

BYLAW NO. 4636

---

**A BYLAW OF THE CITY OF MEDICINE HAT** to adopt a new Municipal Development Plan;

**AND WHEREAS** Council of the City of Medicine Hat deems it advisable to adopt a new Municipal Development Plan that meets the changing needs of the City;

**AND WHEREAS** opportunities have been provided to school authorities, adjacent municipalities, and persons who may be affected by the plan to make suggestions and representations during the preparation of the revised Municipal Development Plan;

**AND WHEREAS** the requirements of the *Municipal Government Act*, RSA 2000, Chapter M-26 regarding the advertising of this Bylaw have been complied with;

**AND WHEREAS** copies of this Bylaw and related documents were made available for inspection by the public at the office of the City Clerk as required by the *Municipal Government Act*, RSA 2000, Chapter M-26;

**AND WHEREAS** a public hearing with respect to this Bylaw was held in the Council Chambers at City Hall on October 5, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.

**NOW THEREFORE THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF MEDICINE HAT, IN COUNCIL ASSEMBLED, ENACTS AS FOLLOWS:**

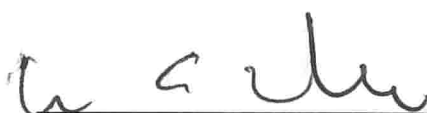
1. This Bylaw may be cited as the "Municipal Development Plan 2020 Bylaw".
2. The City of Medicine Hat Municipal Development Plan 2020 attached as Schedule "A" to this Bylaw is adopted.
3. Bylaw 4105 cited as the Municipal Development Plan 2012 Bylaw, and all amending Bylaws, are hereby repealed.
4. This Bylaw shall come into force at the beginning of the date it is passed.

**READ A FIRST TIME** in open Council on September 8, 2020.

**READ A SECOND TIME** in open Council on October 5, 2020.

**READ A THIRD TIME** in open Council on October 5, 2020.

**SIGNED AND PASSED** on October 6, 2020.



MAYOR KEITH E. (TED) CLUGSTON



CITY CLERK, A. CRUICKSHANK

**Schedule "A" – Bylaw No. 4636**

---

**SCHEDULE "A"**



A large steel truss bridge spans a wide river. The bridge has multiple spans with intricate steel frameworks. The sky is filled with soft, golden clouds from the setting or rising sun, which reflects on the calm water. The bridge's reflection is clearly visible in the river below. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic.

# mymh

MEDICINE HAT MASTER PLAN

**TITLE** myMH - Medicine Hat Master Plan

**AUTHOR** Planning & Development Services  
City of Medicine Hat

**BYLAW** Approved October 6, 2020 Bylaw No. 4636  
Amended August 4, 2021 Amending Bylaw No. 4674

**ADDITIONAL COPIES** Planning & Development Services  
City of Medicine Hat  
580 First Street SE  
Medicine Hat, AB T1A 8E6  
403.529.8374

© 2020, 2021  
City of Medicine Hat  
All rights reserved.





Luke Fandrich

# my<sup>mh</sup>

## MEDICINE HAT MASTER PLAN

Introduction .....	1
1 - Our Story .....	2
1.1 - Regulatory Context .....	3
1.2 - Process .....	4
1.3 - Community Context .....	5
1.4 - Upcoming Challenges .....	6
1.5 - Future Hat Stats .....	7
1.6 - General Land Use Pattern .....	10
2 - Our Future .....	12
2.1 - Vision .....	12
2.2 - Matching Services to Level of Need .....	13
2.3 - How to Use the Urban Transect .....	14
2.4 - Sector Planning .....	15
3 - How We Grow .....	24
3.1 - Vibrant Downtown .....	26
3.2 - Livable Neighbourhoods .....	34
3.3 - Strong Economy .....	40
3.4 - Efficient Public Services .....	46
3.5 - Environmental Stewardship .....	52
4 - Where We Grow .....	60
4.1 - Purpose-Built Servicing Levels .....	60
4.2 - Measured Staging .....	60
4.3 - Energized Infill .....	62
4.4 - Balanced Growth .....	62
4.5 - Efficient Use of Infrastructure .....	62
5 - Appendices .....	72
Definitions .....	72
Acknowledgements .....	77

Terms which are defined in the “Definitions” section (p.70) are highlighted in **purple** the first time they appear in this Plan.





## LIVE TODAY. IMAGINE TOMORROW.

During the next few decades, the need for fiscal responsibility in both public and private sectors is profound. If current economic trends continue, and the City continues to move ahead without adapting certain processes, then intensifying financial pressures will make it difficult for the City to maintain current levels of service while continuing to keep taxes to a minimum. Conversely, certain global circumstances are shifting in ways that are more challenging to foresee. The next 20 to 30 years may bring about significant changes to our surroundings and the manner in which we conduct our everyday lives.

To accommodate our growth and to support Medicine Hat's evolution to a highly sustainable, livable and prosperous city, the myMH Master Plan takes a focused, practical approach to resiliency and growth management. Success will mean a strong, diverse economy, a greater range of residential and work place choices, a smarter approach to how we build and move around and a dedication to environmental responsibility.

By consulting with Hatters from 2017 to 2020, we received a myriad of perspectives regarding the city's future. The strategies and initiatives of the myMH Master Plan have been prepared by incorporating feedback received from the public, community stakeholders, City Council and various committees and advisory boards. This Plan focuses on specific priorities to help Hatters achieve our common goals and directions in a manner that is well-considered, collaborative and realistic. Ultimately, myMH is about who we are as a city and what we want our common future to be; a place where we can live fully today, and plan ahead for an even better tomorrow.





# OUR STORY





# 1 OUR STORY

## 1.1 REGULATORY CONTEXT

### Purpose of myMH Master Plan

The myMH Master Plan is a long-range vision, for the future growth and development of our community. It is a high level plan that provides a broad conceptual framework that serves as the foundation for more detailed City plans, and guides City operations. Think of it as the blueprint for Medicine Hat.

### Role and scope

The myMH Master Plan will provide information and direction\* with regard to:

- constraints and challenges facing our city;
- future land use, growth, and development patterns within our city;
- our **infrastructure** and transportation systems;
- services and facilities provided by the City;
- our economic development strategy; and
- fostering the well-being of the environment.

\*The myMH Master Plan is a statutory Municipal Development Plan, prepared and adopted by bylaw, in accordance with section 632 of the Municipal Government Act.

\*\*In accordance with section 637 of the Municipal Government Act.

The intent of the Plan is to establish goals, policies and concepts for the purpose of providing long-term guidance for our community, including our City Council, City administration, developers and the public.

The planning horizon for the myMH Master Plan is 30 years. It is noteworthy that circumstances are subject to change, particularly within a time period which spans decades. Amendments may be made from time to time to account for changing circumstances. Thus, the City is not required to undertake specific projects referred to in this Plan.\*\*

The myMH Master Plan has been prepared to be consistent with and to support the goals of higher level legislation and plans, including:

- the **Municipal Government Act** (MGA) and any associated regulations thereunder;
- the **South Saskatchewan Regional Plan**, a southern Alberta regional plan based around the **South Saskatchewan watershed**, and;
- the **Intermunicipal Development Plan** (IDP), a local co-operative plan with our neighbours, the Town of Redcliff and Cypress County.

## 1.2 PROCESS

### Groundwork

Before drafting a plan which outlines how a city will move forward, it is vital to establish its current circumstances, needs and constraints. This process involves many facets of research including a review of legislative requirements, an analysis of development patterns and policies contained within previous plans, identifying current development constraints, a review of current planning best practices and establishing a financially feasible **Growth Management Strategy**.

### Collective input

Throughout various points in the process of creating this Plan, input was actively solicited from residents, business owners, local stakeholder groups and associations, City advisory boards and committees, the **Municipal Planning Commission**, neighbouring municipalities, local First Nations organizations and City Council. Technical expertise was also provided by both internal consultation with subject matter experts within City departments and external planning, engineering and financial consultants.

### Engagement methods

A wide variety of methods were used by the myMH team to reach out to the community and stakeholders, including:

- Open house style public engagement sessions
- Workshops with community groups
- Community led kitchen table conversations
- Online and paper surveys
- Public photo contest
- Dedicated myMH Master Plan website
- Social media notifications
- Direct emailed invitations to hundreds of diverse groups and organizations
- Dedicated stakeholder sessions
- Presence and discussions at several local trade shows



*Above: Various considerations in creating an MDP.*



*Above: Opportunities for information and feedback at public engagement events.*



### 1.3 COMMUNITY CONTEXT

The southeastern region of Alberta is an area in which First Nations peoples, generally Blackfoot, Cree and Assiniboine, thrived for at least 8000 years. The **Saamis Archaeological Site**, designated as a Provincial Historic Resource in 1984, was an integral part of the lives of Indigenous peoples. The lands of the site were used extensively for shelter, wood, water and as a buffalo meat processing area.

In 1883, Canadian Pacific Railway construction reached the South Saskatchewan River as it progressed westward, and a train bridge was constructed over the river. A village began to grow, consisting mostly of railway workers and immigrants. Inspired by First Nations medicine man legends, the settlement was dubbed “Medicine Hat”.

The community's location was advantageous

for a number of reasons. It was at a junction of the railway and river, two major transportation routes. It was surrounded by ample land for farming and ranching. Perhaps most significantly, there was an abundance of resources including fresh water, natural gas, clay and coal.

By 1884, the Northwest Mounted Police had established a presence. The General Hospital was completed in 1890, and was the only hospital between Winnipeg and Vancouver. Medicine Hat became a city in 1906 and an industrial boom followed soon after, bringing with it a surge of immigrants and expanding development. In 1954, the positioning of the Trans-Canada highway through the municipal boundary further established the city as the major urban centre of southeastern Alberta.

With a current population of 63,260\*, Medicine Hat continues to be a thriving city. However,

like many prairie communities, it faces challenges. The oil and gas sector, once the area's predominant industry, has lost much of its economic lustre. This reality, as well as factors such as aging infrastructure, an aging population, and the necessities of financial restraint, have challenged decision-makers to seek innovative solutions for long-term **sustainability**.

However, new development proceeds at a notable pace, as investors continue to show strong interest in the city. Often called an “oasis on the prairie”, Medicine Hat continues to have much to celebrate. It is the sunniest city in Canada and is bolstered by a diverse, resilient economy. Other enviable features include the prominent river and coulee system, City-owned utilities division, safe streets, strong sports community, vibrant arts scene and nationally and provincially recognized **heritage sites**.



*Photo of a Cree family on the prairie. (Undated)*



*Medicine Hat city centre, c.1905.*



*Medicine Hat city centre, 2018.*



## 1.4 UPCOMING CHALLENGES

### Infrastructure renewal

Infrastructure (such as roads, pipes, utility lines, water and wastewater treatment facilities) are crucial operational requirements for a city, but present ever-increasing costs.

Such infrastructure must not only be built, but also maintained over its lifespan and eventually replaced. Although replacements are ongoing, due to Medicine Hat's **Asset Management Plan**, much of the City's infrastructure is over 60 years old, and some is over 100 years old, which brings into question the condition of the infrastructure to meet ongoing needs.

To keep up with current and future servicing demand, while remaining financially viable, cities require long-term strategies for infrastructure.



### Climate resiliency

Dynamic climate conditions will likely have a significant effect on Medicine Hat within a relatively short span of years. Research indicates that the annual number of +30°C days in the Medicine Hat region could nearly double, from 21.9 days (1976-2005) to 38.3 days (2021-2050).<sup>\*</sup> This translates to warmer summers and water becoming increasingly scarce. Such changes will have an impact on agriculture, soil conditions and the length of time people can spend outdoors. Cities may need to adapt, by using less water (e.g. parks irrigation) and changing the way city infrastructure and buildings are designed.

