

HAMLET OF ERSKINE

Concept Plan

JANUARY 2012



Acknowledgements

County of Stettler

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INTRODUCTION

The County of Stettler engaged the consulting firm of Sandalack and Associates Inc. to prepare a Concept Plan for the Hamlet of Erskine. This plan is intended to provide guidance for future development and growth, and it endeavours to reflect the uniqueness of Erskine, support the existing community, and provide appropriate guidelines for services and infrastructure, land subdivision and commercial development. The Plan proposes a framework and recommendations that emphasize socially, economically and environmentally sustainable practices.

Legal Framework

The Concept Plan fits into the hierarchy of planning documents. The Municipal Development Plan provides a policy framework for the longterm growth and development of the County, stressing the preservation of rural land uses, qualities, lifestyles and values, and the protection of the natural capital of the area. The Land Use Bylaw is derived from the MDP and regulates the use and development of land and buildings within the County. The Concept Plan provides guidance and direction specifically for Erskine. The planning process is intended to help identify needs and issues, and the desired future direction, and to provide opportunities for public involvement.

Why A Concept Plan Now?

- » As an existing hamlet with a population of just over 350 people, Erskine is identified by the County of Stettler as a potential development node. There has been some recent interest in subdividing existing lots, and the proximity to Red Deer and Stettler make Erskine desirable as a place to

live that is within easy commuting distance. Guidelines are required so that any new development will be coherent with the hamlet's structure, function, image, and quality of life.

- » Erskine serves as an important gateway to Buffalo Lake and the summer villages of Rochon Sands and White Sands. There could be potential for additional services and commercial development, and for enhancing Erskine's function as a gateway to this popular recreation destination.
- » Erskine is very accessible and well-connected. Its location along highways 12 and 835 is attractive for small scale commercial and agro-industrial development.
- » The potential for development of a water tank fill site (as identified in the 2009 Stettler Rural Water Master Plan) at the east of Erskine should be accompanied by a land use plan for that area
- » How and where any new development might occur is important to plan for, and the Concept Plan is required so that Erskine's way of life and quality of life can be supported and improved.

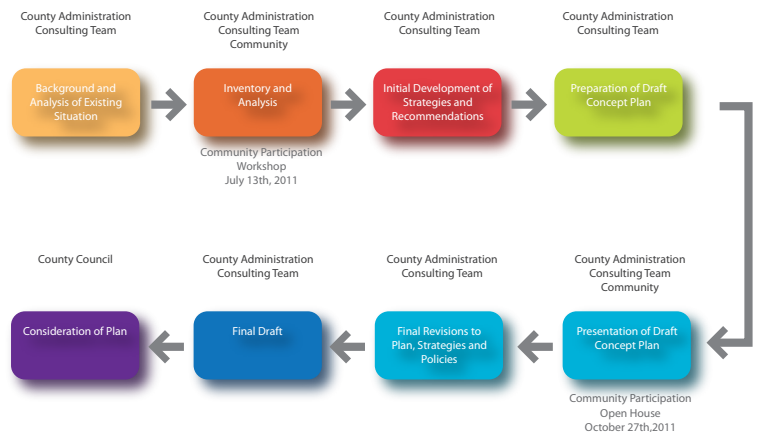
Process

The Concept Plan process included a review of the historic evolution of Erskine, analysis of environmental factors, land uses and functional relationships, infrastructure and services, and circulation and open space, to understand the uniqueness of Erskine and clarify issues. It includes opportunities for public participation to provide better understanding of the issues, concerns, and aspirations of the community for the hamlet, and to provide feedback on the draft Concept Plan.



Erskine - view from west on Highway 12

Plan process



TOWNSCAPE ANALYSIS

Environmental Analysis

The area around Erskine is characterized by “knob and kettle” landscape, a result of glacial processes that produced irregular mounds and depressions in which wetlands form. There are numerous small wetlands in and around Erskine.

Wetlands, lakes and woods are very important as habitat for birds and other wildlife, including endangered species such as the piping plover (which nests on some of the shores of Buffalo Lake). Wetlands can also be very important in improving water quality by removing pollutants.

The Erskine marshes to the south are noted as Environmentally Significant Areas in a recent ESA Report (Sweetgrass Consultants Ltd., 1998).

Storm water management, agricultural practices, and land uses are all important in influencing the quality of water within the watershed.

Erskine residents currently depend on wells for their water supply. The aquifers that provide this water have some vulnerability to contamination, and can be affected by surface activities and land uses.

The tree and shrub vegetation that helps to make Erskine a beautiful hamlet is the result of years of effort. Tree planting is important, especially on the prairies, in improving the general livability and quality of life, and is important in modifying the microclimate (by providing shade and shelter). Tree planting practices are therefore an important consideration in the Concept Plan.



Historic Evolution



Elevator, water tank, railway station, 1910



Railway station, 1910



West side of Main Street, 1910



Railway Avenue, 1911



Buffalo Lake, 1913



Birds Eye View - Erskine, Alberta
View to the north, no date



View to the northeast, 1912



Royal Bank of Canada, 1921



Lakeview Hotel, 1955

- Early history Blackfoot tribes are the first inhabitants of the region
- 1750s Area explored by Anthony Henday, then Peter Fidler
- 1876/7 Treaty 6 and 7 signed, opening the area for European settlement
- 1891 - 1910 Land in Erskine area is surveyed in advance of homesteading
- 1905 Erskine established on a branch line of the CPR running through Stettler and develops as a local agricultural service centre
- A railway station is constructed north of the railway tracks, and grain elevators (eventually three) are constructed south of the tracks
- Businesses and services develop along Railway Avenue, which later becomes Hwy 12
- Main Street, wider than Erskine's other streets, extends to the north, perpendicular to the railway and Railway Avenue, with stores, banks and hotels
- A grid pattern of blocks develops on both sides of Main Street, and additional residential subdivision occurs along Hwy 835
- Erskine School is established in 1906 and reconstructed several times and still serves the region; students complete higher grades in Stettler
- Buffalo Lake, a longtime Cree and Blackfoot camping area, is popular as a summer resort, boating and fishing area from the early days of Erskine's history, and Erskine is important as a turn-off point and fuel/supplies centre
- Early tree planting provides shade and shelter - an important part of making Erskine a comfortable place to live
- The distinctive 'knob and kettle' landscape of the area results in many small depressions and wetlands, including several in town
- Erskine gradually expands, but undergoes stagnation during the 1930s depression and 1940s war years
- Post-war changes in grain handling, transportation, and industry throughout the prairie region leads to elimination of grain elevators and railway station in Erskine
- By the 1960s, the Red Deer - Stettler highway (Hwy 12) is improved, making car travel easier between those larger centres. Some highway commercial thrives, but Main Street has declined
- Erskine continues to function as an agricultural service centre, a school centre, and as a gateway to the Buffalo Lake
- The population is now approximately 350, several businesses still thrive, and Erskine is home to a number of churches and halls

