

# NORTH OF DIVIDE PLANNING DISTRICT

## OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN

Prepared for:

THE NORTH OF DIVIDE PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of the North of Divide Planning District Official Community Plan (“the District Plan”) is to manage growth, land use and development in the North of Divide Planning District (“the Planning District” or simply “the District”) in a manner that sustains the economy, preserves the environment and enhances community and the quality of life for residents. The District Plan will provide a consistent approach to planning on a regional basis. Competition for development opportunities will be minimized as will land use conflicts since there will be greater predictability and certainty for land use decisions by both the public and private sector. Improved inter-municipal communication will lead to opportunities for increased joint planning initiatives, enhanced administrative capacity and providing overall benefit to the greater community.

The District Plan is established under the authority of Section 102 of *The Planning and Development Act, 2007*. The policies contained in this document shall be implemented in conformity with *The Statements of Provincial Interest Regulations* in community planning and development and applicable provincial statutes and regulations in cooperation with provincial government ministries and agencies. The District Plan sets out a vision for the future of the Planning District and establishes goals and regional policies that provides a framework for official community plans enacted by the affiliated member municipalities and serves to guide land use decision making at the local and provincial government levels.

## 1.2 NORTH OF DIVIDE PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

The formation of the North of Divide Planning District Commission and the development of this District Plan were initiated by local municipalities in 2011 with the establishment of the North of Divide Community Association. The affiliated municipalities subsequently agreed to the formation of a district commission and the establishment of the North of Divide Planning District under the auspices of *The Planning and Development Act, 2007*.

Affiliated municipalities include the City of Meadow Lake, the Rural Municipality of Meadow Lake No. 588, and the Villages of Dorintosh, Goodsoil, Loon Lake and Pierceland. The Waterhen and Flying Dust First Nations are potentially interested in participating in the community planning process as well.

The North of Divide Planning District Commission will provide leadership in the preparation of the District Plan and its ongoing implementation. The District Plan will provide a regional focus for affiliated municipalities and First Nations and Métis to establish improved regional linkages and capacity to help them meet their individual community, social, economic and developmental needs. Shared goals and broad community objectives can best be achieved through collective and cooperative planning and action.

## 1.3 PLANNING CONTEXT

The affiliated municipalities have been experiencing growth in recent years as a result of increased resource and tourism development. The Planning District area is characterized by a wide range of lifestyle and development options ranging from urban living in the City of Meadow Lake to contemporary rural agricultural land use and activities in its expansive countryside coupled with resource and recreational development opportunities in outlying areas.

The affiliated municipalities have a common interest in accommodating and managing development in a manner which is in the best interests of all participating parties, with regard to:

- respect for the natural environment;
- health, safety and social well-being of residents;
- opportunities for economic development; and
- provision of municipal services in an efficient and economical manner.

The municipalities have agreed that the formation of the North of Divide Planning District will offer significant benefits including:

- the expansion of a collaborative approach to land use planning to support growth on a regional basis;
- the opportunity for collaboration and an enhanced relationship with First Nations and Métis;
- the creation of a consistent decision making process that provides certainty for investment;
- the integration of infrastructure and service on a regional basis;
- the potential to cost share for the services of professionals to provide planning, building standards, economic development and municipal support services; and
- the assurance that affiliated municipalities will receive adequate benefits to offset the costs of development.

## 1.4 OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

The following are identified as key Planning District opportunities:

- A strong resource development sector coupled with an advantageous western Canadian regional location.
- Tourism activity associated with the Meadow Lake and Makwa Provincial Parks and numerous recreation sites and facilities.
- A diverse economy based on agriculture, tourism and forestry.
- A good history in inter-municipal cooperation with current sharing arrangements in waste management and water treatment services and with good potential for increased cooperation in transportation infrastructure.
- A strong institutional component including post-secondary education services and facilities such as North West Regional College and extensive facilities for long term seniors' health care.