Also, by 2050, our provincial population is projected to surpass 7 million people, an increase of 2.7 million.<sup>\*\*</sup> A large percentage of this population increase will draw from the South Saskatchewan watershed, adding significant strain to our water supply.

<sup>\*</sup>Prairie Climate Centre, University of Winnipeg, 2018.

<sup>\*\*</sup>Alberta Treasury Board and Finance, 2019.



### Disruptive technologies

Technological advancements can produce long-term benefits but can cause short-term challenges for communities and their residents. While it is difficult to predict sudden changes, technological or otherwise, cities should strive to stay diversified, resilient and adaptable.

The imminent technology of **autonomous vehicles** is advancing quickly, potentially requiring changes to roadway designs and traffic laws. It is expected that consumers in North America will be able to purchase self-driving vehicles within the next decade.<sup>†</sup>

In addition, robotics and artificial intelligence will change how we work in the near future. More workers will need to learn new skills, so provisions for education and retraining programs and facilities is an important consideration for municipalities.

<sup>†</sup>Kristen Kolodge, J.D. Power, 2019.



## 1.5 FUTURE HAT STATS

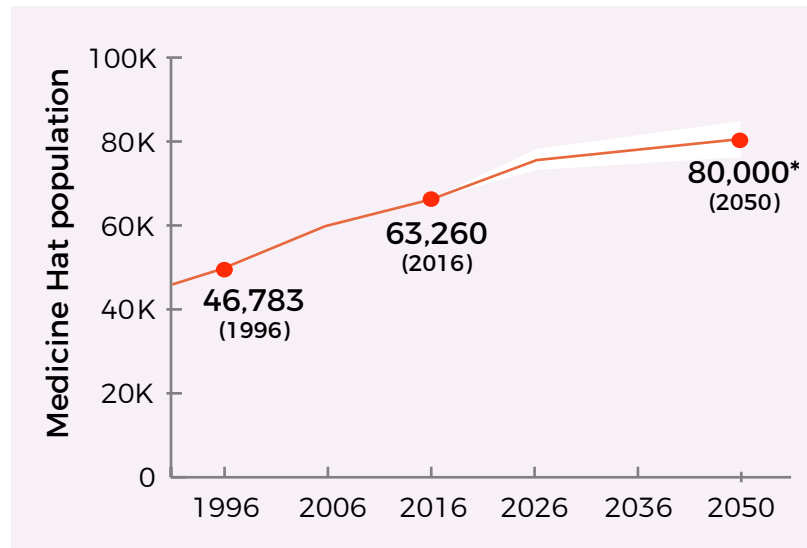
Due to a variety of regional and global factors, *significant changes* are likely to have notable impacts on Medicine Hat and all other communities in western Canada within the next 20 to 30 years. Cities that do not shift away from traditional approaches may struggle to remain viable. For municipalities to remain sustainable, having workable strategies founded in resilience, adaptability and creativity is essential.

Medicine Hat is projected to experience population growth of approximately 0.8% per year over the short-term, with a gradual decline to 0.6% per year by 2050.

This decrease in population growth is consistent with many other regions in Canada and is due to changing demographics. However, as our total population increases, it will mitigate this decline and allow for a relatively consistent year over year growth rate of between 400 to 600 people.

This equates to approximately 80,000 people in our city by the year 2050. This population growth will need to increasingly rely on a positive migration flow to Medicine Hat as our rate of natural population increase (births minus deaths) slows down considerably. It is important to note that this is a *projected* rate of growth based on previous census information and forecasted demographics.

Medicine Hat typically has a cyclical growth pattern, whereby we generally see periods of high growth followed by low growth. Actual population growth will be highly dependent on economic conditions and could vary substantially from projections.



- By 2050, Medicine Hat will have a population of approximately 80,000 people.\*
- There will be an increased demand for housing options for seniors and for millennials.
- As **natural increase** declines, city growth will be fueled by migration and immigration.

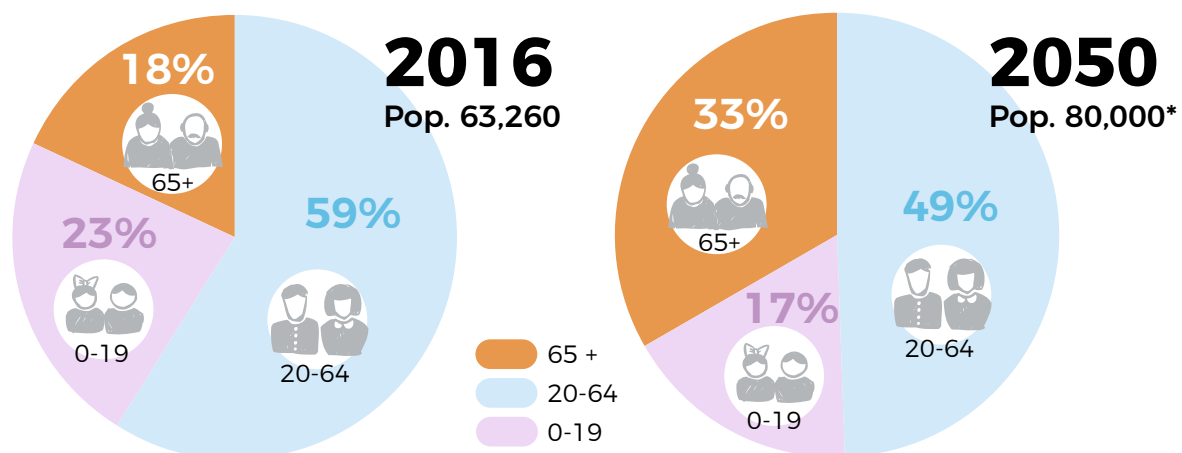
\*Projected



*Due to various trends, including affordability, the demand for multi unit dwellings is expected to increase relative to single family homes.*

Medicine Hat's projected population growth will result in demand for approximately 125 to 175 new dwellings per year. It is anticipated that over time, the ratio of multiple unit dwellings to single unit dwellings will increase in response to our changing demographics, household composition, housing affordability, market trends and preferences. Additionally, the demand for private housing that is **accessible** and for institutions that specialize in various levels of supportive living, will increase as our population ages.

## MEDICINE HAT'S SHIFTING DEMOGRAPHICS



- Mobility methods will likely change, including the incorporation of new technologies.
- Recreation facilities and services must also ensure that the needs of people with disabilities, as well as older residents, are well considered.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF AGE-FRIENDLY NEIGHBOURHOODS



**66%**  
of Canadians live in car-dependent suburban areas.\*\*

Driving is a way of life in most suburbs, leaving less-mobile seniors isolated or unable to stay in their own neighbourhoods.



With Canada's population aging rapidly, many cities are rethinking their approach to urban development.

**33%**  
of Hatters will be 65 or older by 2050\*.

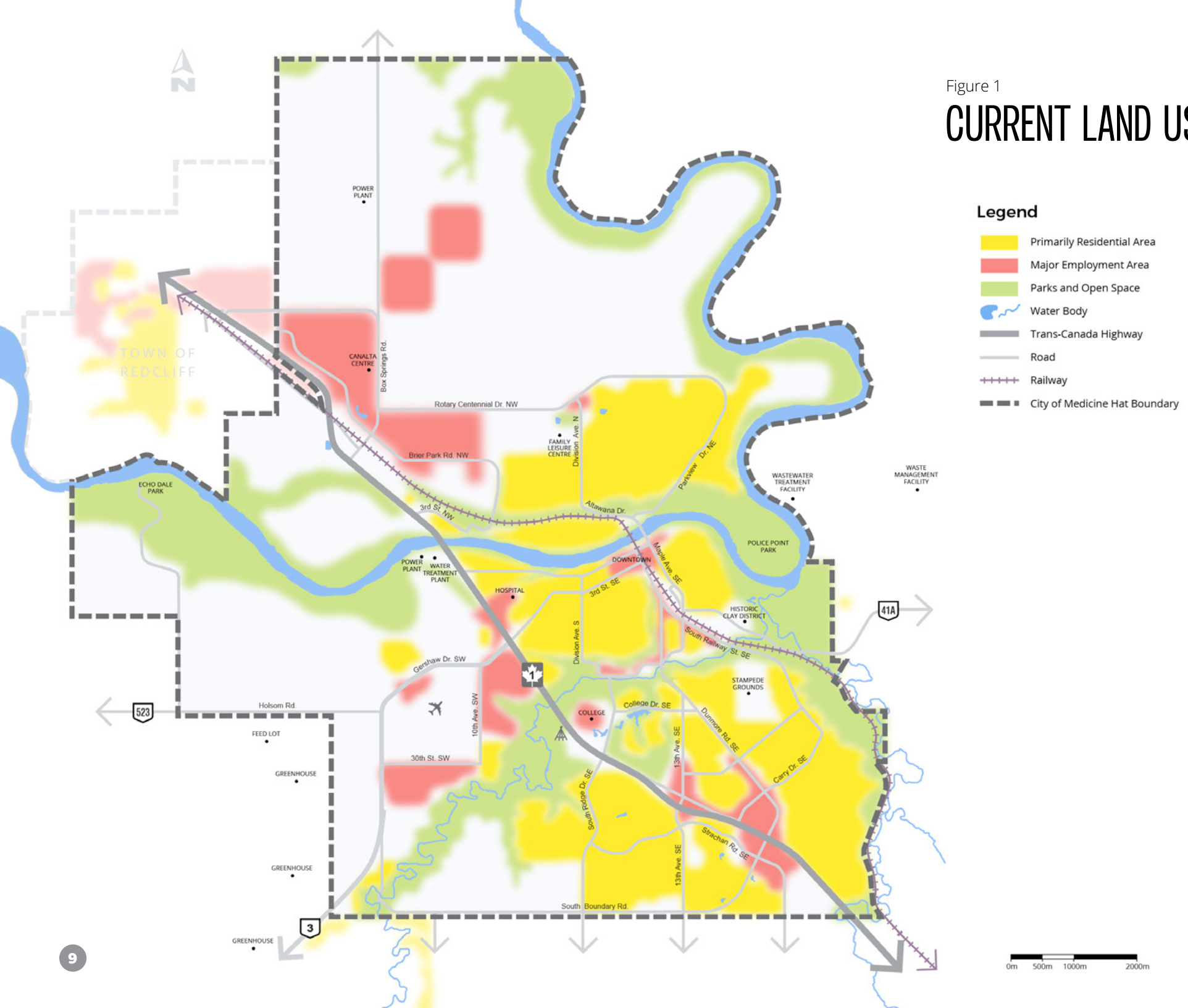


\*Projected \*\*Census Canada



Figure 1

# CURRENT LAND USE



## 1.6 GENERAL LAND USE PATTERN

The current land use in Medicine Hat can be generally classified under one of **six categories**.



### Residential

The eastern half of the city is made up of three distinct residential sectors, the City Centre, the North and the South. These three sectors have very defined edges, separated from each other by the coulee system formed from the South Saskatchewan River and the Seven Persons Creek. The City Centre sector has a population of approximately 15,000 and is made up of historic neighbourhoods surrounding the Downtown. The North sector is a mix of both established and modern suburban neighbourhoods and also contains a population of approximately 15,000. The South sector is substantially larger and has a population of roughly 30,000 and is a mix of established and modern neighbourhoods.



