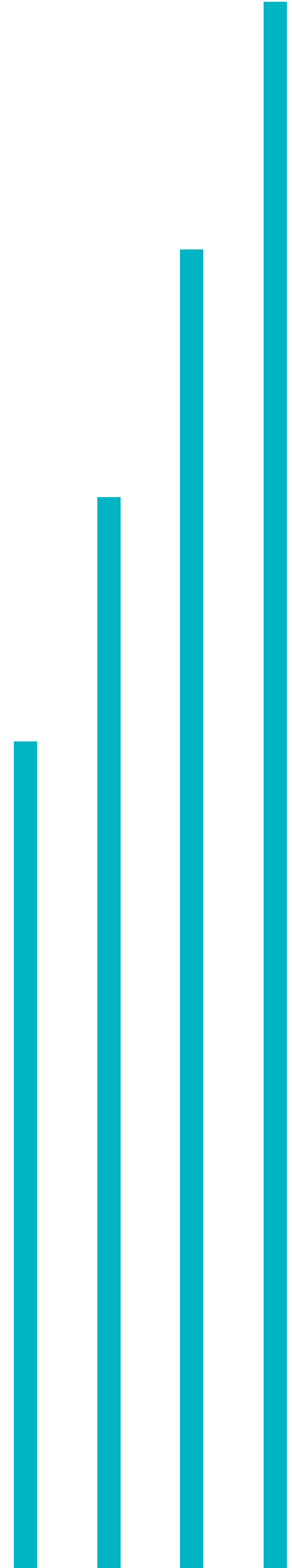


Woodlands County and Town of Whitecourt

# Intermunicipal Development Plan

Town of Whitecourt Bylaw #1477  
Woodlands County Bylaw #401/12  
Adopted March 2013





# Table of Contents

<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1. Purpose and Background .....	1
1.2. Plan Area .....	1
1.3. Authority .....	1
1.4. Planning and Community Planning Process .....	2
1.5. Definitions .....	3
1.6. Plan Framework .....	4
<b>2. Plan Goals and Guiding Principles .....</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1. Goals of the IDP .....	5
2.2. Guiding Principles .....	5
<b>3. Policy Framework and Future Land Use Patterns .....</b>	<b>6</b>
3.1. General Land Use .....	6
3.2. Economic Development .....	8
3.3. Land Development .....	9
3.3.1. Residential Development .....	9
3.3.2. Recreational Development .....	10
3.3.3. Commercial Development .....	10
3.3.4. Industrial Development .....	11
3.3.5. Agriculture .....	12
3.4. Environment .....	13
3.4.1. Environmental Management .....	14
3.4.2. Natural Resources .....	14
3.4.3. Environmentally Sensitive Areas .....	14
3.4.4. Crown Land .....	15
3.5. Infrastructure .....	16
3.5.1. Transportation .....	16
3.5.2. Servicing and Infrastructure .....	17
3.6. Municipal Facilities .....	18
3.6.1. Whitecourt Airport .....	18
3.6.2. Airport Industrial Transition Area .....	18
3.6.3. Parks, Open Space, and Trails .....	19
3.6.4. Community and Emergency Services .....	20
<b>4. Plan Implementation .....</b>	<b>21</b>
4.1. Plan Administration, Review, Amendment and Repeal .....	21
4.2. Intermunicipal Dispute Resolutions .....	21
4.3. Referral Process .....	22
4.4. Requirements for Area Structure Plans .....	23
4.5. Boundary Adjustments .....	23

Figure 1.0 - Overview Map

Figure 2.0 - IDP - Geophysical Features

Figure 3.0 - IDP - Land Use

Figure 4.0 - Whitecourt Growth Opportunities

Figure 5.0 - Transportation Network

Appendix A - Airport Industrial Transition District





Highway 43 Corridor South

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Purpose and Background

In cooperation, the neighbouring municipalities of Woodlands County and the Town of Whitecourt entered into the process of updating their Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP). The IDP is intended to outline policies applying to the land identified as the Plan Area and used as a framework for decision making in each municipality. Each municipality is responsible for decisions within their boundaries utilizing the policies and the procedures as set forth in the IDP. This IDP has been created with input and cooperation from a variety of stakeholders.

The purpose of the IDP is to facilitate and sustain long term strategic growth, as well as to identify joint development opportunities. Both municipalities agree mutually beneficial policies and procedures are the preferred means of addressing intermunicipal opportunities. This IDP represents the best opportunity for a continuous cooperative working relationship.

Woodlands County and Town of Whitecourt will continue the process of cooperative land use planning through the use of the IDP.

## 1.2. Plan Area

The Plan Area encompasses approximately 28,000 hectares (70,000 Ac) of land surrounding, and within the corporate limits of the Town of Whitecourt as shown on Figure 1.0 – Overview Map and Figure 2.0 – IDP Geophysical Features.

The location of Whitecourt, and the plan area, is at a significant confluence of four water courses. The Athabasca River, McLeod River, Sakwatamau River and Beaver Creek are the four systems which come together in the valley area. In fact, Sagitawah means “the place where the rivers meet” in Cree. The community of Whitecourt was originally established as a Hudson’s Bay Trading Post in 1897. The first permanent resident arrived in 1905 and in 1908 some

of the land in the plan area was surveyed into quarter sections. Since, Whitecourt and the surrounding area have developed within and outside the valley area. Currently in the valley there are a variety of uses such as the town centre, residential areas, Millar Western saw and pulp mill and many businesses. The Hilltop area of Whitecourt (south of the valley) includes more residential areas, some industrial and a highway commercial strip. West Whitecourt includes an industrial area and another commercial strip along Highway 43 driving northwest of the community.

Outside of the community core, agriculture and country residential parcels are features on the rolling hills to the south of Whitecourt. West from town is the airport, some industrial uses, more country residential developments, agriculture and woodlots. Significant aggregate deposits have also been found upstream from the Town site towards the west. The Town is bounded by the Athabasca River on the north which is also the preferred growth direction for urban development. To the east of Whitecourt there are a few parcels of productive agricultural land; beyond that is Alberta public land, administered by Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development. This land is currently in a natural state to the east and southeast. This is due in part to severe development constraints and its value as a natural space.

## 1.3. Authority

The Province of Alberta adopted land use policies pursuant to the Municipal Government Act (MGA) in 1996. These policies encourage intermunicipal cooperation in many aspects including land use. The contents for an Intermunicipal Development Plan are outlined in Section 631 of the MGA which states:

*“631(1) Two or more councils may, by each passing a bylaw in accordance with this Part or in accordance with sections 12 and 692, adopt an intermunicipal development plan to include those areas of land lying within the boundaries of the*

*Municipalities as they consider necessary.*

(2) *An intermunicipal development plan*

(a) *may provide for*

- (i) *the future land use within the area,*
- (ii) *the manner of and the proposals for future development in the area, and*
- (iii) *any other matter relating to the physical, social or economic development of the area that the councils consider necessary,*

*and*

(b) *must include*

- (i) a procedure to be used to resolve or attempt to resolve any conflict between the Municipalities that have adopted the plan,
- (ii) a procedure to be used, by one or more Municipalities, to amend or repeal the plan, and
- (iii) provisions relating to the administration of the plan.

