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# Rocky View County COUNTY PLAN

## BYLAW C-7280-2013 AMENDED JUNE 23, 2022



## 14.0 BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

A strong local economy provides multiple benefits to the social, economic, and environmental fabric of the County. Businesses provide:

- · employment and services
- · a commercial focus adding to the vitality of a hamlet
- taxes to help provide community services
- · local employment to reduce vehicle use

The County Plan provides a number of business areas and development forms which accommodate the wide variety of businesses wishing to locate in the county. This Plan identifies regional business centres, highway business areas, and hamlet business areas as areas where the majority of commercial and industrial development should locate. By focusing development in these locations, the County provides for orderly growth and economic efficiencies in the development of its transportation and infrastructure systems.

The County Plan supports and encourages a robust market-driven economy by facilitating economic development and providing planning policies that help foster private and public investment in the county.

### GOALS

- Provide a range of well-designed *business areas* that serve county residents and the Calgary region.
- Direct the majority of new commercial and industrial businesses to locate in the business areas identified on Map 1.
- Support the growth of a variety of business areas, agriculture businesses, and home based businesses.
- Support hamlets in developing main streets or central commercial areas that add to the social fabric of the hamlet and provide enhanced services to the local area.
- Support business development that meets the County's community and environmental goals.
- Increase the business assessment base to support the financial sustainability of the County's operations, while reducing reliance on the residential tax base.

**Environmental reserves** are defined in the Municipal Government Act as lands dedicated to prevent development in hazard areas (e.g. floodways or escarpments), reduce water pollution, and provide access to lakes and rivers. Environmental reserves are dedicated as public land.

**Environmental reserve easements** have the same goals and obligations as environmental reserves under the Municipal Government Act, but are allowed to remain privately owned.

A **conservation easement** is a method to protect significant natural landscape features or agriculture land whereby a landowner voluntarily gives up all or some of the rights to develop the land.

## POLICY

#### **General Business**

- 14.1 Provide a range of locations and development forms in the county to accommodate the growth and diversification of the county's business sectors.
- 14.2 Direct business development to locate in identified business areas as identified on Map 1.
- 14.3 Encourage the infilling or intensification of existing business areas and hamlet main streets in order to complement other businesses, maximize the use of existing infrastructure, minimize land use conflicts with agriculture uses, and minimize the amount of traffic being drawn into rural areas.
- 14.4 A business area shall have an adopted area structure plan in place prior to development, with the exception of lands in business areas that already have the appropriate land use designation allowing business development.
- 14.5 Boundary expansion of a business area shall require an area structure plan or an area structure plan amendment.
- 14.6 Business development shall address the:
  - a. County's Commercial, Office, and Industrial Design Guidelines; and
  - b. development review criteria identified in section 29.

#### **Regional Business Centres**

Regional business centres are large areas of commercial and industrial development within the County. The purpose of a regional business centre is to provide regional and national business services, and local and regional employment opportunities. Regional business centres make a significant contribution in achieving the County's fiscal goals.

Substantive planning, time, and public and private investment have resulted in identifying and developing regional business centres. This Plan does not contemplate developing other regional business centres until the identified centres are approaching full build-out.

Identified regional business centres, shown on Map 1, have the following characteristics:

- existing businesses
- an efficient road connection to the provincial highway network;
- significant scale and scope of operations;
- infrastructure with the potential to service the proposed development;

The term **business** is used in its broadest meaning to encompass commercial, industrial, agriculture, and home based activities.

**Business areas** are defined as regional business centres, highway business areas, hamlet business areas, or areas for business identified in an area structure plan or conceptual scheme.

The general location of existing or proposed regional business centres, highway business areas, and hamlet business areas is shown on Map 1.

- potential of multiple transportation options (road, rail, or air); and
  - regulated by existing statutory policy, and/or identified in annexation agreements.
    - 14.7 Development of a new regional business centre should not be supported unless a need has been demonstrated, based on the following criteria:
      - a. the proposal has regional or national significance;
      - b. existing regional business centres within the *trade area* of the proposed development are approaching full buildout, and the County has determined the expansion of the existing regional business centres is not desirable;
      - c. existing regional business centres within the trade area do not meet market demand;
      - d. land uses and target markets are clearly defined;
      - e. the proposed development meets the environmental and infrastructure goals and policies of this Plan;
      - f. the proposed development has the potential to provide a substantial financial benefit to the County;
      - g. adverse impacts on existing residential communities and agriculture operations will be minimized; and
      - h. the proposed development is in close proximity to the provincial transportation network.
  - 14.8 Direct new commercial and industrial development to existing, identified regional business centres and ensure development complies with existing area structure plans.