### Commercial

There are two major established commercial areas within the city, the Downtown and the South **Urban Village** (see figure 9, page 22). The Downtown is one of the oldest areas of the city and contains a mix of offices, retail and services. The South Urban Village is adjacent to the Trans-Canada Highway and focused primarily on retail. Additionally, there are several commercial corridors and neighbourhood commercial sites throughout the city. The Box Springs Business Park is a new emerging commercial area in the northwest that borders the Trans-Canada Highway and the city's major industrial area.



### Industrial

The industrial areas are located in the North Employment Sector, which is isolated from residential uses, and the West Employment Sector, where the Medicine Hat Regional Airport is also situated.



### Institutional

There are several major institutional sites located throughout the city. The Medicine Hat College and Medicine Hat Regional Hospital are both located adjacent to the Trans-Canada Highway and are locations of high employment.



### Parks and open space

The majority of **parks** and **open space** within the city are located within the South Saskatchewan River valley and the tributary creek corridors. The city has four major parks: Police Point Park, Strathcona Island Park, Kin Coulee Park, and Echo Dale Regional Park.



### Agricultural

There are some large expanses of agricultural land that is actively farmed within the city. They are located in the river bends of Lower Burnside, Ranchlands, and the Northeast Reserve as well as a large area that extends west from the Medicine Hat Regional Airport.







## 2 OUR FUTURE

### 2.1 VISION

Medicine Hat is a city that recognizes its roots. From the day that the railway first spanned the South Saskatchewan River, the community embraced the entrepreneurial spirit of western Canada. With a foundation in agriculture and ranching, Medicine Hat's landscape changed dramatically with the harnessing of vast natural gas deposits at the turn of the century. Promoted in the early 1900s as a "Smokeless Pittsburgh of the West", Medicine Hat built a reputation as a place where business and industry thrives, and where newcomers are welcomed.

This momentum has been carried forward as Medicine Hat has evolved into a community that also embraces technology, diversity, arts, culture, heritage and its abundance of natural spaces. Moving towards the middle of the 21st century, commitment to long term sustainability is the city's top priority. This translates to adapting to a changing economic landscape by attracting and retaining emerging and innovative industries. It involves attracting more visitors, and encouraging more newcomers to make Medicine Hat their home. It calls for adaptable and creative decision-making regarding city planning, structure and services. Most importantly, it involves making bold choices in striving for ongoing prosperity, appealing neighbourhoods, environmental responsibility and thriving residents.

## 2.2 MATCHING SERVICES TO LEVEL OF NEED

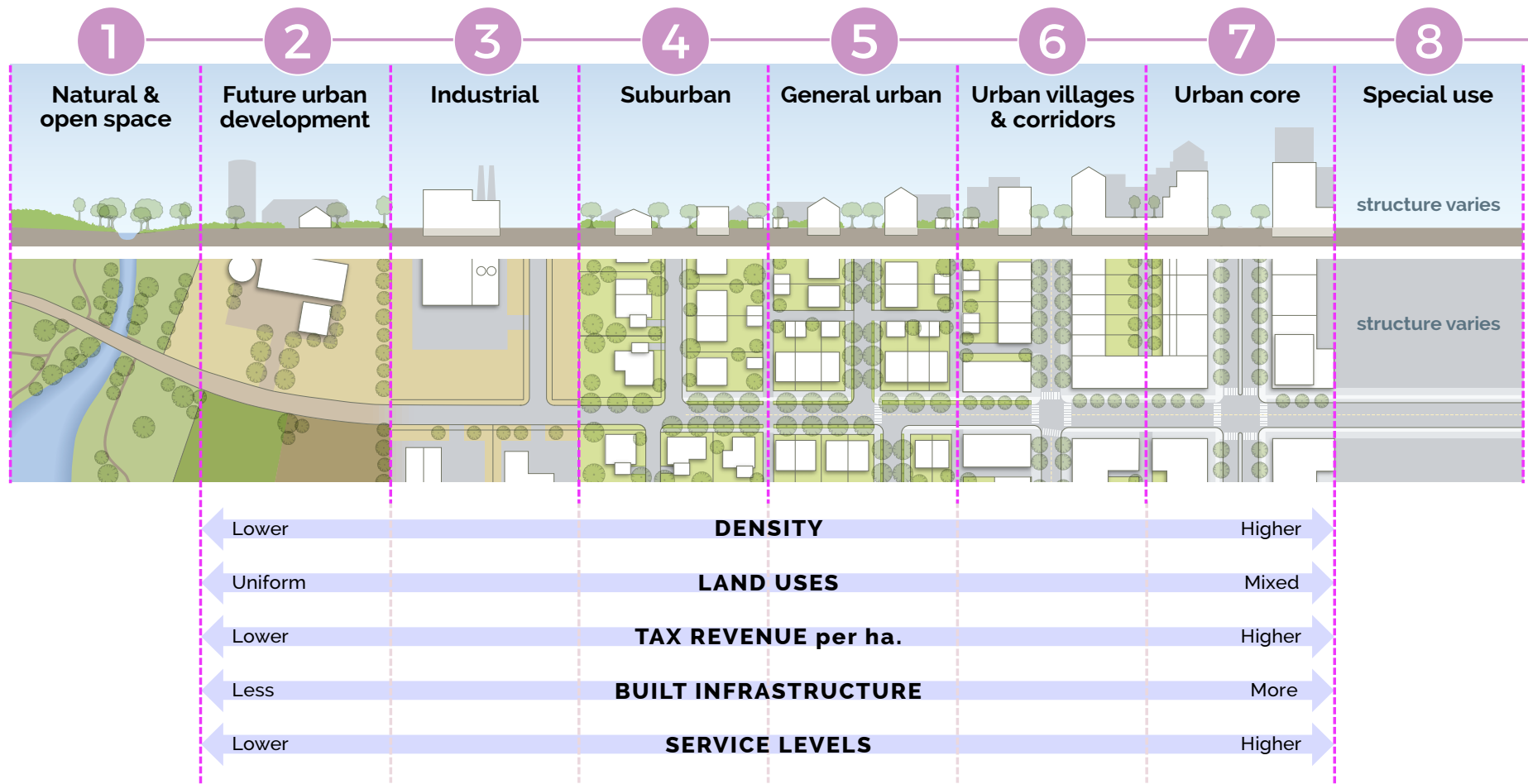
Every city provides services and infrastructure for its residents. Things like water and sewer lines, roads, walkways, public parks, recreation centres and police, fire and transit service are all examples of such services which are funded by municipal taxes. Service levels are not required to be uniform in all areas. Land use, level of activity, needs and demands vary across a city. A “one size fits all” approach to infrastructure and service

provision is not economical, nor sustainable over the long term.

For example, it's important to have robust transit service in a city centre, but not in an agricultural area. A park with play space is a valuable amenity in a residential district but would be wasted in an industrial area. Therefore, to be fiscally responsible, cities allocate such infrastructure according to how *fully* it is likely to be used.

## URBAN TRANSECT

Figure 2



## 2.3 HOW TO USE THE URBAN TRANSECT

By examining *what* an area is generally used for, it is possible to classify the area's *level* of use. And looking at an area's population per hectare (actual and most suitable) is an appropriate way to categorize the area's **density**. To these ends, Medicine Hat has been sorted into a series of **eight typologies**, described below. Each reflects the individual character of a typical component of the city. The combination of these typologies form an **urban transect** (figure 2 - page 13) of the city as a whole.

The urban transect is a tool that can be used to determine, at a high level, the varying **built environment** characteristics which are best suited for any given area, with the aim of long-term financial sustainability. Such characteristics include type of land use, suitable density and appropriate levels of service and infrastructure. The purpose of the urban transect is to act as a guideline for future city development and the ongoing allocation of municipal resources.

1

### NATURAL & OPEN SPACE

**Snapshot:** Open space that is undeveloped or has minimal low-impact development such as recreational trails and storm ponds. Natural wildlife habitats. Generally no turf nor irrigation.

**Local examples:** Coulees, areas surrounding river and creeks, Police Point Park.

2

### FUTURE URBAN DEVELOPMENT

**Snapshot:** Agricultural land, such as for farming and ranching, as well as associated buildings and residences. Large lots, gravel roads and drainage ditches are common. Not for commercial greenhouses, feed lot operations, etc.

**Local examples:** Area in vicinity of Holsom Road SW.

3

### INDUSTRIAL

**Snapshot:** Areas set aside for all varieties of industrial operations, from manufacturing facilities to machine shops to greenhouses. Minimal street infrastructure (i.e. no sidewalks) is typical.

**Local examples:** Brier Park, Southwest industrial, North industrial.

4

### SUBURBAN

**Snapshot:** Low-density areas, predominantly residential. Various housing types, parks, schools, churches and small commercial. Curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs are common.

**Local examples:** South Ridge, Crescent Heights, Ross Glen, Hamptons.

8

### SPECIAL USE

**Snapshot:** Specific types of land use which do not readily fit into broad use categories. Structures vary. Considered on a case-by-case basis.

**Local examples:** College campus, Airport, Stampede grounds, cemeteries.

7

### URBAN CORE

**Snapshot:** **Compact** area which functions as city centre. Taller structures, **mixed-use buildings**, pedestrian-oriented, commercial and entertainment. Apartments, civic buildings, town squares and transit stations are typical.

**Local examples:** Downtown.

6

### URBAN VILLAGES & CORRIDORS

**Snapshot:** Denser areas where people tend to shop, eat and gather. Condominiums, townhouses, mixed-use buildings, recreation centres and commercial uses are common.