#### **1.4. Planning and Community Planning Process**

##### **Public Participation**

In accordance with Section 692 of the MGA, appropriate measures were taken to ensure the involvement of the public within the planning process. Several methods of public participation were utilized prior to the adoption of this Plan. In summary, the public participation process included:

##### ***Newspaper, Radio, and Advertisements***

Prior to the May 7, 2009 Open House, a series of media releases were sent to the community to present the project, provide contact information, and inform the public of the process. All members of the public were invited to ask questions and refer to the County and Town websites for more information.

A second series of media releases was sent to the community prior to the second Open House. Updates were provided throughout the planning process on the County and Town websites as well as the dedicated website: <http://www.projectupdate.ca/woodlands-whitecourt-idp.html>.

##### ***Informational Open House***

An informational Open House was held on May 7, 2009 at the Woodlands County Office to inform the public about the Intermunicipal Development Plan process. Feedback forms were handed out

and a brief question and answer period was held based on the information presented. This was the first opportunity to collect public opinions and investigate concerns within the Plan Area. A summary of the collected feedback was developed and forwarded to County and Town staff.

##### ***Design Workshop***

Following the Open House; County and Town staff, landowners, and representatives from community groups were invited to participate in a Design Workshop. This visioning exercise was an opportunity for participants to review four major areas of interest: Development/ Land Use, Transportation, Open Space/Recreation, and the Plan Boundary. A Feedback Summary was created to highlight the specifics of each topic and then presented to County and Town staff.

##### ***Policy Plan Open House***

A second Open House was held on March 11, 2010 at the Woodlands County Office to present the Draft IDP to the public. Information and topics that were deemed imperative such as land use, servicing, and densities were addressed in a presentation.

The public was requested to review the IDP following the Open House in order to provide comments, revisions, and suggestions where appropriate. Subsequent revisions to the Plan were made prior to the Public Hearing.

##### ***Landowner, Stakeholder, and Public Review of Draft Plan***

A Draft IDP was prepared and circulated to the County, Town, landowners, Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development, and Alberta Transportation for review.

These key members were requested to review the Plan and provide comments, revisions, and suggestions where appropriate. Subsequent revisions to the Plan were made prior to the Public Hearing.

## 1.5. Definitions

**Agriculture Land Use** – The use of land, buildings, or structures for the raising of animals and/or the growing of plants for food or other production.

**Area Structure Plan** - A statutory plan, adopted by bylaw, which provides a framework for subsequent redesignation, subdivision, and development of a specified area of land in the Municipality pursuant to Section 663 of the MGA.

**Commercial Land Use** – A variety of retail, business and service based land uses.

**Confined Feeding Operation** - Fenced or enclosed land or buildings where livestock are confined for the purpose of growing, sustaining, finishing or breeding by means other than grazing and any other building or structure directly related to that purpose but does not include residences, livestock seasonal feeding and bedding sites, equestrian stables, auction markets, race tracks or exhibition grounds.

**Cost Sharing** - An arrangement under which costs of a program or project are shared, according to an agreed upon formula for mutually beneficial developments or joint ventures.

**Council** - The Council of Woodlands County and/or the Town of Whitecourt.

**Developer** - An owner, agent, individual, firm, or company required to obtain, or who has obtained, a development permit or subdivision approval.

**Flood Way** - The portion of the flood hazard area where flow is deepest, fastest and most destructive. The flood way typically includes the main channel of a stream and a portion of the adjacent bank.

**Flood Fringe** - The outer portion of the floodplain subject to period inundation by flooding.

**Floodplain** – An area adjacent to a river, stream, lake, estuary, or other water body subject to flooding.

**Leapfrog Development** - Development not contiguous with the build-up area, requiring the extension of municipal services across undeveloped land. This is generally accepted as an unnecessarily expensive practice and instigates sprawl.

**Minor Review** - A limited review of aspects or provisions within the Plan which Council deems warranted or for which a review has been requested by a Municipality. This review may, at the discretion of the Municipality, involve public consultation.

**Major Review** - A broad and comprehensive review of all aspects within the Plan. Major reviews shall involve a public consultation process.

**May** - Support in principle is indicated for an action or compliance but the Municipalities are free to choose whether or not to undertake the action or compliance or the degree and approach for such action or compliance.

**Municipalities** – Woodlands County and the Town of Whitecourt.

**Municipality** - Woodlands County or the Town of Whitecourt.

**Plan Area** – An area that refers to the land which the Intermunicipal Development Plan policies apply.

**Right-of-Way (ROW)** – A strip of land granted, through an easement or other mechanism for the use of utilities or transportation.

**Rural Density** – The number of dwelling units per an identified area, which is acceptable to Woodlands County and recognized within the Land Use Bylaw and Municipal Development Plan. This density depends on the land use district and conditions of subject parcel/s.

**Shall** - Actions that must be undertaken and policies must be complied with.

**Should** - Actions to be taken and compliance with policies is in principle required but subject to the discretion of the Municipalities on a case by case basis.

**Servicing** - Wastewater, water and stormwater.

**Tax Sharing** - Sharing between Municipalities of the municipal portion of municipal property tax on an agreed-upon formula for a specific geographic area.

**Urban Density** – The number of dwelling units per an identified area, which is acceptable to the Town of Whitecourt.

## **1.6. Plan Framework**

### **1.0 Introduction**

Introduction includes the purpose and background, description of the Plan Area, description of the planning and public consultation process, and a set of definitions.

### **2.0 Plan Goals and Guiding Principles**

This section establishes fundamental goals and principles of the IDP as set forth by the Municipalities.

### **3.0 Policy Framework**

The IDP boundary and policy direction has been developed and agreed upon by the Municipalities through a review of the Area's growth patterns, natural resources, transportation and servicing needs, and public consultation.

### **4.0 Implementation**

Implementation establishes the administration and implementation process for the IDP as required by the MGA.







## 2. Plan Goals and Guiding Principles

### 2.1. Goals of the IDP

The overall goals of the IDP are to:

1. Provide policies which will guide land use, economic development, growth management, transportation, infrastructure, and joint initiatives.
2. Develop, implement, and maintain policies which are mutually beneficial between the municipalities.
3. Continue open lines of communication between the Municipalities in regards to growth and future land use.
4. Identify opportunities for cost and municipal tax sharing between the municipalities.
5. Develop and ensure a high level of standards for development of any land within the Plan Area.

**Tourism and Recreation** - Ensure that existing trails and facilities are identified, formalized, and improved. Provide amenities and facilities that enhance recreation experiences while promoting tourism.

### 2.2. Guiding Principles

The following principles have been identified and implemented in the preparation of the policies contained within the Plan.

**Land Use** – ensure compatible and complementary land uses in order to minimize conflicts.

**Joint Initiatives** – Pursue mutually beneficial opportunities such as land development, infrastructure, public facilities, and economic development.

**Environment** – Retain, protect, and enhance environmentally sensitive areas including rivers, wetlands, trails, and wildlife corridors where possible.

**Development Control** – Ensure consistent development standards and requirements among the Municipalities with uniform enforcement.

Flats Road





### 3. Policy Framework and Future Land Use Patterns

Six policy framework areas have been identified within the IDP. Each provides context, objectives and policy direction to guide future development decisions within the Town of Whitecourt and Woodlands County. They are:

1. General Land Use
2. Economic Development
3. Land Development
4. Environment
5. Infrastructure
6. Municipal Facilities

#### 3.1. General Land Use

The growth and development in the region over recent years has placed tremendous pressures on land use and development.

A key aspect of the plan is the generalized land use proposal identified on Figure 3.0 - IDP Land Use. These proposed land uses guide the general land use patterns within the Plan Area. All figures are conceptual in nature and shall require the development of Area Structure Plans and/or Outline Plans to determine specific development details.

