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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Municipal Development Plan Purpose

Municipal planning in Alberta is administered under the provisions of Part 17 of the Municipal Government Act, RSA 2000 (hereafter referred to as the “Act”). The purpose of planning in Alberta is provided in Section 617 of the Act as follows:

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

In Alberta municipalities, the primary land use planning policy document used to achieve this broader purpose is the Municipal Development Plan (“MDP” or “Plan”). It provides a framework for the ongoing development of the Municipal District of Lesser Slave River No. 124 (the “MD”). The MDP outlines a set of long-term goals and policies to guide the planning and coordination of development and subdivision in the MD.

The Plan will assist Council in rationally addressing ongoing conflicts between resource-based industries and residential or recreational land uses; hamlet growth and servicing options; the accommodation of industrial and commercial development; future transportation networks; and the acquisition and use of reserve land for parks and other municipal purposes.

Regular reviews of the MDP ensure that policies remain relevant over time and accurately reflect the priorities of the community. A review of the 2012 MDP was initiated in 2021 to address key strategic priorities previously identified by Council; many of these priorities remain relevant in 2025:

- Increasing flexibility respecting the allocation of municipal reserve at subdivision;
- Establishing clearer criteria respecting the allocation of environmental reserve at subdivision;
- Accommodating economic development initiatives;
- Protecting and retaining agricultural lands;
- Developing recreational areas, trails and open spaces; and
- Ensuring consistency with Council's Integrated Community Sustainability Plan, Council's Strategic Plan, and Council's Vision, Mission and Values statement.

Other key topics examined in 2021 include the extension of rural road infrastructure, incentives for residential growth, and the character and form of development in new residential areas, along with application of stronger zoning and other land use planning tools to ensure that different land uses coexist and complement each other. In addition, MDP policies respecting the implementation of Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta (FRIAA) FireSmart principles and emergency response have been significantly enhanced in response to major forest fire events experienced in the Spring of 2011. Further, the 2012 MDP was reviewed to ensure that the requirements of the Act are met, and that applicable provisions of the Alberta Land Stewardship Act (ALSA) are addressed where warranted.

This review process, as conducted in 2021, was completed in conjunction with several engagement opportunities including the public, members of the Municipal Planning Commission (MPC), and Council.

Administration has utilized the feedback provided during this review and engagement process in order to achieve an updated plan in 2025.

The MDP, in its essence, will help to create complete communities throughout the MD and provide a basis for building consensus around change. It will also provide the MD with a holistic approach to integrate the MD's growth and development with surrounding municipalities and jurisdictions. However, this plan is a general guide and may not cover all situations and circumstances. As a result, more detailed policy documents such as Area Structure Plans, master plans, and mitigation plans are needed to support the Plan in its implementation and meeting its community building goals. Some areas of the MD are more likely to see future growth and will need more detailed planning and land use guidance than this MDP can provide. In those cases, relevant Area Structure Plans will be implemented to address the circumstances of these specific areas.

## 1.2 Conformity with Plan

MDPs are prepared and adopted in accordance with the requirements of Section 632 of the Act and are mandatory for all municipalities. The Act provides guidance for Plan content through the provision of mandatory and optional requirements as follows:

### *Mandatory Requirements*

- Future land use
- Proposals for future development
- Coordination with adjacent municipalities if no intermunicipal development plan in place
- Transportation systems
- Municipal services
- Land adjacent to sour gas facilities
- Municipal, school, or municipal and school reserve
- Protection of agricultural operations

### *Optional Requirements*

- Finance and programming of infrastructure
- Coordination of programs
- Environmental matters
- Financial resources
- Economic development
- Development constraints
- Any other matters relating to physical, social or economic development
- Conservation reserve

Section 637 of the Act does not require a municipality to undertake any projects that might be specified in the Plan. Section 638 requires that all statutory plans (Intermunicipal Development Plans, Area Structure Plans, and Area Redevelopment Plans) be consistent with each other. Any new land use or development proposal that does not comply with this MDP cannot be considered unless the Plan itself is amended to accommodate that proposal. Land uses in existence prior to adoption of the MDP which do not comply with the Plan are allowed to continue, subject to the Act.

## 1.3 Legislative Requirements

- 1.3.1 This Plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Act, as well as the principles and strategies contained in the Alberta Land-Use Framework (ALUF) and the MD's Intermunicipal Development Plan with the Town of Slave Lake and Sawridge First Nation.
- 1.3.2 The MD shall participate in the formulation of the Upper Athabasca Regional Plan in order to communicate the MD's vision, goals and policies contained in the MDP, and will amend the MDP to be consistent with the Upper Athabasca Regional Plan once adopted, as required.

## 1.4 Interpretation

- 1.4.1 For the purpose of interpreting this MDP, the following definitions shall apply:

### *Area Structure Plan*

Means a Statutory Plan adopted by Council, prepared pursuant to Section 633 of the Act, that provides a framework for subsequent subdivision and development of an area of land at a conceptual level of detail.

### *Environmentally Sensitive Area*

An area that is determined to be generally unsuitable for development due to the presence of excessive or unstable slopes, the potential for erosion or flooding, or which contains sensitive ecological habitat. This definition applies to lakeshores, rivers and other water courses, river valleys, forests and vegetation, unique topographic features, environmentally hazardous lands, and important wildlife habitat and corridors.

### *Internal Subdivision Road*

A public road that provides access to lots within a registered subdivision.

### *Outline Plan*

Means a non-statutory, detailed land use plan for an area of land that is typically smaller than the land area encompassed by an Area Structure Plan and which conforms to all Statutory Plans. An Outline Plan may be adopted by resolution of Council pursuant to Part 17 of the Act.

### *Regulation*

The Subdivision and Development Regulation (AR 43/2002).

### *Rural Municipality*

Means Westlock, Northern Sunrise, Woodlands, and Athabasca Counties, the MDs of Opportunity No. 17 and Big Lakes, and the Sawridge First Nation.

### *South Shore*

Means that area of the MD that consists of the communities of Canyon Creek, Widewater, Wagner, Nine Mile Point/Nine Mile Point East and Assineau.

### *Statutory Plan*

Means an Intermunicipal Development Plan, Municipal Development Plan, Area Structure Plan, or Area Redevelopment adopted by bylaw under the authority of the Act.

All other words or expressions shall have the meanings respectively assigned to them in the Act, Subdivision and Development Regulation, and the MD's Land Use Bylaw.

- 1.4.2 This Plan contains policies utilizing the terms “shall”, “should” and “may”, which are to be interpreted as follows:
- “Shall” means that a policy is mandatory and must be complied with,
  - “Should” means a policy where compliance with the general principle is required but the method and level of compliance is subject to the discretion of the applicable authority on a case-by-case basis,
  - “May” means a policy is discretionary with the level of compliance determined on a case-by-case basis by the applicable authority.
- 1.4.3 The policies set forth in this Plan apply to all lands contained within the corporate boundaries of the MD. In the event of an inconsistency between the MDP and the Intermunicipal Development Plan respecting lands within the boundaries of the MD, the Intermunicipal Development Plan shall prevail.
- 1.4.4 The land use area boundaries identified in this MDP are considered approximate and not absolute. Any minor adjustments or variances that may be necessary to land use policy areas shall not require an amendment to this MDP.

## 1.5 Council Vision

In order to optimize the MDP's effectiveness, it is critical that it be consistent with the directions and priorities established in Council's Strategic Plan and visioning processes. In Council's Strategic Plan, the following mission statement was adopted:

*We manage and develop the infrastructure of our MD to protect the inherent beauty of our landscape. We provide stability and opportunities for growth, for the MD and for the individuals who live here.*

Key components of the Council vision include:

- Capitalizing on our geographic location to realize our potential as a major route to the North and the Pacific.
- Leveraging our renewable resources to provide sustainable infrastructure with taxation generated from the oil and gas industry.
- Pursuing opportunities for concentrated processing of our resources at Mitsue Industrial Park and elsewhere where infrastructure, environment, and lifestyle warrant.
- Planning our communities with consideration for environmental impact, design integrity, segregation of use, the nature of neighbourhoods, the placement and type of local improvements, and the sense of privacy and space in rural settings.
- Supporting initiatives for community halls, common green spaces and places for recreation, gathering and communicating.
- Providing opportunities for youth and stability for seniors.
- Sustaining the municipality as a place where prosperity is the norm, and where people are equipped to care for themselves, for the land, and for one another.
- Community policing to ensure the safety of residents and enforcement of MD Bylaws.
- Flood and drought management and mitigation.