**Local examples:** Northlands/Family Leisure Centre area.

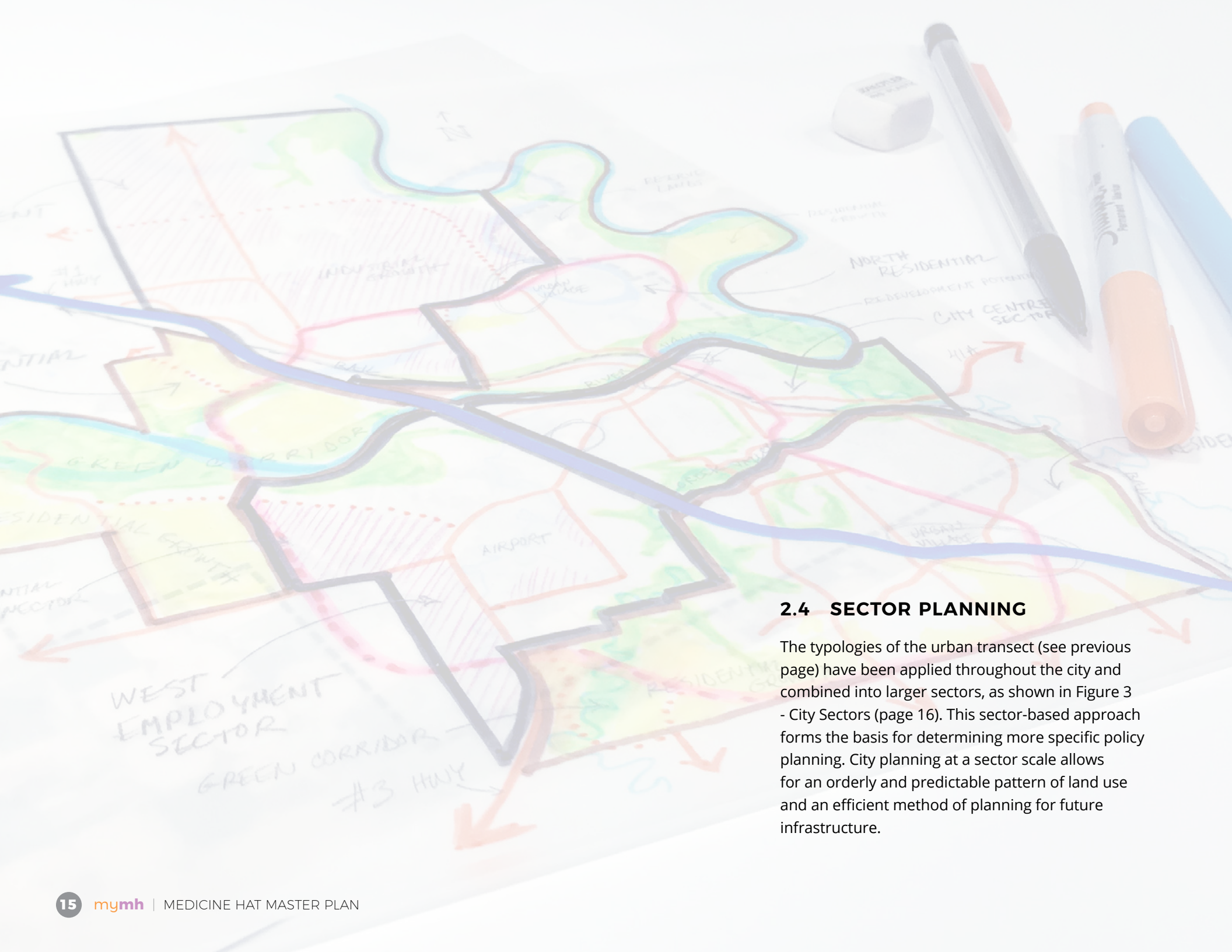
5

### GENERAL URBAN

**Snapshot:** Mature low-density areas, largely residential. Various housing types, parks, schools, churches and small commercial. Traditional grid-pattern streets and rear lanes are typical.

**Local examples:** Riverside, SE Hill, SW Hill, River Flats.





## 2.4 SECTOR PLANNING

The typologies of the urban transect (see previous page) have been applied throughout the city and combined into larger sectors, as shown in Figure 3 - City Sectors (page 16). This sector-based approach forms the basis for determining more specific policy planning. City planning at a sector scale allows for an orderly and predictable pattern of land use and an efficient method of planning for future infrastructure.

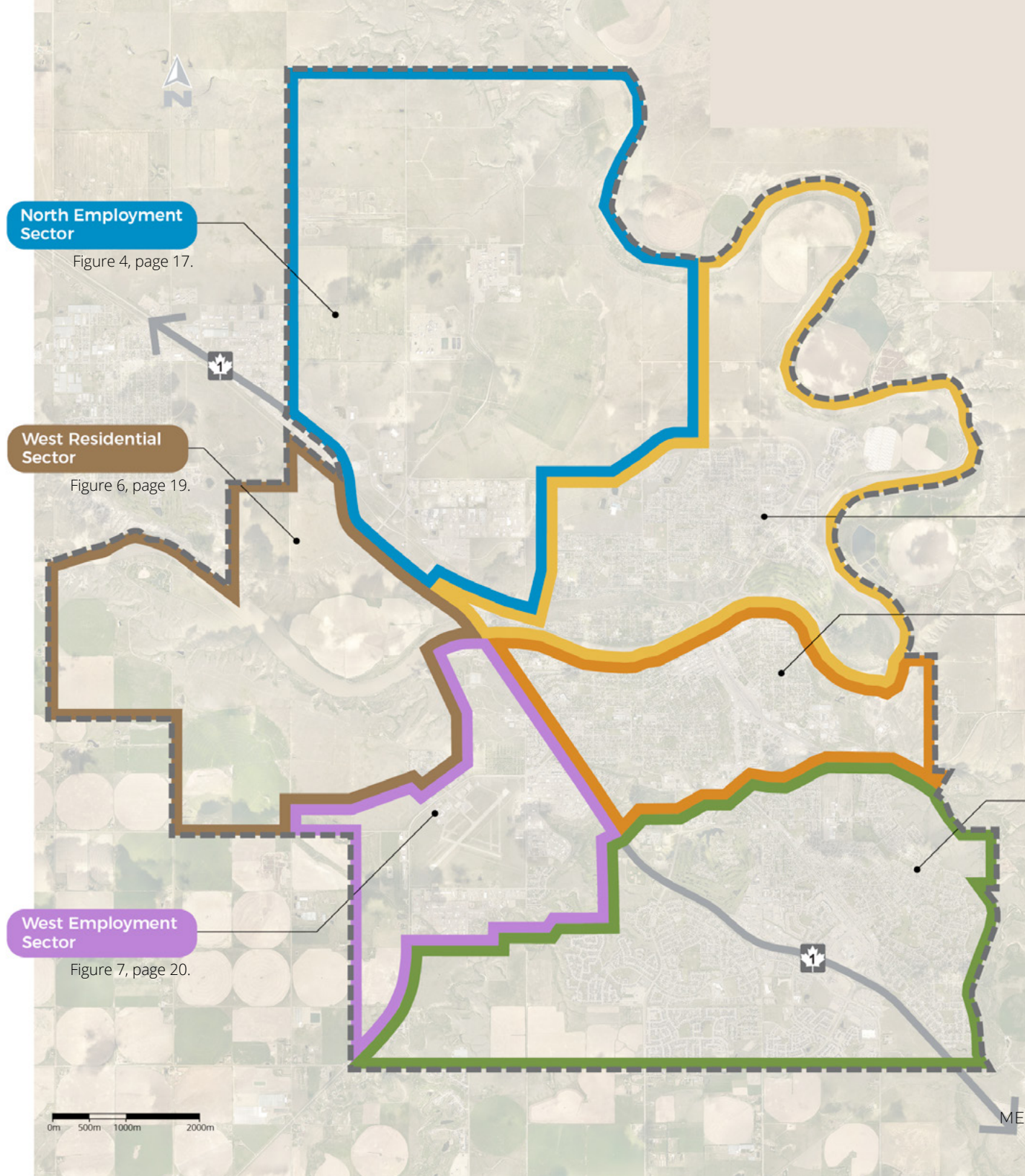


Figure 3

## CITY SECTORS

Pages 17-22 examine the City Sectors individually and provide characterizing details of each.

**North Employment Sector**

Figure 4, page 17.

**West Residential Sector**

Figure 6, page 19.

**North Residential Sector**

Figure 5, page 18.

**City Centre Sector**

Figure 8, page 21.

**West Employment Sector**

Figure 7, page 20.

**South Residential Sector**

Figure 9, page 22.



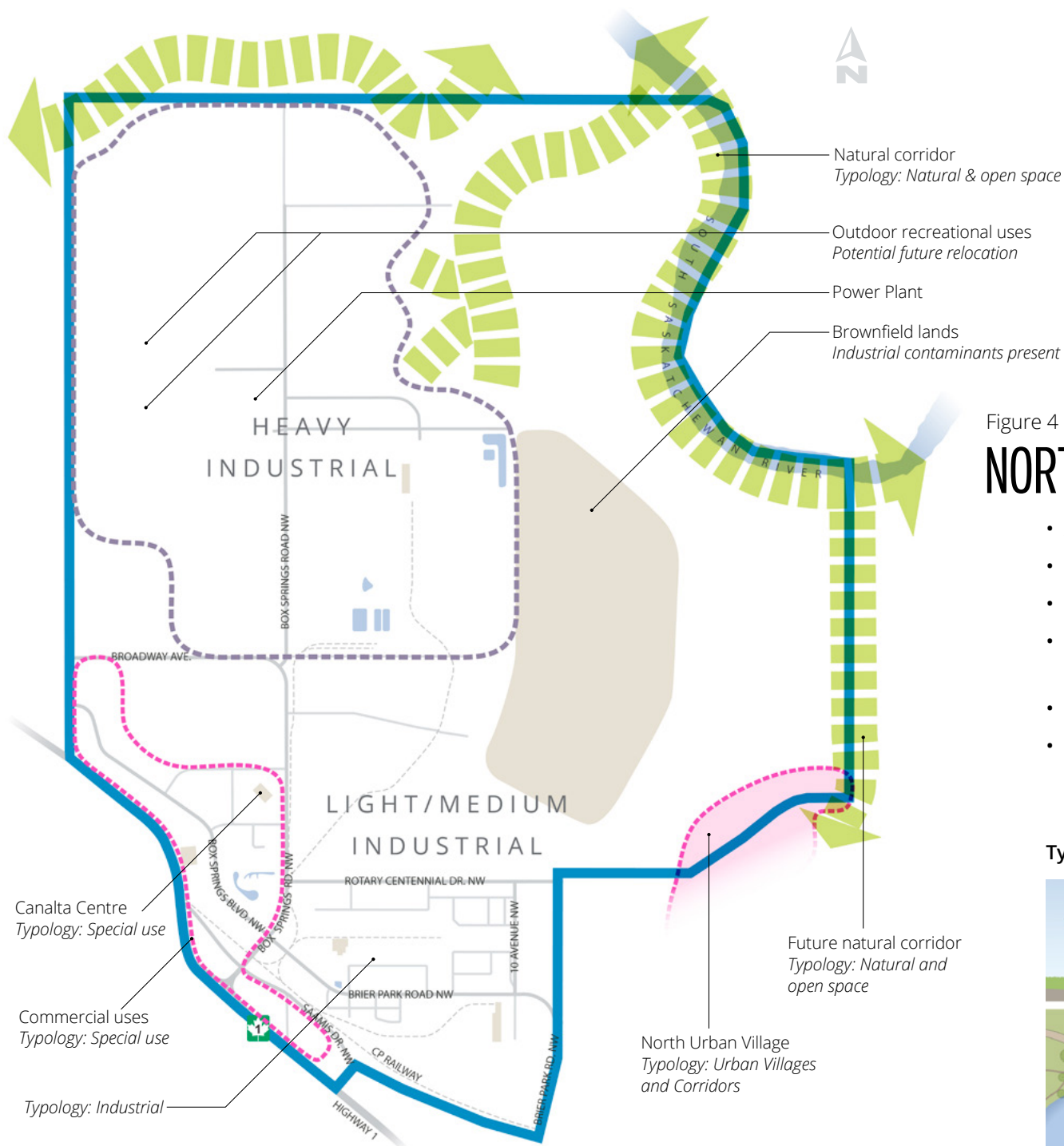


Figure 4


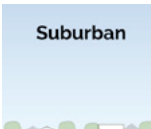
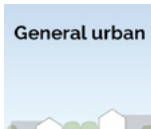





## NORTH EMPLOYMENT SECTOR

- About 3210 hectares in area.
- Borders Redcliff on west side.
- Borders Trans-Canada Highway on south side.
- Current land uses are mostly heavy industrial, light industrial and commercial.
- Contains railway main and spur lines.
- No residential land uses allowed.