1. Policies related to the existing use and transition of Natural Resource Areas. (specifically section 3.4.2 herein)
2. Policies related to Environmentally Sensitive areas. (specifically section 3.4.3 herein)
3. Policies related to the future Town Growth direction. (specifically sections 3.1, 3.3 herein)
4. Policies related to the development and expansion of Country Residential areas within the County. (specifically section 3.3.1 herein)
5. Policies related to the development and expansion of Industrial land use. (specifically sections 3.3.4 herein)

6. Policies related to the development and expansion of a Highway Commercial Corridor. (specifically section 3.3.3 herein)
7. Policies related to Agriculture land use. (specifically section 3.3.5 herein)
8. Policies related to the development and expansion of land located adjacent to Whitecourt Airport. (specifically sections 3.6.1, 3.6.2 herein)

Policies specific to these 8 items are imbedded within the appropriate Policy Framework subject area.

Districting on land south of Whitecourt within the plan area is Country Residential. This area has been permitted to develop country residential parcels over the last number of decades. Within this area Woodlands County is contemplating creating a specific area wide policy document, intended to provide policy direction and enhanced development certainty for residents and future developers. In addition, due to the previous subdivision activities, opportunities for enhanced transportation and recreational corridors exist and should be incorporated into future developments.

Directly to the east of the town site, quality agricultural land can be found along the lower bench of the river valley. Woodlands County and the Town of Whitecourt envision protecting these parcels as a productive agricultural area. To the southeast of Whitecourt is a significant tract of Provincial crown land shown as the Natural Resource Area on Figure 3. This is a non-preferred growth area by the municipalities and Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development. This area is quite void of any development and represents an area of undisturbed boreal forest. Passive recreational opportunities in this area are supported by both municipalities. If agreements on development can be reached amongst all required parties, formal recreational trail development in the area may be considered.

The Town of Whitecourt has indicated their preferred

growth direction is north across the Athabasca River. While this area is currently under Provincial jurisdiction, discussions for future expansion have been held between Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resources Development (AESRD), the Town of Whitecourt and Woodlands County. As a means to instigate development, a bridge and utility corridor would have to be developed at appropriate locations. The desire for this growth direction is to ensure the current downtown area remains the concentric core of the community and to service industrial activities currently taking place north of the river.

As indicated, land located north of the Athabasca River is envisioned to accommodate future town growth. Development within this area will support urban development with a variety of residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional uses along with schools, parks, and open spaces. Identified on Figure 4.0 - Whitecourt Growth Opportunities is the proposed river crossing and the intended urban growth nodes are delineated. Based on communications with Town of Whitecourt administration, the town has a suitable serviceable land supply for the next 12-15 years. The forecast distribution of this growth is approximately 75% in the Flats area, 15% in the hilltop area 5% in North Haven and another 5% for infill development. The urban footprint is currently growing at a rate of 16.4 acres/year, or approximately the equivalent of 60 dwelling units at current lot sizes.

West of the Town of Whitecourt is the airport area and land which due to its location along the Athabasca River doesn't lend itself to serviced development. There is interest on some of these parcels for aggregate extraction along the valley bench and adjacent table land. While it is beneficial extraction takes place where few other uses are directly impacted, these developments are not without their challenges. They are susceptible to socio-environmental conflicts during approvals, and transportation oriented challenges where haul routes are identified. These challenges can be addressed with sound planning to ensure a framework for mitigation exists. The airport recently received a service upgrade by Woodlands County and is in the early stages of planning for additional development. The future vision is for airport specific uses to be permitted directly adjacent to the aerodrome, industrial uses setback from the aviation services and uses complementary to an airport, such as service oriented developments

(hotels, restaurants) adjacent to Highway 32 which leads to the airport. Additional industrial parcels are being considered along the railway tracks west of Whitecourt as the airport utility corridor is adjacent and servicing is readily available.

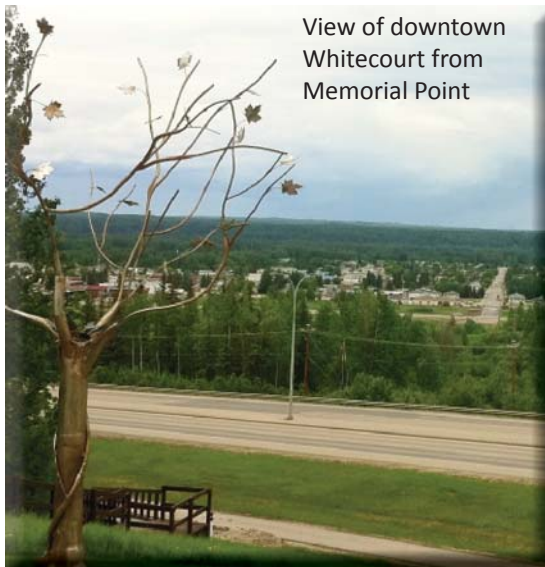
#### **Objectives:**

1. Promote a pattern of orderly and compatible land use within the Plan Area.
2. Avoid and/or minimize conflicts amongst land uses.
3. Coordinate land use in a manner that does not limit the orderly expansion of the Town of Whitecourt.
4. Begin planning for future serviced urban development areas.

#### **Policies**

- A. No subdivisions or development shall be permitted within the plan area without the preparation and adoption of an Area Structure Plan pursuant to Section 633 of the MGA or an Outline Plan to ensure orderly, compatible, and beneficial development.
- B. Orderly and logical development should be encouraged to prevent leapfrogging and the premature extension of municipal services.
- C. The Municipalities shall work cooperatively with the appropriate provincial agencies to address safety, location, and feasibility of future bridge locations across the Athabasca River.
- D. The Municipalities shall work cooperatively with utility agencies to address safety, location and feasibility of future utility corridors across the Athabasca River.
- E. The Municipalities should prepare guidelines to ensure public and private developments are developed at a high quality and are aesthetically pleasing.
- F. Development shall be discouraged in areas prone to flooding, erosion, landslides, or natural or human induced hazards. These areas maybe taken as Environmental Reserve.
- G. For all development types, developments within the flood fringe, hazard land, areas of potential erosion or landslides, will only be contemplated for approval subsequent to the submission of a signed report from a qualified engineer indicating acceptable mitigating measures.

- H. Any extraction of natural resources should be considered in areas prior to development. Upon completion of any extraction, subject land shall be remediated to an acceptable state as deemed appropriate through an approved reclamation plan as completed by a qualified professional.
- I. Development within close proximity of the Town boundary should be encouraged to connect into Town municipal services at standards acceptable to the Town of Whitecourt via a servicing agreement; tax sharing or other forms of compensation shall be negotiated between the two Municipalities.
- J. Within the Plan Area, aggregate extraction will not be permitted below the ground water level. This is to ensure that post extraction land remains available for development and end pit lakes do not become predominate end land uses subsequent to the mining of aggregate materials.



View of downtown Whitecourt from Memorial Point

### 3.2. Economic Development

The Municipalities recognize the mutual benefits in coordinating land use and promoting joint economic development within the Plan Area. The Municipalities will review mutually beneficial opportunities and joint initiatives on an individual basis, or collectively, at the discretion of either Council.

The Town of Whitecourt and Woodlands County have been blessed with a wealth of natural resources that contribute to recreational opportunities, employment opportunities and a high quality of life. This diversity contributes to the high economic development potential in the region and the strong economic base already contributing to the local economy.

