

Introduction

Residential development in Strathcona County has occurred in several different areas and in many different forms throughout Sherwood Park, the rural Hamlets and the remaining rural areas. The various types of housing that exist throughout the County range from “farm house” residences associated with agricultural operations, to large and small lot country residential acreages, to urban housing forms such as single family dwellings, medium density apartments and condominium complexes.

The demand for affordable “starter homes”, as well as adult-oriented multi-unit housing, is high and will likely remain so for the foreseeable future. In addition, a large segment of the population is beginning to reach the age of retirement. As a result, the demand for “non-traditional” housing forms, such as adult-only, multi-unit accommodations will continue to increase.

Objectives

Strathcona County’s residential development objectives are to:

- 1) Continue to provide opportunities for people to live in both urban and rural settings;
- 2) Reduce the consumption of agricultural land for non-agricultural (i.e. residential) purposes;
- 3) Promote the development of a broad range of housing types and locations, capable of meeting the needs of residents of various age groups, family types, lifestyles and income levels;
- 4) Ensure that urban and rural residential development occurs in an orderly and sustainable manner that is compatible with differing land uses; differing residential densities; and is cost effective relative to the provision of services;
- 5) Encourage the development of attractive residential environments;
- 6) Retain the character, amenities, and quality of life aspects of existing residential neighbourhoods, while encouraging more diversity;
- 7) Encourage suitable housing opportunities and the provision of convenient community services for residents having special housing requirements;
- 8) Encourage the development of residential communities that incorporate sustainable building design principles and offer lifestyle choices; and
- 9) Direct residential growth away from High and Medium Priority Environment Management Areas as identified in Chapter 8.

Policies

General

Strathcona County will:

- 5.1 Collaborate with the development industry and community organizations to facilitate the development of both accessible rental and ownership housing, to allow for the transition from rental tenants through the continuum of housing forms;
- 5.2 Encourage a mixture of housing types within all residential neighbourhoods to accommodate a broad range of housing needs, incomes and lifestyles;

- 5.3 Ensure the density of any residential development is directly related to the following:
- a) The carrying capacity of the lands proposed for development having regard for site conditions, environmental considerations and impacts, and other factors that may be considered in the design of the proposal;
 - b) The suitability and availability of municipal services and infrastructure necessary to support the proposal;
 - c) The compatibility of the proposed density with that of the surrounding area and the character of the community; and
 - d) Consistency with the provisions of any area structure plan encompassing the subject lands.
- 5.4 Review residential development standards to ensure that access to affordable public amenities, community services and housing are encouraged at the initial planning and design stage of the development;
- 5.5 Ensure there is an adequate amount of housing and services offered for extended and specialized care;
- 5.6 Support the use of alternative building methods in order to encourage the development of more sustainable housing;
- 5.7 Ensure all new developments outside of the Urban Service Area boundary take FireSmart Principles into consideration when determining minimum lot sizes as well as the boundaries for reserves and other areas to be dedicated for the conservation of the natural habitat (see Chapter 10 – Safety);
- 5.8 Require new residential development to provide and pay for infrastructure and servicing improvements, as well as the extension of services to facilitate the development;
- 5.9 Maintain a reciprocal setback distance as defined in the Heavy Industrial Transition Overlay (IH-O) in the Land Use Bylaw between future residential uses north of Baseline Road and existing heavy industries which have, or could have, a significant detrimental effect on the safety, use, amenity, or enjoyment of adjacent or nearby sites due to appearance, noise, odour, emission of contaminants, fire or explosive hazards;
- 5.10 Evaluate and promote innovative residential housing concepts that result in high quality and higher density residential developments as a means of reducing the rate of agricultural land consumption due to growth. This will aid in encouraging social, environmental and economic sustainability; and
- 5.11 Collaborate with development/building industries and community organizations to facilitate the development of more sustainable housing criteria such as:
- a) Sites which include considering elements such as alternate transportation options, reduced site disturbance and heat island effects;
 - b) Increased water efficiency through such elements such as ecoscaping, innovative wastewater technologies and water use reduction;
 - c) Reduced energy use and the positive benefits on the atmosphere through the use of renewable energy and green power;
 - d) Introducing materials and resources used to build homes that are recycled, thereby reducing construction waste; and
 - e) Improving indoor air quality through the use of low emitting materials.