Typologies which typically apply to this sector:

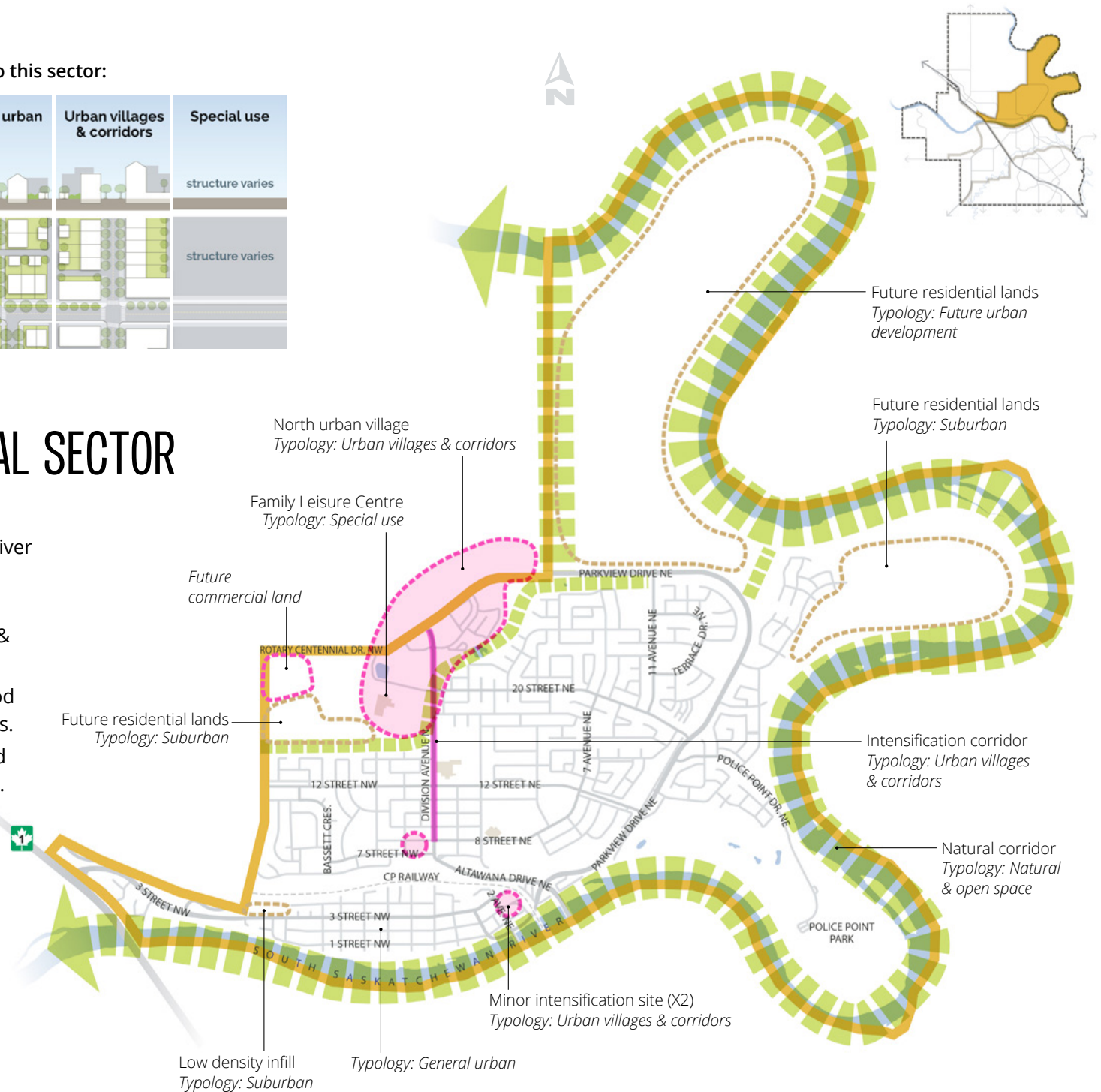
Natural & open space	Industrial	Special use
		structure varies
		structure varies



Natural & open space	Suburban	General urban	Urban villages & corridors	Special use
				structure varies
				structure varies

# NORTH RESIDENTIAL SECTOR

- About 1770 hectares in area.
- Borders South Saskatchewan River on east and south.
- Current land uses are mostly residential, community service & open space.
- Small number of neighbourhood commercial and mixed use sites.
- Contains areas of emerging and future residential development.



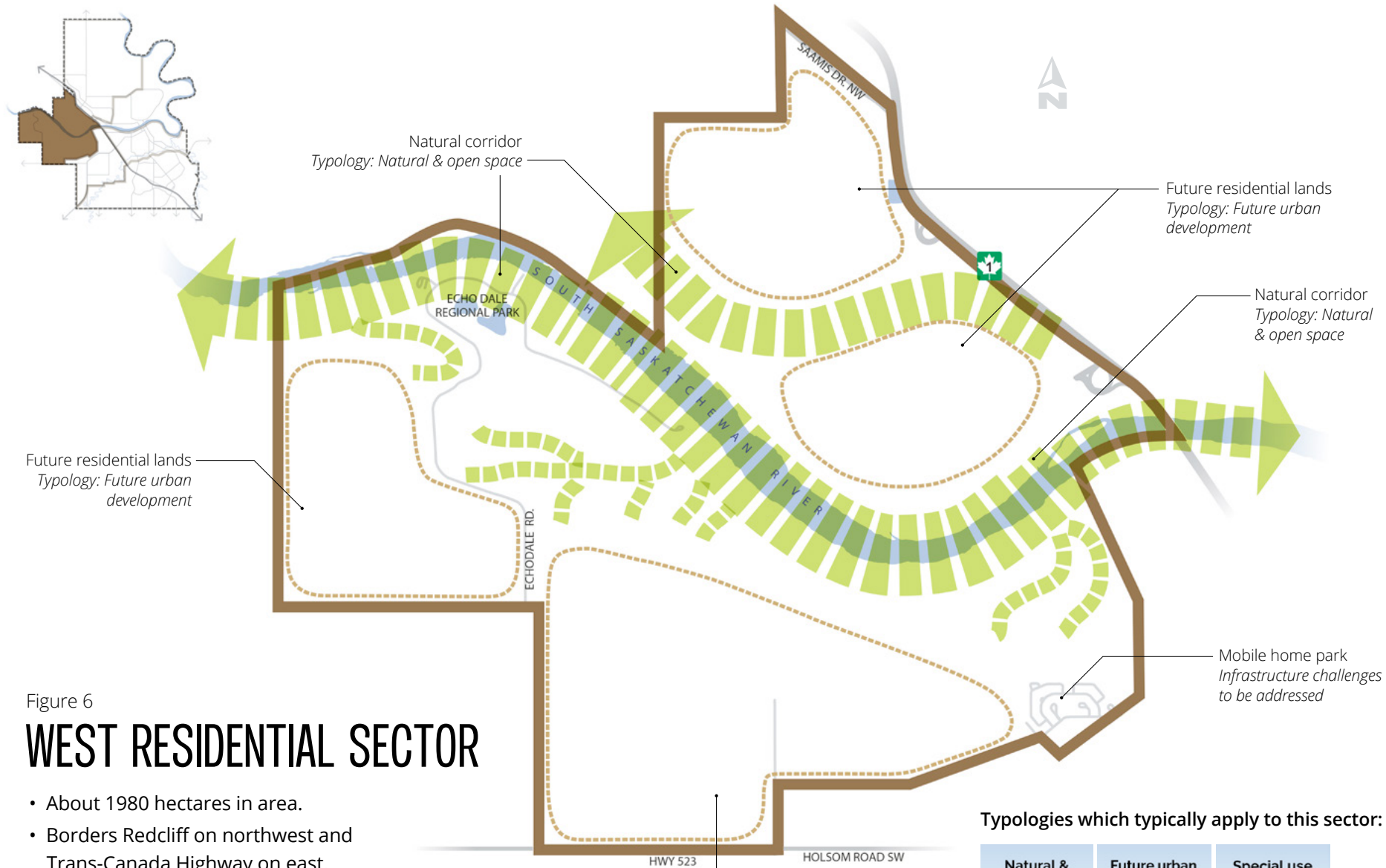


Figure 6

## WEST RESIDENTIAL SECTOR

- About 1980 hectares in area.
- Borders Redcliff on northwest and Trans-Canada Highway on east.
- Borders Cypress County on southwest.
- Bisected by river valley.
- Includes environmentally sensitive coulee regions.
- Largely undeveloped open space with agricultural use.

Typologies which typically apply to this sector:

Natural & open space	Future urban development	Special use
		structure varies
		structure varies



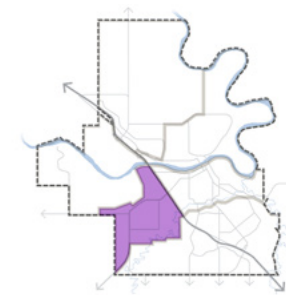
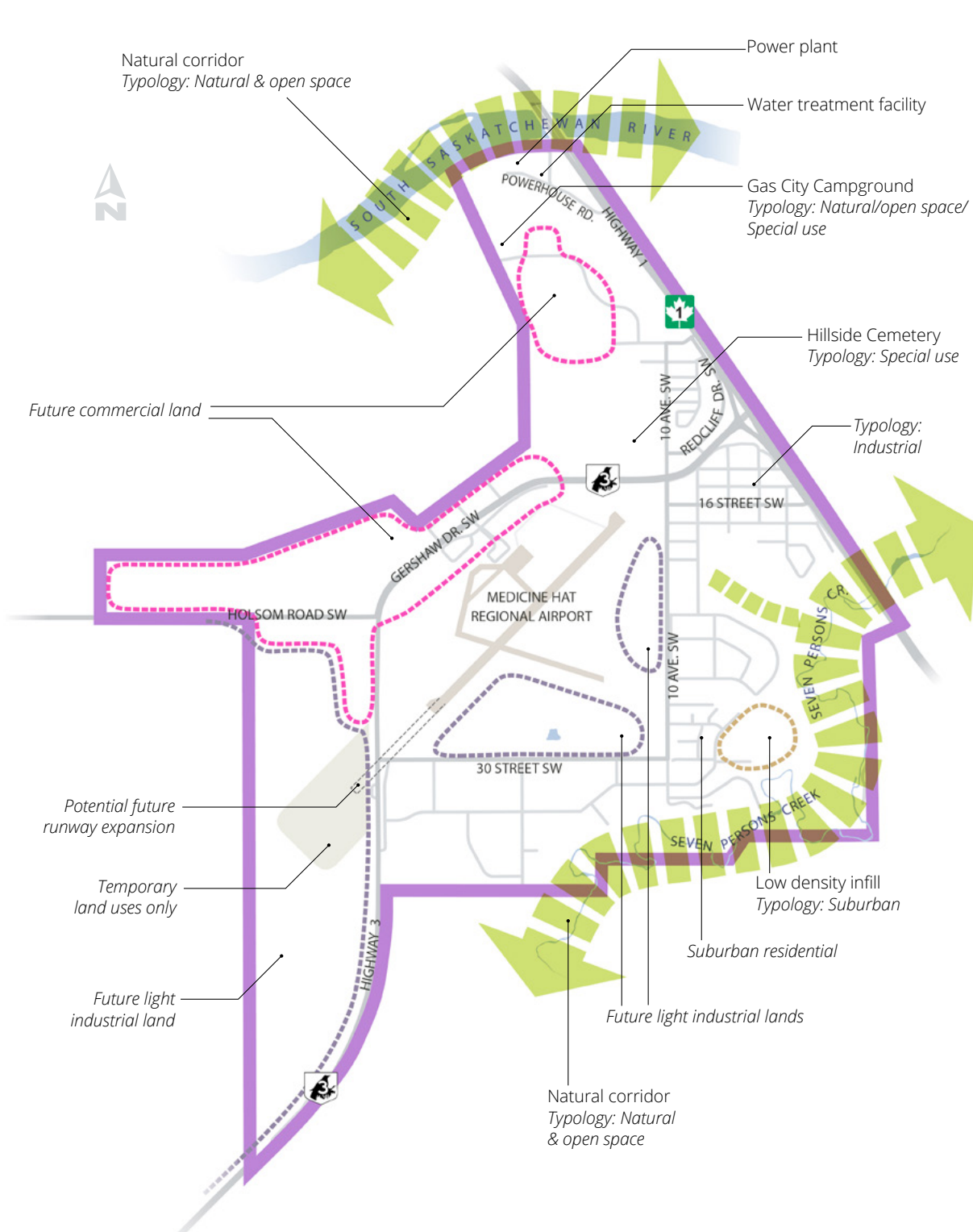


Figure 7

## WEST EMPLOYMENT SECTOR

- About 1100 hectares in area.
- Borders South Saskatchewan River on the north.
- Borders Trans-Canada Highway on the east.
- Current land uses are mostly industrial, commercial, and open space.
- Some pockets of residential development.
- Due to airport, certain development restrictions exist.