#### **Highway Business Areas**

Highway business areas are intended to take advantage of the provincial highway system. They are of limited size and should be located in proximity to highway intersections and interchanges. The purpose of a highway business area is to contribute to the County's fiscal goals, provide destination commercial and business services, provide services to the traveling public, and offer local employment opportunities.

14.9 Area structure plans shall be adopted to provide the framework for highway business area development.

- 14.10 Highway business areas are identified on Map 1 and should have the following characteristics:
  - a. located along intersections or interchanges with the provincial highway network;
  - b. land uses consistent with the purpose of a highway business area;
  - c. limited development area close to one or all of the quadrants of the intersection or interchange;
  - d. planned in a comprehensive manner and not subject to incremental expansion;
  - e. meet the environmental, infrastructure, and financial goals and policies of this Plan;
  - f. minimize adverse impacts on existing agriculture or residential development;
  - g. developed in consultation with Alberta Transportation; and
  - h. consistent with the provincial freeway and access location plans.
- 14.11 Proposed highway business areas not identified on Map 1 shall:
  - a. meet the characteristics identified in policy 14.10; and
  - b. demonstrate the proposed location would not adversely impact the build-out of land within nearby business areas.
- 14.12 In the Conrich area, the relationship of business to the TransCanada Highway shall be determined by the applicable area structure plan.

#### Hamlet Business Areas

Hamlet business areas contribute to local employment opportunities and provide services to the local area. Hamlet business areas accommodate a wide variety of retail commercial, office commercial, and light industrial uses. There are a number of different forms of commercial or industrial business parks within the County's hamlets.

- 14.13 Planning and design of a hamlet business area shall be guided by the hamlet area structure plan, conceptual scheme, the Land Use Bylaw, and any other relevant statutory plan.
- 14.14 Hamlet business areas or regional business centres are supported in, or near, the Hamlets of Conrich, Harmony, Balzac, and Langdon.

**Trade area** is the geographic area from which a business generates the majority of its customers.

#### **Hamlet Main Street**

Commercial and institutional development on a main street, crossroads, or central area contributes to the fabric of a hamlet by providing a community meeting place, adding visual interest to the hamlet, and offering services to the local area. The ability of the hamlet to support commercial development and institutional development is related to the size of the local population and the location of other commercial areas.

- 14.15 Support and encourage existing hamlets in developing and improving their main street, crossroads, or central area.
- 14.16 Hamlet main streets or central areas are encouraged to develop with a consistent design theme.
- 14.17 Hamlet area structure plans and/or subordinate plans shall address the design and function of the hamlet's main street, crossroads, or central area.

#### Agriculture

Agricultural operators and the entire agricultural sector make an important contribution to the County's economy and employment levels. The agricultural service goals, strategies, and policies that support the business of agriculture are found in policies 8.7 to 8.13.

#### **Home Based Business**

Home based business is encouraged as a self-employmentopportunity for residents as long as the business has minimalimpact on adjacent home owners and County infrastructure.

14.18 Home based business is encouraged and supported when it is in accordance with any applicable area structure plan, subordinate plan, and the Land Use Bylaw.

Home-based business is encouraged as a self-employment opportunity for County residents, subject to the business use being of an appropriate intensity and form for its location. Although homebased business uses vary in their nature, in all cases they must be secondary to the principal residential uses on the property, and despite their presence, the residential character of the subject property and surrounding area must be clearly maintained.

Many home-based business operations are limited to such an extent that they can be located on most residential and agricultural parcels, subject to a development permit. However, those home-based business uses that are of a greater intensity, often needing larger areas of outdoor activity or storage, are required to also be assessed through a land use redesignation application.

14.18 All home-based business uses shall be clearly subordinate to the principal residential use, and where appropriate, agricultural uses, on the subject land. Such uses shall also not have a significant adverse effect on the residential or agricultural character of the subject parcel or surrounding area.