Housing Needs

Strathcona County will:

- 5.12 Encourage the development of affordable housing and special needs housing through policies and bylaws and collaborate with the development industry and community organizations to do so;
- 5.13 Encourage the creation of residential developments for individuals and households with special needs in appropriate locations near support services such as:
 - a) Educational, health care, transit and commercial facilities; and
 - b) Open space and pedestrian trail networks.
- 5.14 Continue to communicate to higher orders of government, local priorities related to the provision of affordable housing and the importance of government funding programs to provide such housing;
- 5.15 Incorporate provisions in the Land Use Bylaw to allow density bonusing for multiple unit developments on a site specific basis, in return for developers providing affordable, rental, senior citizen or special needs housing within the Urban Service Area or hamlets where deemed appropriate;
- 5.16 Review municipal land banking as an option for providing land for the development of social housing;
- 5.17 Work with the development industry and various agencies to help provide land for the purpose of developing social housing; and
- 5.18 Encourage the development of supportive housing forms, such as private and public care homes, custodial care facilities, and child and adult day care in all areas of the community.

Rural Residential

Strathcona County will:

- 5.19 Require all proposed subdivisions to be in conformance with the Land Use Bylaw's purpose, intent and regulations under which the parcel is currently districted, unless the proposed parcel is:
 - a) A physically severed parcel which cannot be further subdivided; or
 - b) The parcel is an existing non-conforming parcel and the proposed subdivision would not increase the extent to which the parcel is deemed to be non-conforming within the Land Use Bylaw's district regulations.
- 5.20 Ensure that any newly created residential lots provide an adequately sized, contiguous developable area; and
- 5.21 Require new developments within the rural service area to provide and pay for infrastructure and improvements.

Agriculture – Large Holdings Policy Area

Strathcona County will:

- 5.22 Allow subdivision for residential purposes in the Agriculture- Large Holdings Policy Area subject to the following:
- a) First parcel out of an unsubdivided quarter section for an existing residence; or
 - b) First parcel out of an unsubdivided quarter section for a new residence; or
 - c) A split into two equal parcels for a previously unsubdivided quarter section; or
 - d) For an unsubdivided quarter section which contains a physical severance, is less than 8.1 hectares (20 acres), a first parcel out shall be permitted on the largest portion of the property, unless there is already an existing first parcel out on the property; or
 - e) For an unsubdivided quarter section which contains a physical severance, is greater than 8.1 hectares (20 acres), a first parcel out shall not be permitted on either area.
- 5.23 Allow a secondary residence for the purpose of supporting the agricultural operation. Collective communal residences will continue to be considered on a discretionary basis; and
- 5.24 Not permit subdivision for residential purposes for those areas included within Alberta's Industrial Heartland Area Structure Plan, as amended from time to time.

Agriculture – Small Holdings Policy Area

Strathcona County will:

- 5.25 Ensure new residential developments within the Agriculture –Small Holdings Policy Area adhere to the following conservation design-based principles:
- a) The ecology of the site must be considered. Lands identified as High and Medium Priority Environment Management Areas must be left undisturbed wherever possible, but incorporated into the overall development. Wildlife corridors or connections between all Priority Environment Management Areas must be maintained wherever possible, through the use of conservation mechanisms;
 - b) Development will be directed to lands that are determined to be of lesser environmental significance, such as those identified as Low Priority Environment Management Areas; and
 - c) The natural landscape and topography must be considered and incorporated into the overall design of the site.
- 5.26 Allow subdivision for residential purposes in the Agriculture – Small Holdings Policy Area subject to the following criteria:
- a) Council has adopted a conceptual scheme which has been prepared in accordance with County policy;
 - b) Internal road access is provided to each of the existing and proposed lots that are part of the subject lands wherever possible;
 - c) Suitable environmental conditions exist for on-site water supply and on-site sewage disposal;
 - d) The subject lands are redistricted under the Land Use Bylaw to an appropriate residential land use district;
 - e) Maximum parcel density does not exceed eight (8) parcels per quarter section, except as noted in sections 5.26 (h) (iv) and 5.26 (i) (iv);