#### Top resources are:

- Agriculture,
- Aggregate,
- Forestry,
- Natural Gas and Oil,
- The boreal forest setting that provides the full suite of year round outdoor activities.

#### Top Industries

- Oil and Gas Industry,
- Forestry Industry,
- Recreation providers and associated services,
- Agricultural producers and associated services.

Woodlands County and the Town of Whitecourt are defined by sharing:

- A hard-working, diversely skilled labour pool,
- established major industry sectors,
- abundant natural resources,
- connected, proactive municipalities working together,
- large regional customer base,
- infrastructure that boasts a first class road, rail, air and bus networks,
- a strong commitment to a sustainable economic future,
- a strong commitment to adaptability in changing economic and environmental times,
- high quality of living,

- low taxes,
- proximity to major markets.

**Objectives:**

1. Maintain an adequate supply and variety of serviced land for future development potential.
2. Foster economic development in the Plan Area by recognizing the needs of both Municipalities and the local economy.
3. Identify and cooperate in joint development opportunities where appropriate.
4. Cooperate in the promotion, enhancement, and development of various attractions to increase tourism within the region.

**Policies:**

- A. The Municipalities shall work together to provide an adequate inventory of various land uses to attract and service a broad range of businesses, industries, and residential development.
- B. The Municipalities should cooperate in the diversification of the local economy. Activities not related to the forestry and oil and gas sector including: agriculture, manufacturing, and tourism, shall be strongly encouraged.
- C. The forestry and oil and gas sectors will continue to be supported and appreciated by both Municipalities.
- D. The Municipalities should cooperate in the development, enhancement, and advertising of the tourism sector.

**3.3. Land Development**

**3.3.1. Residential Development**

The majority of the residential uses within the Plan Area consist of urban development in the Town, and Country Residential and farmsteads in the County. Given the need to provide a variety of housing choices, the IDP identifies areas for future urban and rural residential development.

Residential options abound within the Whitecourt and Woodlands area. As is indicated by Figure 3.0 there are many potential country residential parcels south of Whitecourt. Within the town there are still options for growth, and as the rate of growth within the town has held quite consistently at 2.5% per year for the last 5-10 years, this development is expected to last 12-15 years before the town reaches its current planning threshold. Growth areas within Whitecourt are represented on Figure 4.0 - Whitecourt Growth Opportunities.

In order to prevent country residential parcels adjacent to the town boundary inhibiting future urban growth, shadow plans transitioning the land from country residential to urban densities may be requested prior to subdivision approval. Where country residential developments can connect directly to municipal services provided by the Town of Whitecourt, Woodlands County has and will continue to refine standards within the Land Use Bylaw #244/07 to support and facilitate this.

**Objectives**

1. Identify areas appropriate for residential expansion at urban densities as identified by the Town of Whitecourt in consultation with Woodlands County.
2. Identify areas appropriate for country residential expansion at rural densities as identified by Woodlands County in consultation with the Town of Whitecourt.
3. Accommodate various residential-related land uses including recreational, commercial and institutional uses within the areas identified.
4. Avoid and/or minimize conflicts between residential and non-residential uses.

**Policies**

- A. The maximum number of country residential parcels shall be forty (40) per quarter section,

with lot sizes being no less than 0.5 acres and no greater than 4.94 acres in communal wastewater and/or domestic water serviced subdivisions.

- B. Areas suitable for country residential development are shown conceptually on Figure 3.0 – Proposed Land Use.
- C. Country Residential development as defined in Woodlands County’s Land Use Bylaw and Municipal Development Plan, should be encouraged to develop communal wastewater and water systems.
- D. Development within the flood fringe shall require the construction of flood proof wastewater treatment systems to minimize the risk of water table contamination.
- E. All future development, at the discretion of the Municipalities, shall require the provision of appropriate development setback(s) and may require additional studies and/or protective measures as required.
- F. Country Residential subdivisions are envisioned as multi-lot developments that maximize rural characteristics.

### 3.3.2. Recreational Development

Along the intensive network of rivers and natural space, recreational development will allow for the controlled and responsible use of natural areas.

#### Objectives

- 1. Protect existing rivers, wetlands, environmentally sensitive areas, and natural spaces.
- 2. Ensure adequate land is dedicated for Municipal Reserves and Environmental Reserves.
- 3. Identify areas appropriate for recreational residential development.
- 4. Accommodate new residential, recreational, and recreational related business land uses within the Plan Area.
- 5. Avoid and/or minimize conflicts between land uses.
- 6. Facilitate safe public access to recreational resources.

#### Policies

- A. Recreation development should be encouraged to develop communal wastewater and water

systems or connect directly to urban services where infrastructure extensions are appropriate.

- B. Environmentally sensitive areas shall be protected through the dedication of Environmental Reserve required under the MGA.

### 3.3.3. Commercial Development

There are opportunities for expanding the business corridor along Highway 43 to the northwest of the established highway development. The current and projected traffic volumes, and future realignment of Highway 43, create a highly attractive area for highway commercial development.

Within the plan area is the current Highway 43 corridor and the future bypass. Significant highway service oriented development has been permitted along the current route and is also anticipated for the future bypass. According to the Town of Whitecourt’s Municipal Development Plan (MDP) Bylaw # 1428 significant retail commercial is discouraged along the highway corridor. This is to ensure the downtown area of Whitecourt remains the retail commercial center. Also within Whitecourt’s MDP #1428, policy indicates that prior to commitment/construction of the Highway 43 bypass, a corridor study will be undertaken to determine the impact of the highway relocation on current commercial areas, and how to best plan for the future highway commercial corridor. Items to be included in this study are access improvements, aesthetic details and potential districts and uses. Another future development is the Airport Industrial Transition Area anticipated along Highway 32, east of the airport entrance and along the ridge to the extent serviceable and appropriate for development as per Figure 3.0.

#### Objectives

- 1. Provide an adequate supply of various types of commercial land.
- 2. Promote and establish highway service development along the Highway 43 and Highway 32 corridors at levels appropriate for the servicing and development potential.
- 3. Cooperate in infrastructure planning between municipalities and other government agencies to establish development along the current and future Highway 43 and Highway 32 corridor.
- 4. Develop and establish design guidelines to ensure aesthetically pleasing and high quality

development along the future Highway 43 and Highway 32 corridor.

5. Utilize planning and design to avoid and/or minimize conflicts between commercial and non-commercial uses.

#### Policies

- A. Areas suitable for the highway business corridor are shown conceptually on Figure 3.0 – IDP Land Use. The existing endeavours in this area such as Alberta Newsprint Company, the water pumphouse and the co-generation facility will continue to be supported.
- B. All future development, at the discretion of the Municipalities, shall require the provision of appropriate development setbacks and may require additional studies and/or protective measures as deemed necessary.
- C. Woodlands County and the Town of Whitecourt will cooperatively promote and establish appropriate development along the Highway 43 and Highway 32 corridors.
- D. The Municipalities should promote economic development by attracting highway commercial development and service related businesses that accommodate various land uses and parcel sizes.
- E. The Municipalities shall cooperate in the preparation of Design Guidelines to ensure aesthetically pleasing and high quality development along the future highway- business corridor. Design guidelines may address architecture, landscaping treatment, building

facades, setbacks, screening and fencing, access management, and signage.

- F. All retail development shall be directed towards the commercial downtown area of Whitecourt unless compelling reasons exist to locate retail commercial space outside the downtown core.