All of these components have a connection to MDP policy. The implications of these directions on the MDP are as follows:

- Inclusion of policy language related to the maintenance and improvement to rural roads and infrastructure;
- Incorporation of environmental protection and stewardship policies;
- Expansion of existing economic development policies, with a focus on growth and affordability;
- Inclusion of strategies and policies respecting emergency preparedness;
- Incorporation of more clear policy direction on land use development and community planning; and
- Identification and preservation of historic resources, cost sharing of recreational services with adjacent municipalities, identification of natural areas and connectivity, and open space planning.

It is intended that the policies of this MDP help achieve this vision.

## 1.6 Municipal Development Plan Goal

The goal of the MDP is based upon an evaluation of various land use issues and concerns facing the MD. This goal becomes the guiding principle and foundation of this MDP.

A significant amount of land in the MD is currently used for natural resource development, including agriculture. Council foresees these resource industries will continue to be important to the long term social and economic welfare of the MD. However, it is necessary that the MDP protect both the predominantly residential nature of the communities within the MD and the diversification of industry and the economic base. In this manner, an environment will be provided which benefits both industry and our communities. It is recognized that there are sufficient areas of the MD which can accommodate nonresidential land uses without jeopardizing our communities. The MDP goal, therefore, encourages opportunities for well planned growth and development. This will promote a diversification of the MD's economic base.

*It is the goal of this MDP to protect and develop communities within the MD in accordance with the communities' vision while providing the necessary opportunities for maximizing the economic use of the MD's resource land base and providing for industrial and economic diversification within the overall context of well-planned growth, change and development.*

## 1.7 General Development Policies

### *Legislative Conformity*

- 1.7.1 The MD must conform to the policies of the Province of Alberta, the Provincial Land Use Framework, Intermunicipal Development Plans, and any Regional Plan when considering MDP updates, MDP amendments, Land Use Bylaw amendments, or other development proposals.

### *Land Use Plan*

- 1.7.2 Future development in the MD shall generally conform to the Land Use Concept Maps (Maps 1 and 2). The maps are designed to provide the MD with a broad framework for development and are not intended to be applied on a site-by-site basis.

### *Area Structure Plan*

- 1.7.3
- a. In accordance with section 633 of the Act, the MD may adopt an ASP as a framework for subsequent subdivision and development of an area of land. An ASP must describe:
    - a. the sequence of development proposed for the area

- b. the land uses proposed for the area, either generally or with respect to specific parts of the area
- c. the density of population proposed for the area, either generally or with respect to specific parts of the area
- d. the general location of major transportation routes and public utilities
- b. In accordance with the Act, an ASP may contain any other matters, including matters relating to reserves, as Council considers necessary.
- c. The MD may require an Area Structure Plan (ASP) to be created as part of an application for subdivision, rezoning, or development, in accordance with the Act.
- d. The MD shall deem if an ASP is necessary in accordance with the MD's Area Structure Plan Policy.
- e. The MD may, at its discretion, initiate the preparation of an ASP or initiate the review of an existing ASP.
- f. In accordance with the hierarchy of statutory plans established in the Act, all ASPs in the MD must be consistent with this MDP.

#### *Outline Plan*

- 1.7.4 The MD may require the preparation of an Outline Plan where:
- a) No ASP exists and is in effect in the proposed area for development;
  - b) The proposed area of land for development does not meet the requirements for an ASP as outlined in the MD's Area Structure Plan Policy; or
  - c) When the Development Authority requires greater detail to assess proposed lot configuration, access, servicing, or environmental considerations.
- 1.7.5 The MD shall deem if an Outline Plan is necessary in accordance with the MD's Outline Plan Policy.

#### *Evaluation of Applications*

- 1.7.6 All applications for Land Use Bylaw amendments, subdivisions or development permits shall be evaluated by the MD according to criteria as specified in the LUB.

#### *Developer Responsibilities*

- 1.7.7
- a) Developers shall install all necessary infrastructure required to service development in accordance with MD standards (refer to the MD's current Municipal Servicing Standards). Failure to do so will result in infrastructure not being accepted by the MD upon completion.

#### *Development Agreements*

- 1.7.8 The MD may use Development Agreements, as permitted under Sections 650 and 655 of the Act, to manage and ensure orderly land development, municipal servicing, and infrastructure responsibilities. Through Development Agreements, as per Sections 650 and 655 of the Act, the MD may require developers to:
- a) Construct or upgrade municipal infrastructure, including roads, sidewalks, trails, street lighting, stormwater management systems, and municipal utilities;
  - b) Complete off-site infrastructure improvements necessary to support the proposed development;

- c) Provide security deposits to guarantee the timely and satisfactory completion and maintenance of municipal infrastructure;
- d) Convey necessary lands, easements, or rights-of-way to the MD for public infrastructure, utility corridors, municipal reserves, or environmental protection;
- e) Implement environmental mitigation, flood protection, or emergency management measures;
- f) Clearly define responsibilities for ongoing maintenance, operation, and eventual transfer of infrastructure and amenities to the MD; or
- g) other obligations as permitted under the Act and deemed to be in the public interest by the MD.

#### *Land Use Bylaw*

1.7.9 The Land Use Bylaw establishes standards for development in the MD, while conforming to and implementing the policies of this Plan.

#### *Reports Required*

1.7.10 Engineering Servicing Design Reports, Geotechnical Reports, Hydrogeological Reports, Historical Resource Impact Assessments, Flood Risk Assessments, and other reports deemed necessary may be required at the discretion of the MD in support of applications for rezoning, subdivisions, or developments.

#### *Fuel Maps*

1.7.11 The MD should assist the Province with preparation of accurate fuel maps for FRIAA planning.

#### *Sour Gas Facilities*

1.7.12 All subdivision and development shall abide by any Provincial regulations respecting separation from sour gas facilities. In this respect, all subdivision and development proposals shall be referred to the appropriate Provincial regulatory body for review and advice before an application is considered.

#### *Electric Utilities*

1.7.13

- a) Electrical utility companies should maintain a proactive hazard tree removal program along power line corridors to reduce wildfire risk and promote public safety.
- b) Underground utility cables should be installed in new developments and distribution power line projects where feasible and appropriate.

#### *Home Businesses*

1.7.14 The MD encourages the development of home based businesses that are compatible with surrounding land uses and are located in areas so as to minimize land use conflict, traffic impacts, or nuisance at an appropriate scale and intensity. Home Business approvals shall be administered through the standards established under the MD's Land Use Bylaw, at the discretion of the Development Authority.

## 1.8 General - Environmental Policies

### *Flood Hazard*

- 1.8.1 Parts of the MD are subject to potential flooding, as identified by ongoing flood mapping and studies.

No new subdivisions or permanent structures shall be permitted within the 1:100 year flood plain of any river, stream or lake shore unless an assessment prepared by a qualified professional determines that the flood plain does not impact the development, or proper flood proofing techniques are applied which will mitigate the impact. A certificate from a qualified, registered professional engineer shall be required to confirm that the development has been properly flood proofed.

The MD should work with Provincial authorities to continuously update flood hazard mapping and maintain appropriate risk management for areas that flood.

Municipal assets and infrastructure should be upgraded to withstand flooding events within the 1:100 year flood plain.

The MD should maintain ongoing dialogue with Alberta Safety Codes authorities working within the MD to ensure that they are only issuing permits that meet the appropriate flood proofing measures within areas identified in the LUB as being at risk for flood hazards.

- 1.8.2 The floodplain is considered to be the area of land adjacent to a river, stream, or lake that is subject to flooding during a 1:100 year flood event. The flood plain consists of both the flood fringe and the floodway.

A floodway is defined as the portion of the floodplain where floodwaters are deepest and fastest. No new development is permitted in the floodway.

A flood fringe is defined as the outer portion of the floodplain, where floodwaters are shallower and slower-moving. Development in the flood fringe may be allowed with appropriate flood-proofing and mitigation, as approved by the Development Authority.

- 1.8.3 As per Section 643 of the MGA, buildings or uses lawfully in existence before new flood-related regulations were introduced can be considered as legal, non-conforming uses. The MD will allow for existing buildings in the floodway to remain. However, expansion and intensification of use is prohibited. Rebuilding after destruction or major damage may be considered at the discretion of the Development Authority, provided that a Development Agreement is entered into and registered as a caveat on title that indemnifies the MD of any liability.
- 1.8.4 Existing legally established buildings entirely or partly within the flood fringe may be maintained or repaired. Additions or structural alterations may be permitted where flood mitigation measures, including but not limited to minimum finished floor elevations, are incorporated to the satisfaction of the Development Authority.