- f) The natural aesthetics such as topography and vegetation of the plan area shall be conserved wherever possible;
- g) A detailed, site specific, biophysical assessment must be performed by qualified professionals;
- h) If part of the plan area is identified as High Priority Environment Management Area the following will apply:
 - i) Environmental reserve and municipal reserve dedication will be used to protect areas identified as High Priority Environment Management Areas;
 - ii) Development will be directed to previously cleared, disturbed, isolated areas and/or areas identified as Medium or Low Priority Environment Management Areas;
 - iii) Habitat linkages must remain intact;
 - iv) If all of the High Priority Environment Management Area cannot be dedicated as environmental reserve or if the area is greater than the 10% maximum municipal reserve dedication allowed, the parcel density may be increased up to a maximum of ten (10) parcels per quarter section subject to conformity with conditions included in the Land Use Bylaw and County policy; and
 - v) All federal and provincial regulations must be adhered to, including provincial policies and regulations concerning wetlands.
- i) If part of the plan area is identified as Medium Priority Environment Management Area the following will apply:
 - i) Habitat linkages must remain intact;
 - ii) Development will be directed to previously cleared, disturbed, isolated areas or areas identified as Low Priority Environment Management Areas;
 - iii) Environmental reserve and municipal reserve dedication will be used to protect areas identified as a Medium Priority Environment Management Area;
 - iv) If all of the Medium Priority Environment Management Area cannot be dedicated as environmental reserve, or if the area is greater than the 10% maximum municipal reserve dedication allowed, the parcel density may be increased up to a maximum of ten (10) parcels per quarter section subject to conformity with conditions included in the Land Use Bylaw and County policy; and
 - v) All federal and provincial legislation must be adhered to, including provincial policies and regulations concerning wetlands.
- j) If the entire site is identified as Low Priority Environment Management Area, development will be directed to previously cleared, disturbed, and isolated areas.

5.27 Continue to allow the subdivision of parcels districted as RA – Rural Residential/Agriculture under the Land Use Bylaw at the time of the adoption of this Bylaw both inside and outside of the Agriculture-Small Holdings Policy Area provided that the parcels created adhere to the policies for the Agriculture-Small Holdings Policy Area, conceptual scheme policy, the Land Use Bylaw regulations, and other County bylaws and policies as may be in effect at the time of application.

Agri-Industrial Transition Policy Area

Strathcona County will:

- 5.28 Not permit any new residential subdivisions or residences within the Agri-Industrial Transition Policy Area, as per the guidelines outlined in Alberta's Industrial Heartland Area Structure Plan as amended from time to time, in order to reduce potential conflicts between industry/agricultural uses and adjacent residential activities.

Beaver Hills Moraine Policy Area

Strathcona County will:

- 5.29 Allow the subdivision of land for residential purposes within the Beaver Hills Moraine Policy Area subject to the following:
- a) First parcel out of an unsubdivided quarter section for an existing residence; or
 - b) A split into two equal parcels for a previously unsubdivided quarter section; or
 - c) For an unsubdivided quarter section that contains a physical severance, is less than 8.1 hectares (20 acres), there shall be no first parcel out permitted on any of the severances; or
 - d) For an unsubdivided quarter section which contains a physical severance, is greater than 8.1 hectares (20 acres), a first parcel out shall be permitted on the largest portion, subject to legal and physical access, unless there is an already existing first parcel out.
- 5.30 Consider a secondary residence for the purpose of supporting the agricultural operation on a temporary basis only, through the utilization of a temporary development permit; and
- 5.31 Continue to allow the subdivision of parcels districted under the Land Use Bylaw, as RA – Rural Residential/Agriculture, at the time of adoption of this Bylaw, which are situated within the Beaver Hills Moraine Policy Area, provided that the parcels created adhere to the Land Use Bylaw regulations, and other County bylaws and policies as may be in effect at the time of subdivision application.

Country Residential Policy Area

Strathcona County will:

- 5.32 Require an area structure plan to be prepared within the Country Residential Policy Area where the land being proposed for redistricting or subdivision is 8.1 hectares (20 acres) or greater in size;
- 5.33 Require the preparation of a conceptual scheme for the Country Residential Policy Area in the following circumstances:
- a) Where the preparation of an area structure plan may be considered by the Approving Authority to be impractical or inappropriate given the small scale of the lands proposed for subdivision or development; or
 - b) Where the subject lands are less than 8.1 hectares (20 acres) in size and there are 10 (ten) lots or fewer being proposed for subdivision; or
 - c) Where the quarter section is already physically severed or fragmented to the point that a full area structure plan is deemed impractical by the Approving Authority.