#### 3.3.4. Industrial Development

The continued growth, expansion, and development of industrial-related businesses are vital to the growth and business diversification of the Municipalities. Properly planned industrial land will include appropriate transportation routes, acceptable services, and land uses to attract new industrial developments. Given the significant resource base in the region, there are numerous opportunities for accommodating industrial development. Within the Town of Whitecourt there are pulp and lumber facilities, and a significant number of service based businesses associated with the oil and gas, forestry and recreation sectors. Both municipalities share in the economic base provided by the local industry and also benefit from the significant amount of provincial land within the County.

Woodlands County has recently serviced the airport area with adequate sanitary and domestic water to accommodate a variety of industrial uses. It is anticipated an industrial park will be planned in close proximity to the airport in the future.

#### Objectives

1. Provide an adequate supply of various types of industrial land.



Gravel extraction and processing facility

2. Identify industrial development opportunities that would be beneficial to both Municipalities.
3. Avoid and/or minimize conflicts between industrial and non-industrial uses.
4. The land identified on Figure 3.0 is intended to attract new industrial economic opportunities and provide opportunities for the expansion of existing operations.

**Policies**

- A. Woodlands County and the Town of Whitecourt shall cooperatively promote and establish industrial areas where appropriate.
- B. Support the development of industrial areas which accommodate the demand for larger parcels.
- C. All future development, at the discretion of the Municipalities, shall require the provision of appropriate development setbacks and may require additional studies and/or protective measures as deemed necessary.
- D. The transportation network shall be upgraded where needed to accommodate the additional traffic generated by industrial activities.
- E. The Municipalities should prepare guidelines to ensure public and private developments are designed at a high standard and are aesthetically pleasing.
- F. The Area identified for industrial land will accommodate various sizes and types of industrial uses.

**3.3.5. Agriculture**

Agriculture is a foundational sector to the County’s local economy and must continue to be supported in a sustainable manner. Woodlands County supports land owners who wish to retain agricultural uses on agricultural land and both municipalities will aim to preserve and protect agricultural land where possible.

The plan area was once a boreal ecosystem. During the early 1910s settlers began clearing the land of trees and transforming the landscape for agricultural purposes. The majority of this agricultural land held profit motive when farming and equipment techniques were able to better accommodate rolling topography and smaller scales. However modern agricultural practices have demanded large tracts of relatively flat topography for viability. This has instigated a change in land use from agriculture to country residential. The best agricultural land in the valley is identified on Figure 3.0. Agricultural conservation is a common policy in many IDPs due to the desire to protect viable agricultural parcels. The parcels identified on Figure 3.0 are intended to remain agricultural until a robust case can be made for amending the use.

**Objectives**

1. Avoid premature development of agricultural land.
2. Support agriculture land for agriculture uses.
3. Avoid and/or minimize conflicts between agriculture uses and non-agriculture uses.

**Policies**

- A. Premature subdivision and land use re-

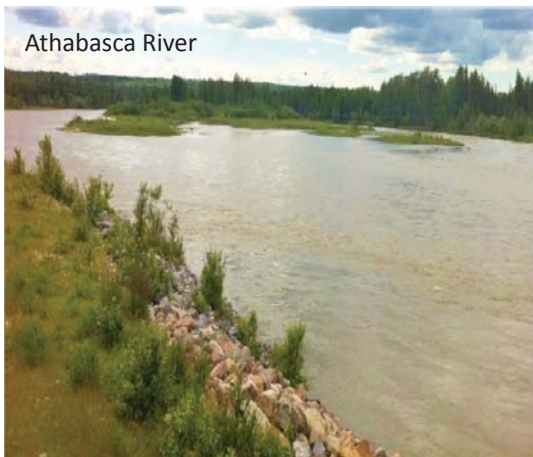


Agricultural land within Whitecourt



designation of agriculture land shall be discouraged and consistent with the policies of the Woodlands County Municipal Development Plan and Land Use Bylaw and this IDP.

- B. Areas suitable for agricultural activities are shown conceptually on Figure 3.0 – Proposed Land Use.
- C. New confined feeding operations shall not be permitted within the Plan Area. Existing confined feeding operations will be permitted to continue operation.
- D. The subdivision of agricultural land shall be limited to two parcels out of a quarter section, creating a total of three parcels as consistent with the Woodlands County Municipal Development Plan and Land Use Bylaw.
- E. The Municipalities shall support agricultural activities in areas deemed as productive agricultural land.
- F. Land identified as Agricultural in Figure 3.0, may require urbanization shadow plans if proposed for country residential development densities.



Athabasca River

### 3.4. Environment

Environmental Management is a field which offers insight into the use and conservation of natural resources, protection of habitats, and control and management of natural hazards. It is not specifically focused on the management of the environment per se, but is focused on human interactions and impacts upon the environment. The three facets most often associated with environmental management are the political context of the subject area, the programs in the subject area and the resources allocated to facilitate the desired management outcomes.

The natural resource area east of the Town of Whitecourt is predominantly crown land which is in a natural boreal state with minimal disturbance. (Identified by Figure 3.0.) This provides a location for conservation and passive recreational opportunities. As well as providing quality habitat for a variety of large, medium and small game, many endemic plant species make this area home. The intention is to keep this area as natural as possible with the potential inclusion of trail development for the enjoyment of residents. Given this land is primarily owned by the Crown, coordination between Woodlands County and AESRD will be required prior to any intensive park and trail development initiative.

Being that Whitecourt is located at the confluence of four identifiable watersheds, there are many features which are sensitive from a development perspective. These water courses provide aquatic, riparian and terrestrial habitat to many species, and significantly contribute to the biodiversity of the region. As such, they should be protected from development and retained as amenity features for residents and provide habitat and wildlife corridor functions. These are identified on Figure 2.0 - IDP Geophysical Features.

Crown land is a unique feature in this plan area. This land is owned by residents of the province and is managed by AESRD on behalf of Albertans. The potential uses which could be located on crown land are oil and gas pipelines and facilities, forestry operations, agricultural leases, natural resource extraction developments and recreational opportunities. As this IDP contemplates urban growth eventually across the Athabasca River to the north, consultation will likely be required with AESRD prior to completing the annexation process.

### 3.4.1. Environmental Management

The Athabasca and McLeod Rivers are predominant natural features within the Plan Area and shall be protected from future development. A number of potential environmental concerns related to oil and gas activity within the Plan Area have been identified. Issues related to oil and gas such as pipelines, decommissioning, reclamation, and end use will be reviewed on an individual basis.

#### Objectives:

1. Protect environmentally sensitive areas including wildlife corridors and rivers from inappropriate development.
2. Cooperate, where possible, in integrating the Athabasca and McLeod Rivers as naturalized greenways that can be used for active and passive recreation purposes, wildlife corridors, and stormwater management.
3. Communicate with Provincial and Federal authorities on local environmental matters.

#### Policies:

- A. An environmental setback from the identified high water mark of lakes, rivers, and streams to the property line shall be applied subject to the discretion of the Development Authority.
- B. All development in the Plan Area shall be reviewed in regards to its potential impact on vegetation and wildlife.
- C. Subject to the discretion of the Development Authority, development proposals should not be supported in areas which are considered to possess historical, archaeological, scientific, or environmental features.
- D. Where Environmental Reserve land is necessary to provide separation or access, the Municipalities shall require the dedication of Environmental Reserves in accordance with the MGA, Municipal Development Plan, and Area Structure Plan requirements.
- E. All future development, at the discretion of the Municipalities, shall require the provision of appropriate development setbacks and may require additional studies and/or protective measures as deemed necessary.
- F. Public access should be supported in areas where impacts on natural and environmentally sensitive areas are minimal.