#### *Environmental Reserve*

- 1.8.5 In accordance with the Act, Environmental Reserve (ER) may, at the time of subdivision, be applied to lands that are subject to a flood hazard, contain sensitive habitat, or are subject to potential erosion due to steep or unstable slopes.

#### *Reports for Environmental Reserve Confirmation*

- 1.8.6 Where the need for ER requires confirmation, or situations arise where the amount of ER proposed to be dedicated exceeds the allocations identified in the Act, the MD shall require that a geotechnical report, biophysical assessment, and/or environmental assessment be prepared to support the proposed dedication.

#### *Riparian Area Protection*

- 1.8.7
- a) For subdivisions adjacent to water bodies, ER should include sufficient shore lands so as to provide adequate protection for waterfowl and fish habitat, and public shoreline access in accordance with the Act. In these areas, the ER allocation may be supplemented by Municipal Reserve (MR) where the additional lands are required to accommodate parks or playground areas, trail corridors or walkways, or parking areas.
  - b) Section 664 of the MGA allows municipalities to require up to 6 metres of ER along water bodies (from top of bank). The MD may require increased Environmental Reserve dedication beyond 6 metres in locations where site conditions (e.g. steep slopes, erosion hazards, sensitive habitat, or public access needs) warrant. In such cases, the MD may request an Environmental Site Assessment or Biophysical Impact Assessment to inform the appropriate buffer width.
  - c) The MD promotes the retention of natural vegetation and the minimum alteration of land for development along watercourses or lakeshores in order to preserve natural habitat.
  - d) The MD promotes the protection of wetlands located within its boundaries by recognizing their presence as designated by the Province. Development and subdivision within these areas should be limited and referred to the Province for approval under the Water Act and associated regulations, as applicable.
  - e) The MD should have regard for any existing local watershed management plans when making decisions respecting subdivisions and development.

### *Sand and Gravel Extraction*

- 1.8.8 The MD shall coordinate the permitting and licensing process for sand and gravel operations with the appropriate Provincial regulatory body responsible for regulating aggregate extraction activities. This coordination will ensure compliance with provincial environmental standards and minimize potential impacts on adjacent lands and land uses.

## 1.9 General - Social Policies

### *Municipal Reserve Dedication Requirements*

- 1.9.1 Pursuant to Section 666 of the Act, the MD shall require that the 10% maximum allotment of MR be dedicated for subdivisions in accordance with the MGA and the following:
- a) Where buffers are required between incompatible land uses; or
  - b) To implement the open space requirements of an approved Statutory Plan, or
  - c) To implement the land or capital requirements identified in a Recreation and Open Space Master Plan or other recreational facility need identified by the MD.

In all other situations, MR shall be dedicated as money-in-lieu.

### *Money-in-Lieu of Municipal Reserve*

- 1.9.2 When MR is to be provided as money-in-place pursuant to Section 667 of the Act, the rate of payment shall be based on the assessed value of the subject land as determined by the MD assessor.

### *Deferment of Municipal Reserve*

- 1.9.3 MR requirements may be deferred regardless of the nature of the proposed subdivision if required to assemble larger school or recreation sites in accordance with an approved Area Structure Plan, if the subject land is located in an urban expansion area as defined in a Statutory Plan, or if the amount of MR owing is relatively small and can be dedicated as a larger amount in the future.

### *Transfer of Municipal Reserve*

- 1.9.4 MR may be transferred between parcels that have the same owner in accordance with the Act. MR may not be transferred between parcels with different owners unless by way of deferment in accordance with MD policy.

### *Design Controls*

- 1.9.5 The MD shall enforce design guidelines and landscaping standards along highways that serve to enhance the visual form and character of development.

### *Communications*

- 1.9.6 The MD shall advocate to communication service providers for improved communications facilities and services on behalf of its residents.

### *Trails*

- 1.9.7 The MD may prepare a Trails and Open Spaces Master Plan to include, but not be limited to:
- a) Trail networks to accommodate both pedestrian and off-road vehicle traffic;
  - b) Establishing criteria for developer responsibility for new trails in private developments;

- c) New trails around communities and industrial and commercial areas to act as surface fuel breaks and provide access for suppression crews;
- d) Integration with other regional trail networks; and
- e) Community hubs and bench programs.

#### *Historical Resources*

- 1.9.8 The MD shall encourage and may support the efforts of public or private agencies in the acquisition, restoration, preservation, conservation or interpretation of historic resources in the MD.

#### *Historic Site Designation*

- 1.9.9 The MD may consider designating valuable historic sites and buildings within the MD as Municipal Historic Sites or encourage the Province to designate valuable historic sites and buildings within the MD as Provincial Historic Sites where it considers such action to be in the public interest.

## 1.10 General - Transportation Policies

#### *Road Access Required*

- 1.10.1 All subdivision and development proposals shall have access to developed roads. The provision of roads associated with a proposed subdivision or development are the sole responsibility of the developer, and must adhere to the criteria as listed in the LUB.

#### *Compliance with Standards*

- 1.10.2 All roads shall be developed in accordance with the MD's Engineering Design Standards. This includes the development of service roads for Highways as shown on the Policy Area Maps, internal subdivision roads, and grid roads.

#### *Proximity to Highways*

- 1.10.3 The MD shall encourage traffic-generating developments to be located near provincial highways or major municipal roads to ensure safe and efficient access. Where a development or subdivision proposal results in the need for upgrades to the highway or local road system, the developer shall be responsible for the costs of such improvements. Required upgrades may include access improvements, turning lanes, acceleration/deceleration lanes, or other traffic safety measures as determined by the MD and/or Alberta Transportation.

#### *Provincial Referrals*

- 1.10.4 The MD shall refer all Area Structure Plans and subdivision applications involving land located within 1.6 kilometres of a Provincial highway to the appropriate Provincial regulatory body responsible for highways for comment.
- 1.10.5 The MD shall refer all rezoning and development permit applications involving land located within 300 metres of a Provincial highway or within 800 metres of a provincial highway and public road intersection to the appropriate Provincial regulatory body responsible for highways for comment.

### *Road Use Agreements*

- 1.10.6 As a condition of approval of a development, the MD may require that the developer/operator enter into a Road Use Agreement with the MD to address haul routes, maintenance and/or upgrading if necessary, dust control, snow removal, and any other matters relative to the road use.

### *Road Naming and Addressing*

- 1.10.7 The provision of municipal address signage for individual lots shall be provided at the cost of the developer. All naming and addressing of roads shall conform to the MD's Municipal Servicing Standards.

### *Roadside Cleanup*

- 1.10.8 The MD shall work with the Provincial government and other jurisdictions on the periodic cleaning of roadsides and ensuring removal of potential fuel materials from Highways and other roadsides.

### *Road Design*

- 1.10.9 All internal subdivision roads shall be designed and constructed in accordance with FRIAA principles. This includes providing roads in new developments with multiple entrance and exit points to facilitate evacuation and access for emergency vehicles. In addition, all roads requiring bulbing shall be designed to accommodate turnaround dimensions for fire fighting vehicles. The MD may require input from emergency services departments or qualified fire officials to confirm that proposed road designs support safe emergency access and egress.

### *Transportation Master Plan*

- 1.10.10 The MD shall develop and maintain a Transportation Master Plan (TMP) to guide the long-term planning, development, and maintenance of the municipal transportation network.

The TMP will serve as a strategic framework for identifying road classifications, future network expansion, connectivity improvements, and integration with regional transportation systems.

In support of the TMP, the MD shall also establish a road improvement prioritization system and road improvement program to guide infrastructure investment decisions based on factors such as traffic volumes, safety, road condition, and growth patterns.

### *Railway Protection*

- 1.10.11 New development abutting a railway right-of-way should provide a safety barrier or proper setback distance to current or future railway lines. It is recommended to consult the local railway company for setback distances for development in proximity to railway operations. The MD shall also ensure the entrances/exits to new subdivisions will not be interfered by railway operations or setbacks.

## **1.11 General - Utility Policies**

### *Underground Utilities*

- 1.11.1 The MD shall promote the placement of all utilities underground in a manner consistent with the Provincial Transportation Utility Guidance Manual.

### *Public Utilities*

- 1.11.2 Public utilities such as utility lines, telecommunication facilities, green-energy systems or similar infrastructure may be developed, provided they meet the regulations of the applicable Federal or Provincial legislation, the LUB, and are compatible with adjacent development.

