount of noise to be generated;
  - i) method of sewage disposal; and
  - j) proposed location of main transportation routes.
- 3) The Municipal Planning Commission shall require that all proposed industrial activities have adequate buffers between nearby residential uses.

- 4) The Improvement District may promote the development of a dry land industrial park.
- 5) Development on unserved industrial sites will be limited to those uses which require significant areas for outdoor storage and such other facilities as small office buildings and warehouses.
- 6) The Improvement District will promote the development of an industrial park consisting of a variety of lot sizes in order to satisfy the potential land requirements of a variety of industries.
- 7) The Improvement District should not allow any industrial use to locate within the Hamlet if, in its opinion, the proposed use is considered not compatible with existing community development and human health due to noise, vibration, noxious odours or potential public safety hazards.

### 3.6 Institutional Development

Institutional uses consist of churches, cemeteries, schools, hospitals, recreational facilities, and government activities. The availability of locally-provided public services and facilities provides a significant contribution toward a community's general quality of life.

There is a perceived need for more public health care services in the Hamlet, especially for senior citizens, as well as other community services. In recent years, the local availability of public services has either declined or has been eliminated. It is therefore important that the community improve the existing levels of public services designate land to accommodate potential future institutional development.

#### 3.6.1 Objectives

- 1) To provide an appropriate level of public services that satisfies local and regional needs.
- 2) To ensure that there is sufficient lands, appropriately located through the community, for future institutional development.

#### 3.6.2 Policies

- 1) The Improvement District shall strongly discourage any further reduction of currently available public services.

- 2) In order to reduce the need for seniors and other residents to travel beyond the community for health and public services, the Improvement District shall encourage a greater level of such services in the community.
- 3) The Improvement District shall monitor future population growth to determine the need for additional school facilities, fire, policing and ambulance services.
- 4) The Improvement District shall encourage institutional land uses to locate, when practical, near the central area of the Hamlet in order to enhance this area as the primary focal point of the community.
- 5) Institutional land uses will be designated in accordance with Schedule A, Hamlet of Smith Development Concept.

### 3.7 Parks and Recreation

Communities should ensure that their residents have adequate access to a variety of recreational facilities and public parks. There is an apparent need to develop more recreational areas and facilities, as well as upgrade some of the existing facilities in the Hamlet. Natural areas, such as ravines and treed areas, should also be protected from development because of poor soil or water drainage problems. Some of these areas could be developed into pedestrian and biking trails that provide linkages to recreational areas throughout the community.

#### 3.7.1 Objectives

- 1) To provide an adequate range of parks and recreational facilities that satisfies the needs of Smith's residents.

#### 3.7.2 Policies

- 1) The Improvement District should construct a boat launching facility near the Highway 2A bridge over the Athabasca River.
- 2) Potential campground sites should be established in accordance with Schedule A, Hamlet of Smith Development Concept.
- 3) An indoor skating rink should be developed in the Hamlet.

- 4) The Improvement District should promote the development of such recreational facilities as baseball diamonds, soccer fields, children's playgrounds, a downhill ski slope and cross-country ski trails.
- 5) The Improvement District should ensure that the provision of recreational activities and facilities keeps pace with the needs of a growing community.
- 6) As allowed in the Planning Act, a maximum of 10% of net developable land in new subdivisions will be required for municipal reserve, in the form of land and/or money.
- 7) The Improvement District should protect such natural amenities as river banks and ravines from future development.