The affiliated municipalities recognize the following constraints to progress:

- Water and sewer infrastructure in several urban municipalities is at or near to capacity and requires upgrading in order to accommodate future development.
- Increased truck traffic resulting from expanded resource development may impact negatively on the provincial and municipal road systems.
- A rail linkage is absent from the District, creating a potential barrier to industrial and resource operations.

- A shortage of healthcare professionals in the region has been identified.
- Retention or attraction of young workers is a challenge in the region's communities, while the average age of residents continues to rise, causing declining populations.
- Affordable housing including rental housing is scarce throughout the Planning District.
- Effective marketing and interest-building for the region requires more attention and resources.

## 1.5 REGIONAL CONCERNS

The following issues and themes related to land use planning are of regional (i.e. cross-municipal) concern or have significant regional opportunities, and thus are managed under regional policy laid out in this District Plan. All other planning matters within the Planning District are managed in the affiliated municipalities' Official Community Plans.

- Water protection;
- Environmental conservation;
- Transportation infrastructure;
- Servicing infrastructure;
- Economic development; and
- Tourism and recreation.

## 1.6 PLAN STRUCTURE

The District Plan is comprised of four parts. Part 1 serves as an introduction to the Planning District and its formation. Part 2 presents a vision for the District developed by the North of Divide Planning District Commission and outlines the five broad strategy components of the District Plan which will encompass both the regional concerns outlined above and the associated provincial interests, namely: ***environmental stewardship, resource management, building a strong economy, and planning for vibrant communities.*** Goals, objectives, and regional land use policies are outlined for each of these components in Part 3. Implementation is detailed in Part 4.

## 2 VISION & STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

### 2.1 VISION

The vision for the North of Divide Planning District developed by the Planning District Commission is as follows:

*“The North of Divide is a progressive region with a diverse and stable economy and quality of life, making it an attractive place to live and invest. Its communities are unique, vibrant, and recognized as important service centres for northern residents and for growing recreational and resource development.*

*Agriculture, tourism, and resource based activities provide the main drivers of the regional economy. Beautiful lakes, parks, and heritage features, along with ample recreation amenities, make the region a well-known destination. Their preservation is important to the region.*

*Modern infrastructure is developing in a cooperative manner to connect the region and support the growing population. Choice, diversity, and collaboration between municipalities and First Nations and Métis ensure the region is able to respond to the needs of all residents and that it remains sustainable well into the future.”*

### 2.2 STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The District Plan identifies goals strategic policy directions together with general policies and actions for managing growth and development in the North of Divide Planning District. The policies and recommended actions set forth in this Plan will provide a framework for the formulation of policies in the planning bylaws (Official Community Plans and Zoning Bylaws) of the affiliated municipalities to achieve the vision of the Planning District. Coordination between the affiliated municipalities and provincial ministries and agencies is needed ensure the management of growth and development in the region.

The District Plan must also be consistent with provincial interests in community planning and development. Section 8 of *The Planning and Development Act, 2007* provides that Official Community Plans must adhere to *The Statements of Provincial Interest Regulations*. District policy is divided into four strategy areas and an implementation section to accommodate provincial interests as follows:

Strategic Policy Areas	Provincial Interests
Environmental Stewardship	Biodiversity and Natural Ecosystems Shore Lands and Water Bodies Source Water Protection
Management of Resource Lands	Agriculture and Value-Added Agribusiness Mineral Resource Exploration and Development Sand and Gravel
Building a Strong Economy	Public Works Transportation Recreation and Tourism
Building Vibrant Communities	Public Safety Residential Development Heritage and Culture
Implementation	First Nations and Métis Engagement Intermunicipal Cooperation

## 3 REGIONAL LAND USE POLICIES

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### 3.1 ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

**Goal:** *Development in the North of Divide Planning District occurs in a sustainable manner with ecosystems and biodiversity being protected, maintained and restored. Water is managed and protected to provide adequate quality and quantity for human consumption and ecosystem integrity.*