Typologies which typically apply to this sector:

Natural & open space	Future urban development	Industrial	Special use
			structure varies
			structure varies

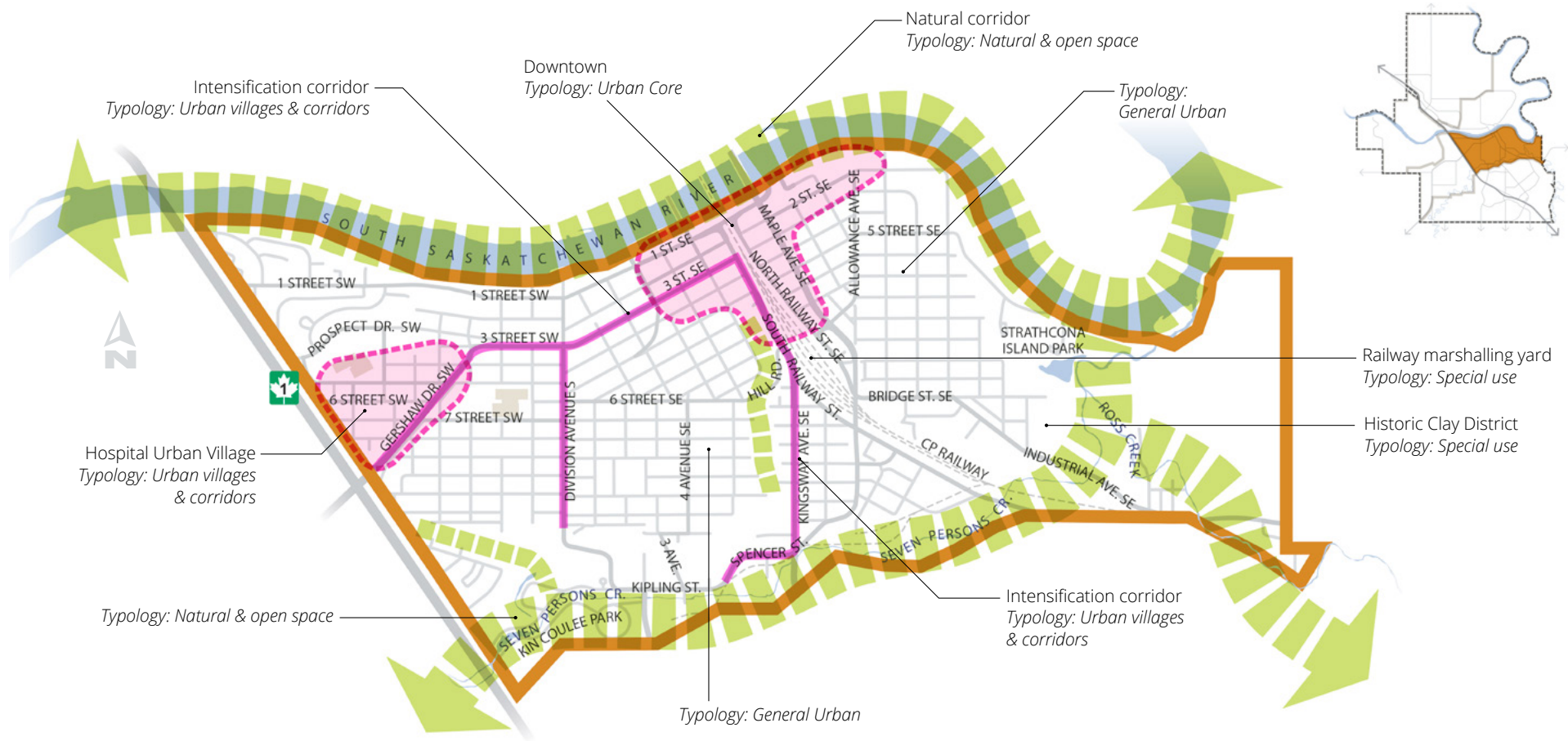


Figure 8

## CITY CENTRE SECTOR

- About 1080 hectares in area.
- Borders South Saskatchewan River on the north and Seven Persons Creek on the south.
- Borders Trans-Canada Highway on the west.
- Current land uses are mostly residential, mixed use, community service and open space.
- Contains CP Railway marshalling yard.
- Some areas are within flood plain.

Typologies which typically apply to this sector:

Natural & open space	General urban	Urban villages & corridors	Urban core	Special use
				structure varies
				structure varies



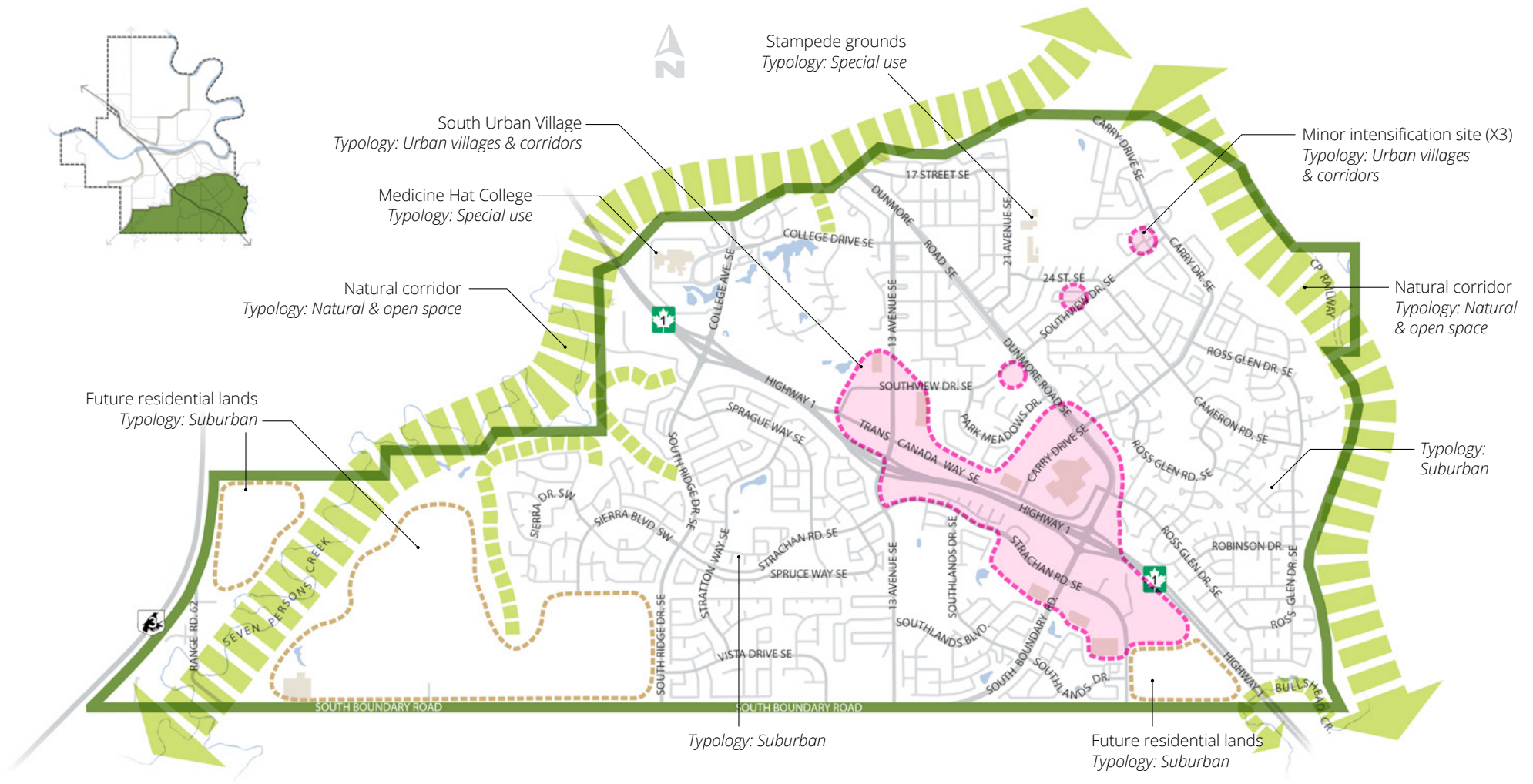


Figure 9

## SOUTH RESIDENTIAL SECTOR

- About 2540 hectares in area.
- Borders Seven Persons Creek on the north and Cypress County on the south.
- Borders CP Railway and Ross Creek on the east.
- Current land uses are mostly residential, commercial, community service and open space.
- Contains areas of emerging and future residential development.

Typologies which typically apply to this sector:

Natural & open space	Suburban	Urban villages & corridors	Special use
			structure varies
			structure varies







# 3 HOW WE GROW

Through the many discussions with the people of Medicine Hat during the creation of this Plan, certain issues kept resurfacing. These common threads included the need to create enduring economic growth, sustainable and efficient city development, protection of natural spaces and having a city that works well for everyone.

To best achieve these outcomes, the myMH Master Plan focuses on **five strategic goals**, each identifying specific methods to bring about the most effective results. These five “game changers” are designed to efficiently bring about a long-term vision for a livable city, ensuring that all Hatters continue to enjoy an excellent quality of life.

## FIVE STRATEGIC GOALS:



### VIBRANT DOWNTOWN

A Downtown core that is active, exciting, walkable and accessible, featuring an enhanced waterfront district, and including plenty of opportunities for local businesses, housing and leisure activities.



### LIVABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS

Residential areas which provide varied types and densities of housing, efficient and accessible mobility, a primary focal point for public amenities and integrated green space.



### STRONG ECONOMY

Ample opportunities for employment and innovation, with prime location options for industry and an economic ecosystem which strengthens local businesses.



### EFFICIENT PUBLIC SERVICES

Services and infrastructure that are efficiently delivered to meet the needs of our changing community in a cost-effective manner.



### ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

**Natural assets** which are monitored and conserved, water management practices which are suitable for a semi-arid climate and reduced impact of the city's overall environmental impact.







# VIBRANT DOWNTOWN



## myMH PRIORITIES:

1

The Downtown should feature a new centralized **Waterfront Development District**, which provides key development opportunities and amenity space interfacing with the South Saskatchewan River.

2

The Downtown should evolve over the long term into a higher density **mixed-use district** that provides desirable opportunities for urban living, entertainment and destination retail.

3

The Downtown transportation network should prioritize **multi-modal** mobility.

## ENHANCING A UNIQUE DESTINATION

Medicine Hat's Downtown represents the heart of the city. Originally located at the junction of two transportation routes, the South Saskatchewan River and the CP railway, the area became established as the city's central marketplace, employment region and entertainment district. Residential development inevitably became a significant part of the Downtown fabric as well. Offering residents and visitors a natural refuge and gathering spot near the river, Riverside Veterans' Memorial Park has been in use since the 1890s. In 1908, directly west of the park, Finlay Bridge was constructed, further establishing Downtown as a regional centre of activity.