### 3.4.2. Natural Resources

Natural Resource Areas primarily consist of crown land located in the east of the Plan Area. Much of the Natural Resource Area is currently operated under lease agreements for the purpose of resource and industrial use. Future development, landownership, lease agreements and activities on this land is largely at the discretion of the Province of Alberta.

#### Objectives

1. Preventing biodiversity loss related to the management of water, soil, forests and wetlands.
2. To provide effective stewardship of natural resources and ensure quality of the natural environment is retained.

#### Policies

- A. Should land within the Natural Resource Areas be sold, all Municipal policies shall apply to the development of the land.
- B. Development of land which is adjacent to, or within Natural Resource Areas, will be referred to the Province to ensure their interests are addressed.
- C. The Municipalities cooperating with Provincial agencies should encourage recreational uses within the Natural Resource Areas where natural amenities exist and are deemed appropriate.
- D. Non-motorized public access should be encouraged within the Natural Resource Areas.

### 3.4.3. Environmentally Sensitive Areas

The four watersheds located within the Plan Area are important environmental features that will be protected and preserved. Opportunities to utilize these natural amenities for recreational purposes will be pursued.

#### Objectives

1. Discourage development in sensitive areas.
2. Utilize the sensitive features as local amenities were appropriate, for pursuits such as bird watching and berry picking.
3. Identify and protect environmentally sensitive areas during development planning.
4. Direct development away from environmentally sensitive areas.
5. Prevent invasive or alien species from impacting

environmentally sensitive areas.

**Policies**

- A. The protection and preservation of environmentally sensitive areas through the dedication of Environmental and Municipal Reserve shall be identified at the Area Structure Plan, redistricting, and subdivision stages.
- B. All future development, at the discretion of the Municipalities, may require the provision of appropriate development setbacks and may require additional studies and/or protective measures.
- C. Recreational use on and in close proximity to Environmentally Sensitive Areas should be encouraged, provided its use compliments the overall area and is consistent with the existing open space and natural trails network.
- D. Development within the flood fringe will not be permitted to utilize septic or sanitary systems which could harm the surrounding environment, impact neighbouring properties or instigate health and safety concerns.

**3.4.4. Crown Land**

Crown land within the Plan Area is predominantly used for forestry, agriculture, oil/gas exploration, and aggregate extraction industries. The majority of crown land has existing environmentally sensitive features and should be protected. The Municipalities have authority over this land from a land use and development permitting perspective unless specifically noted in the Municipal Government Act Section 618.

**Objectives**

- 1. Cooperate with Provincial departments and agencies in land use planning and development of Crown Land.
- 2. Work with Provincial authorities and agencies to co-ordinate the development approval and permitting process.

**Policies**

- A. The Municipalities shall remain involved and cooperate with all matters related to surrounding crown land.
- B. The sale and development of crown land should be opposed if the land is considered to be environmentally sensitive unless extenuating circumstances exist.
- C. The Municipalities shall work with Provincial authorities and agencies to develop an Open Space, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan which would identify recreation opportunities on Crown Land.

Natural gas facility



### 3.5. Infrastructure

Infrastructure refers to the services built for public benefit through tax dollars. Within the plan area there are:

1. developer constructed and municipally maintained roads, sanitary and storm systems and domestic water systems (typical residential development services),
2. municipally constructed and maintained infrastructure (public roads, water, sewer and storm systems),
3. provincially funded, built and maintained infrastructure (provincial highways).

In consideration of these three varieties of infrastructure, the policies below are generally focused on numbers one and two most specifically. In consideration of the future Highway 43 bypass, this is an example of number 3. While the province consults with the municipality, to a large degree the route, design and construction is undertaken solely by the Province of Alberta. Given this situation, municipalities must be responsive to this scenario and create policies and agreements in order to best capitalize on construction.

Due to access management issues, along the stretch of Highway 43 southeast of Whitecourt, a service road functional study is being undertaken. This is due to the high traffic volumes and number of commuters that dwell within the Country Residential area south of the town. The current situation is impacting the safety and functionality of the highway, as such, limited entry points as per Figure 5.0 Transportation Network are going to be constructed by the municipality and/or Alberta Transportation.

Woodlands County, Town of Whitecourt and private developers have partnered on servicing country residential developments south of the Town. Where the contiguousness of the servicing has been logical to extend to development, Woodlands County has welcomed this level of service for residents. This level of service for Country Residential developments instigated an amendment to the Land Use Bylaw to accommodate municipally or grouped serviced developments. The concept of group septic to a common treatment system with domestic water service from a communal source are servicing options also considered in the Woodlands County Land Use Bylaw.

#### 3.5.1. Transportation

The Municipalities have been working with Alberta Transportation on the realignment of Highway 43 as shown on Figure 5.0 – Proposed Future Transportation Network. Future alignments of Highway 43 will have a significant impact on the future growth patterns and transportation nodes within the Plan Area. Highway 32 serves the west portion of the Plan Area including the airport, numerous country residential properties, and a growing industrial interest. Currently, corridor planning is taking place in this area to mitigate conflicts between the industrial and residential areas and facilitate safe highway access for resource extraction. As such, transportation planning shall occur to minimize land use impacts and conflicts for all future development. Another critical facet of the transportation network with significant contributions to the local economy is the established railway network. This railway is owned by Canadian National and is known as the Sangudo Subdivision. It serves many oil and gas operations in the region, lumber and pulp mills, as well as transporting aggregate resources mined along the Athabasca River to market.

##### Objectives

1. Provide efficient, effective, and functional connections accommodating the present and future transportation demands within the Plan Area.
2. Plan and manage transportation matters in cooperation with Alberta Transportation.
3. Develop access management guidelines for key portions of the Highway 43 and highway corridor.

##### Policies

- A. The Municipalities shall participate in the planning of major transportation facilities within the Plan Area as jurisdiction dictates. Where connections are adjacent to Provincial highways, the two Municipalities shall work with Alberta Transportation to provide a satisfactory level of service and safety.
- B. The Municipalities shall make efficient use of existing roadways by directing developments to locate adjacent or connect to existing roadways.
- C. Subdivision of land adjacent to primary and secondary highways and other major roadways shall provide adequate setbacks for future road widening.

- D. The right-of-way requirements for roads shall be provided in accordance with the Municipal Development Plan and Area Structure Plan requirements.

### 3.5.2. Servicing and Infrastructure

The majority of the Plan Area is serviced at a rural standard consisting of well and private sewage systems. The potential increase in residential, commercial, and industrial developments will impact the demand on municipal wastewater and water systems if grouped services and utility corridors are established in the plan area.

#### Objectives

- 1. Develop minimum servicing standards that are acceptable to the Municipalities.
- 2. Determine the appropriate servicing standards within the Plan Area.
- 3. Provide for orderly and cost effective extension of services.
- 4. Create cost and tax sharing opportunities between the Municipalities.

- 5. Work cooperatively to establish utility corridors in the plan areas when and where required.

#### Policies

- A. The Municipalities should coordinate and update minimum engineering standards.
- B. All developments shall be supplied with an appropriate level of services based on the location, density, and characteristics of the development.
- C. Residential development should be encouraged to develop communal wastewater and water systems.
- D. Development within close proximity of the Town boundary should be encouraged to connect into Town municipal services at standards acceptable by the Town of Whitecourt via a servicing agreement; taxes generated may be shared between the two Municipalities.
- E. Land which may be affected by potential future transportation and utility corridors shall anticipate right-of-ways and may require adequate setbacks at the discretion of the Municipalities or agencies.