#### 3.1.1 Drinking Water Protection

**Objective:** To ensure a sustainable supply of potable water for residents and visitors of the Planning District.

**Policies:**

- (1) Water management strategies are required to identify, monitor, manage and protect existing public drinking water supply watersheds to ensure a long term supply of potable drinking water in the Planning District.
- (2) The Planning District Commission will collaborate with Provincial agencies to identify strategies to protect public water supply watersheds in the District in consultation with major landowners, resource stakeholders and the public.
- (3) The Planning District Commission will ensure the protection of municipal wells in the District. District municipal wells are located at the following land locations:
  - **Village of Goodsoil:** SW ¼ Sec. 14 – 63 – 22 – W3M
  - **Village of Pierceland:** Parcel T, Plan 00B04108 Ext. 2 in the NW ¼ Sec. 36 – 61 – 26 – W3M
  - **Village of Loon Lake:** Lot 11, Block 7, Plan 59B04920 in the SE ¼ Sec. 23 – 58 – 22 – W3M
  - **Village of Dorintosh:** NW ¼ Sec. 10 – 62 – 18 – W3M
  - **Village of Makwa:** SE ¼ Sec. 17 – 58 – 20 – W3M

#### 3.1.2 Water Quality Management

**Objective:** To protect and enhance the quality of surface and groundwater in the District and to minimize the risk of contamination from sewage treatment systems and storm water runoff and runoff from industrial enterprises.

**Policies:**

*Surface Water Protection*

- (1) To protect surface water by ensuring that protective natural buffers be provided and maintained between development and adjacent watercourses.

- (2) The Planning District Commission will identify strategies in collaboration with Provincial agencies to identify, manage, and protect significant wetlands in the District.

#### *Ground Water Resources*

- (3) To ensure that development does not negatively impact ground water resources. The affiliated municipalities may require hydrological assessments in considering commercial, or industrial development proposals that are potentially high water consumers (e.g. factories, mines, hotels, golf courses, etc.) to assess their impact on groundwater resources.

#### *Storm Water Management*

- (4) To ensure that development in urban and rural areas is managed effectively to reduce environmental impacts. Major multi-parcel residential subdivisions, commercial complexes, and industrial parks will be required to provide drainage plans to manage storm water runoff.
- (5) To develop broad surface water management strategies for the Planning District to give direction to the formulation of polices for surface water management and the management of site development in the planning bylaws of the affiliated municipalities.

#### *Waste Water Management*

- (6) To ensure that development located in areas without access to existing communal sewer treatment facilities, such as cottage resort areas provide adequate treatment facilities that meet provincial health requirements.

### **3.1.3 Conservation and Recreation Areas**

**Objective:** To protect sensitive ecosystems, habitat areas, and land with potential for recreational development opportunities.

**Policies:**

- (1) To protect areas of particular ecological importance, such as the Moose Hills area, to retain their natural resource value.
- (2) To accommodate a range of uses related to tourism development including seasonal residences, country residential and resorts with related recreational and commercial uses.
- (3) To support and encourage the development of a system of active trails such as walking/cycling pathways, hiking, skiing and ATV trails in the Planning District, specifically including the network of trails around and connecting the City of Meadow Lake and the Flying Dust First Nation.
- (4) To ensure safe, convenient lake access for residents and visitors including boat launch and docking areas, beaches and swimming areas at the various recreation lakes located in the northern portion of the planning district.
- (5) Potentially sensitive critical wildlife habitats according to the Ministry of Environment are identified on Map 1 – North of Divide Planning District. The affiliated municipalities are encouraged to consider these habitats and their environmental context when reviewing proposals for subdivision or development within them.



### 3.1.4 Climate Change

**Objective:** To protect development, infrastructure, natural resources and industry investments from natural hazards, including the anticipated effects of climate change.