Proposed utility lines and facilities should incorporate appropriate buffer zones and setbacks to reduce land-use conflicts with residential, agricultural, recreational, and environmentally sensitive areas. Buffering may include vegetative buffers, fencing, berms, setbacks, or other mitigating strategies determined through the development approval process.

### *Compliance with Standards*

- 1.11.3 All municipal infrastructure systems, including sewage collection and water distribution systems, and sanitary waste disposal sites installed by private developers shall meet or exceed all appropriate MD, Provincial and Federal standards.

### *Protection of Groundwater*

- 1.11.4 Any future subdivision and development which may jeopardize existing groundwater supplies or quality or pose problems for sewage disposal shall not be approved. Further, all developments are required to meet Provincial standards for water supply and sewage disposal.

### *Water and Sewer Servicing*

- 1.11.5 All developments located outside of serviced hamlets or designated Community Areas shall be required to provide private water supply and private sewage disposal systems, in accordance with applicable Provincial legislation, codes, and standards.

Where municipal water and/or wastewater infrastructure is available within or adjacent to a proposed development area, the development shall be required to connect to that infrastructure, unless otherwise approved by the MD.

In areas served by municipal water and wastewater systems, subdivision and development shall occur at densities, lot sizes, and configurations that make efficient and economical use of the servicing infrastructure, and shall not exceed the capacity of existing municipal systems.

The MD may require a servicing study, capacity assessment, or infrastructure review as a condition of subdivision or development approval, where connection to existing services is proposed.

### *Development Agreements*

- 1.11.6 The developer is responsible for the provision of all on-site and off-site infrastructure required to service the site, including the payment of offsite levies. Development agreements may be required as a condition of subdivision and may be required as a condition of development permit approval.

### *Proof of Water Supply*

1.11.7

- a) The MD shall require developers to demonstrate proof of water supply if accessing groundwater, or identify the proposed method of water servicing, for all multi-lot rural residential developments in excess of five lots. Where lots are proposed to be served by cisterns, restrictive covenants

shall be registered as a condition of subdivision approval, prohibiting the use of wells or other means of groundwater collection.

- b) In areas with poor water availability, the MD may require the installation of hydrant systems or water reservoirs.

#### *Sewage System Information Requirements*

- 1.11.8 As part of a development permit application, the MD shall require that developers submit information respecting the proposed location and type of sewage disposal system intended to serve the proposed development. The MD may require that soil tests be undertaken by the developer to determine that the soils are suitable to accommodate onsite sewage disposal systems.

#### *Stormwater Management*

- 1.11.9 The MD shall require developers to provide stormwater management plans for multi-lot subdivisions, and site grading/drainage plans for individual development sites shall be in conformance with the stormwater management plan.

#### *Utilities Strategic Plan*

- 1.11.10 The MD should implement and periodically update a Utilities Strategic Plan to guide the sustainable provision of water and wastewater services throughout the municipality.

#### *Wildfire Recovery Plan and Wildfire Mitigation*

- 1.11.11 The MD, in cooperation with other applicable authorities, will work towards the implementation of the measures contained in the 2011 Regional Wildfire Recovery Plan and the Lesser Slave Lake Regional Wildfire Mitigation Strategy. Such measures include but are not limited to:
  - a) The expansion and construction of fire halls;
  - b) The construction of new water lines between the South Shore communities, the Town of Slave Lake, the Sawridge First Nation and Mitsue; and
  - c) Requiring the installation of dry hydrants at strategic locations throughout the MD.

#### [Land use maps]

## 2 Community Areas

The Community Areas within the MD include hamlets, rural settlements, and rural residential development areas, each serving distinct roles and functions:

- **Smith** functions as the primary service centre, offering a wide range of commercial, industrial, institutional, and residential services and land uses.
- **Flatbush** and Chisholm provide a more limited ranges of services, supporting local needs, and are primarily residential areas.
- The **South Shore** communities offer predominantly a residential lifestyle, with limited local services. However, in some areas, they support substantial home-based business opportunities.
- **Fawcett Lake** is designated as a recreational resort community, focused on seasonal and leisure-oriented uses.

While the MD recognizes that growth in these Community Areas is desirable, it is also aware that adjacent resource-based land uses (e.g., forestry, oil and gas, or gravel extraction) can negatively impact the quality of life, character, and development potential of nearby communities. The intent of this MDP is to protect the viability, character, and function of these communities by coordinating future development and growth in a way that aligns with the goals of this Plan and balances growth with compatibility.

### *Objectives*

- Ensure each Community Area contains sufficient land within its boundaries to support comprehensive land use planning and the development of appropriate water, sewer, and transportation servicing schemes.
- Promote community growth and expansion in a cost-effective, orderly, and affordable manner that avoids the unnecessary extension of municipal services.
- Encourage targeted growth in appropriate Community Areas while discouraging premature or unnecessary removal of land from the agricultural or natural resource base.
- Protect future community expansion areas from premature or incompatible development that would either preclude or significantly increase the cost of future conversion to community use.
- Ensure rural residential growth does not negatively impact municipal infrastructure, the MD's fiscal capacity, or nearby resource-based industries.
- Discourage premature or scattered rural residential development that could lead to increased municipal servicing costs or undermine coordinated land use planning.

## 2.1 Community Areas - Land Use Policies

### *Community Areas*

2.1.1 The Community Areas are illustrated on the Policy Area Maps, which include but may not be limited to the following:

- a) Assineau,
- b) Bayer Road
- c) Broken Paddle
- d) Canyon Creek
- e) Chisholm
- f) East of Nine Mile Point
- g) Eben Ebenau
- h) Fawcett Lake
- i) Flatbush
- j) Gildwood/Summerland
- k) Lawrence Lake
- l) Marten Beach
- m) Nine Mile Point
- n) Old Town
- o) Old Smith Highway
- p) Poplar Lane
- q) Smith
- r) Wagner
- s) Widewater

Development in the Community Areas shall be predominantly residential in nature, with commercial, institutional, and light industrial uses permitted only where they are compatible with

surrounding residential development and located in areas that minimize land use conflict, traffic impacts, or nuisances.

#### *Rural Residential Development*

- 2.1.2 All multi-lot rural residential subdivision development proposals shall be evaluated according to the criteria listed in the LUB.

#### *Fringe Area Development*

- 2.1.3 Development proposals on lands adjacent to or near the boundaries of Community Areas shall be carefully reviewed and regulated by the MD to ensure that the character, natural features, and overall amenities of the Community Area are preserved. The MD shall not support development or LUB amendments in fringe areas unless it can be demonstrated through appropriate studies or assessments that the proposed development will not negatively impact the Community Area's visual or environmental qualities (e.g., loss of vegetation, views), infrastructure or service capacity, land use compatibility, or community function and livability.

#### *Hamlets*

- 2.1.4 The MD shall encourage new development within its existing hamlets where it can be supported by existing infrastructure, community services, and location advantages.

Each hamlet shall be considered a potential growth node capable of accommodating an appropriate mix of residential, commercial, recreational, and institutional land uses, provided such development is compatible with the scale and character of the community.

The MD also supports efforts to improve the long-term viability and vibrancy of its hamlets, including:

- Development of group homes, seniors housing, and community programs (such as youth initiatives),
- Enhancement of local recreation facilities, and
- Policies and investments that attract and retain residents and services.

## 2.2 Community Areas - Environmental Policies

### *Protect Natural Features*

- 2.2.1 The natural character and ecological integrity of shorelines, ravines, and river corridors shall be protected by ensuring that adjacent development is designed and located in a way that minimizes visual, physical, and environmental impacts.

Development adjacent to these features—including buildings, parking areas, and other site improvements—shall be regulated in terms of height, massing, and placement to ensure they do not disrupt views or alter the natural form and function of these areas.

### *Conservation Easement*

- 2.2.2 The MD shall support the voluntary placement of Conservation Easements by private landowners as a means of protecting important wildlife habitat, riparian areas, and ecologically sensitive lands.

Where a Conservation Easement is proposed, the MD should encourage the landowner to partner with a qualified non-profit conservation organization to act as the easement holder (dominant tenement), in accordance with the Alberta Land Stewardship Act.

## 2.3 Community Areas - Transportation Policies

### *Location of Transportation Facilities*

- 2.3.1 The MD shall encourage the location of transportation facilities in a manner which:
- Encourages the integration of transportation routes and utility lines within defined corridors and, as much as possible, in government road allowances;
  - Discourages the creation of fragmented parcels of land between rights-of-way; and
  - Minimizes the impacts on recreational, historical or wildlife resource areas.