Most cities in Canada have experienced a diminished preeminence of their city centres, as development has expanded outward. However, these downtown districts are important in establishing a community's character, fostering local business, attracting residents and tourism, preserving heritage features, and symbolizing local pride. Communities which have been successful in maintaining or restoring vibrancy in their downtowns have not achieved this outcome by accident; but with vision, courage and commitment.

This Plan outlines opportunities to strengthen and enhance our city centre. A natural step is to allow the river to become the main attraction by comprehensively redeveloping our urban waterfront, enhancing its status as a year-round gathering space. A reimagining of this strategically located Waterfront Development District, while incorporating appropriate flood mitigation measures, could encourage additional **redevelopment** in the city centre. To further enhance the Downtown experience for businesses, visitors and residents, other considerations could include enhanced **walkability**, adjustment of some traffic patterns, and long-term solutions for vehicle parking. Medicine Hat has already seen an increasing interest in Downtown redevelopment; the right vision can further such momentum, to the benefit of all city residents and businesses.

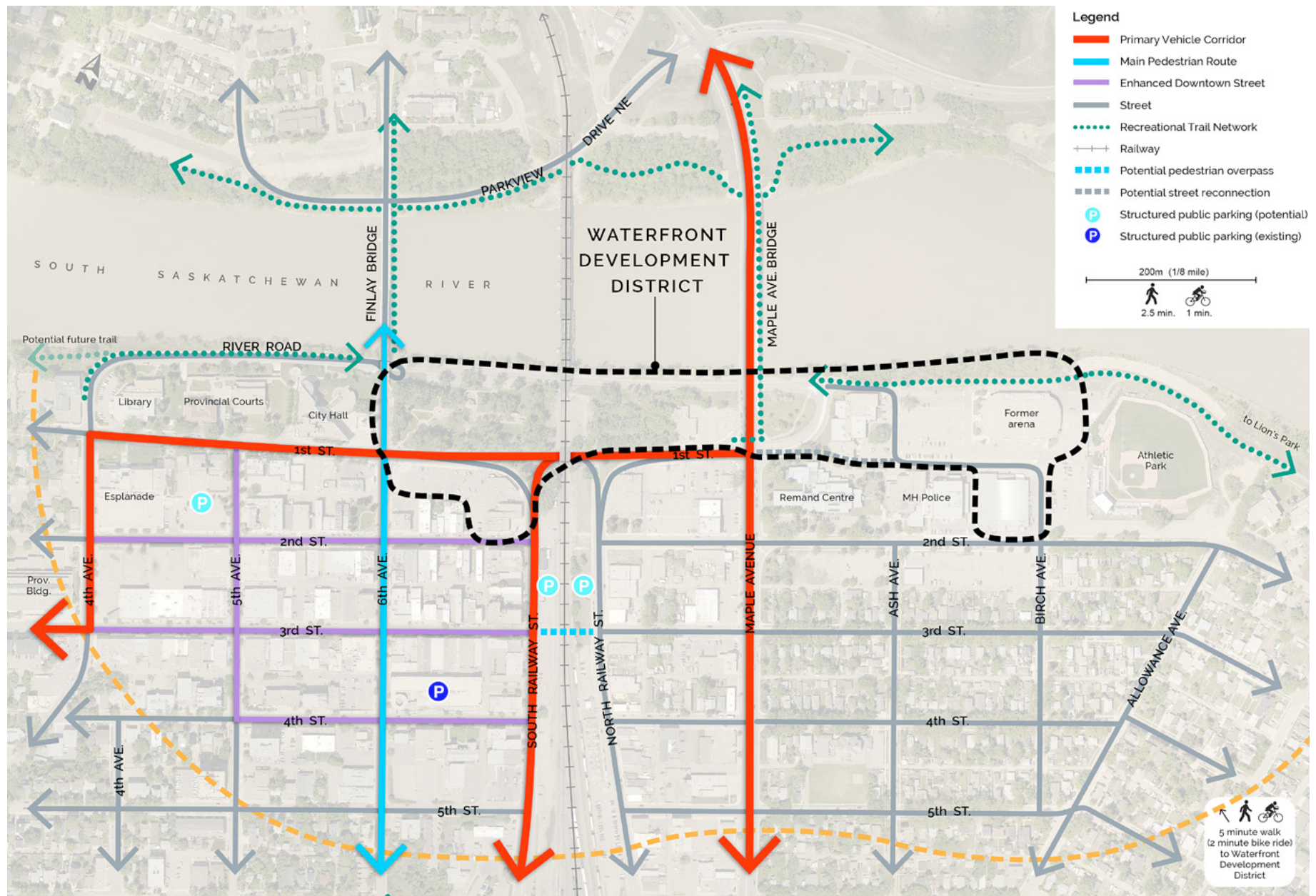


Figure 10  
DOWNTOWN CONCEPT





1

The Downtown should feature a new centralized Waterfront Development District, which provides key development opportunities and amenity space interfacing with the South Saskatchewan River.

## GUIDING POLICY:

1. A new Waterfront Development District should be created adjacent to the South Saskatchewan River as the anchor of the Downtown. This district should encompass the area as indicated in figure 10 (page 27).
2. To ensure an urban, vibrant, safe, and well-utilized space, the Waterfront Development District should contain a blend of mixed-use developments, park and plaza space, and recreation amenities.
3. A conceptual plan for the Waterfront Development District should be undertaken to establish the required land, facilities, servicing, and infrastructure requirements. To create new opportunities for quality higher density residential and mixed-use developments, the conceptual plan should also consider how potential redevelopment sites which are located within a 400m radius of the district can be integrated into the overall concept. As part of the design process, Finlay Bridge may also be repurposed as a pedestrian-only river crossing and multi-purpose space.
4. The Waterfront Development District should function as a premier regional attraction by:
  - a. creating new opportunities for high-quality mixed-use developments;



Example of an innovative waterfront development is shown in this concept for Downtown Riverfront Park in Eugene, OR.

- b. providing an improved park and plaza experience through seamless integration and direct public access with the river;
  - c. containing flexible, multi-use public space for festivals, cultural events, recreation, and civic functions;
  - d. supporting Downtown businesses by allowing both permanent and pop-up commercial uses;
  - e. providing pedestrian and cycling connections to adjacent neighbourhoods;
  - f. including **placemaking** elements which are unique to the Downtown; and
  - g. integrating with major public institutions such as City Hall, the Provincial courthouses, the Public Library and the Esplanade.
5. Development incentive programs should be explored to establish the Waterfront Development District as the premier urban space for social gatherings, recreation and living.

## IMPORTANCE OF MAJOR DESTINATIONS

One of the key ingredients for creating a diverse and vibrant downtown district in any city is to have major destinations that attract people to downtown for reasons other than employment. Amenities such as a permanent public market, entertainment venue and appealing outdoor gathering space provide residents with reasons to check out what is going on in the centre of their community. Seattle's Pike Place Market is an example of a highly popular public market, with about 8-10 million visits per year.

Another ingredient for a strong downtown is to ensure it is family-friendly and kid-friendly. Even downtowns with superb attractions for adults often lack features that appeal to families. All it may require is quality outdoor space to allow the kids to run around, enjoy structured play space, and visit a food truck.



Medicine Hat's **Waterfront Development District** offers a remarkable opportunity as a primary destination with spectacular views, potentially drawing visitor-oriented private development with it. This could include commercial, recreational but also cultural opportunities. An urban park attraction is likely to create more housing opportunities in the city centre as well, since such amenities are desirable to live near. Building in kid-friendly features would be a bonus for families looking for fun, affordable activities.

*(Above) Calgary's Riverwalk takes advantage of area near a river to create a multi-purpose public space within a dense urban environment.*



2

The Downtown should evolve over the long-term into a higher density mixed-use district that provides desirable opportunities for urban living, entertainment and destination retail.

## GUIDING POLICY:

1. The Downtown will continue to be the primary focus for civic, social, cultural, arts, entertainment, professional and office land uses.
2. Downtown land uses should be compatible and contribute to the transition to a desirable urban residential neighbourhood and the most walkable and urban area of the city. Desirable future land uses include:
  - a. residential;
  - b. food and beverage establishments;
  - c. small scale retail and personal services;
  - d. entertainment, arts, and cultural venues;
  - e. hotels and event space; and
  - f. professional offices and financial institutions.
3. The unique character and heritage of our Downtown should be reinforced by:
  - a. preserving our remaining heritage buildings and features;
  - b. blending traditional local building styles and materials with quality modern design in new developments;
  - c. ensuring new development matches the existing pattern of minimal **façade setbacks**; and
  - d. building significant **wayfinding** and gateway features uniquely branded for the Downtown.



4. To create a **critical mass of population** that will support businesses, services and public amenities, the density of dwellings should be substantially increased. To achieve this, new residential development should:
  - a. be configured as mixed-use buildings whenever possible, with active commercial uses (e.g. food and beverage, small scale retail, etc.) located on the main floor;
  - b. be designed as multi-storey buildings;
  - c. include structured parking and bicycle storage; and
  - d. contain a diverse range of residential types (e.g. affordable, multi-bedroom, accessible, etc.) and varied forms of ownership (e.g. rental, condominiums, supportive living, etc.).
5. The City should enhance the safety of buildings and public spaces and discourage criminal activity and anti-social behaviour through the application of **Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design** guidelines.
6. Temporary pilot projects and events (e.g. parking lane patios, pop-up parks, markets, etc.) that contribute to a vibrant Downtown are encouraged and should be supported.
7. Development incentive programs should be explored to encourage residential and mixed use developments that help to achieve a critical mass of population.



*Mid-rise mixed-use building (commercial / residential) in Portland, OR.*

## SELF-SUSTAINING DOWNTOWNS

In urban planning, *critical mass* is a sufficient number of residents and businesses in a given area that allows the area to become self-sustaining and to create its own further growth.

Historically, successful city centres have contained a variety of uses that serve the broader community. Uses such as retail, restaurants, civic buildings, offices, hotels, and urban parks create an environment that is active during the day *and* evening. These uses initially cater to local residents, which leads to attracting further residential development, resulting in further commercial opportunities, creating a perpetual cycle of development downtown. Grouping these types of activities and high-density housing downtown is necessary to establish the critical mass of activity necessary for continued vitality.

In short, high-density housing developments for residents of all types is crucial to support the cluster of businesses in the downtown core and create vibrancy. Public/private partnerships (e.g., development incentives) are useful tools for getting the revitalization process off the ground and building the critical mass needed to spur a cycle of sustainable development.



3

The Downtown transportation network should prioritize multi-modal mobility.

## GUIDING POLICY:

1. The enhanced Downtown street network should focus on creating a highly walkable environment, with particular attention towards the main pedestrian route identified in figure 10 (page 27). Important elements include:
  - a. universal design;
  - b. methods to encourage traffic calming;
  - c. designing infrastructure such as intersections and mid-block crossings to prioritize pedestrian movement and safety over other modes of travel; and
  - d. wide unobstructed sidewalks, functional street furniture and street trees.
2. As part of the Waterfront Development District concept plan, a transportation assessment should be undertaken which considers universal design, pedestrian needs and motorist needs within the Downtown, and which supports the Waterfront Development District.
3. The Downtown should remain an important public transit node within the city.



*A transportation assessment should be done as part of the Waterfront Development District plan.*

4. To support business and the increased density within the Downtown, a comprehensive parking strategy should be implemented to address parking needs. Considerations include:
  - a. establishing a robust parking information and enforcement system to encourage a shift in parking habits;
  - b. incentivizing Downtown workers and business operators to utilize long term off-street parking;
  - c. encouraging high turnover of on-street parking; and
  - d. including charging stations for electric vehicles within new and existing long-term parking structures.
5. Consideration should be made for provision of on-street drop off/ loading zones for autonomous vehicles.