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- and Appendix B (Redlined Version) 14.19 Subdivision of parcels holding a development permit for a home-based business use, shall not be supported.
- 14.20 Notwithstanding those areas covered by residential-tobusiness transition policies contained within an area structure plan or local plan, a home-based business use requiring a land use redesignation approval should not be:
  - a) located within areas supported for hamlet residential or country residential subdivision by an area structure plan or local plan;
  - b) within 200 metres (± 656 feet) of an existing or permitted residential dwelling located on an adjacent parcel;
    - i. The setback does not apply to any adjacent parcel that also accommodates a home-based business use that required a land use redesignation approval; any commercial or industrial district parcel; or another approved business use.
    - ii. The setback distance is measured from the identified footprint of the home-based business to the nearest elevation of the residential dwelling on the adjacent parcel;
  - c) located on a parcel less than 1.60 hectares (±3.95 acres) in size.
- 14.21 In considering a land use redesignation application for a home-based business use, support should be dependent on the application demonstrating:
  - a) compliance Policies 14.18 and 14.19 above, and any other statutory or non-statutory plans, policies, or standards adopted by the County;
  - an ability to comply with the regulations of the applicable Rocky View County Land Use Bylaw, at development permit stage;
  - an ability to locate the business in close proximity to the existing dwelling(s) and accessory buildings on the subject property;
  - d) reasonable proximity of the proposal to a highway or the County's Long-Range Transportation Network (Map 2);
  - e) appropriate servicing availability to accommodate the needs of the business;
  - f) satisfactory access to a public road, and provision of necessary road infrastructure improvements to accommodate the proposal in accordance with County/Provincial standards and the Applicant's own transportation assessments (where required); and
  - g) the continued presence of a residential dwelling on the subject parcel for a period of more than one year prior to the application being submitted.
- 14.22 In addition to meeting the relevant application and technical requirements of the County Plan (Section 29.0) and Land Use Bylaw, land use redesignation applications for home-based business uses shall include a supporting statement providing:

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- a) details on the specific home-based business activity that is proposed; and
- b) a summary of how the home-based business complies with Policies 14.18 to 14.20 of this Plan.

The application should include relevant site plans, mapping and other drawings in support of meeting this policy.

#### **Other Business Development**

Substantive planning, time, and public and private investment have resulted in identifying and developing business areas. This Plan encourages new businesses to locate within the existing business areas as identified on Map 1 and does not support business development on business area boundaries. Proposals for small scale business development away from identified business areas must justify their need and location.

- 14.23 Applications to redesignate land for business uses adjacent to, or in the vicinity of, the boundaries of an identified business area shall not be supported.
- 14.24 Small scale value-added agriculture and agriculture services, natural resource extraction, and business as defined in relevant Federal or Provincial legislation may be

supported adjacent to, or near, a business area.

- 14.25 Applications to redesignate land for business uses outside of a business area shall provide a rationale that justifies why the proposed development cannot be located in a business area (e.g. requirement for unique infrastructure at the proposed location).
- 14.26 Proposals for business development outside of a business area should:
  - a. be limited in size, scale, intensity, and scope;
  - have direct and safe access to a paved County road or Provincial highway;
  - c. provide a traffic impact and intersection assessment; and
  - d. minimize adverse impacts on existing residential, business, or agricultural uses.

#### **Industrial Storage**

Location and design are important factors when considering redesignation and subdivision applications for industrial storage. Unless they are properly sited and designed, industrial storage facilities may adversely impact land values and agricultural operations. They may also create traffic problems in an area by increasing traffic volume and dust.

- 14.27 Applications to redesignate land for industrial storage shall:
  - a. Adhere to policies 14.19 to 14.22;
  - b. Locate in a manner that minimizes traffic and dust on nearby lands;
  - c. Provide a landscape and site development plan to reduce visual impact through the use of existing landscaping or topographical elements and visually attractive perimeter screening that incorporates vegetation, fencing, and/or berms; and
  - d. Provide a management plan for the handling and storage of waste materials, including leakage from vehicles or other sources.

#### **Economic Development**

- 14.28 Support business development, in accordance with the policies of the County Plan.
- 14.29 Facilitate economic development by providing assistance and reducing barriers to companies wishing to invest in the County.
- 14.30 Facilitate investment opportunities for a variety of investor groups.
- 14.31 Link investors and developers to investment opportunities.
- 14.32 Work with producers and commodity specialists to add

value and expand the agriculture industry.

## ACTIONS

- Undertake a commercial/industrial land inventory to assist in determining the future potential for the growth and diversification of the County's business sectors (policy 14.1).
- Develop Main Street commercial guidelines for the Hamlet of Langdon (policies 14.15 to 14.17).