image credits:
Glenbow Archives
Stettler County
Government of Alberta

1945



1962



1970



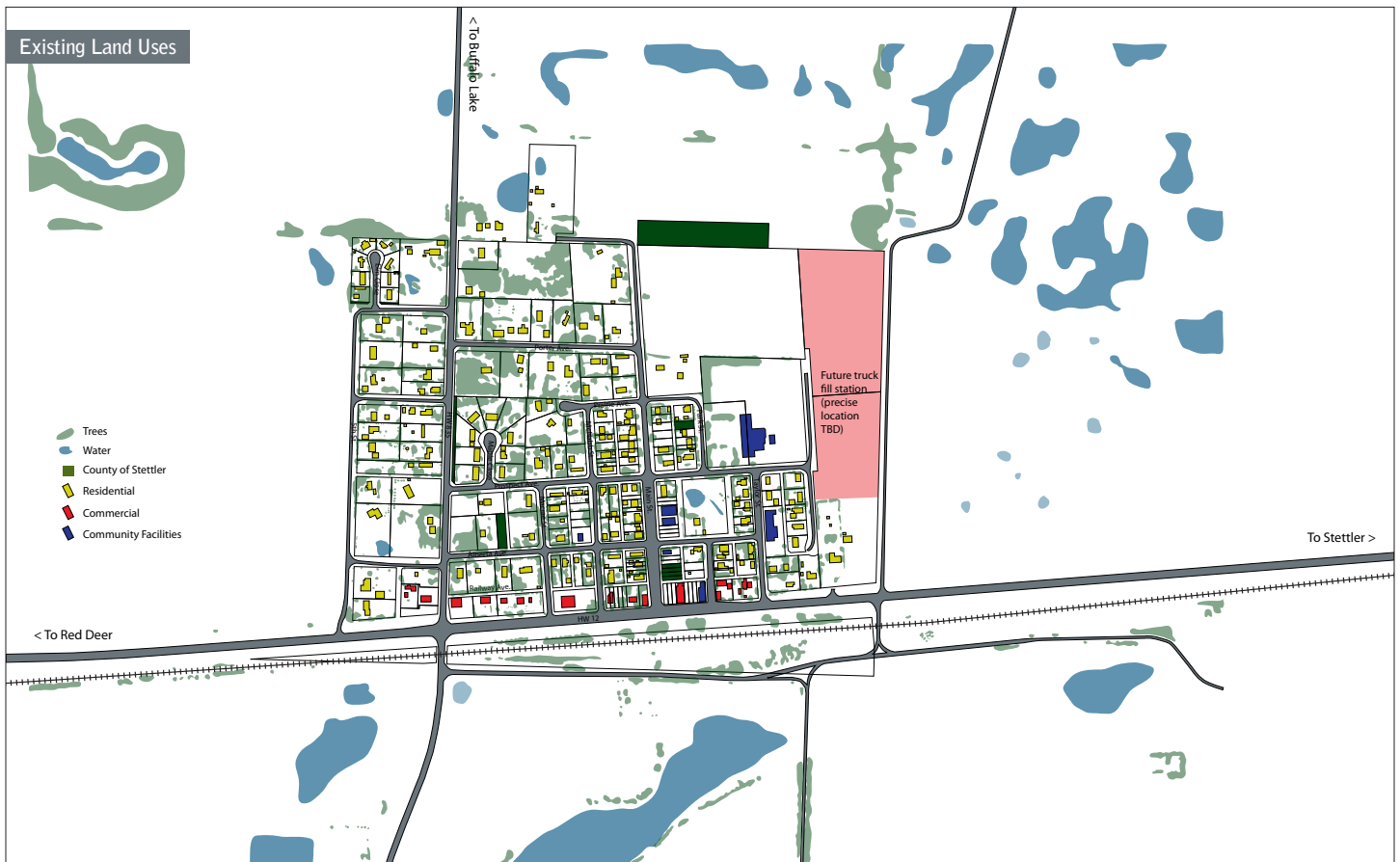
1985



Land Use

A review of the existing land uses and functional relationships suggests the following issues that should be addressed:

- » Should commercial development continue along the highway, or is there interest in directing commercial growth to Main Street?
 - » If commercial development continues along the highway, could Main Street be improved to make it more human-scaled?
 - » Are guidelines needed for highway equipment storage?
 - » How could the former grain elevator lands be utilized?
 - » What kind of future residential growth is appropriate?
 - » Where could future residential growth occur? What is important for residential guidelines to include?
 - » Are the open space needs of Erskine being met? If not, what would be some suggestions?
 - » Where could small industrial uses be accommodated?
- » Any potential land subdivision or growth is directly connected to provision of water and sewer services
 - » A potential water tank fill station could affect traffic and circulation, and require turning lanes



Water - Infrastructure

Currently water service is provided by a series of water wells, some of them shared informally. According to the Alberta Water Well Information Database there are approximately 106 wells in Erskine. Water well data is only available for wells drilled after the mid 1970s; before that time this information was not required by the Alberta Government. Well locations are also therefore not mapped.

County of Stettler Rural Water Servicing Strategy

The Strategy states the following: “The Hamlet of Erskine is within the jurisdiction of the County and is located approximately 13 kilometers west of the Town of Stettler on Highway 12. The hamlet is served by a public wastewater collection and treatment system operated by the County but water supply is currently by private means through individual or informally shared wells.

The 2004 population was recorded to be 352 people and there are currently 144 wastewater system customers. With this population and potential number of customers, it is economic to consider the installation of a High Pressure water supply system, especially since the potential source for treated water is close at hand to the south with the Town of Stettler water supply main.”