### *Buffering Requirements*

- 2.3.2 Where a proposed transportation facility may negatively impact adjacent lands or land uses, the MD shall require appropriate buffering measures to minimize adverse effects such as noise, dust, light, or visual intrusion. Buffering may include landscaping, fencing, berms, or setback distances, as determined by the MD based on the scale and nature of the proposed facility and the sensitivity of surrounding uses.

New residential development shall incorporate design elements that establish a clear and functional transition between developed areas and adjacent agricultural or forest lands.

This transition may include a combination of setbacks, landscaped buffers, open space corridors, local access roads, or other interface treatments that reduce land use conflict, maintain rural character, and protect the long-term viability of adjacent resource lands.

The appropriate buffering measures shall be determined through the subdivision or Area Structure Plan process, based on site-specific conditions and land use compatibility considerations.

### *Transportation Rights-of-Way*

2.3.3 The MD shall encourage new transportation rights-of-way—such as highways, collector roads, or rail lines—to avoid alignment through existing residential areas or lands designated for future residential expansion.

Where proximity to residential areas cannot be avoided, the design and alignment of the right-of-way should incorporate measures that support future community growth, including appropriate setbacks, noise attenuation, landscaping, and access management.

## 2.4 Community Areas - Utility Policies

### *Location of Utility Lines and Facilities*

- 2.4.1 The MD shall encourage the location of utility lines and facilities in a manner which:
- a) Encourages the integration of transportation routes and utility lines within defined corridors and, as much as possible, in government road allowances;
  - b) Discourages the creation of fragmented parcels of land between rights-of-way; and
  - c) Minimizes the impacts on recreational, historical or wildlife resource areas.

### *Buffering Requirements*

- 2.4.2 Where proposed utility lines or facilities may negatively impact adjacent lands or land uses, the MD shall require appropriate buffering measures to reduce visual, noise, environmental, or land use conflicts. Buffering may include landscaping, fencing, berms, increased setbacks, or other design features, and shall be determined by the Development Authority based on the nature of the utility, the sensitivity of adjacent land uses, and site-specific conditions.

### *Utility Rights-of-Way*

- 2.4.3 The MD shall encourage new utility rights-of-way to avoid existing residential areas or lands designated for future residential expansion. Where proximity to residential areas cannot be avoided, the design and alignment of the right-of-way should incorporate measures that support future community growth, including appropriate setbacks, noise attenuation, landscaping, and access management.

### *Optimization of Municipal Services*

- 2.4.4 Where municipal water and sewer services are available, subdivision and development shall be designed to optimize the use of existing servicing infrastructure by locating and sizing lots at densities that are efficient, cost-effective, and within the capacity of the system. Development proposals that would exceed system capacity or require expansion of infrastructure shall not be supported unless accompanied by a servicing strategy acceptable to the MD.

### *Compliance of Existing Systems*

- 2.4.5 When a lot containing an existing house is to be subdivided from a larger parcel, the MD shall determine if the setbacks for the existing sewer system comply with Provincial regulations. If it is determined the system is not compliant as a result of subdivision, relocation or upgrading of the system, this shall be identified as a condition of subdivision approval.

### *Servicing in Hamlets*

- 2.4.6 Residential lots in hamlets shall be serviced with municipal water and sewer services where available.

### *Communal Servicing*

#### 2.4.7

The MD may permit the use of centralized (communal) sewage collection systems to service new developments, provided that:

- The system is designed, constructed, and operated in accordance with all applicable provincial environmental and health regulations; and
- A legally recognized entity, such as the developer, utility provider, or resident association, is established and responsible for the long-term operation, maintenance, and financial management of the system, to the satisfaction of the MD.

### *Energy Conservation*

- 2.4.8 The MD may promote the promotion of energy conservation practices through educational programs or public awareness campaigns.

### *Solid Waste and Recycling Management*

- 2.4.9 The MD should continue to demonstrate leadership in environmental stewardship by providing accurate, efficient, and effective waste and recycling services. Solid waste and recycling collection or disposal sites shall be located, designed, and operated in a manner that minimizes impacts on surrounding land uses, including consideration of visual screening, odour control, noise mitigation, and access management.

## 2.5 Community Areas - Social Policies

### *Municipal Reserve Dedication at Subdivision*

- 2.5.1 Municipal Reserve (MR) shall be dedicated in Community Areas as a condition of subdivision approval.

### *Dedication Requirements*

- 2.5.2 The MD shall require that the 10% maximum allotment of MR be dedicated in Community Areas in accordance with the Act and the following:
- a) Where the subdivision results in the creation of a multi-lot residential development for which community park or facility space is required; or
  - b) Where buffers are required between incompatible land uses; or
  - c) To implement the open space requirements of an approved statutory plan, or
  - d) To implement the land or capital requirements identified in a Recreation and Open Space Master Plan or other recreational facility need identified by the MD. In these situations, MR shall be dedicated in parcel form or as a combination of land and money-in-lieu.

### *Municipal Reserve Not Required*

- 2.5.3 Notwithstanding Policy 2.5.1, the MD shall not require the dedication of MR in the following circumstances in addition to the exemptions contained in the Act:
- a) The re-subdivision of an existing lot under 4 hectares in size, unless the re-subdivision is intended for multi-lot residential development and MR was not previously dedicated for the lot being re-subdivided;
  - b) Subdivision that is required to facilitate the settlement of an estate;
  - c) The creation of a single lot regardless of size. If in excess of 4 hectares, MR owing would be deferred in the event that future subdivision is contemplated in accordance with an Area Structure Plan.

### *Concentration of Municipal Reserve*

2.5.4 MR land dedication should prioritize the creation of larger, consolidated parcels located on sites suitable for active or passive recreation, rather than scattering small MR parcels throughout a subdivision.

Wherever possible, MR lands should be designed to connect with adjacent Municipal Reserve parcels, Environmental Reserve areas, or other publicly accessible lands to create integrated open space networks and trail systems.

### *Disposal of Municipal Reserve*

2.5.5 MR parcels that no longer serve, or are not expected to serve, an open space, recreational, or school-related purpose may be disposed of in accordance with the Act.

Proceeds from the sale of such lands shall be deposited into the MD's dedicated Municipal Reserve fund and used solely for the acquisition or enhancement of parks, public recreation areas, natural areas, or school-related lands and facilities.

## 3 Commercial Areas

Commercial Areas within the MD include business and service activities that support the daily needs of residents, accommodate highway-related services, and contribute to economic development and employment.

### *Objectives*

- Support commercial subdivision and development in locations that are compatible with surrounding land uses and supported by adequate infrastructure, including hamlets, highway corridors, and designated business park areas.
- Promote a diverse mix of commercial uses that contribute to local employment, meet the needs of residents and travelers, and support long-term economic growth in the MD.

### 3.1 Commercial Areas - Land Use Policies

#### *Hamlet Commercial*

3.1.1 The MD shall encourage a range of commercial development in hamlets which serve the day-to-day needs of the community and shall ensure that hamlet commercial uses are developed at a scale appropriate to the community.

#### *Highway Commercial*

3.1.2 Highway commercial development—including uses such as hotels, gas stations, automotive services, and restaurants—may be permitted along designated highways shown on the Policy Area Maps, where appropriate.

Such developments shall be evaluated based on:

- Compatibility with surrounding land uses,
- Protection of environmentally sensitive features,
- Availability and capacity of municipal or private servicing, and
- Safe and efficient site access.

Site accesses must be approved by both the MD and the Provincial regulatory body responsible for highways, in accordance with applicable highway access standards and development regulations.

#### *Infill Encouragement*

3.1.3 The MD shall encourage infill and intensification of existing business parks to make more efficient use of available land, infrastructure, and municipal services. Where necessary, this may be facilitated through amendments to existing statutory plans or land use districts to accommodate expanded or diversified commercial and industrial activity.

## 3.2 Commercial Social Policies

#### *Municipal Reserve Dedication Requirements*

3.2.1 The MD shall require that the 10% maximum allotment of MR be dedicated for commercial subdivisions in accordance with the MGA and the following:

- Where buffers are required between incompatible land uses; or
- To implement the open space requirements of an approved Statutory Plan, or
- To implement the land or capital requirements identified in a Recreation and Open Space Master Plan or other recreational facility need identified by the MD. In all other situations, MR shall be dedicated as money-in-lieu.