### 3.8 Transportation

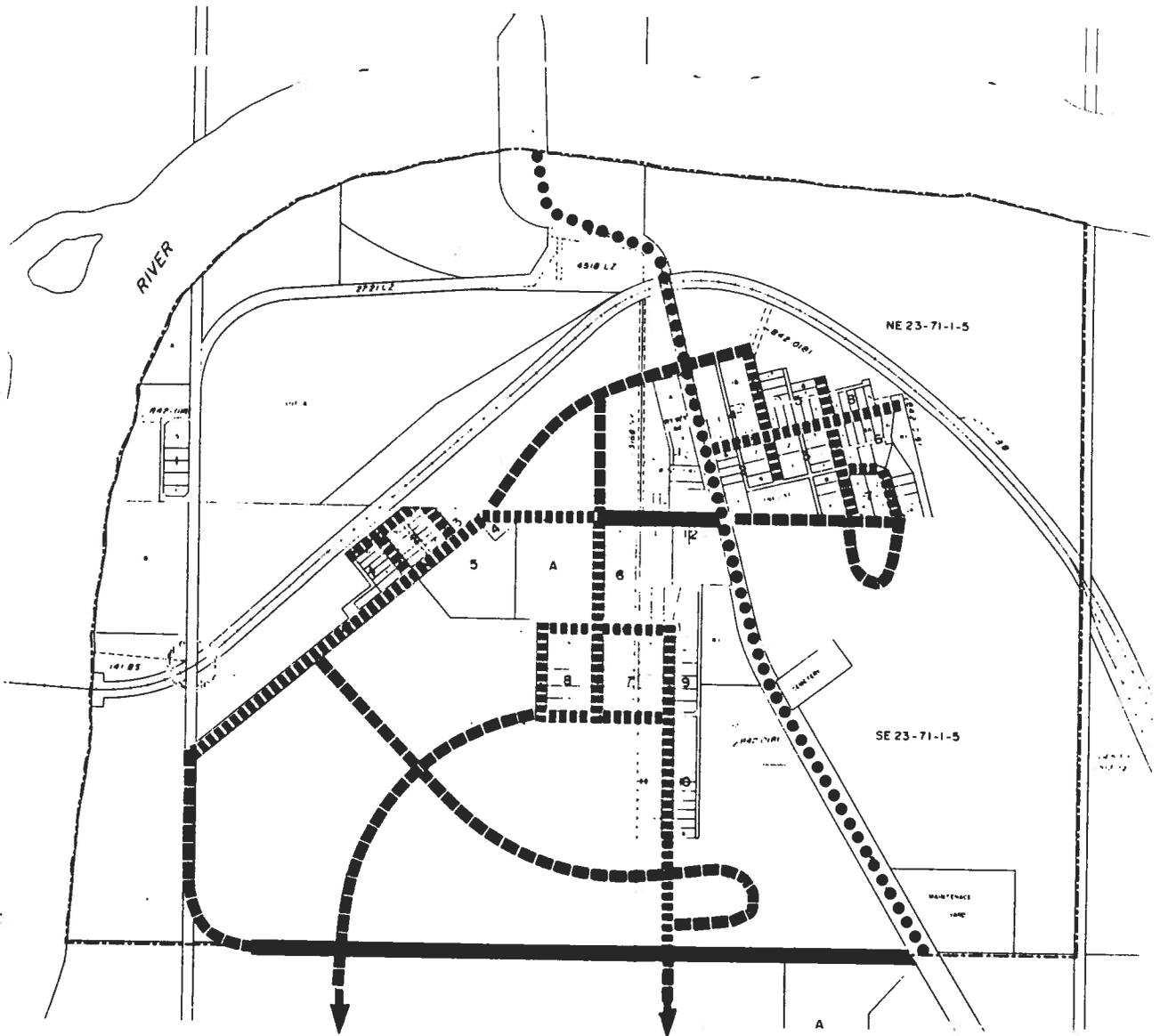
Smith's history has been significantly influenced by modes of transport. Several concerns were raised regarding the condition of roads both within and near the Hamlet. Poorly maintained roads create potential traffic hazards in terms of dust and safety. Other primary transportation concerns were the traffic congestion on Highway No. 2A caused by trains and the general lack of inter-community passenger bus services.

3.8.1 Objectives

- 1) To improve the quality of the local and regional transportation system.
- 2) To encourage an increased level of passenger bus services to and from the Hamlet.