As part of the County of Stettler Rural Water Servicing Strategy, a truck fill station is intended for the east area of the Hamlet. A future water line is also planned to be installed along Highway 835 to take water to the lake and crossing through the hamlet with fire hydrants along Prospect Avenue.

Currently a water line is in place on the south side of Highway 12 and could provide water servicing to the Hamlet. The subject of water servicing is important and is linked to the potential for any land subdivision or residential growth, and it should be considered in a separate process from the Concept Plan.

Wastewater - Infrastructure

Existing infrastructure

Currently there are approximately 144 wastewater customers on a sewage system that drains to a sewage lagoon south of Highway 12.

The existing sewage lagoon is reaching its capacity and will soon need to be redeveloped. Future growth will increase this need and should contribute to a better solution for waste water management.



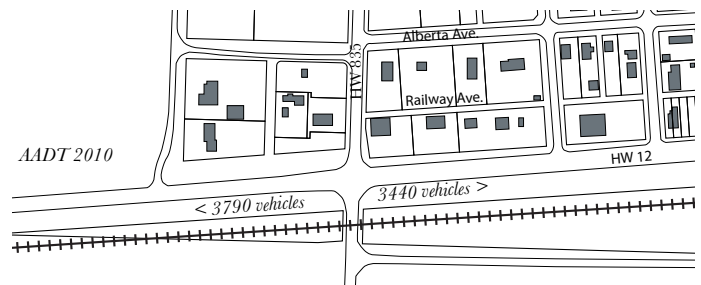


Traffic - Infrastructure

According to the Alberta Transportation Planning Branch (22 February 2011), the Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) for the intersection of Highway 12 and 835 is as follows:

| year | 2001 | 2005 | 2007 | 2009 | 2010 |
|-----------|------|------|------|------|------|
| eastbound | 2990 | 3410 | 3690 | 3450 | 3440 |
| westbound | 3510 | 3840 | 4220 | 3800 | 3790 |

The differences between eastbound and westbound traffic reflects turnoffs to Buffalo Lake, and the recent decline in overall numbers is likely due to a general economic downturn that affects recreation spending.



Highway 12

According to recent correspondence (2011) with Alberta Transportation, the Highway 12 right-of-way is currently adequate for its needs and Alberta Transportation has no plans to expand or modify it.

As part of the County's plans to build the truck fill station a proposed new intersection east of the hamlet on Highway 12 will include deceleration/acceleration lanes.

Highway 835

According to recent correspondence with Alberta Transportation, there are no plans to expand or modify Highway 835.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Workshop and Open House

The process of developing this Concept Plan included the following opportunities for the public to participate:

1. A workshop was held at the Erskine Community Hall on 13 July 2011. It included a brief presentation and poster display of the analysis to date, a walkabout with the residents, councillors, County administration and consultants to look at aspects of the hamlet, and an exercise of collaboratively identifying assets, issues and opportunities that pertain to the Plan.
2. An open house was held at the Erskine Community Hall on 27 October 2011. It included an overview presentation of the Concept Plan, a poster display of the main ideas of the Plan, and discussion. There were also opportunities to provide written feedback on the Concept Plan.



Synthesis Of Issues And Opportunities

The following is a summary of the issues and opportunities that were identified through the workshop:

1. Stormwater and drainage issues

- » ensure that existing swales and culverts are functional
- » County should evaluate the potential of acquiring (through purchase or land swap) the land with the large wetland on Prospect at the end of Park Street for ER and thereby being able to maintain the ecosystem and manage stormwater/drainage
- » provide some educational material for residents - water is part of the environment in Erskine - can't be eliminated entirely, drainage needs to be considered in a comprehensive way since everything is connected

2. Trees, parks and open spaces

- » livability of Erskine is largely dependent on the presence of trees
- » need ongoing planting plan
- » plant for wind protection - agricultural shelterbelt practices could be re-introduced (consider along 5th Street first)
- » provide some connections - emphasise Main Street and Prospect Avenue as the main treed boulevards - focus new planting on these streets first
- » County could consider the land with the large wetland on Prospect at the end of Park Street for designation as ER - could contribute to the open space system as a large central park/natural area
- » playground improvement should be considered

3. Small town / rural character and way of life

- » sense of community depends on school, churches, halls, recreation facilities
- » block pattern, street design, setbacks, density influence character and quality of life; need guidelines for lot sizes, setbacks, building size and massing, design guidelines for buildings and landscape
- » maintain the grid pattern and keep roads continuous, avoid cul de sacs and closed road systems as they impede circulation and prevent the ability to expand
- » restrict/prohibit mobile homes, gated developments, exclusive subdivisions
- » keep sight lines open to rural landscape
- » consider developing architectural guidelines for Main Street and Highway 12

4. Land uses

- » Highway 12 is the best location for commercial - rezone everything to allow for small businesses
- » guidelines required for Hwy 12 commercial
- » designate land south of Hwy 12 as industrial and relocate current storage and parking
- » Main Street is appropriate for hamlet commercial (live-work units), and institutional (halls, churches). It is unlikely to be redeveloped as a commercial street.
- » the scale of Main Street is too broad and exposed - plant trees along sides to improve human scale and reduce exposure and improve visual appeal
- » The IOOF Hall currently functions as a community hall, however its location on Highway 12 is not ideal. the County should consider developing a community hall near the ball diamonds - would improve safety, parking, and could include outdoor activities, camping.
- » new residential could be accommodated in several potential infill areas, or growth to the east

5. Water and sewer and other services

- » water quality and quantity currently dependent on wells
- » health of the aquifer is therefore important - ensure there are bylaws in place to avoid negative land uses and practices
- » water and sewer are the limiting factors to development - communal water / sewer required for any new multi-lot development
- » provision of County water should be considered at some time, and education and information are required for the public to consider the alternatives
- » the water tank fill station location is part of this Concept Plan, and is required as part of the County Water Strategy

6. Pedestrian environment

- » sidewalks are not necessarily required, however existing sidewalks should be maintained/repaired
- » playground and school zones need enforcement
- » 'children crossing' signs required
- » crosswalks required on Hwy 835
- » add pedestrian path along Hwy 835

7. Highways

- » enforce speed and noise controls on Hwy 12 and 835
- » pedestrian crossings required on 835

8. Maintenance and beautification

- » bylaws should be reviewed and enforced to deal with untidy yards or parking areas
- » visual appeal of Eskine is important to the quality of life and creating a sense of community and safety
- » dealing with drainage problems and cleaning out culverts is an important early step
- » general cleanup could be addressed through awareness program
- » overall beautification plan should establish priorities
- » general clean up of Hwy 12 properties and relocation of unsightly parking/storage (designate industrial lands for this purpose)
- » tree planting program for Main Street
- » fix roads, pave school lane
- » pave 5th Street W
- » add street lighting near school and skating rink

CONCEPT

This section of the plan puts forward policy statements and recommendations for various aspects for the future growth and management of the hamlet, based on the analyses in the previous sections. An overall concept plan is included on page 14; please refer to the concept plan along with the following sections that describe specific topics or elements of the plan.