South Highway 43 Corridor



Co-generation facility in the plan area

### 3.6. Municipal Facilities

Like infrastructure, municipal facilities are generally funded, by some form of government interest. These interests can take several forms, from Town and County owned corporations, to direct granting mechanisms, to incentives through tax breaks. The items which became topics for policy framework within the IDP were the Whitecourt Airport and its adjacent land, the parks and trail networks within the IDP area, and the Emergency Services which serve the residents of both municipalities.

The Whitecourt Municipal Airport is a facility owned and operated by Woodlands County. It is located 6 km southwest of Whitecourt along Highway 32. It is a significant contributor to the region and is the ninth busiest airport in the province. The primary users of the airport are the forestry industry, oilfield industry and aviation photography industry. Another reason for the aerodrome's prominence is it hosts an AESRD air tanker base. As such it is a major hub in the effort to control and extinguish wildfires in the province. Along with these industrial users, services provided out of the airport are fixed wing and helicopter training businesses and businesses related to aviation support. Recently, many municipalities have begun to develop the areas around airports as industrial and business parks. The mix of uses between airports and some business such as warehouse commercial and industrial developments often are quite complementary. Figure 3.0 indicates where airport development is preferred to continue along Highway 32 northeast towards the town. This area is intended to become a highway commercial, industrial business and avionics oriented area.

Due to the attractiveness and desirable natural features found within the plan area, many parks, community trails and outdoor recreational spaces have been developed. Many of these have been developed in conjunction with AESRD and have received provincial and municipal funding. These efforts are appreciated by both municipalities and will continue.

Emergency and protective services are another municipal entity which is shared by the Town, or County or jointly funded depending on the service. The Whitecourt fire department provides service to the County residents. Protective services are provided by the RCMP and County Peace Officers and can be engaged within the Town or County during emergency situations.

#### 3.6.1. Whitecourt Airport

The Whitecourt Airport is located within the plan area and provides the Town and County with an excellent amenity feature. The master plan for the Airport is to continue to facilitate the sale and development of aviation related business and services on the Airport property. Figure 3.0 identifies where this land exists.

##### Objectives

1. Protect and plan for the airport's prime function and future expansion as being a fully functioning aerodrome.
2. Avoid and/or minimize conflicts amongst land uses.
3. Provide services and municipal facilities for users to establish, continue or grow existing uses.

##### Policies

- A. Land identified for the Airport Master Plan Area is shown conceptually on Figure 3.0 – IDP Land Use.
- B. Woodlands County and the Town of Whitecourt will cooperatively promote and establish the development of the Whitecourt Airport Area.
- C. Support the development of airport related business to accommodate and facilitate the growth of the airport as a regional amenity.
- D. Development within the Whitecourt Airport Area shall connect to wastewater and water systems to the satisfaction of the Municipality.

#### 3.6.2. Airport Industrial Transition Area

Land which is adjacent to the Whitecourt Airport as indicated on Figure 3.0 has been identified as an area for large lot industrial with the potential for highway commercial along Highway 32. Detailed design of these areas will be undertaken in cooperation between both municipalities to ensure the uses and scale of the development is appropriate. Protecting the egress to the airport with regard to it serving as an attractive entrance feature is also critical to the objectives of both municipalities. The airport industrial transition (AIT) area is envisioned to be fully serviced with municipal services. Recently Woodlands County invested in capital upgrades to bring sewer and water services adjacent to these parcels and are working towards an agreement with the Town of Whitecourt to provide for domestic water and wastewater treatment.

## Objectives

1. Support complementary development near and adjacent to the Whitecourt Airport.
2. Identify industrial development opportunities beneficial to both Municipalities.
3. Provide an adequate supply of various types of industrial and commercial land.
4. Ensure land use and development does not hinder or negatively affect future expansion of the Whitecourt Airport.

## Policies

- A. The Municipalities will promote economic development by attracting aviation related development as well as industrial park development that accommodates land uses and parcel sizes which lend themselves to larger lots. 85% of the lots adjacent to the airport will have a 3.95 acre minimum with 15% 1.98 to 3.95 acres. This size allotment is being accepted in recognition of possible site constraints.
- B. Examples of permitted uses are; industrial laydown yards, tank farms, industrial storage and warehousing, large scale fabrication shops, heavy equipment sales and services. The uses in the AIT district are being adopted as part of the IDP within Appendix A.
- C. Highway commercial will be permitted to buffer the industrial lots from the highway right-of-way and provide a greater mix of services.
- D. Industrial strip mall style of development will be prohibited in this area through land use districting. Multi-tenant development in this

area will be limited to no more than prime plus two tenants for up to 30% of the lots. All other lots must be single tenant developments.

- E. Titles will be caveated to prevent additional subdivision and condominiumization of parcels after initial approval.
- F. The transportation network will be reviewed and upgraded where needed to accommodate the additional traffic generated by the development through development agreement with the developer.
- G. A service road linking either side of the identified land may be considered southeast of the airport area and northwest of Highway 32.
- H. The development of industrial land shall not impact the safety, operation, or future upgrading or expansion of the Whitecourt Airport.
- I. The Municipalities should prepare guidelines to ensure public and private developments are developed at a high quality and are aesthetically pleasing.

### 3.6.3. Parks, Open Space, and Trails

Woodlands County and the Town of Whitecourt have ample open spaces and natural areas as shown on Figure 2.0 – IDP Geophysical Features. The plan area is known for its vast array of outdoor activities. Recreational opportunities should be explored in terms of expansion and enhancement in response to public demand.

#### Objectives

1. Protect existing rivers, wetlands, environmentally sensitive areas, and natural spaces which serve



as amenity features.

2. Create an Integrated Open Space, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan.
3. Explore opportunities for the development of joint recreation facilities.
4. Ensure that adequate land are dedicated for Municipal Reserve.
5. Identify and establish formal trails for off-highway vehicle use.

#### **Policies**

- A. The Municipalities shall work together and with other stakeholders to preserve natural areas and create recreational opportunities.
- B. The Municipalities should develop an Open Space, Recreation, and Trails Master Plan to preserve natural areas and create recreation opportunities.
- C. All recreation opportunities in the Plan Area shall be reviewed to determine their potential impact on natural vegetation and wildlife.
- D. Where possible, joint opportunities for recreation needs and facilities will be explored.
- E. Environmentally sensitive areas should be protected through the dedication of Environmental Reserve designated under the MGA.
- F. The Municipalities should develop a Master Off-Highway Trails Plan to identify formal trails, linkages, staging areas, safety concerns, and enforcement.
- G. Municipal Reserve dedication shall be provided in accordance with the MGA's requirements when requested by the development authority.

#### **3.6.4. Community and Emergency Services**

Emergency services such as policing and fire are provided to the Plan Area between the Municipalities. Demand for community and emergency services is anticipated to increase with additional development and growth. The potential increase in population will increase the need and demand for community services such as schools, place of worship, recreation facilities, social care, etc. These services will be developed as needed in locations based on use and population.

#### **Objectives**

1. Identify and maintain an appropriate supply of emergency service personnel, equipment and facilities to meet population and developed land requirements within the plan area.
2. Ensure cooperation between the Municipalities to provide and maintain an acceptable level of schools, recreational facilities, community centres and other community services.