**Policies:**

- (1) To recognize local risks such as flooding, wildfire, excessive wind and slope hazards and to identify potential impacts on vulnerable public infrastructure. The Planning District Commission, in association with experts or Provincial agencies, will develop strategies to address identified regional impacts and identify mitigation and adaptation measures.
- (2) To encourage the undertaking of risk assessments for wildfires in communities, the preparation of Community Wildfire Protection Plans and the incorporation of development and mitigation standards in the planning bylaws of the affiliated municipalities to address the risk to development.
- (3) Ensure that development does not deplete or reduce the quality of water resources in the broader region.
- (4) To work with the Water Security Agency, as necessary, on potential flood protection issues in the Planning District.
- (5) Ensure that development protects and sustains important waterbodies, waterways, wetlands, groundwater, riparian systems, and low-lying / high-water table areas in the Planning District and broader region by employing site-specific planning programs, either alone or in cooperation with other agencies, organizations or governments. This may include limiting, restricting, delaying or prohibiting development in proposed development areas until site-specific planning has been completed or until the Planning District and affected municipalities are satisfied that specific development projects will sustain these areas.
- (6) As per *The Statements of Provincial Interest Regulations*, insofar as is practical, the development of new buildings and additions to buildings in the floodway in the 1:500 year flood elevation of any watercourse or waterbody shall be prohibited.
- (7) As per *The Statements of Provincial Interest Regulations*, insofar as is practical, development of new buildings and additions to buildings to an elevation of 0.5 metres above the 1:500 year flood elevation of any watercourse or waterbody in the flood fringe shall be flood-proofed.

### 3.1.5 Archaeological Resources

**Objective:** To identify and protect the archaeological resources of the North of Divide Planning District.

**Policies:**

- (1) A heritage resource impact assessment (HRIA) may be required where development is proposed in or near areas of known or suspected archaeological resources including traditional First Nations and Métis sites.

- (2) Potentially heritage sensitive quarter-sections are identified on Map 1 – North of Divide Planning District. Consultation with the Heritage Conservation Branch may be required before subdivision or development occurs on a potentially heritage sensitive quarter-section. It is understood that many quarter-sections in the Planning District may not contain elements of heritage sensitivity despite their designation as potentially so, particularly those that are already cultivated for field crops or used for other purposes.

## 3.2 RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

**Goal:** *Natural resources and productive rural lands, as well as mineral resources and aggregates, are managed and used sustainably to support a growing regional economy while ensuring environmental values are respected. The agricultural sector is strong and continues to contribute to community sustainability and a robust regional economy.*

### 3.2.1 Forestry

**Objective:** To protect forest resources in partnership with the Province of Saskatchewan for environmental, social and economic benefit. Large scale forest harvesting, forest product production and outdoor recreation activities are integral to the regional economy and will be accommodated in the Planning District.

**Policies:**

- (1) The planning bylaws of the affiliated rural municipalities must provide policy to accommodate and support large scale forest harvesting and to avoid conflict between forest harvesting and other land uses and resources.
- (2) Forest product production includes traditional resource use such as animal grazing, hunting, fishing, trapping, firewood harvesting and berry picking, as well as contemporary uses including oil and gas exploration and development, agroforestry and gravel extraction, ecotourism and outfitting, and will be accommodated in the planning bylaws of the affiliated rural municipalities. It is recognized that the Province retains the authority and responsibility to manage forestry on Crown land in the Planning District.

### 3.2.2 Mineral and Aggregate Deposits

**Objective:** To manage the exploration and development of mineral and hydrocarbon deposits, including sand and gravel deposits, to secure economic benefits while respecting environmental values.

**Policies:**

- (1) The exploration to locate mineral and hydrocarbon deposits shall be allowed to occur in the Planning District. Exploration activities will be encouraged to be carried out in an environmentally friendly manner consistent with the policies of this Plan as well as the affiliated rural municipality's Plan, with the requirement for exploration areas to be rehabilitated upon completion of the activity.
- (2) Development of land for mines and hydrocarbon drill sites will be permitted, having regard for *The Statements of Provincial Interest Regulations* and local land use compatibility matters to minimize and/or mitigate conflict between such development and adjoining land use.
- (3) Sand and gravel extraction will be allowed where it is demonstrated that the development will minimize visual impacts through retention of natural buffers and provide for ongoing site reclamation and rehabilitation of disturbed areas. Sites in forested areas shall be reforested.

### **3.2.3 Agricultural Land Base**

**Objective:** To support policies, bylaws and programs to optimize the use of the agricultural land base to facilitate the growth, expansion and diversification of sustainable agriculture as a viable economic sector in the Planning District.