Surface and Subsurface Water

Wetlands

- » Erskine's location in a knob and kettle landscape means that wetlands are a common feature; some are located within the hamlet.
- » it is important to consider the area historically - there are wet and dry years, so looking only at one year may not provide the true picture. The air photos on this page show how wetlands change according to yearly variations.
- » stormwater drainage and wetlands should be considered in a comprehensive way, since they are inter-related. Wetlands perform vital ecological functions, provide habitat and can become part of a park and open space system. Even within private lands, wetlands should not be drained, and should be left as natural as possible and incorporated into the landscaping of the yard. Refer also to the section on Riparian Areas on page. 17
- » Stettler County could consider acquiring (through purchase or land swap) the land with the large wetland on Prospect at the end of Park Street (Lee's Wetland) for designation as Environmental Reserve. This area could then be considered a community asset, with the County responsible for managing stormwater/drainage as part of the overall hamlet infrastructure, rather than a private landowner, since this is a waterbody within the hamlet with a more significant size and impact.

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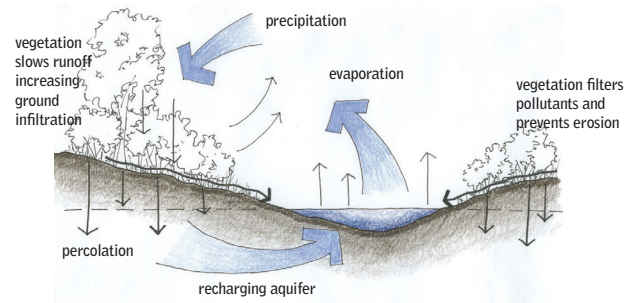


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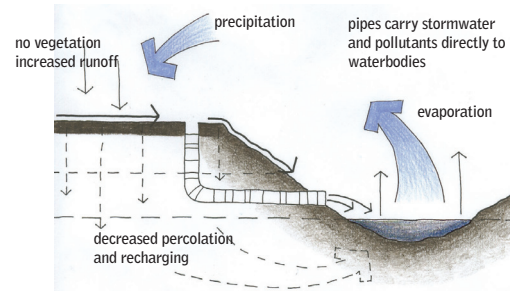


Stormwater management

- » storm runoff affects overall water quality - although runoff may look clean, it can contain materials such as oil, gasoline, sediment, fertilizers and other contaminants. Since runoff feeds wetlands and can make its way into underground aquifers that supply well water, it is important to control activities that could contaminate. Guidelines/bylaws restricting harmful activities are important for ecological and human health and safety.
- » existing swales and culverts need to be maintained properly so that surface water drains properly - clean up and repair is necessary in some places, and regular maintenance is important.
- » it is recommended that low-impact methods of dealing with storm runoff, such as bio-swales, be utilized for more natural drainage in existing and any new developments.

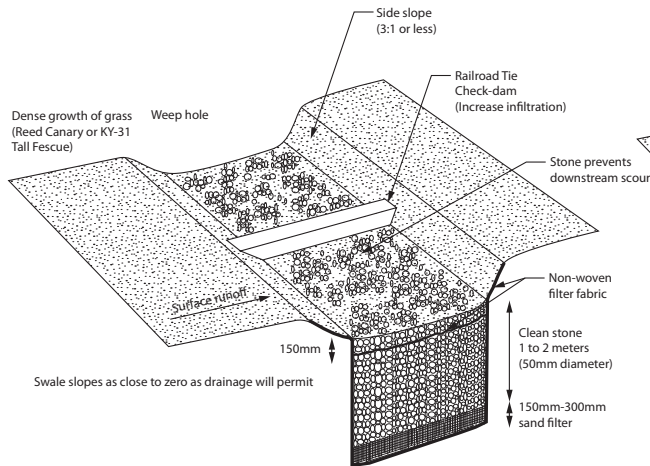


Natural hydrological cycle

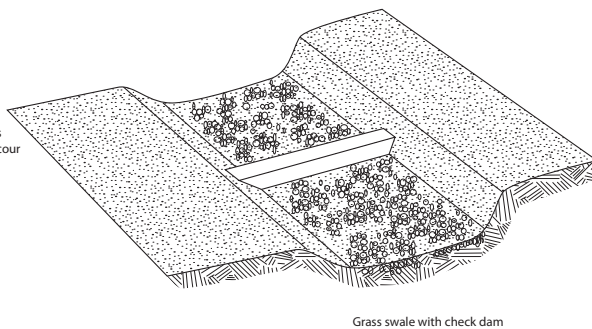


Effects of urbanization

These diagrams illustrate the normal hydrological cycle, and the effect of urbanization. It is important to maintain tree cover, to maintain a healthy riparian zone, and to minimize impervious surfaces, such as parking lots.



Infiltration trench



Bioswale

As per Alberta Stormwater Management Guidelines

Public Realm Improvements

Parks and Open Spaces

- » existing County-owned lands or those that may be acquired in the future should be managed to contribute to the open space system, and incorporate paths and seating areas to provide community amenities, as well as creating public park/natural areas and community focal points.
- » although there was some interest expressed in using the former landfill site to the north of Erskine as park/trails/day-use area, it is recommended that prior to any public use, an environmental analysis be conducted to determine if there are any issues of contamination or toxic materials that could pose hazards to public use.
- » additional consultation and detailed design are required for park and open space improvements.