- 5.34 Notify all property owners within an existing multi-lot country residential development regarding subdivision applications for properties within the subdivision prior to its consideration;
- 5.35 Ensure new country residential developments adhere to the following conservation design based principles:
- The ecology of the site must be considered. Lands identified as High and Medium Priority Environment Management Areas must be left undisturbed wherever possible, but incorporated into the overall development. Wildlife corridors or connections between all Priority Environment Management Areas must be maintained wherever possible, through the use of green infrastructure;
 - Development will be directed to lands that are determined to be of lesser environmental significance, such as those identified as Low Priority Environment Management Areas; and
 - The natural landscape and topography must be considered and incorporated into the overall design of the site.

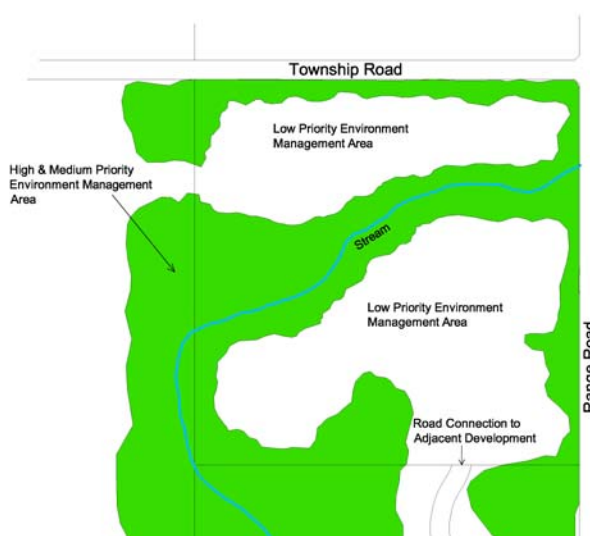


Figure 14: Example of a quarter section before being developed for country residential purposes.



Figure 15: Example of a quarter section that has developed according to Conservation Design principles.
Note: the minimal amount of site disturbance and the conservation of the stream and wildlife corridor.

- 5.36 Allow subdivision for country residential uses within the Country Residential Policy Area subject to the following:
- An area structure plan or a conceptual scheme that has been prepared in accordance with County policy has been adopted/approved by Council;
 - Internal road access is provided to each of the existing and proposed lots that are part of the subject lands wherever possible;
 - A maximum number of 50 lots per quarter section may be developed;
 - All new country residential lots must be serviced by municipal water and sewer systems, with the exception of first parcels out of an unsubdivided quarter section larger than 2.0 hectares (4.94 acres);
 - A detailed, site specific, biophysical assessment of the site must be performed; and

- f) If part of the plan area is identified as High Priority Environment Management Area:
 - i) Environmental reserve and municipal reserve dedication will be used to protect these lands;
 - ii) Development shall be directed to previously cleared, disturbed, isolated areas and/or areas identified as Medium or Low Priority Environment Management Areas;
 - iii) Habitat linkages must remain intact or be provided through the use of open space dedication or other tools, such as conservation easements or environmental reserve easements;
 - iv) The County may consider purchasing High Priority Environment Management Area lands as part of the Legacy Lands initiative if over and above the required 10% dedication; and
 - v) All federal and provincial regulations must be adhered to, including provincial policies and regulations concerning wetlands.
 - g) If part or all of the plan area is identified as a Medium Priority Environment Management Area:
 - i) Habitat linkages must remain intact or be provided through the use of open space dedication or other tools, such as conservation easements or environmental reserve easements;
 - ii) Development will be directed to previously cleared, disturbed, isolated areas or areas identified as Low Priority Environment Management Areas;
 - iii) Municipal reserve and/or environmental reserve dedication will be used to protect areas identified as Medium Priority Landscape Management Areas; and
 - iv) All federal and provincial legislation must be adhered to, including provincial policies and regulations concerning wetlands.
 - h) If the entire site is identified as a Low Priority Environment Management Area, the development shall be directed to previously cleared, disturbed or isolated areas;
 - i) All lots shall indicate the location of the development envelope as well as natural areas;
 - j) The remaining natural area should remain unfenced and have as little vegetation removed as possible;
 - k) No new parcel created will be smaller than the smallest existing parcel within the previously subdivided quarter section at the time of original subdivision approval, (excluding first parcels out and parcels approved on appeal), to ensure that the established character of the existing country residential development is not negatively impacted; and
 - l) The subject lands are redistricted under the Land Use Bylaw to an appropriate residential land use district.
- 5.37 Ensure new country residential developments address potential conflicts with existing agricultural operations by designing subdivisions to mitigate potential negative impacts from agricultural pursuits;
- 5.38 Require new country residential developments within the Country Residential Policy Area to provide and pay for infrastructure and services as required;
- 5.39 Consider permitting the development of new country residential lots on parcels that lie outside of the Country Residential Policy Area boundary. As identified on the map following chapter 5, where a portion of the quarter section was designated Country Residential Policy Area at the time of the adoption of this Bylaw, but was not subdivided for country residential lots, and where the following conditions also exist:

- a) The quarter section is located within the Agriculture-Small Holdings Policy Area; and
 - b) Internal access exists and has been provided to non-country residential parcels on the quarter section; and
 - c) Lands that are designated Country Residential Policy Area have been developed through an approved area structure plan (this does not include first parcels out or parcels approved on appeal). Where there is no area structure plan, further subdivision of the portion of the quarter section may be approved, subject to Council's adoption of an area structure plan or conceptual scheme for the portion of the quarter section.
- 5.40 Allow parcels that are districted RC – Country Residential under the Land Use Bylaw, and are part of an approved area structure plan, but are outside of the Country Residential Policy Area at the time of the adoption of this Municipal Development Plan, to be re-subdivided provided that no new parcel created will be smaller than the smallest existing parcel within the previously subdivided quarter section at the time of original subdivision approval, (excluding first parcels out and parcels approved on appeal), to ensure that the established character of the existing country residential development is not negatively impacted;
- 5.41 Ensure that any new country residential developments that occur outside of the Country Residential Policy Area boundary, identified under sections 5.39 and 5.40, adhere to the policies for the Country Residential Policy Area except for the requirement to hook up to municipal water and sewer, if the existing portions of the quarter section are not already utilizing municipal services, and are districted accordingly; and
- 5.42 Not permit the development of estate residential forms of development within the Country Residential Policy Area, but continue to recognize the uniqueness of existing estate residential developments.

Sherwood Park Urban Service Area

Strathcona County will:

- 5.43 Recognize the primarily low density residential character within the Sherwood Park Urban Service Area, but work toward diversifying the range of residential forms and increasing densities by supporting the development of secondary suites, if approved through the adoption of an area redevelopment plan or area structure plan amendments;
- 5.44 Consider the following residential neighbourhood design guidelines with respect to all new area redevelopment plans or amendments to area structure plans proposed within the Sherwood Park Urban Service Area:
- a) Ensure the design is sympathetic to amenities such as natural topography and other environmental features including tree stands, ravines, streams and other wetlands;
 - b) Encourage communities to establish a unique neighbourhood identity;
 - c) Encourage innovative housing designs that incorporate sustainable elements;
 - d) Encourage the incorporation of energy conservation measures into designs;
 - e) Consider alternative, appropriately designed, residential development fronting onto collector roads;
 - f) Discourage direct driveway and back lane access to collector and arterial roads;
 - g) Encourage the development of vacant or underutilized sites (infill);
 - h) Require neighbourhoods to have a central focus and defined edges;
 - i) Ensure communities contain a balanced mix of activities, housing forms, shopping opportunities, employment, schools, places of worship which are scale appropriate and recreation facilities; and

- j) Encourage the development of neighbourhoods built with a comprehensive network of streets, walkways and public transit.
- 5.45 Encourage future residential development within the Sherwood Park Urban Service Area to be phased, contiguous extensions of existing development subject to:
- a) The adoption of an area structure plan; and
 - b) The economical and efficient provision of municipal services.
- 5.46 Mitigate noise impacts on residents in new areas, created as a result of traffic on highways or major arterial roads, through the use of appropriately located landscape berms, fences, and/or other noise attenuation barriers;
- 5.47 Maintain appropriate interim land uses such as agriculture and nonpermanent open space uses, which do not prejudice future urban development, in those locations designated for future residential development;
- 5.48 Consider supporting the development of hi-rise, high density residential apartment complexes that are more than six (6) storeys in height within the boundaries of the Sherwood Park Urban Service Area; and
- 5.49 Not allow any new manufactured home parks or developments to be established within the Sherwood Park Urban Service Area, except expansion into NE Section 12-53-23-W4M.