#### *Design Controls*

3.2.2 The MD shall enforce design guidelines and landscaping standards along highways that serve to enhance the visual form and character of development.

## 4 Industrial Areas

The MD's economy is driven primarily by industrial activities related to forestry, agriculture, oil and gas, and aggregate resource extraction. Major industrial developments are concentrated within the Mitsue Industrial Park, including pulp mills, lumber mills, oriented strand board (OSB) production facilities, gas processing plants, and an oilfield waste disposal facility. Additionally, the MD supports a variety of smaller-scale industrial businesses related to resource-based sectors across the region.

#### *Objectives*

- Encourage new industrial development at appropriate locations.
- Ensure that new industrial development is carried out in an environmentally responsible manner.

## 4.1 Industrial Areas - Land Use Policies

#### *Industrial Development*

##### 4.1.1

- a) Unless otherwise indicated in this Plan, all future industrial development shall be concentrated in the Mitsue Industrial Area as illustrated on the Policy Area Maps.

- b) In locating industrial development, special consideration shall be given to the impacts on rural infrastructure, including local roads, bridges, traffic flows, and other considerations as determined by the MD.
- c) Industrial development which requires large lots and a minimum level of municipal services should be located in an industrial park.

#### *Other Industrial*

- 4.1.2 The MD shall encourage diversification of its industrial base by encouraging small-scale or emerging industries that complement the existing resource-based economy. Locations outside Mitsue Industrial Park may be considered on a site-specific basis if supported by clear economic or community benefit.

#### *Buffering Requirements*

- 4.1.3 At the discretion of the Development Authority, industrial developments should incorporate appropriate buffer zones and setbacks to reduce land-use conflicts with residential, agricultural, recreational, and environmentally sensitive areas. Buffering may include vegetative buffers, fencing, berms, setbacks, or other mitigating strategies determined through the development approval process.

#### *Emergency Response and Safety*

- 4.1.4 Industrial development applications should include an emergency response and safety plan identifying potential hazards, including environmental hazards, emergency response procedures, and coordination with local emergency services, to the satisfaction of the MD.

#### *Environmental Protection*

- 4.1.5 Industrial developments should minimize negative impacts on the environment through implementation of site-specific environmental management plans, erosion and sediment control practices, spill control measures, and appropriate stormwater management facilities in compliance with Provincial and Federal regulations, to the satisfaction of the MD.

#### *Heavy Traffic Management*

- 4.1.6 Industrial developments generating significant heavy vehicle traffic may be required by the MD or the Provincial regulatory body responsible for transportation to prepare a Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) as part of their development application. Recommendations from the TIA may then be implemented to ensure local roads and bridges can accommodate increased volumes and loads.

## 5 Crown Lands

Provincially controlled Crown lands represent approximately 85% of the Municipal District's total land base and play a critical role in supporting major economic activities such as oil and gas, forestry, sand and gravel extraction, and agriculture. These lands also contain important environmental features, including rivers, lakeshores, wetlands, and wildlife habitats.

Although decisions regarding the use, disposition, and environmental protection of Crown lands are made by the Province, the MD recognizes that these decisions significantly influence local land use planning, economic development, and environmental sustainability. As such, the MD will continue to advocate and

collaborate with provincial agencies to encourage land management practices on Crown lands that align with local community interests and municipal planning objectives.

### *Objectives*

- Minimize conflicts between resource based and non-resource-based land uses.
- Minimize the negative impact of resource based industrial operations on the quality of the communities' environments.
- Minimize the negative impact of resource-based operations on the quality of the natural environment.
- Minimize conflicts between resource based and non-resource-based land uses.
- Minimize the negative impact of resource-based operations on the quality of the natural environment.
- Cooperate with Provincial Government departments in the planning and development processes affecting Crown lands.

## 5.1 Crown Land - Land Use Policies

### *Crown Land Area*

5.1.1 Lands within the Crown Land area are primarily reserved for resource development, recreation, environmental protection and associated activities.

### *Crown Land Conversion*

5.1.2 The MD shall consider the following factors when reviewing and commenting on proposals to convert Crown Land to titled land:

- a) The impact on the existing road system and the cost of constructing roads, if any, into the new areas; and
- b) The potential loss of alternative resource development, recreational opportunities, or environmentally sensitive lands.

### *Review of Development Proposals*

5.1.3 When reviewing proposals for development on Crown land, consideration shall be given to the following:

- a) Adjacent land uses;
- b) Provision of water, sewer, and emergency and community services;
- c) Access; and
- d) Environmental impacts.

### *Crown Approvals*

- 5.1.4 As a means of ensuring that the interests of the MD are recognized and reflected in the development of Crown Land, the MD shall be involved and cooperate in Provincial approval processes for proposed leases and other dispositions, serving as a means for conveying the concerns of residents to the appropriate Provincial agencies, and active participation in the review processes.

### *Resource Extraction Industry Cooperation*

- 5.1.5 The MD shall proactively encourage resource extraction companies to collaborate with municipal staff in developing land use plans and to engage in early public education and communication efforts prior to exploration or extraction activities. This collaboration should include evaluating and addressing potential impacts on existing land uses, future land development, community infrastructure, and environmental sustainability.

### *Responsible Energy Development*

- 5.1.6 As part of the energy resource development and exploration process, the MD shall encourage the energy industry to proactively consult with the MD, landowners, and the public to identify and address concerns, including:
- a) The potential threat to surface and ground water and existing water wells;
  - b) The impact of development on ability to farm affected land;
  - c) Dust, noise, and other consequences with potential to affect domestic life;
  - d) Road maintenance and the establishment of traffic corridors; and
  - e) Safety management coordination.

### *Work Camps*

- 5.1.7 Support from the MD may be conditional upon evidence that the work camp location and design effectively mitigate impacts on adjacent lands and existing land uses.

## 5.2 Crown Land - Environmental Policies

### *Wildfire Risk Management*

- 5.2.1 The MD shall coordinate with Provincial agencies, industry partners, and local fire protection services to proactively manage wildfire risks on Crown Lands. Developers should prepare wildfire management plans and implement FRIAA practices as appropriate.

### *Restoration and Reclamation*

- 5.2.2 The MD should encourage timely and effective reclamation and restoration of disturbed Crown Lands by developers. The MD may request reclamation plans, include timelines, reclamation methods, and monitoring procedures, and shall be developed to Provincial standards and best practices.

## 5.3 Crown Land – Transportation Policies

### *Compliance with Standards*

- 5.3.1 Development on Crown Land is typically accessed via private lease roads. However, if such development requires upgrades or improvements to MD roads, these improvements shall be the responsibility of the developer.
- 5.3.2 All required road upgrades shall be completed in accordance with MD engineering standards and specifications, and at the developer's cost. The MD may also request that an ASP be prepared to provide long-term planning direction.

## 5.4 Crown Land – Social Policies

### *Communications*

- 5.4.1 The MD shall support the development of communications towers and related facilities in Crown Land areas.

### *Recreation and Access*

- 5.4.2 The MD shall encourage the Province to maintain and enhance public access to Crown Lands for responsible recreation, tourism, and cultural purposes, ensuring such activities are managed sustainably and in consultation with local communities.

# 6 Agriculture

Agriculture is a significant land use in the southerly portion of the MD. In this area, the protection of agricultural operations and minimizing the conversion of agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses is a priority.

### *Objectives*

- Protect and retain productive agricultural lands.

- Protect agricultural operations from incompatible non-agricultural uses.

## 6.1 Agriculture – Land Use Policies

### *Agriculture Areas*

- 6.1.1 Within the Agriculture Areas identified on the Policy Area Maps, farming shall be the primary and preferred land use. Agricultural operations will be prioritized above all other land uses. The MD shall protect existing agricultural activities from incompatible developments or land uses that could negatively impact agricultural productivity or operations.

### *Notice of Agricultural Operations*

- 6.1.2 The MD shall inform all applicants for subdivision and development within Agricultural areas that farming is the predominant and priority land use. Applicants should understand that agricultural operations have precedence over other land uses. Non-agricultural developments shall be designed and operated to minimize conflicts with agricultural practices, including considerations related to hours of operation, odours, noise, dust, and traffic generated by farming activities.

### *Minimization of Fragmentation*

- 6.1.3 Where agricultural land is dedicated for roads, rail lines, pipelines, and transmission lines, the MD should endorse only those proposals which minimize the fragmentation of agricultural land.