**Policies:**

- (1) Current agricultural land use policies and regulatory requirements contained within the planning bylaws of the affiliated rural municipalities respecting agricultural cropping and grazing, intensive livestock operations, agri-business, home- and farm-based businesses have proven to be effective and viable for the rural community over the long term and require little modification.
- (2) A review and revision of policy to accommodate agro-forestry is required.

### 3.3 BUILDING A STRONG ECONOMY

**Goal:** *A strong and diversified economy that supports job retention and regional prosperity.*

#### 3.3.1 Regional Transportation

**Objective:** To ensure an efficient transportation system for the movement of goods, services and people that supports business expansion. The importance of the provincial highway system to the regional economy, notably the movement of natural resource products and tourism traffic is recognized. Provincial highways are indicated on Map 1 – North of Divide Planning District.

**Policies:**

- (1) To promote coordinated planning of the regional transportation system to provide and maintain a system of municipal rights of way and facilities that meets demands for safe travel and access for vehicular and pedestrian traffic.
- (2) It is recommended that the Planning District Commission discuss opportunities for improvements to the regional transportation system and the development of regional transportation strategies for consideration by the affiliated municipalities and the Ministry of Highways.
- (3) This District Plan supports the application of provincial building control and access requirements for development in proximity to the provincial highway system.
- (4) The application of highway signage controls and regulations will be undertaken in conjunction with policies contained in this Plan for identification and protection of significant rural viewscales.

#### 3.3.2 Industrial and Commercial Lands

**Objective:** To ensure there is an adequate supply of lands in the Planning District for commercial and industrial development.

**Policies:**

- (1) New industrial development will be encouraged to locate in urban centres and rural areas such as hamlets and along highways where there is available land, infrastructure and access to regional roads, and in accordance with the policies and regulations of the planning bylaws of the affiliated municipalities.
- (2) Rural and urban commercial areas will be encouraged to locate in select locations or along existing highway corridors and in accordance with any Future Land Use Concept maps of the affiliated municipalities. Commercial and industrial uses that require large land areas and minimal services will be encouraged to locate in clustered, industrial-park settings.

#### 3.3.3 Tourism

**Objective:** To conserve key assets of the natural and built environment to facilitate tourism growth and to assist tourism enterprises in adjusting to emerging markets.

**Policies:**

- (1) New tourism resort development and accommodations will be encouraged to locate in settlement areas with access to existing services, transportation networks and other amenities.
- (2) The planning bylaws of the affiliated rural municipalities shall provide policy for the consideration of new tourism development including the following provisions:
  - (a) a description of how the proposed development is consistent with the vision and policies of this District Plan;
  - (b) an identification of the impact of the development on natural resources, adjoining land use and that costs to the rural municipality are minimized;
  - (c) an outline of the regional economic benefits;
  - (d) an outline of potential environmental impacts and proposed mitigation measures; and
  - (e) a description of its potential impact on the visual amenity of the area.
- (3) Small scale tourist establishments including bed and breakfast accommodations, adventure tourism businesses and hunting and fishing lodges are encouraged subject to the policy and requirements of applicable planning bylaws of the affiliated municipalities.
- (4) Tourism assets such as parks, trails, natural areas and landscapes abound in the North of Divide Planning District. In order to magnify and market their attraction for tourism development it is recommended that the Commission undertake an assessment of tourism assets. One asset worthy of protection is the considerable visual attraction of the area as a source of pride and enjoyment for residents and as a valuable regional tourism attraction. It is recommended that the Commission develop strategies to protect significant viewsapes and to support the marketing of tourism for the region.