Medium Density Residential

Strathcona County will:

- 5.50 Ensure medium density residential developments are limited to a size and scale appropriate for the neighbourhood;
- 5.51 Prepare development permit guidelines for medium density residential developments that consider:
- a) Compatibility with the character of adjacent low density residential areas;
 - b) Architectural form and character, in order to ensure sensitive integration with surrounding developments by taking into consideration elements such as: building form, character, roof slopes, design details, landscaping, and street orientation to reduce the impression of mass in multiple unit housing developments; and



Figure 16: Example of architectural form that reduces the impression of mass.

- c) Communal space, ensuring adequate size, as well as amenity space, to provide for the recreational needs of residents.



Figure 17: Example of amenity or communal space.

5.52 Ensure planned dwelling groups, strata or condominium developments and medium density housing projects:

- a) Utilize sustainable development principles (See Chapter 4 – Sustainability and Growth Management), in the overall design of the project and incorporate amenity areas;
- b) Provide pedestrian, cycling and vehicle circulation connections to adjacent residential areas;



Figure 18: Example of pedestrian connection within a large multi-unit development.



Figure 19: Example of a pedestrian connection to adjacent residential areas.

- c) Include a variety of housing types to meet a range of life cycle, lifestyle, social needs and income levels;
- d) Provide transitioning elements into the overall design in order to ensure sensitive integration with surrounding urban development;
- e) Incorporate community facilities into the design that may be utilized on a joint-use basis with the adjacent community or neighbourhood; and
- f) Incorporate urban design elements such as plazas, focal points and usable open spaces into the design that re-enforce continuity with the surrounding neighbourhood and foster a sense of community by providing opportunities for citizens to interact.



Figure 20: Example of a focal point/useable open space.

- 5.53 Encourage new, large, multi-lot developments to have an open and accessible neighbourhood form, that emphasizes the integration of new housing with the broader community; and
- 5.54 Encourage a balanced distribution of multi-family, higher density residential and mixed use residential urban village developments, as identified in area structure plans. They should be situated along transit routes, arterial and major collector roadways, or adjacent to major services and amenities, such as schools and recreation facilities within the Urban Service Area, in order to encourage the development of more complete and diverse neighbourhoods.

Rural/Urban Transition Policy Area

Strathcona County will:

- 5.55 Encourage the development of community centres which will serve the needs of the residents in terms of:
 - a) Affordable and special needs housing; and
 - b) The provision of a diversity of housing forms.
- 5.56 Ensure new residential developments within the Rural/Urban Transition Policy Area adhere to the following conservation design-based principles:
 - a) The ecology of the site must be considered. Lands identified as High and Medium Priority Environment Management Areas must be left undisturbed wherever possible, but incorporated into the overall development. Wildlife corridors or connections between all Priority Environment Management Areas must be maintained wherever possible, through the use of conservation mechanisms;
 - b) Development will be directed to lands that are determined to be of lesser environmental significance, such as those identified as Low Priority Environment Management Areas; and
 - c) The natural landscape and topography must be considered and incorporated into the overall design of the site.

5.57 Ensure the Growth Management Strategy will take into account appropriate transitioning of the built form, from rural to urban with regard to residential development; and

5.58 Once the Growth Management Strategy and servicing studies are completed and endorsed by Municipal Council, Strathcona County will accept new applications for area concept plans, area structure plans, rezoning or subdivisions within the boundaries of this policy area.

The Hamlets

Strathcona County will:

5.59 Allow further infill and expansion within hamlets, that have adequate sanitary sewer and water service capacity, as well as community facilities to support additional population growth in accordance with an approved area structure plan; and

5.60 Support the inclusion of a wider range of housing options within the hamlets of Josephburg, Ardrossan and South Cooking Lake, to meet lifecycle shelter requirements, lifestyle, social needs and income levels.