### *Subdivision of Agricultural Land and Fragmented Parcels*

- 6.1.4 The subdivision of land and fragmented parcels in the Agriculture Area may be approved in the circumstances as specified in the LUB.

The maximum number of lots allowed to be subdivided from a quarter section in the Agricultural (A) designation (see MDP Policy Area Maps) shall be four (4), including the remnant. Approval of additional lots shall require a Area Structure Plan in accordance with the Act.

### *Location of Vacant Residential Parcel*

- 6.1.5 The MD should only approve the creation of a vacant residential parcel if its location and intended residential use have been designed to reasonably minimize potential negative impacts on environmental features, the ongoing agricultural use of the remaining quarter section, and adjacent agricultural operations. The MD may require adjustments to parcel location, configuration, or other conditions to achieve these objectives.

### *Confined Feeding Operations (CFOs)*

- 6.1.6 In addition to provincial minimum distance separation requirements determined by the Natural Resources Conservation Board, the MD shall not permit new Confined Feeding Operations (CFOs) or manure storage facilities requiring provincial approval or registration within:
- 2.4 kilometres of any urban municipality's corporate boundaries within the MD;
  - 2.4 kilometres of any Community Area as designated on Map 1 (these areas shall be considered "urban fringe" for the purpose of applying provincial regulations); or
  - 2.4 kilometres from the shoreline of Lesser Slave Lake.

### *CFO Variances*

6.1.7 In addition to Policy 6.1.6, the MD shall encourage the appropriate provincial regulatory agency responsible for agricultural operations (Natural Resources Conservation Board) to avoid granting variances or exemptions from provincial requirements related to Confined Feeding Operations (CFOs). The MD strongly supports full compliance with all provincial agricultural operation standards and regulations.

### *Road Use Agreements for CFOs*

6.1.8 The MD shall encourage the appropriate regulatory agency to require that a Road Use Agreement be entered into with the MD to address haul routes, maintenance and/or upgrading if necessary, dust control, and any other matters relative to the use of roads for the CFO.

### *Manure Management*

6.1.9 The MD shall encourage agricultural operators and any agencies that approve manure spreading to ensure that odours from the manure spreading do not seriously impact the use and enjoyment of nearby dwellings. All manure-related operations shall abide by the Provincial Manure Spreading Regulations.

### *Distance Setbacks*

6.1.10 In reviewing subdivision or development proposals near existing CFOs, the MD shall ensure compliance with all applicable provincial and federal regulations, including Alberta's Agricultural Operation Practices Act (AOPA) and relevant federal legislation related to environmental protection, water quality, and wildlife habitat.

### *Resource Extraction*

6.1.11 The MD shall only support resource extraction operations in Agricultural Areas when operators demonstrate effective measures to mitigate or minimize adverse impacts on adjacent agricultural operations, soils, water quality, biodiversity, ecosystems, and other nearby land uses.

### *Resource Extraction Industry Cooperation*

6.1.12 The MD shall proactively encourage resource extraction industries to collaborate with the municipality when preparing land use plans. The MD shall also encourage industry-led public education and consultation before initiating exploration or extraction activities, to ensure impacts on current and future land uses are appropriately considered and addressed.

### *Separation from Extraction Activities*

6.1.13 New rural subdivision and development should be directed away from active and potential nonrenewable surface resource extraction areas so as not to conflict, or constrain, the extraction of the resource.

### *Responsible Energy Development*

6.1.14 As part of the energy resource development and exploration process, the MD shall encourage the energy industry to engage in forward thinking and constructive consultation to address the following issues when they propose development within the MD:

- a) The potential threat to surface and ground water and existing water wells;
- b) The impact of development on ability to farm affected land;
- c) Dust, noise, and other consequences with potential to affect domestic life;
- d) Road maintenance and the establishment of traffic corridors; and

- e) Safety management coordination.

#### *Work Camps*

- 6.1.15 The MD shall support the establishment of work camps in Agricultural Areas, provided they are located on sites with minimal existing agricultural activity and designed to avoid interference or conflict with surrounding agricultural operations.

## 6.2 Agriculture – Environmental Policies

#### *Conservation Easement*

- 6.2.1 The MD shall support the voluntary placement of Conservation Easements by private landowners as a means of protecting important wildlife habitat, riparian areas, and ecologically sensitive lands.

Where a Conservation Easement is proposed, the MD should encourage the landowner to partner with a qualified non-profit conservation organization to act as the easement holder (dominant tenement), in accordance with the Alberta Land Stewardship Act.

#### *Weed and Pest Control*

- 6.2.2 The MD shall actively enforce weed and pest control measures in Agricultural Areas, in accordance with provincial legislation, to prevent infestations and protect agricultural productivity.

## 6.3 Agriculture – Transportation Policies

#### *Location of Transportation Facilities*

- 6.3.1 The MD shall encourage the location of transportation facilities in a manner which:
  - a) Encourages the integration of transportation routes and utility lines within defined corridors and, as much as possible, in government road allowances;
  - b) Discourages the creation of fragmented parcels of land between rights-of-way; and
  - c) Minimizes the impacts on recreational, historical or wildlife resource areas.

### *Buffering Requirements*

- 6.3.2 Transportation facilities should incorporate appropriate buffer zones and setbacks to reduce land-use conflicts with residential, agricultural, recreational, and environmentally sensitive areas. Buffering may include vegetative buffers, fencing, berms, setbacks, or other mitigating strategies determined through the development approval process.

### *Compliance with Standards*

- 6.3.3 All roads shall be developed in accordance with the MD's Engineering Design Standards. This includes the development of service roads for Highways as shown on Map 1, internal subdivision roads, and grid roads.

### *Alberta Transportation Referrals*

- 6.3.4 The MD shall refer all Area Structure Plans, rezoning, subdivision and development applications involving land located within 0.8 kilometres of a highway to Alberta Transportation for comment.

## 6.4 Agriculture – Utility Policies

### *Location of Utility Lines and Facilities*

- 6.4.1 The MD shall encourage the location of utility lines and facilities in a manner which:
- a) Encourages the integration of transportation routes and utility lines within defined corridors and, as much as possible, in government road allowances;
  - b) Discourages the creation of fragmented parcels of land between rights-of-way; and
  - c) Minimizes the impacts on recreational, historical or wildlife resource areas.

### *Utility Rights-of-Way*

6.4.2 The MD shall encourage new utility rights-of-way to avoid existing residential areas or lands designated for future residential expansion.

Where proximity to residential areas cannot be avoided, the design and alignment of the right-of-way should incorporate measures that support future community growth, including appropriate setbacks, noise attenuation, landscaping, and access management.

### *Compliance of Existing Systems*

6.4.3 When a lot with an existing residence is subdivided from a larger parcel, the MD shall verify that the existing sewer system meets provincial setback requirements. If the sewer system does not comply due to the proposed subdivision boundaries, the MD shall require relocation or upgrading of the system as a condition of subdivision approval.

## 6.5 Agriculture – Social Policies

### *Municipal Reserve*

6.5.1 Municipal Reserve (MR) should not be required for subdivisions located in the Agricultural Area, unless otherwise specified within the LUB. MR dedicated under this policy shall be dedicated as cash-in-lieu in accordance with the Act.

## 7 Recreation, Environment, & Trails

The MD is characterized by an abundance of natural areas that are ideally suited for a variety of outdoor recreation activities. With increasing demand expected on these areas, the intent of this MDP is to support recreational development that aligns with the sustainable capacity of the landscape and respects the overall goals of this Plan. Additionally, the MD shall acquire Municipal Reserve and Environmental Reserve lands as provided by the Act to ensure long-term preservation and public access to key natural areas.

### *Objectives*

- Provide diversity in public recreation opportunities.
- Provide public recreation development that is compatible with the capabilities and characteristics of the natural environment and surrounding land uses.
- Ensure that high quality recreation resources are not jeopardized through premature or incompatible development.
- Encourage quality development of public outdoor recreation resources as a means of promoting tourism in the MD.
- Recognize that non-development and preservation of natural areas contribute significantly towards the promotion of tourism in the MD.

## 7.1 Recreation, Environment, & Trails – Land Use Policies

### *Support for Recreation Development*

- 7.1.1 Within the MD, recreational uses such as campgrounds, day use areas, picnic sites, hiking and ski trails, and other similar uses as developed by either private or public interests shall be allowed in all areas, provided that they do not interfere with agricultural operations or resource extraction and processing industries.

### *Design of Recreation Facilities*

- 7.1.2 All public recreation development shall be designed to fit into the surrounding natural landscape, particularly in terms of siting, scale and visual impact.