### 3.4 BUILDING VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

**Goal:** *Urban communities are distinct, safe, well-designed and maximize public investment in infrastructure. Communities are resilient in dealing with the shifting economic, social and cultural dynamics in the region.*

#### 3.4.1 Directing Community Growth

**Objective:** To support the growth of urban communities consistent with their unique character and role as follows:

- (a) **City of Meadow Lake:** The City is the main service centre for the region with a concentration of retail, education, healthcare, cultural and recreation facilities and services. Commercial and industrial development supports local employment. The City will continue to be the centre for urban development and growth in the Planning District.
- (b) **Villages of Dorintosh, Loon Lake and Goodsoil:** The Villages are traditional small agricultural communities that will continue to provide quality residential environments and commercial service delivery at the local level. The Villages of Dorintosh and Goodsoil also serve as gateways to Meadow Lake Provincial Park, and provide for tourism and recreation in that regard.
- (c) **Village of Pierceland:** The Village is a compact residential community which serves as a service centre and gateway to adjacent natural resource, recreation and resort areas.
- (d) **Rural Municipality of Meadow Lake:** Provide low-density quasi-urban residential lifestyle options within hamlets, multi-parcel residential, and resort residential subdivisions for area residents.

**Policies:**

- (1) Planning and development within urban areas will be in a manner consistent with their identified role and unique character within the Planning District. Improved policies for enhancing community character and urban design are encouraged in the future review and any required upgrade to the current planning bylaws of the affiliated urban municipalities.
- (2) Within urban and quasi-urban areas, municipal planning will encourage compact and sustainable forms of development by:
  - (a) directing development to readily serviceable areas and encouraging innovative approaches to water and energy service delivery;
  - (b) concentrating commercial development in areas identified in each of the member communities Official Community Plans;
  - (c) developing open space systems for parks, trails recreation and natural areas; and
  - (d) identifying and protecting heritage buildings and resources.
- (3) The planning bylaws of the affiliated urban municipalities shall provide for a range of housing types, density variations and ownership and rental options to meet the needs of residents.

- (4) Large scale retail commercial and industrial developments, where permitted, shall be integrated into the urban community through provision of pedestrian access, energy efficient and high quality building design and materials and streetscape features.
- (5) Proposed amendments to the planning bylaws of the affiliated municipalities shall be consistent with the vision and policies of this District Plan.
- (6) Modest growth in urban areas is anticipated for the planning period that will likely be accommodated within current corporate boundaries in the short to medium term. Planning bylaws of the affiliated municipalities shall provide policy to address the need for boundary alterations in the long term. The planning bylaws of the affiliated rural and urban municipalities shall also identify areas for future urban expansion and the negotiation process for accommodating boundary alteration applications for planned development.

### ***3.4.2 Infrastructure and Servicing***

**Objective:** To maximize investment in infrastructure and services within the Planning District by ensuring that services are provided economically and efficiently to meet the needs of residents, businesses and visitors.

**Policies:**

- (1) This District Plan encourages collaboration between the affiliated municipalities in delivery of municipal services such as fire protection, municipal administration and district/municipal planning.
- (2) Municipal water and sewer services and treatment facilities shall be directed to areas within the servicing thresholds of current systems within or closely in proximity to existing urban settlement areas, wherever possible.

### ***3.4.3 Rural Settlement Areas***

**Objective:** To accommodate rural residential development in a planned and orderly manner.

**Policies:**

- (1) The planning bylaws of the affiliated rural municipalities shall provide for a range of rural residential housing options and life-styles to meet the current and future needs of residents for country residential acreage and cottage resort development. Those bylaws shall contain policy respecting locational guidelines and standards for design, development and servicing.
- (2) Development in rural settlement areas shall contribute to the preservation of the rural landscape in accordance with the policies of this District Plan and those of applicable planning bylaws of the affiliated rural municipalities regarding the protection of water resources and provisions for surface drainage and waste water management.



## 4 IMPLEMENTATION

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### 4.1 PLANNING PERIOD

This District Plan is intended to provide direction to the affiliated municipalities, participating First Nations/Métis and residents for the future development of the region over the next ten to fifteen years. After such time, the District Plan will be reviewed to assess the need for its update and renewal or replacement with a new district plan.