Community Hall

- » the existing IOOF Hall serves as Community Hall, however the location is not ideal. It is directly on the highway, with a front door just steps away from heavy traffic, and does not have much multi-use potential. This Concept Plan recommends that the County consider developing a community hall in a location close to the school and ball diamonds (two potential options are indicated in the drawings to the right). There is then the potential to hold multi-use events that include outdoor activities as part of the hall events, and connections to the recreation fields and school. This would also provide the potential of a joint use agreement between the school and the County.
- » additional consultation and detailed design would be required in order for this to occur.

Streets and Paths

- » the overall walkability and easy connections in Erskine are elements that provide a strong sense of community, and this should be supported and enhanced where possible.
- » because there is limited traffic in Erskine, sidewalks are not necessarily required, with the exception of Main Street and Prospect Avenue, which are more significant thoroughfares and should have sidewalks. As well any existing sidewalks should be maintained/repaired.
- » because sidewalks are not included everywhere, it is even more important that playground and school zones be



Relocation of Community Hall - Option 1



Relocation of Community Hall - Option 2

enforced, and 'children crossing' signs are required in several locations.

- » a pedestrian path should be developed along the east side of Hwy 835. This makes use of road allowances and County-owned land, and provides better connectivity through Erskine. Crosswalks should be installed at key intersections.
- » cooperation is needed with Alberta Transportation so that speed and noise controls can be enforced on Highways 12 and 835 and so that pedestrian crossings can be installed on Highway 835.

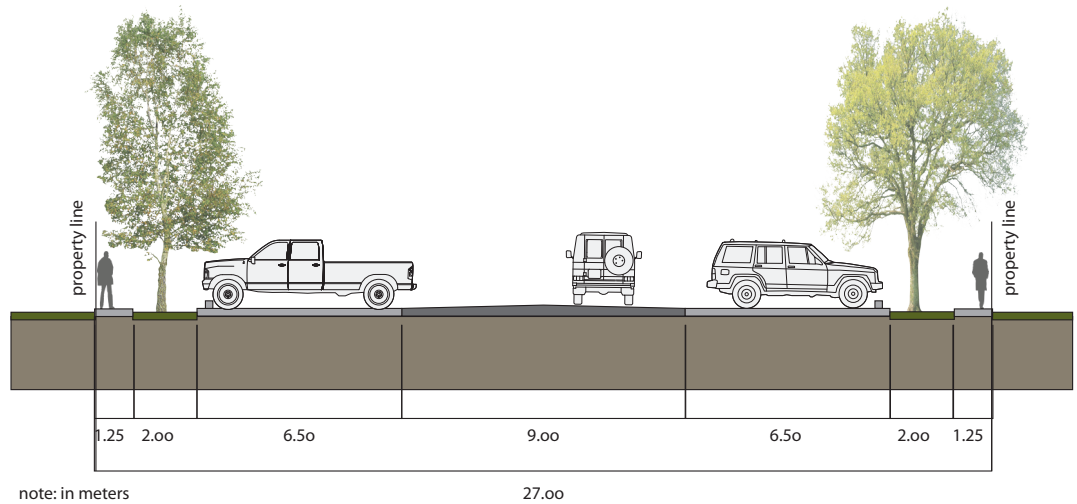
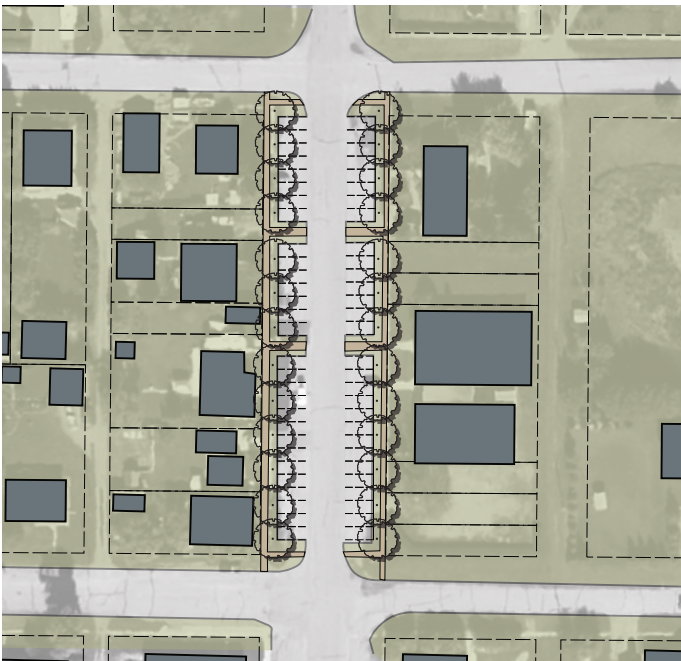
» the scale of much of Main Street is very broad and exposed, and since it now includes institutional and community facilities rather than the original commercial businesses, there is the opportunity to add improvements to make it an important central boulevard. See the accompanying diagram for options for tree planting to improve human scale and reduce exposure as well as improve visual appeal.



Main Street - Existing



Main Street - Proposed, showing sidewalks, street trees and bulb-outs to add shelter from sun and wind and improve human scale and aesthetics.



Main Street - Proposed Section, showing addition of sidewalks and street trees.

Land uses and potential growth areas

General Land Use Organization

- » Erskine’s sense of community is highly dependent on the presence and activities of the school, churches, halls, and recreation facilities.
- » as discussed in the section on public realm improvements, it is recommended that a Community Hall be considered for a location near the school and ball diamonds. This would be a safer location, centrally located, and would allow connection to outdoor events.
- » over time, Highway 12 has transitioned to become the best location for commercial activities (rather than Main Street). This Concept Plan recommends that the existing Hamlet Commercial zoning of the properties along Highway 12 be retained to allow for additional small businesses.
- » land south of Highway 12 could be suitable for development to light industrial as it is slightly removed from the hamlet but well connected by existing roads. It is recommended that the County acquire this land and that existing parking and storage on Highway 12 could be relocated there. This would be subject to provision of adequate water supply for fire fighting purposes, and subject to other policies and regulations, such as the Alberta Building Code.
- » currently some parking and storage occurs on Alberta Transportation land along Highway 12, which is not a permitted use. This should be redirected to the light industrial land south of the railway tracks.
- » the wider section of Main Street from Highway 12 up to Prospect Avenue has lost its original strong commercial orientation, and is now appropriate for hamlet commercial (live-work units), and institutional (halls, churches). The public realm improvements discussed in the previous section could improve the human scale and visual qualities of this street, and support the institutional and other uses.
- » County-owned land to the east is designated for future residential development. The south parcel of this land is designated as the site of a water truck fill station, and an access road from Highway 12.

