

Introduction

A variety of commercial uses are located within the urban and rural service areas of Strathcona County, providing services for County residents, the travelling public and surrounding areas.

Within Strathcona County, five types of commercial developments are found in some different settings; distinguishable by their geographic location, scale and market area. These commercial settings are:

- 1) **Community Commercial** is located at the intersection of major roads and provides a broad range of services to residents on a daily basis. Community commercial includes Urban Villages (sustainable urban neighbourhoods/mixed use developments).
- 2) **Urban Villages (Sustainable Urban Neighbourhoods)** are generally located where most services, shops, restaurants and movie theatres are within walking distance. Developments tend to be pedestrian oriented.
- 3) **Arterial Commercial** is located along highly visible arterial roadways and provides a variety of larger commercial developments to the entire community. Developments tend to be vehicle oriented.
- 4) **Service Commercial** is located in business parks; serves as a transition between arterial commercial and industrial uses; and provides support and services for business and industry. Developments tend to have limited retail uses.
- 5) **Rural Commercial** is located along highways and service roads adjacent to highways in the rural area; in hamlets or at intersections along range and township roads; and provides services to those living in the rural areas as well as the travelling public.
- 6) **Hamlet Commercial** is located within the hamlets; not necessarily on intersections. This type of commercial can also be found along range and township roads which serve the primary needs of those living in the hamlet.
- 7) **Highway Commercial** is located along highways and service roads adjacent to highways, within the Urban Service Area. This type of commercial provides services to residents and the travelling public.

Recent trends in commercial development have resulted in vehicle-oriented development, with commercial uses located at the periphery of communities. There has also been a substantial increase in the amount of big box and large retail chain stores. Current projections indicate a “return to the past” as demographics change, the cost of living and fuel increases and communities continue to grow, and there will be a return to smaller-scale, accessible, commercial uses in the heart of the community.

With the return to smaller-scale, accessible, commercial uses, urban villages have and will continue to be created. There are currently three urban villages within Sherwood Park. Although they all contain mixed use developments which meet the everyday needs of individuals, they also have different characteristics which make them unique. The development of an urban village in the downtown area of Sherwood Park is important in creating a central focal point for the community. The downtown area reinforces community identity and pride and is a location for developments such as Centre in the Park and the Sherwood Park Mall. The other two urban villages located in the Emerald Hills neighbourhood and the Palisades development, allow individuals to remain in the same neighbourhood, as their housing needs change, through “aging in place” developments.

Objectives

Strathcona County's commercial objectives are to:

- 1) Establish a strong, diversified commercial base, to provide employment and a high level of service to residents and visitors;
- 2) Encourage commercial developments which contribute to a more sustainable community;
- 3) Encourage the development of adequate, efficient and economical infrastructure to meet current and future commercial needs; and
- 4) Use commercial developments to aid in establishing a central focal point for communities.

Policies

General

Strathcona County will:

- 6.1 Encourage complementary commercial development which will enhance the County's commitment to maintain and enhance the environment for future generations;
- 6.2 Encourage the development of a variety of commercial land uses to serve the County and generate employment opportunities;
- 6.3 Promote alternative building methods to encourage healthy and efficient developments;
- 6.4 Ensure future commercial uses in the Urban Service Area include the development of structures, buildings and landscaped areas which, without limiting innovation and marketing attributes, are compatible with adjacent uses and ensure a high level of visual and aesthetic quality;
- 6.5 Promote the design of aesthetically pleasing commercial developments by:
 - a) Placing stores along the streets and parking in the rear or in the middle of commercial developments; and
 - b) Requiring landscaping internally within the site as well as on the periphery.

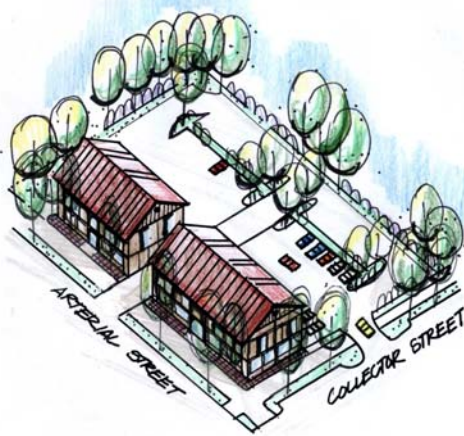


Figure 21: Commercial buildings are located along the street front, with parking at the rear of the property.