### 4.2 CONFORMITY OF PLANNING BYLAWS WITH THIS PLAN

The City of Meadow Lake and the Rural Municipality of Meadow Lake have adopted official community plans and zoning bylaws for their communities. Planning bylaws that compliment this District Plan have been prepared for the Villages of Dorintosh, Goodsoil, Loon Lake and Pierceland. It is recognized that the planning bylaws for these communities provide more specific direction for their growth and development than does this Plan. This Plan provides overarching policy from a regional perspective. *The Planning and Development Act, 2007* requires that community planning bylaws be consistent with a District Plan applicable to their area. The community planning bylaws of the affiliated municipalities must be consistent with the spirit and intent of this Plan keeping in mind that they may contain policy to accommodate unique community circumstances. Once this Plan is approved, the Commission will advise the affiliated municipalities respecting appropriate changes to their planning bylaws.

### 4.3 APPROACH TO IMPLEMENTATION

This Plan provides a framework to achieve good planning, land use management and development from a regional perspective. It is enacted by complementary bylaws of the affiliated municipalities and can be amended in similar fashion based on the advice of the District Planning Commission and compatibility with the principles and policies herein.

Municipalities will continue to play a primary role and responsibility for controlling planning and development in the North of Divide Planning District in terms of implementing broad policies identified in this Plan through more specific policies contained in their individual official community plans.

### 4.4 PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

This Plan presents an opportunity for the affiliated municipalities to build an enhanced regional culture through the North of Divide Planning District Commission leading to the development of improved regional services and programs for the benefit of the overall community. The Commission will provide ongoing advice to the Councils of the affiliated municipalities to assist the implementation of this Plan in the following ways:

- (1) to review and provide recommendations concerning amendments to current Official Community Plans of affiliated municipalities to ensure their compliance with this Plan;
- (2) to review and provide recommendations respecting ongoing subdivision and development applications in the Planning District;
- (3) to advise affiliated municipalities regarding requested amendments to this Plan;

- (4) to identify needed collaboration and facilitate discussion between municipal, provincial agencies, First Nations and Métis and business and community stakeholders to find mutually beneficial solutions to managing growth and development in the region;
- (5) to initiate research, analysis and monitoring activities respecting the proposed strategic actions of this Plan in regards to:
  - (a) cost sharing the services of a professional district planner and other administrative support for associated municipal services such as district and local community planning, economic development, building inspection, etc to assist the affiliated municipalities with the implementation of this Plan;
  - (b) developing strategies to address regional transportation, climate change impacts, surface water drainage, watershed monitoring and management, community trail development and tourism asset and view scape protection; and
  - (c) encouraging the affiliated municipalities to conduct community risk assessments and develop Community Wildfire Protection Plans consistent with the Fire Smart program initiative of the Ministry of Environment to address current and future wildfire protection needs.

The Commission shall endeavor to prepare a schedule of Commission rules of procedure in accordance with Section 100 of *The Planning and Development Act, 2007*, following the approval of this Plan in order to clarify the Commission's function and to ensure that the affiliated municipalities and the public understand the Commission's role and responsibility. The schedule of rules shall contain a communication protocol to assist information sharing between the affiliated municipalities.

#### 4.5 INTER-MUNICIPAL & JURISDICTIONAL COOPERATION

The Commission shall encourage and facilitate inter municipal /jurisdictional cooperation in development decisions and for joint provision of municipal services delivered on a community wide basis. The Commission shall communicate with adjacent municipalities and First Nations/Métis to ensure that development decisions are compatible with broad community interests and do not jeopardize adjacent land uses. Key inter-jurisdictional initiatives will be as follows:

- (1) Recognition by affiliated rural municipalities that development on the fringe of urban municipalities must be orderly and timely to ensure that future urban development and servicing needs are not jeopardized and that annexation is not compromised. The planning bylaws of the affiliated urban municipalities shall identify specific urban fringe areas. Where development is proposed within an identified urban fringe area, the affiliated rural municipality shall consult with the affiliated urban municipality to ensure that land use compatibility and effective and efficient provision of services will be achieved.
- (2) The affiliated municipalities will share information respecting their infrastructure and service requirements within the District and to identify opportunities for collaboration and agreements, where needed, to provide cost efficiency and avoid duplication. The rules of procedure for the Commission shall contain a communication process for the referral by affiliated municipalities of development permit, subdivision and rezoning applications within the Planning District to the Commission.