3.8.2 Policies

- 1) The Improvement District should ensure that road maintenance and paving improvements are brought to an appropriate standard satisfactory to local residents.
- 2) Improved dust control measures are required for all local roads in the Hamlet.
- 3) The Improvement District should encourage the construction of a new and wider bridge across the Athabasca River.
- 4) There should be a "runaway lane" for the heavy trucks on Highway No. 2A, immediately north of the Hamlet.
- 5) The Improvement District shall consult with Canadian National Railways to determine an appropriate solution to the traffic interruption problems caused by trains blocking Highway No. 2A.
- 6) The Improvement District will contact various passenger bus companies to determine the feasibility of increasing scheduled bus services in Smith.
- 7) The Municipal Planning Commission may require proposed commercial and industrial developments to be setback at least 75 feet (22.9 metres) from the Highway No. 2A right-of-way.
- 8) The Improvement District will promote the development and maintenance of Hamlet roads in accordance with Figure 2 - Recommended Road Network.



- ..... Arterial Road
- Collector Road
- ..... Local Road
- Future Road

**Figure 2**  
**RECOMMENDED ROAD NETWORK**

### 3.9 Economic Development

In order to sustain long term economic growth and stability, it is important that small communities focus on diversifying their economic base. Economic diversification is not a simple process. Successful economic development programs require a substantial amount of community commitment and cooperation from all levels of government. Opportunities to diversify the local economic base might include the expansion of agricultural-related activities, tourism or new industrial businesses. To ensure Smith's potential for future residential growth, the community must take appropriate actions to stimulate new commercial and industrial development in the Hamlet and surrounding region.

#### 3.9.1 Objectives

- 1) To encourage the vitality and expansion of Smith's economic base.

#### 3.9.2 Policies

- 1) The Improvement District should investigate the feasibility of attracting new businesses to the community or surrounding region, through the use of financial or local improvement incentives.
- 2) The Improvement District could promote new tourism development in the region by encouraging more recreational cottage development on Fawcett Lake.
- 3) The Improvement District should support an increased level of fish stocking by Alberta Fish and Wildlife in Fawcett Lake in order to enhance tourism through improved recreational fishing opportunities.
- 4) The Improvement District should promote the upgrading of Fawcett Lake Road north to Amoco Road for the purpose of improving the area's accessibility for industry and tourists.
- 5) The Improvement District should identify and promote potential visitor attractions such as outdoor recreational activities, as well as historic sites and buildings.

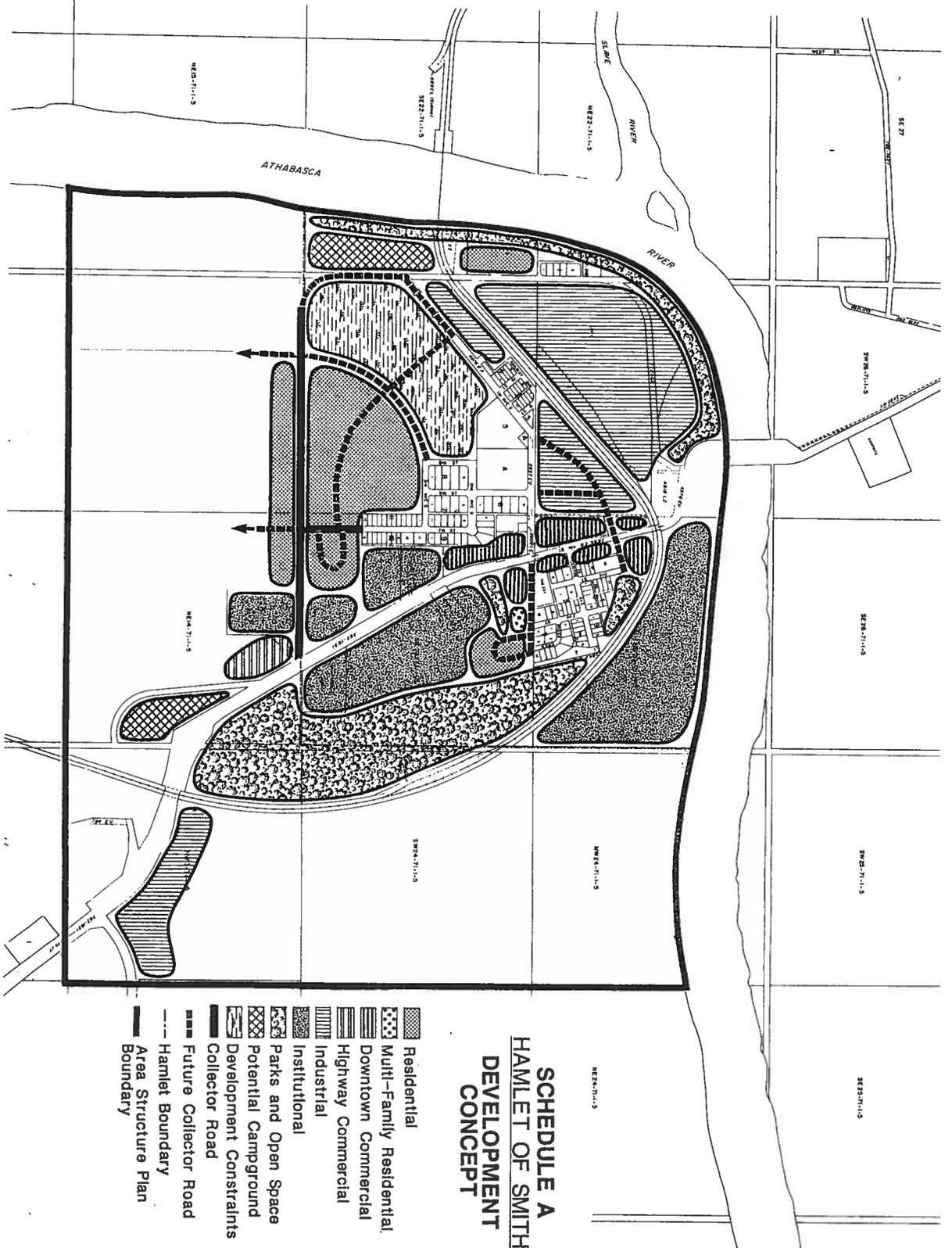
#### 4.0 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