## 28.0 AREA STRUCTURE PLAN PREPARATION AND AMENDMENT

Periodic review of an area structure plan is necessary to ensure the policies and strategies reflect the current community and County vision. New area structure plans may also be prepared to provide a framework to guide future growth and change in specific areas of the County.

## POLICY

- 28.1 The decision to prepare a new area structure plan, or to amend an existing area structure plan, shall be directed by the policies of this Plan. The terms of reference for the work shall be approved by Council.
- 28.2 A new area structure plan, or an amendment to an area structure plan, shall be prepared by, or directed by, the County.
- 28.3 Area structure plans should be assessed every 10 years to determine whether a review is required.
- 28.4 A review of an area structure plan may be initiated by Council prior to 10 years if:
  - a. available residential capacity is reaching full build-out;
  - b. there are multiple applications for alternative development forms inconsistent with the area structure plan;
  - c. changes in major servicing policies or conditions occur;
  - d. external planning changes (regional plans, County Plan, intermunicipal development plans, adjacent area structure plans, etc.) affect the area structure plan;
  - e. there is a change in County boundaries; or
  - f. Council otherwise determines that a review is required.

#### **Development Intiated Area Structure Plan Amendment**

- 28.5 A major amendment to an area structure plan shall be led or directed by the County in consultation with the local community.
- 28.6 A minor amendment to an area structure plan may be prepared by the development proponent in consultation with the local community, at the direction of the County.

#### **Interim Land Uses**

Area structure plans commonly have policies to phase development areas according to factors such as servicing and transportation infrastructure capacity and improvements. Therefore, some lands within approved area structure plans can take many years to build out completely in accordance with their intended land use.

In some area structure plans, it may be appropriate to allow for low impact temporary uses on lands prior to their development as comprehensively planned residential, business, or institutional areas. These interim land uses usually have no permanent structures associated with them and have limited servicing requirements.

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and Appendix B (Redlined Version) Consequently, they can be easily removed from the land at the time of the planned final use of the site being implemented.

- 28.7 Upon preparation, review, or amendment of an area structure plan, the provision of interim land uses within the area structure plan shall be encouraged, subject to the following considerations:
  - a) the compatibility of the interim land use with existing and future uses within the surrounding area;
  - b) alignment with relevant statutory and non-statutory plans, policies and standards;
  - c) potential impacts upon the infrastructure of the County, Province, and other agencies and municipalities;
  - d) the ability of the use to be removed from the lands when required, without significant remediation efforts; and
  - e) limitations on subdivision for interim land use areas during the period prior to implementation of comprehensive development as supported by the area structure plan.
- 28.8 Redesignation applications proposing interim residential and/or business land uses outside of an adopted area structure plan or local plan shall not be supported. The uses shall instead be considered to be permanent and assessed as such against the policies of this Plan.

## ACTIONS

• Review area structure plans for alignment with the County Plan. Prioritize and recommend area structure plan reviews based on the criteria identified in policy 28.4.

## Appendix B

## DEFINITIONS

The following definitions provide clarity to the terms used throughout this Plan. All definitions within the County Plan are italicized and where the word is first used in the text, the definition is provided in the side bar.

AGRICULTURAL AREA: means the area of Rocky View County where redesignation, subdivision, and lot development are not guided by an area structure plan, conceptual scheme, or master site development plan.

AGRICULTURE SERVICES: assist the agricultural operator in the production of primary and value-added agriculture products and services.

*BUSINESS AREAS:* are defined as regional business centres, highway business areas, hamlet business areas, or areas for business identified in an area structure plan or conceptual scheme.

*CARRYING CAPACITY:* is the ability of a watershed, air shed, and/or landscape to sustain activities and development before it shows unacceptable signs of stress or degradation.

CONFINED FEEDING OPERATION: means 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.

*CONSERVATION DESIGN:* is a method of site planning that begins with the identification of a land area's features and values that are to be retained and protected. These features may include natural habitat, wildlife corridors, open land, vistas, farm/ranch land, and historical areas. Once these areas are identified for protection, sustainable site planning may occur on the remaining lands.