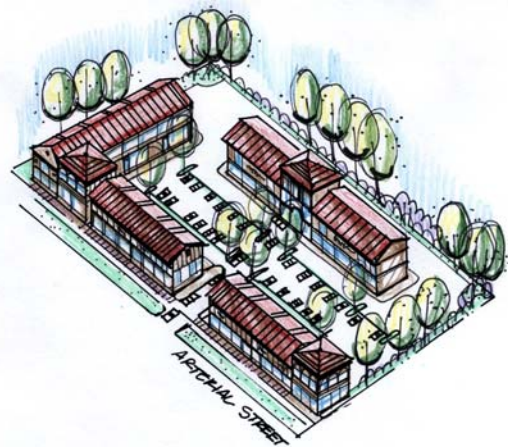


Figure 22: Parking is located in the middle with commercial buildings positioned along the street and at the rear of the property.

- 6.6 Ensure all access points and access separation distances be constructed per Strathcona County standards;
- 6.7 Review development guidelines to improve landscaping standards within commercial developments;
- 6.8 Where appropriate, promote compatible new commercial development or infill redevelopment within older established commercial centres to create innovative mixed use developments;
- 6.9 Require connection and linkages within and between commercial developments to create an efficient, aesthetically pleasing and safe environment for pedestrians and cyclists;
- 6.10 Promote well planned and designed commercial uses along major roadways and highways, to provide for an enhanced appearance at major gateways into Strathcona County;
- 6.11 Promote Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles in the creation of commercial developments; and
- 6.12 Ensure commercial developments within 1.5 kilometres and 3.0 kilometres of heavy industry are restricted for health, safety and nuisance reasons. Restricted uses shall be identified through the Heavy Industrial Transition Overlay (IH-O) contained in the Land Use Bylaw.

Community Commercial

Strathcona County will:

- 6.13 Ensure new community commercial is located in a manner which ensures compatibility with adjacent residential neighbourhoods;
- 6.14 Create better design guidelines to address the form and character of development and increase landscaping standards;
- 6.15 Limit the size and scale of community commercial developments to ensure they are complementary to the surrounding residential developments;
- 6.16 Support the maintenance and development of community commercial centres that provide convenient local shopping opportunities and services, while minimizing the need for travel beyond the community;
- 6.17 Promote convenient access to a variety of commercial services required on a day to day basis; and
- 6.18 Ensure connections and linkages are created for pedestrians and cyclists, between commercial and residential areas through pathways and trails.

Urban Villages (Sustainable Urban Neighbourhoods)

Strathcona County will:

- 6.19 Promote the development of urban villages to support accessibility to meet every day needs and to create vibrant and attractive, multi functional community focal points;



Figure 23: Example of an urban village (sustainable urban neighbourhood).

- 6.20 Encourage pedestrian-oriented commercial activity within and adjacent to urban villages;
- 6.21 Encourage street level retail with residential developments above, in order to increase the number of people on the streets and enhance the vitality and security of an area;
- 6.22 Ensure integration of access points, parking and design between adjacent commercial and residential developments;
- 6.23 Promote urban villages as mixed use developments which provide individuals a place to live, work and play; and
- 6.24 Promote the redevelopment of Centre in the Park in order to create a downtown area for Sherwood Park which will serve as:
 - a) A location for festivals and events;
 - b) A location for a variety of residential and commercial developments that will attract people to the site throughout the day as well as in the evenings; and
 - c) A preferred location for specialty retail, cultural establishments and a civic centre.

Arterial Commercial

Strathcona County will:

- 6.25 Ensure new arterial commercial is located along major arterial roads on sites large enough to accommodate adequate parking, loading, internal circulation and landscaping;
- 6.26 Encourage arterial commercial development to display a high standard of architectural appearance and design;
- 6.27 Enforce urban design guidelines and landscaping standards along major arterial roads that serve to enhance the visual form and character of development, as well as promote the economic assets of these corridors; and
- 6.28 Ensure large format commercial developments provide adequate buffering, landscaping and screening to mitigate negative impacts on adjacent land uses/areas.

Service Commercial

Strathcona County will:

- 6.29 Ensure new service commercial developments are located:
 - a) Along non-residential major arterial or collector roadways to serve the entire community;
 - b) As transitional uses between arterial commercial and light to medium industrial uses; and
 - c) In planned business parks or centres with good visibility and accessibility.
- 6.30 Encourage a high standard of architectural appearance and landscaping standards;
- 6.31 Require storage facilities to be located within enclosed buildings, in service commercial developments; and
- 6.32 Encourage service commercial sites which allow for business support and service uses.

Rural Commercial

Strathcona County will:

- 6.33 Ensure rural commercial developments are located in a manner which provides safe access and egress from adjacent roadways;
- 6.34 Ensure highway commercial developments in the rural area are located:
 - a) On service roads adjacent to highways;
 - b) In areas with good visibility and accessibility; and
 - c) In accordance with Strathcona County and Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation regulations, policies and requirements for highway roadside development.
- 6.35 Protect sufficient rights-of-way adjacent to highways to ensure adequate land for future road improvements and interchanges;
- 6.36 Encourage the conservation of the rural countryside appearance, in the development of commercial uses; and
- 6.37 Encourage rural commercial sites to develop uses that serve the needs of the travelling public, as well as the daily needs of adjacent rural residents.