### *Recreation Master Plan*

- 7.1.3 The MD may prepare a Recreation and Open Space Master Plan, which shall be used as the basis for future recreation, park and trail planning and development. The plan shall:
- a) Identify and enhance the provision of a sustainable land base to support tourism development;
  - b) Develop plans to create significant recreation and tourism features, settings and scenery on public lands;
  - c) Identify the partners, resources, and need for new investment in infrastructure that supports the development of tourism;
  - d) Identify and designate high intensity motorized recreation areas;
  - e) Identify other infrastructure and facilities necessary to support trails based recreation; and
  - f) Coordinate with other municipalities and governments to develop a regional trail system.

### *Recreation Services*

- 7.1.4 The MD shall, through regional and local recreation boards, continue an active program for the provision, upkeep and improvement of recreational areas and facilities to meet the recreational needs and desires of MD residents.

## 7.2 Recreation, Environment, & Trails – Environmental Policies

### *Recreational Use in Environmental Areas*

- 7.2.1 The MD supports the use of lake shores, river corridors and other environmentally sensitive areas for passive recreational purposes that do not place undue stress or harm on the resource.

### *Tourism Development*

- 7.2.2
- a) The MD should conduct tourism opportunity assessments to identify potential tourism experiences, which may include guided tours, educational programs, attractions, exhibits, and interpretive sites.
  - b) The MD should collaborate with the Provincial government and other partners to secure funding and technical support to promote the MD's scenic routes, trails, waterways, and attractions. These collaborative efforts should aim to create distinctive visitor experiences and effectively showcase the region's unique natural and scenic resources.

## 8 Intermunicipal Coordination & Economic Development

The MD shares boundaries with six rural municipalities, surrounds the Town of Slave Lake, and also surrounds the Sawridge First Nation. The MD shall collaborate closely with all neighbouring municipalities and the Sawridge First Nation to effectively serve residents and industries. The intent of this MDP is to encourage coordinated development, planning activities, and the efficient delivery of shared services between the MD and adjacent jurisdictions.

### *Objectives*

- Provide for coordination of development activity and infrastructure with neighbouring jurisdictions.
- Continue to implement intermunicipal agreements as a means of continuing to provide services to residents on a cost-efficient basis.

## 8.1 Intermunicipal and Economic Development Policies

### *Circulation of MDP Amendments*

- 8.1.1 All proposals for amendments to this MDP shall be circulated to Sawridge First Nation, all Rural Municipalities, and the Town of Slave Lake for comment and input before a decision on the proposal is made.

### *Referrals*

- 8.1.2 All proposals for a Statutory Plan, Statutory Plan amendment, Land Use Bylaw amendment, subdivision, or development permit for lands located within 3.2 km of a Rural Municipality or Sawridge First Nation shall be circulated to that municipality for comment and input before a decision on the proposal is made. All referrals to the Town of Slave Lake shall be in accordance with the Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP).

### *Slave Lake Intermunicipal Development Plan*

- 8.1.3 The MD shall continue to support its IDP with the Town of Slave Lake. The MD shall participate in the monitoring and review of the IDP to ensure it remains current and reflects the needs of the municipalities and area residents.

### *Conformity with IDP*

- 8.1.4 The MD shall not approve any development proposal in contravention of an IDP. If such development is proposed and deemed to have merit, then an amendment to the IDP shall be pursued in accordance with the provisions of the IDP.

### *Intermunicipal Agreements*

- 8.1.5 The MD shall continue the use of intermunicipal agreements as a means of delivering services, such as emergency response, affordable housing, transportation, and utility infrastructure, in a cooperative manner and to maximize available resources.

### *Joint Economic Development Strategy*

- 8.1.6 The MD, in cooperation with other strategic partners including Sawridge First Nation, should develop and maintain a long-term economic development strategy that will promote the MD and region as an attractive place to locate new businesses and support the retention and expansion of existing businesses and industries.

### *Economic Development*

- 8.1.7 Investments in projects that support economic growth shall be prioritized to enhance the MD's overall competitiveness and prosperity. The following strategies should guide future economic development efforts:
- (a) Protecting and enhancing industrial and commercial areas to ensure suitable spaces are available for new and expanding businesses;
  - (b) Focusing growth in strategic locations that provide sustainable, vibrant communities offering a high quality live-work environment;
  - (c) Encouraging investment in local communities and neighbourhoods to increase diverse and affordable housing opportunities;

(d) Prioritizing efficient review and issuance of permits for various types of businesses to stimulate local economic activity and investment; and

(e) Actively collaborating with government partners, Indigenous communities, non-governmental organizations, and non-profit sectors to attract investment and foster broader economic opportunities throughout the MD.”

#### *Interagency Cooperation*

8.1.8 The MD shall actively collaborate with neighbouring municipalities, Indigenous communities, and provincial authorities in planning, developing, and operating shared transportation networks, water distribution systems, and sewage treatment facilities, where cooperation can achieve mutual benefits and cost efficiencies.

#### *MD as Affected Party*

8.1.9 The MD considers itself to be an affected party for any application under review by any regulatory agency that affects Lesser Slave Lake. The MD shall work with regulatory agencies to ensure it is consulted during the review process as the Lake is a significant source of drinking water for the MD.

#### *Emergency Services*

8.1.10 The MD may provide assistance in response to fires, rescues, or other emergencies that occur outside its municipal boundaries, when appropriate and feasible.

8.1.11 The MD may enter into mutual aid agreements with neighbouring municipalities, First Nations, fire protection services, and relevant provincial or regional agencies to both provide and receive emergency assistance for fires, rescues, and other incidents.

#### *Tourism Development*

8.1.12 The MD possesses significant historical, natural, ecological, and wildlife resources, making it an attractive destination for both heritage tourism and ecotourism. The MD shall actively support and promote tourism initiatives that celebrate these resources, while ensuring that all development and activities are environmentally responsible and culturally respectful.

#### *Cooperative Recreation and Tourism Development*

8.1.13 The MD shall promote cooperative private, non-government and public sector initiatives to develop local recreation and tourism opportunities.

#### *Support for Eco-Tourism and Agri-Tourism*

8.1.14 The MD should support the development of eco-tourism and agri-tourism as strategies to diversify the local economy and generate employment opportunities, provided such initiatives align with land use compatibility and environmental stewardship goals.

## 9 Plan Implementation

This section of the MDP relates to the mechanisms for the ongoing monitoring, implementation and administration of the Municipal Development Plan.

## 9.1 Authority of the Plan

### *Subdivision and Development Compliance*

- 9.1.1 Subdivision and development of lands within the MD must be in accordance with the provisions of this MDP and other Statutory Plans that may be applicable.

### *Government Regard for Plan*

- 9.1.2 Council shall encourage the Provincial and Federal governments to have regard for the provisions of this MDP in the development and redevelopment of Crown lands, and in the formulation of Provincial and Federal policies and programs within the MD.

## 9.2 Land Use Bylaw

### *MD Not Compelled to Rezone Land*

- 9.2.1 No provisions of this MDP shall compel the MD to rezone lands in the Land Use Bylaw for any use until such time as a subdivision or development application is submitted to the MD requiring such action.

## 9.3 Amendments to the Plan

### *Amendments in Accordance with Act*

- 9.3.1 Any amendments to this Municipal Development Plan (MDP) required due to changing conditions shall be adopted by Council through a bylaw, in accordance with the Act.

### *Amendment Criteria*

- 9.3.2 Requests to amend this MDP shall meet the following criteria:
- a) Applicants shall submit a formal, written request to Council, accompanied by the required application fee; and,
  - b) The request shall include a detailed written explanation clearly outlining how the proposed amendment relates to, and impacts, the goals, objectives, and policies of this MDP.

### *Agency Referrals*

- 9.3.3 Council may circulate amendment proposals to relevant external agencies or stakeholders for review and comment, and may request additional information as necessary to adequately assess and make an informed decision on the proposed amendment.
- 9.3.4 An amendment to this MDP may be initiated by the MD if deemed to be in the best interests of the MD to do so.

## 9.4 Plan Review

### *Review of MDP*

- 9.4.1 As planning conditions continuously evolve, this MDP shall be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains relevant and responsive to the MD's needs. Reviews of this MDP shall occur as follows:
- a) A complete or partial review due to economic, social, or technical developments or environmental considerations;
  - b) A complete review at least once every five years; or

c) A complete or partial review as a result of an MDP amendment request.

[Followed by Final Pages]