*COUNTY POLICY:* is adopted by resolution of Council and addresses the following areas:

- 1. Administration
- 2. Finance & Systems
- 3. Planning & Development
- 4. Infrastructure & Operations
- 5. Agricultural Service Board
- 6. Utility Services

*DEVELOPABLE LAND:* includes all land on which building could occur and excludes land identified as environmental reserve or environmental reserve easement.

*FIRST PARCEL OUT:* means the subdivision of a single residential or agricultural parcel created from a previously un-subdivided quarter section.

*FLOODRISK AREA:* means the area of land bordering a water course or water body that would be inundated by 1 in 100 year flood as determined by the Province, in consultation with the County, and may include both flood fringe and floodway.

FRAGMENTED QUARTER SECTION: is a quarter section of land within the agriculture area divided into six or more:

- 1. residential lots; and/or
- 2. small agricultural parcels, each of which is less than 10 hectares (24.7 acres) in size.

HARD INFRASTRUCTURE: means land and infrastructure related to roads, pathways and trails, and water, stormwater, wastewater, and parking and loading facilities.

*INTERIM LAND USE:* means a use which is transitional in nature, providing the potential to utilize land for commercial gain or community benefit, prior to its planned comprehensive development for residential, business or institutional uses. The land use redesignation approval for an interim land use under the Land Use Bylaw is permanent, but the associated development permits approved are temporary. Typical interim land uses have limited impacts on infrastructure and can be easily removed from the land upon comprehensive development taking place.

LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT: uses a variety of techniques to treat and manage stormwater runoff close to the areas where rain falls. Low Impact Development focuses on site design and stormwater control options such as green roofs, stormwater capture and re-use, and landscaping that increases the absorption and filtering of rainwater.

MINIMUM DISTANCE OF SEPARATION: means a provincially regulated setback established between a confined feeding operation and the neighbouring residence that is in existence at the time the application is submitted. The purpose is to minimize the impact of odour. It is measured from the outside walls of neighbouring residences to the point closest to the confined feeding operation's manure storage facilities or manure collection areas.

*MULTI-LOT:* means development of two or more new residential lots and includes country residential and hamlet development. The definition of multi-lot development does not apply to the subdivision and development of lands within a fragmented quarter section (policy 10.10 to 10.14).

#### NEW OR DISTINCT AGRICULTURAL OPERATION:

- 1. New agricultural operations are distinctly different from the existing use of the land in terms of agricultural products, livestock, and/or facilities.
- 2. Distinct operations are where two or more different agricultural uses are established on a single agriculture parcel for a period of 5 years or more. Such uses may include agricultural products, livestock, and/or facilities.

*NOTIFICATION ZONE:* means an area within 1.6 kilometres of an adjacent jurisdictional boundary. The zone is for the purpose of informing an adjacent municipality of a development application within the County.

OPEN LAND IS DEVELOPABLE LAND AND INCLUDES:

- 1. parks and open space;
- 2. publicly or privately owned land permanently used for conservation, recreation, agriculture, and/or institution uses;
- 3. public utility lots;
- 4. municipal reserve land dedication;
- 5. riparian areas, constructed wetlands, stormwater treatment areas, wastewater treatment areas;
- 6. flood fringe areas; and
- 7. Other environmentally important land not qualifying as environmental reserve.

*PHYSICAL CONSTRAINT:* means a natural feature or human made hazard that impacts or restricts site suitability for development. Constraints include rivers, water bodies, wetlands, ravines, escarpments, steep slopes, land that is subject to flooding, and land that is, in the opinion of the subdivision authority, unstable.

*SERVICING STANDARDS:* means the County's technical requirements that govern infrastructure design, construction, testing, inspection, maintenance, and transfer of public works.

*SOFT INFRASTRUCTURE:* includes, but is not limited to, infrastructure relating to recreation, libraries, protective services, fire protection services, and schools.

UN-SUBDIVIDED QUARTER SECTION: Is a titled area of:

1. 64.7 hectares (160 acres) more or less; or

2. a gore strip greater than 32.38 hectares (80 acres) in size,

if an un-subdivided quarter section is reduced or fragmented by any road widening, boundary adjustment, public use, or right of way for roads, utilities, railroads and canals, it shall be considered un-subdivided when assessing first parcel out proposals. This includes instances where, as a result of a boundary adjustment, public use, or right of way, separate titles have been registered for remaining fragmented portions of the quarter section.

VALUE-ADDED AGRICULTURE: involves the processing of primary agricultural products and services into secondary products to increase overall product value.