Potential Areas for Growth

- » future residential growth could be accommodated through infilling of existing larger lots, or directed towards land to the east
- » this Concept Plan identifies where there are currently larger lots that could be subdivided over time to accommodate additional population. Subdivision of these lots would be subject to County review and other policies, for example those dealing with water supply.
- » the County-owned land to the east of Erskine could accommodate new residential development, according to the block pattern shown on the Concept Plan.
- » block pattern, street design, setbacks, and density all influence the physical character of Erskine, its sense of community and quality of life. The existing grid pattern of Erskine should be maintained, in order to keep roads continuous. Grid block patterns with back lanes are proposed, and cul de sacs and curvilinear streets should be avoided, as they restrict circulation, connectivity and walkability, and prevent the ability to expand. Design guidelines could be developed for lot sizes, setbacks, building size and massing, and landscaping.
- » an area for the development of acreages (3 to 5 acres) is identified on the larger parcels on the north side of the hamlet.

Tank Fill Station

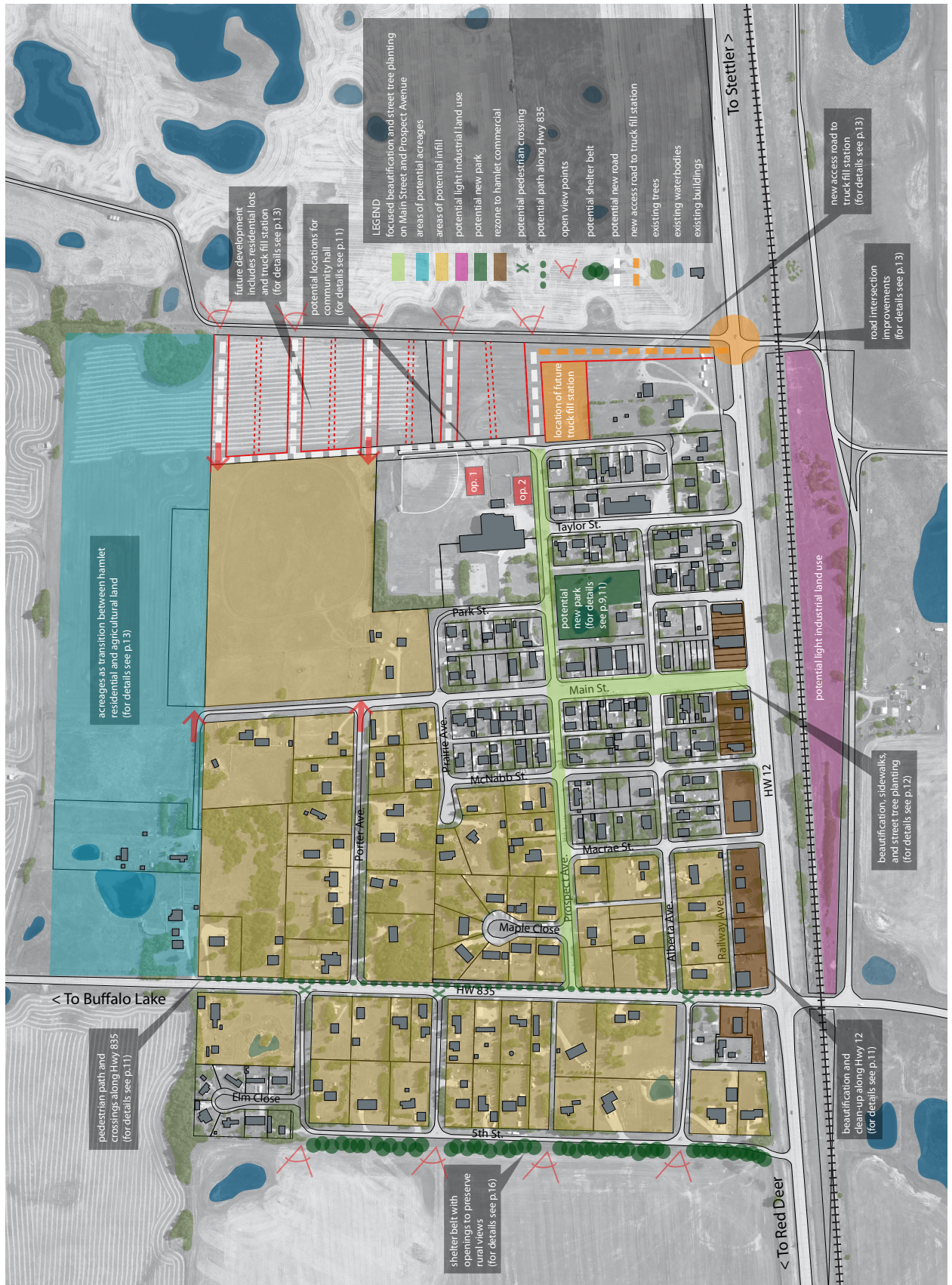
- » A truck water tank fill station location is part of this plan (see concept) as well as an access road from Highway 12, both to occur on County-owned land (as per the 2009 Stettler Rural Water Masterplan). Improvements to the intersection with Highway 12 are currently being developed, and will ensure that traffic impacts are minimal.

Town Signage

- » Town signs “Welcome to Erskine” should be provided at all three entries to the hamlet, and designed to express something of the character of Erskine, as well as the sustainable approach to town planning, for example through the use of solar-powered lighting.