##### 4.1 Interpretation and Implementation

- 4.1.1 This Area Structure Plan was prepared to influence the decision-making process affecting all land use and development matters affecting the community.
- 4.1.2 To successfully implement this Area Structure Plan, the Improvement District must ensure that its development evaluation and processing procedures comply with the general spirit and intent of the Plan.
- 4.1.3 The Municipal Planning Commission may approve a proposed development permit application which represents a minor deviation from the contents of this Plan, without the need for an amendment to this Area Structure Plan, provided that the proposal complies with the regulations of the Improvement District's Land Use Order and demonstrates sufficient planning merit to warrant approval.
- 4.1.4 All land development and building construction in the Hamlet requires a development permit issued by the Development Officer or Municipal Planning Commission. A development permit can only be issued if the proposal complies with the regulations contained in the I.D.'s Land Use Order and this Area Structure Plan.
- 4.1.5 All subdivision applications within the Hamlet shall be evaluated by the Municipal Planning Commission, who in turn will ensure that
  - a) the proposal complies with the spirit and intent of this Plan;
  - b) there is adequate provision of community-related services to support the proposed development; and
  - c) the application demonstrates sufficient overall land use planning merit to warrant subdivision approval.

##### 4.2 Plan Amendments and Review

- 4.2.1 The contents of this Area Structure Plan may be amended by the Minister of Municipal Affairs, at the request of the I.D. Advisory Council, to reflect any relevant changing planning needs or requirements in the Hamlet.
- 4.2.2 The I.D.'s Land Use Order should be amended, upon adoption of this Area Structure Plan by the Minister of Municipal Affairs, to incorporate any land use planning considerations contained in this Plan.
- 4.2.3 The Hamlet of Smith Area Structure Plan represents a long term land development strategy for the community. Over time, however, local needs, issues and development trends may change considerably. Therefore, formal review of this Plan should be undertaken by the year 1997.



**SCHEDULE A  
HAMLET OF SMITH  
DEVELOPMENT  
CONCEPT**

-  Residential
-  Multi-Family Residential
-  Downtown Commercial
-  Highway Commercial
-  Industrial
-  Institutional
-  Parks and Open Space
-  Potential Campground
-  Development Constraints
-  Collector Road
-  Future Collector Road
-  Hamlet Boundary
-  Area Structure Plan Boundary