- (3) Annexation shall occur according to legislation where development is anticipated within a ten-year time frame as expressed in the planning bylaws of an affiliated urban municipality. An urban and rural municipality may enter into an agreement respecting a proposed annexation which compensates the rural municipality for the loss of taxation for an agreed to term.
- (4) Aboriginal Affairs
- (a) The affiliated municipalities welcome the participation of regional First Nation and Métis communities as active members in the Planning District and as partners in overall community and regional development initiatives.
- (b) Within their authority for land use planning and development decisions, the affiliated municipalities will work together with the Flying Dust First Nation, the Waterhen Lake First Nation, the Thunderchild First Nation, the Canoe Lake First Nation, other First Nations and Metis communities:
- (i) in a spirit of cooperation on community planning, economic development and public service delivery; and
- (ii) to formalize protocols for engagement and decision making, which may include signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and creating guidelines for working together.
- (c) Within their authority for land use planning and development decisions, the affiliated municipalities will work together with the Flying Dust First Nation, the Waterhen Lake First Nation, the Thunderchild First Nation, the Canoe Lake First Nation, other First Nations and Metis communities to preserve and protect Treaty and Aboriginal Rights to hunt, trap and fish for food or carry out traditional land uses and to avoid potential adverse impacts on any cultural, spiritual or other important sites within the planning district.
- (d) Waterhen Lake First Nation (WLFN)
- (i) The affiliated municipalities will consider WLFN land use mapping of ancestral lands and current traditional uses where provided as background information to this plan in order to assist the district with planning and development matters.
- (ii) The affiliated municipalities recognize the portion of the M-37 Fur Block situated within the district and shown on Map 1.
- (e) Flying Dust First Nation (FDFN)
- (i) The affiliated municipalities will consider FDFN land use mapping of ancestral lands and current traditional uses as background information to this plan in order to assist the district with planning and development matters.

## 4.6 DISPUTE RESOLUTION MECHANISM

The following process will provide a mechanism for resolving Planning District disputes locally:

- (1) A municipality identifying an issue in dispute may notify the Secretary of the Planning District Commission to have the matter placed on the next regular meeting of the Commission.

- (2) Prior to the Commission meeting, municipal staff of the parties in dispute shall meet to clarify the issues in dispute and to discuss potential solutions. Based on this discussion the staff shall prepare a report to the Commission.
- (3) The Commission shall meet and hear representation from the parties in dispute and attempt to resolve the matter by consensus.
- (4) Should the Commission fail to resolve the dispute, the respective Councils shall meet to arrive at a solution. Should the Councils fail to reach agreement all parties may initiate a request for mediation and/or a binding decision by the Saskatchewan Municipal Board under Section 233 of *The Planning and Development Act, 2007*.

#### 4.7 OTHER PLANS

This Plan is supported by and relates to a range of policies and plans, including:

- The Official Community Plans and Zoning Bylaws of the affiliated municipalities;
- The Whitehood and Murphy/Fowler Lakes Integrated Resource Management Plans; and
- Regional economic development plans and strategies. (RDCs, Community Futures, etc.).

#### 4.8 MAPPING

Map 1 which forms a part of this District Official Community Plan is a map illustrating the extent of the North of Divide Planning District. Certain land use policies contained in this Plan make use of this map to assist in their application. Shown on this map are the following features:

- Affiliated rural municipalities;
- Affiliated and non-affiliated urban municipalities;
- First Nations/Métis reserves;
- Provincial parks and recreation sites;
- Highways;
- Potentially heritage sensitive quarter sections;
- Potentially sensitive critical wildlife habitats;
- Waterbodies and watercourses;
- Wetlands;
- Furblocks; and
- Provincial forest boundary.

#### 4.9 INTERPRETATION

The meaning of words used in this District Plan is identical to the definitions provided in *The Planning and Development Act, 2007*, unless otherwise specified.

## 5 MAPPING

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Map 1 – North of Divide Planning District