HAMLET OF ERSKINE
concept plan

Concept Plan

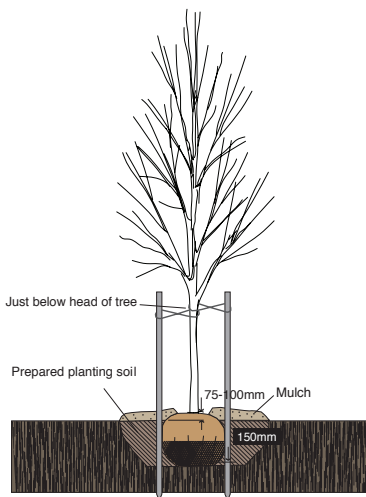


Beautification and Maintenance Initiatives

Priorities

The visual appeal of Erskine is important to the quality of life and in creating a sense of community and safety. Although many of the points below are covered in other sections, this Concept Plan considers beautification and maintenance as a comprehensive direction and community/County initiative. Priorities for overall cleanup and beautification include the following:

- » dealing with drainage problems and cleaning out culverts is an important early step in improving the functioning and visual aspect of the hamlet.
- » general clean up of Highway 12 and Highway 835 properties should be undertaken along with relocation of unsightly parking/storage to proposed future industrial lands to the south.
- » a tree planting program should be adopted for Main Street (see previous diagrams).
- » any roads or sidewalks that are damaged or in poor condition should be repaired prior to paving of new roads.
- » sidewalks should be continuous on Main Street and Prospect Avenue
- » however, the school lane should be paved as a priority, and street lighting added near the school and skating rink.
- » paving of 5th Street should be the next priority.
- » general cleanup of private yards could be addressed through development of an awareness program, and also through enforcement of bylaws in extreme cases.



PLANTING DETAIL

Trunk Protection:

- Trunk wrapping in place prior to planting to be removed for trunk inspection.

Soil Amendment:

- As per specifications.

Planting Soil:

- Hole to be backfilled, tamped, and watered to eliminate air pockets.

Mulching:

- Mulch with shredded bark or composted hardwood chips to a maximum depth of 75mm over the area of the rootball. Keep mulch 150mm away from the trunk.

Crown Pruning:

- Prune at planting to carefully remove dead, broken, damaged and interfering branches, double leaders and narrow angle branch unions.

Stakes And Ties:

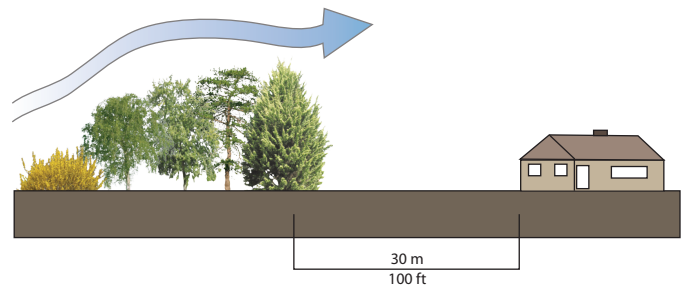
- Stake immediately.
- Wooden stakes to be driven 300mm into undisturbed soil
- Use 3 stakes for trees up to 2m in height.

Rootball, Burlap, Twine:

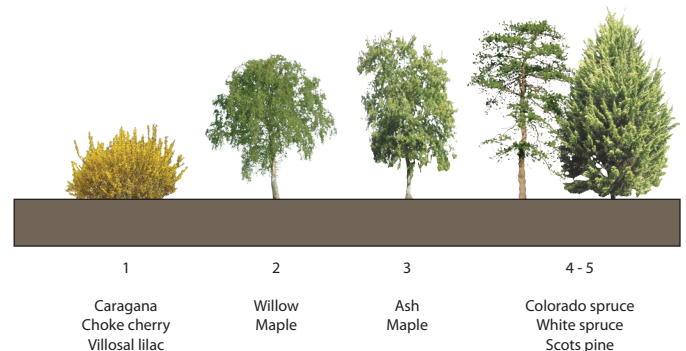
- Cut and remove all wire, rope, twine and burlap from around trunk and the top 1/3 of the rootball.

Tree Planting

- » an ongoing planting plan is required so that the impact of trees to Erskine's visual and other qualities is maintained and improved. Main Street as well as Prospect Avenue should be emphasized as the main treed boulevards. This Concept Plan proposes that new plantings be developed for these streets first, and as the budget permits, expanded to other streets.
- » in addition, planting in general should be encouraged for shelter and wind protection. Re-introduce good agricultural shelterbelt practices, for example along 5th Street, which is exposed to west/northwest winds.
- » tree planting should reflect best agricultural practices, for example, shelterbelt planting as per Agriculture Canada guidelines
- » street tree plantings should be according to the best horticultural practices
- » tree species should be selected for hardiness and longevity, and be sourced from local (Central Alberta) nurseries. See the Alberta Horticulture Guide (Government of Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development) for appropriate trees and shrubs.



Shelterbelt minimum distance from buildings
(Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada)



Side view of a 5-row shelterbelt
(Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada)

Services

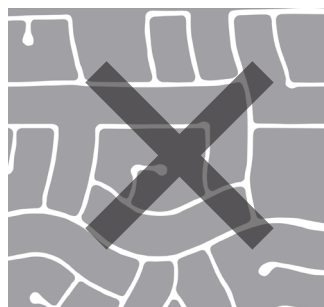
Water and Sewer

- » Erskine is currently dependent on wells for drinking and other water. The health of the aquifer is therefore important - this Concept Plan stresses the need to ensure there are bylaws in place to avoid negative land uses and practices. (Refer to the 2009 Stettler Rural Water MasterPlan for information on water quality and aquifers.) This means that infilling/subdivision of the larger lots in Erskine is conditional upon the completion of a groundwater potential study to determine water quantity and quality and the impact on existing wells, should the drilling of new wells be allowed.
- » water and sewer are the limiting factors to any future development. As per the County Municipal Development Plan, any new multi-lot development and infilling (i.e. splitting one parcel into two or more parcels) must include plans for communal water and sewer services. As well, subdivision of any lots is subject to County review and other policies, including those dealing with water supply.
- » a new water well for residential purposes does not require a license from Alberta Environment however, an approved driller must be contracted who is then obligated to file a drilling report with Alberta Environment.
- » capping a decommissioned old well is recommended for two reasons: to keep track of the number of wells extracting water from an aquifer and to prevent contamination of the aquifer. Guidelines for capping a well are explained on “Water Wells that Last Generations” by Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development ([http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/wwg404](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$department/deptdocs.nsf/all/wwg404)). It is highly recommended that the capping of the well be done by an approved driller.