#### **Policies**

- A. Cooperation between Municipalities should continue in delivering shared emergency and community services.
- B. The Municipalities shall explore and implement methods of providing services in an efficient and cost effective manner. These services may include, but not limited to: fire protection, animal control, community facilities, schools, and other similar municipally or publicly supplied services.
- C. Development of community and emergency services shall be located where appropriate.







Northwest Highway 43 Corridor

## 4. Plan Implementation

### 4.1. Plan Administration, Review, Amendment and Repeal

As required by the MGA, an IDP must include “provisions relating to the administration of the plan” and a “procedure to be used by one or more Municipalities to amend or repeal the plan.”

While the IDP is intended to be a long range planning document, regular monitoring, review, and periodic amendments to policies may be required in order for the Plan to remain current with changing trends, technologies, and growth within the region.

The IDP establishes a process for amendments when it is in the mutual interests of Woodlands County and the Town of Whitecourt.

#### Policies

##### Plan Adoption

4.1.1 This Plan shall be adopted via Bylaw by each of the Councils in accordance with the requirements of the MGA.

##### Review of IDP

4.1.2 The Municipalities shall undertake a minor review of the Plan periodically with a major review after five years from the date on which the IDP is adopted via Bylaw.

##### Plan Amendment

4.1.3 This Plan may need to be amended subject to the review and agreement of both Councils. An amendment to the Plan may be initiated by:

- Recommendations from the Councils of the Municipalities.
- Property owners or members of the public through the Municipality in which they reside.
- Amendments to the Plan must be adopted by the Municipalities via Bylaw in

accordance with the MGA.

4.1.4 Upon adoption or subsequent amendment of this Plan, the Municipalities shall undertake the review to adopt subsequent amendments to their respective Municipal Development Plans and Land Use Bylaws to the extent required in order to provide effect to the policies and provisions of this Plan.

##### Repeal of Plan

4.1.5 Any intent to repeal the Plan shall first be raised before the Municipalities and best efforts shall be pursued to resolve any issues that may have given cause to consider the repeal of the Plan. The procedure for repealing the Bylaws shall be in accordance with the requirements of the MGA.

### 4.2. Intermunicipal Dispute Resolutions

Both Municipalities agree it is important to avoid any dispute by ensuring the policies and provisions of the Plan are followed. Should any disagreements regarding the interpretation and application of the provisions within this Plan arise, the Municipalities shall seek a timely resolution in a manner which is respectful of each Municipality’s interests and concerns using the steps as identified.

In the event the dispute resolution process is initiated, the Municipality having authority over the matter shall not provide any further approval until the dispute has been resolved or the mediation process has concluded. The Municipalities agree the resolution steps identified shall be completed within 60 calendar days from the date on which the disagreement is identified.

The process is designed to maximize opportunities for discussion and review with the goal of resolving any disagreements early in the approval process through the following three stages:

### **Step 1 Staff Review and Discussion**

Should the Municipalities identify any issues related to proposed plans, bylaws or amendments that may result in a serious disagreement between the Municipalities, every attempt will be made to discuss the issues at the Administrative level with the intent of arriving at a mutually agreeable solution.

### **Step 2 Chief Administrative Officer**

In the event staff review and discussion is unable to resolve a disagreement, the Chief Administrative Officer's shall attempt to resolve the disagreement. Each municipality, through its administration, must ensure the facts of the issue have been fully investigated and clarified. Staff meetings may occur at this point to discuss possible solutions.

### **Step 3 Municipal Councils**

Should the Chief Administrative Officers be unable to resolve the disagreement, they shall request a joint meeting of the Councils of the Municipalities who will attempt to resolve the disagreement.

### **Step 4 Alberta Municipal Affairs**

Should the Councils be unable to resolve the disagreement, either Municipality may request Alberta Municipal Affairs to commence a mediation process under the Department's guidance.

If the disagreement cannot be resolved by mediation then:

- Any Municipality may appeal to the Municipal Government Board under the provisions of Section 690 of the Act if the disagreement pertains to a statutory plan, a land use bylaw or any amendment of either, or
- The results of the mediation report will be binding on each Municipality, if no relief under the Municipal Government Board is found.

## **4.3. Referral Process**

Each Municipality shall refer to the other Municipality in any matters that affect land within the Plan. The continued referral of planning applications, statutory plans, amendments, studies, and documents is essential to maintaining open communication and resolving intermunicipal issues on an ongoing basis.

### **Policies**

- 4.3.1 The Municipalities shall circulate and refer all matters related to planning and land use including:
- Statutory plans and amendments;
  - Land uses that are not addressed by, or are inconsistent with this Plan or Area Structure Plans / Outline Plans in effect;
  - Land uses that are not permitted uses under existing land use districts; and
  - Proposed larger scale industrial, commercial, and institutional uses.
- 4.3.2 In addition to those specific matters identified for referral, a Municipality should also refer any matter which may be of interest, or may be relevant to this Plan and the land within the Plan Area, and may include:
- Municipal Development Plan approval or amendments;
  - Transportation, waste water, water, or stormwater management plans;
  - Recreation and/or parks plans; and
  - Tourism development.
- 4.3.3 The Municipalities to which a referral is made may provide a response to the matter referred and, if so, shall provide a timely response recognizing, where applicable, the statutory or regulatory time frames that apply for processing and decision.
- 4.3.4 The Municipalities shall notify any affected individuals, organized groups, and any First Nations groups within, and surrounding, the Plan Area of development proposals which may have adverse impact on the other, including development or activity that may generate smoke, smell, noise, aesthetics, traffic, storm runoff, or land use conflicts.

#### 4.4. Requirements for Area Structure Plans

This Plan is intended to be a broad policy framework regarding land use, transportation, municipal services, environmental management, recreation, parks, and open space. Additional detailed planning shall be undertaken in the form of Area Structure Plans or relevant planning documents. Future subdivisions and development applications will not be considered prior to the preparation and adoption of an Area Structure Plan / Outline Plan by Council.

##### Policies

4.4.1 The Municipality shall require the preparation of an Area Structure Plan / Outline Plan in conjunction with an application for subdivision or development approval that; due to the scale, scope, or circumstance, warrants; in the opinion of the respective Municipality, the preparation of such a plan.

4.4.2 The preparation of an Area Structure Plan will be required for:

- 4 or more parcels intended for residential use.
- 1 or more parcels intended for industrial, commercial, or institutional use.

4.4.3 The preparation of an Outline Plan and additional studies may also be required prior to, or in conjunction with, an application for subdivision or development approval because of the scale, scope, circumstance, or warrants.

#### 4.5. Boundary Adjustments

Both the Councils of the Municipalities realize in order to meet the demand for residential, commercial, and industrial growth, municipal boundary adjustments may be necessary. In determining the timing, size, and location of future boundary adjustments, the following factors shall be considered:

- The requirement of additional land to meet future demands for residential, commercial, and industrial purposes within the Town of Whitecourt.
- Extension of municipal services and transportation networks where required and appropriate.
- Logical and orderly patterns of land use redesignation and development.
- Consistency with policies of any existing relevant statutory plans at the time of boundary adjustment.

##### Policies

4.5.1 Figure 3.0 – IDP Land Use will guide the general land use patterns within the Plan Area.

4.5.2 The Town boundary should be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure the Town has an adequate supply of land to meet its future urban growth needs.



Graham Acres  
Recreation Area