Hamlet Commercial

Strathcona County will:

- 6.38 Encourage hamlet commercial developments to incorporate the principles of urban villages (sustainable urban neighbourhoods), into their design and function where feasible;
- 6.39 Encourage the development of a range of commercial uses which serve the day to day needs of the community;
- 6.40 Ensure hamlet commercial uses are developed at a scale appropriate to the community;
- 6.41 Encourage commercial developments to build on the uniqueness and character of the community; and

- 6.42 Encourage hamlet commercial uses to take advantage of both highway and local traffic to benefit from a potentially larger market.

Highway Commercial

Strathcona County will:

- 6.43 Ensure highway commercial developments are situated in a location which ensures safe access and egress from adjacent roadways without disrupting their transportation function by locating:
- a) On service roads adjacent to highways;
 - b) In areas with good visibility and accessibility; and
 - c) In accordance with Strathcona County and Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation regulations, policies and requirements for highway roadside development.
- 6.44 Promote safe and efficient transportation corridors in the development of highway commercial uses;
- 6.45 Ensure highway commercial developments are compatible with adjacent land uses;
- 6.46 Enforce urban design guidelines and landscaping standards along highways that serve to enhance the visual form and character of development, as well as promote the economic assets of these corridors; and
- 6.47 Consider Commercial, Light Industrial and Public Service land uses within the area identified as Development Expansion Area in Map 1.1, and the Transition Area Master Plan (July 1995) subject to the following criteria:
- a) Must be developed according to Strathcona County rural servicing standards; and
 - b) An area structure plan must be developed and approved by County Council for the entire quarter section.

Rural/Urban Transition Policy Area

Strathcona County will:

- 6.48 Ensure that the appropriate levels of commercial services are available to the residents within the Rural/Urban Transition Policy Area to meet, at minimum, their daily needs.

Types of Commercial Developments



Figure 24: Example of Community Commercial development



Figure 25: Example of Arterial Commercial development

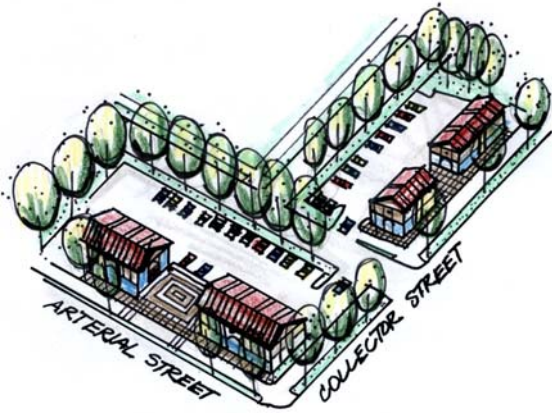


Figure 26: Example of Service Commercial development

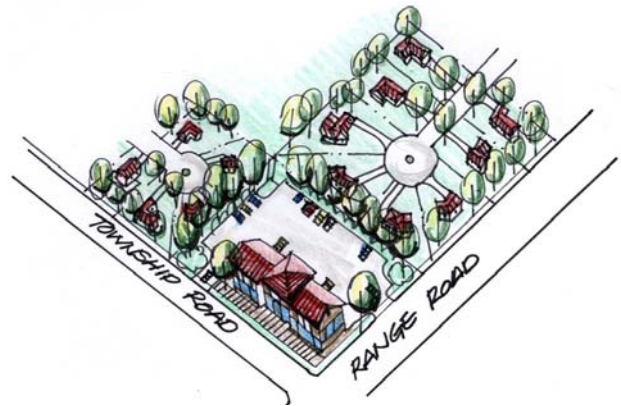


Figure 27: Example of Hamlet Commercial development

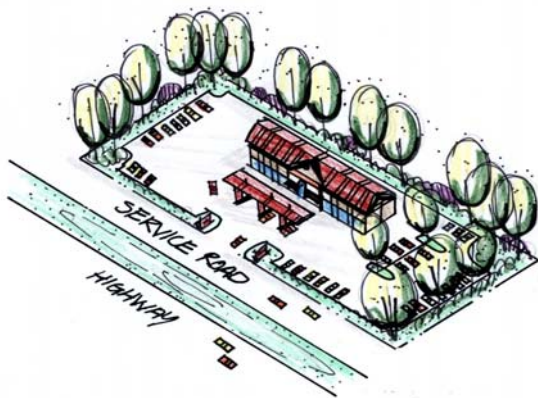


Figure 28: Example of Highway/Rural Commercial