Traditional Erskine block form



Curvilinear suburban block form



Fire Protection

- » fire protection is a priority so that community amenities and school are protected, and a water line will be installed east-west on Prospect Avenue, as per the 2009 Stettler Rural Water Masterplan.
- » Fire Smart practices should be encouraged.

Additional Guidelines

Residential Growth, Block Pattern and Site Planning

- » preserve agricultural areas by growing only in designated areas, and in a compact fashion. The Concept Plan indicates potential areas of growth, and also identifies an area at the north of the existing hamlet that is suitable for acreages, as a transitional land use between hamlet and agriculture.
- » develop interconnected streets according to the existing grid block pattern. This will help to retain cohesiveness and a sense of community, and also contribute to greater walkability. This block pattern also provides easier access for emergency responders and escape routes for residents in case of emergency than does a less connected block pattern.
- » gated developments, mobile home park developments, and exclusive subdivisions will not be allowed, however single mobile homes may be permitted as a housing option.
- » multi-family housing may be provided in the form of townhouses or small apartment buildings, in keeping with the overall scale, massing, and character of Erskine.
- » laned and laneless developments are both supported. Laned developments should have rear access garages and not front driveways. Laneless developments may have front driveways, but the garages should be recessed behind or beside the house facade in order to contribute to a high quality pedestrian environment.
- » new development proposals must include site planning that reflects the existing grid block pattern, street dimensions, building locations and setbacks, and building orientation.
- » lot sizes in new developments and infill developments must reflect existing lot sizes of the densest area in Erskine (14 m x 35 m) in order to promote compact growth and continuity of the form and character of the hamlet. A maximum of two lots may be consolidated, in order to provide some variety and diversity of choice.
- » building setbacks in residential areas should reflect the existing conditions in Erskine (front setback from property line 7 m, side setback 2m, rear setback 3.5 m).

- » all new or infill development proposals must include the provision of street trees (minimum 2 trees per lot). Existing vegetation must be preserved where possible.
- » sight lines to the adjacent landscape should be kept open where possible, for example by avoiding development or heavy landscaping at the ends of streets.

Truck Fill Station Area

- » design of the new truck fill station could resemble the historic water tower that was previously located in Erskine

New Brigden, Alberta
(Government of Alberta)

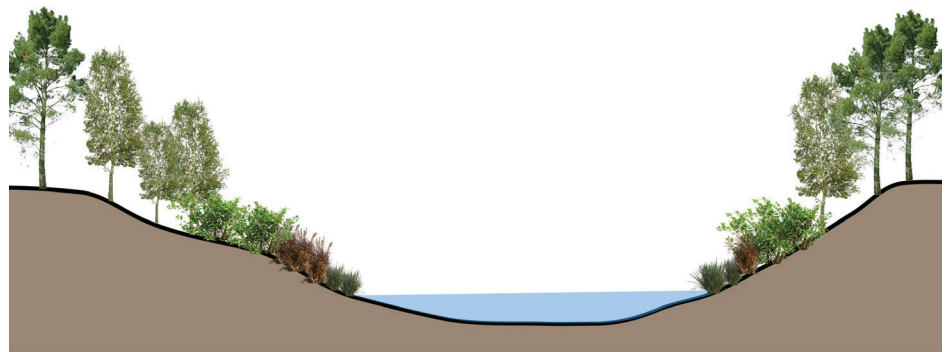


Erskine 1910
(Glenbow Archives)

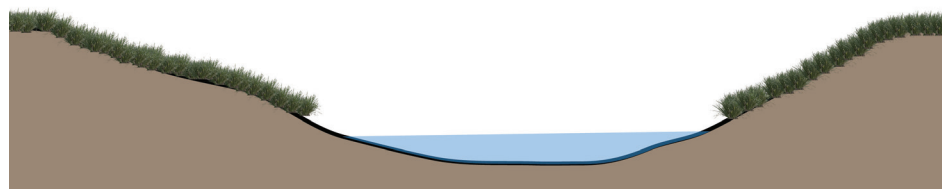


Riparian Areas

- » riparian areas (the interface between land and a waterbody) should be maintained for maximum ecological health, as they provide many important functions, including soil retention and water bio-filtration and they are often rich habitat for flora and fauna. These areas should not be mowed or maintained like turf areas; natural mixed vegetation should be encouraged.
- » these recommendations for wetland and riparian areas management apply to private lands as well as to public lands. Private landowners should endeavour to accommodate wetlands into the landscaping of their yard instead of draining and mowing.



Healthy riparian area



Unhealthy riparian area

Commercial Land Use Areas

Building and landscape design should attempt to reinforce the rural character and visual qualities of the hamlet, and to contribute to a high quality public realm.

- » commercial areas are designated on the Concept Plan, and are clustered along Highway 12.
- » home occupation (live-work) and mixed use developments in the form of residential occupation above a business are encouraged.
- » building height shall not exceed two stories.
- » building entries should be oriented towards the public thoroughfare, rather than to the side or rear, in order to provide “eyes on the street” and create a more pedestrian-friendly environment.
- » outdoor seating areas, awnings, street tree plantings, and other amenities to create a high quality visual environment and pedestrian comfort are encouraged in this area.
- » parking and equipment storage shall be sited at the sides or rears of the lots, or be adequately screened by landscaping.
- » driveways shall be the minimum practical width so as not to dominate the public realm, and garages shall be set back from the road.

REFERENCES

County of Stettler (12 August 2009)
Municipal Development Plan

County of Stettler (9 March 2011)
Land Use Bylaw

County of Stettler (June 2009)
Rural Water Servicing Strategy Master Plan

Sweetgrass Consultants Ltd. (November 1988)
Environmentally Significant Areas of the Counties of Lacombe and Stettler

Alberta Transportation Planning Branch (22 February 2011)
Alberta Highways 1-986 Traffic Volume History 2001-2010

Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development (n.d.)
Alberta Horticulture Guide

The Cows and Fish Program (February 2006)
Riparian Areas: A User's Guide to Health

Energy Resources Conservation Board (July 2011)
The Wells Spacing Map
<https://www3.eub.gov.ab.ca/EUB/DDS/Spacing/help/index.html>

Alberta Environment and Water (July 2011)
Alberta Water Well Information Database
<http://www.envinfo.gov.ab.ca/GroundWater/>

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