*Fully utilized on-street parking Downtown.*



*Underutilized parking space on 4th Street parkade.*



*Underutilized parking space on 4th Street parkade.*

## **DOWNTOWN PARKING SOLUTIONS**

Some existing surface parking lots in Downtown may be repurposed in the near future. This will not only reduce off-street parking, but the parking lots could be replaced with other uses that could create a need for *even more* parking.

However, the Downtown Transit Terminal parkade, despite being a modern structure, is currently underutilized as a parking facility. Downtown workers could be encouraged to better utilize the parkade through economic incentives, while long-term on-street parking may be better controlled through improved monitoring techniques. There is also potential for additional City-owned permanent structured parking facilities.

Municipalities use various strategies to devise parking solutions for their city centres. For instance, adding angle parking to specifically chosen streets can increase the amount of on-street parking for customers and visitors. A city may also choose to partner with business owners to make private parking lots available to the public during off-peak hours such as evenings and weekends.





PARADE OF  
HOMES  
BROOK  
OPEN

Home of the 2018  
Parade of Homes

PARADE OF HOMES  
CANADIAN HOME BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION



# LIVABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS



## myMH PRIORITIES:

1

Neighbourhoods should be cohesive, with an appropriate structure of land uses and densities.

2

Neighbourhoods should contain a safe and efficient system of mobility that emphasizes walkable streets.

3

Neighbourhoods should contain an integrated and linked system of open space that fosters healthy and active living.

## PLACES TO LIVE AND THRIVE

With nearly 140 years of history, Medicine Hat has a diversity of neighbourhoods, each exhibiting their own unique character. From the traditional tree-lined street of Southeast Hill and the River Flats, to impressive coulee views from Ross Glen and Crescent Heights, Medicine Hat strives to be “a community of choice” for long-term residents and newcomers alike. Respecting the values of residents and providing them with opportunities to create the lives they envision is an important priority. Satisfying public need for appealing, livable neighbourhoods and a variety of housing options are fundamentals addressed through policies in this Plan.

## BALANCING NEEDS, WANTS AND BUDGETS

Having quality **urban design** and various mobility options directly correlates to the quality of life, safety, health and social cohesion of neighbourhoods. However, facilitating Medicine Hat’s long-term financial sustainability means sensitively matching urban design with the context for each area, as well as considering adaptability of design for potential future changes.



*Contemporary multifamily building in Southlands.*



1

Neighbourhoods should be cohesive, with an appropriate structure of land uses and densities.

## GUIDING POLICY:

1. Neighbourhoods should be structured as a cohesive unit. They should:
  - a. be centered around a primary focal point containing public amenities (e.g. neighbourhood park, schools, etc.);
  - b. have distinct and identifiable edges such as a prominent street or natural feature;
  - c. be appropriately sized to accommodate a five minute walk (approximately 400 metres) from centre to edge; and
  - d. be developed to completion, insofar as such completion is feasible.
2. The organization of land uses within the neighbourhood should be determined by both function and intensity, with:
  - a. **low density residential** generally located within the interior of the neighbourhood;
  - b. **medium density** or **high density residential** located on the perimeter of the neighbourhood along a major street;
  - c. small scale neighbourhood commercial or mixed-use developments located along or at the intersection of major streets; and
  - d. public institutions such as schools, community centres and other landmark buildings given prominent locations within the centre of the neighbourhood.
3. Appropriate transitions between varying levels of residential density should be provided to create a logical neighbourhood form and structure.
4. Clustering of compatible neighbourhood commercial, public services, and higher density housing to create mixed-use urban villages that serve several neighbourhoods is encouraged.
5. Neighbourhoods should include a variety of housing types and designs that support:
  - a. shifting demographics and family structures;
  - b. all ages and abilities, specifically with adequate provision for accessible and **visitable housing**; and
  - c. a variety of income levels and ownership structures.
6. Where a neighbourhood is adjacent to nuisances or incompatible land uses (e.g. industrial operations, transportation or major utility corridors, etc.), appropriate measures to mitigate negative impacts, such as increased setbacks, landscaping buffers, and sound attenuation barriers, should be implemented as required.
7. Development of large private residential sites (e.g. bareland condominium, cluster housing) should be allowed provided such sites do not disrupt the connectivity of the neighbourhood.



*Accessible housing development aimed at the growing seniors demographic.*





2

Neighbourhoods should contain a safe and efficient system of mobility that emphasizes walkable streets.

## GUIDING POLICY:

1. The neighbourhood street network should:
  - a. be designed as a **modified grid** whenever possible to allow for increased connectivity, dispersion of traffic and multiple routes for emergency response;
  - b. contain smaller block lengths, as they allow for better connectivity for both pedestrians and motorists;
  - c. have multiple access points to adjacent neighbourhoods or commercial areas;
  - d. allow for future redevelopment;
  - e. adapt to the local terrain and natural features; and
  - f. be oriented to best take advantage of regional climate conditions (e.g. optimum solar gain).
2. Neighbourhood street design should prioritize a walkable environment by including:
  - a. context appropriate and accessible pedestrian infrastructure;
  - b. **boulevards** that allow for street trees;
  - c. limited driveway widths;
  - d. narrower street widths with strategic on-street parking; and
  - e. reduced vehicular speeds.



*Example of a new residential development incorporating a walkable design and a neo-traditional **streetscape**.*

3. Major streets that run through neighbourhoods should facilitate multi-modal transportation by including:
  - a. separated multi-use pathways for pedestrians and cyclists;
  - b. wider boulevards with street trees;
  - c. accommodation for transit routes and stops;
  - d. landscaped medians with turning lanes if required; and
  - e. limited direct access only to higher density development.
4. Rear lanes should only be permitted where front access is restricted or to provide access to higher density developments.



## HOW GREEN LINKAGES ENHANCE NEIGHBOURHOODS

Medicine Hat's great public parks are, rightly so, treasured by locals and receive thousands of visitors per year. From the interpretive centres, boat launches and lively activities of bigger parks, to the small and intimate green spaces, each urban park has its own unique character. A complementary type of park also offers important and popular functions: The linear park.

Linear parks and "green strips" provide urban trail links between parks and neighbourhoods, allowing residents to explore the outdoors and enjoy free physical activity year-round. Often making use of adjacent waterways, roadways, coulee edges and other undevelopable or sensitive lands, trail linkages offer opportunities to enjoy the natural landscape and socialize with neighbours and friends. In fact, nearby access to linear parks is one of the most desirable features of a neighbourhood and may be linked to increased property values.

Linear parks can also have significant environmental benefits, including flood protection and curbing run-off pollution - two pressing issues for cities with extreme weather events occurring with more frequency and severity.



3

Neighbourhoods should contain an integrated and linked system of open space that fosters healthy and active living.

## GUIDING POLICY:

1. Open space systems within a neighbourhoods should:
  - a. consist of a primary neighbourhood scale park, a network of **linear parks**, storm water facilities, and natural areas where applicable;
  - b. be accessible to the public, with multiple access points from streets; and
  - c. have direct connections to adjacent natural areas, neighbourhoods, or commercial areas.
2. Neighbourhood parks should:
  - a. be located approximately in the centre of neighbourhoods;
  - b. incorporate aspects of alternative landscaping design and **xeriscaping** principles;
  - c. be designed to include recreation features, sports fields, and programming;
  - d. include land for school sites as required; and
  - e. incorporate neighbourhood amenities such as community centres, public gardens, gathering spaces, etc.
3. Linear parks should:
  - a. provide pedestrian linkages between the neighbourhood park, major roadways, and multi-family residential located in the neighbourhood;





*Trails in Medicine Hat provide year-round opportunities for passive recreation.*

- b. be an appropriate width to be used as both a trail corridor and a buffer;
  - c. use xeriscaping principles in the landscape design; and
  - d. be incorporated into the storm water system where feasible (e.g. **bioswale**).
4. Storm water management facilities should:
- a. be located adjacent to the neighbourhood park where feasible;
  - b. have a naturalized pond design;
  - c. use xeriscaping principles in the landscape design;
  - d. provide non-potable irrigation water for open spaces if possible;
  - e. serve as a water feature for the park and neighbourhood; and
  - f. not be restricted nor enclosed with manmade structures.



## **XERISCAPE, NOT ZEROSCAPE**

Xeriscaping is a style of landscaping which uses native and drought resistant plants and materials to make water efficient landscapes. Using less water and saving on utility bills doesn't mean unattractive landscaping. Landscape design which uses native plant species, mulch and coloured rocks is a great alternative to bland mono-coloured gravel or concrete. And unlike concrete, xeriscaping also allows for infiltration of rainwater and melting snow, resulting in less runoff to storm sewer systems.

Even turf can be included in the design, but only where it will provide a functional benefit. Due to Medicine Hat's semi-arid climate, the area should be properly shaded to help reduce the need for water, and drought tolerant grasses should be chosen.

A visit to the Xeriscape Demonstration Garden on the Medicine Hat College campus (pictured above) can provide inspiration on ways for homeowners and businesses to create water-wise outdoor spaces.







# STRONG ECONOMY



## myMH PRIORITIES:

1

Foster a prosperous economy that is sustainable, equitable and enables a high quality of life.

2

Employment sectors should be designed to accommodate growth of existing businesses and attract new compatible industries.

## DIVERSIFICATION MEANS RESILIENCE

Now more than ever, it is important to be adaptable and inventive in economic ventures. Cities which rely on one or two industries to support their economies can suffer crippling losses when shifts in the global market and/or technology occur. A strong and balanced economic landscape will produce quality employment opportunities and foster a thriving environment for innovation and entrepreneurship.

## OPEN FOR BUSINESS

High-tech/innovative industries, **renewable energy**, and entirely new industrial operations have chosen to locate in southeastern Alberta and enjoy the benefits of a positive business environment. Provision of competitive City-owned utilities, a favourable regulatory environment, availability of large tracts of land, and the business friendly attitude will continue to drive such investment in our community. To ensure Medicine Hat's prosperity, it is important for the City to continue to support opportunities for these businesses to become established, innovate and grow.



*The Goodyear tire and rubber plant has been one of the city's largest employers since opening in 1960.*

1974



2020



*The city's southeastern region has seen significant commercial development since the late 1970s, including the 13th Avenue corridor (pictured above).*



1

Foster a prosperous economy that is sustainable, equitable and enables a high quality of life.

### GUIDING POLICY:

1. The City should develop a comprehensive economic development plan that supports and guides overall economic growth.
2. The City should continue work to improve internal processes and procedures to ensure a business-friendly environment at City Hall.
3. The City should work with industry and regional stakeholders to support and facilitate:
  - a. commercial and industrial development opportunities including proactive business retention, expansion and attraction;
  - b. Waterfront Development District opportunities including the attraction of high-quality mixed-use developments;
  - c. labour force development opportunities including resident attraction; and
  - d. tourism development opportunities including trade shows, conferences, sporting and entertainment events, outdoor recreation throughout southeast Alberta, and cultural and heritage resource assets.
4. The City should actively promote Medicine Hat as a community of choice.
5. The City should support innovation and entrepreneurship in collaboration with regional stakeholders.



- 
- A network diagram with various icons representing different sectors like energy, healthcare, and infrastructure, all interconnected on a blue background. The icons include a globe, Wi-Fi symbol, bridge, car, flame, shopping cart, leaf, fan, house, group of people, trash can, power line, megaphone, light tower, police badge, parking sign, and briefcase. They are connected by a web of lines, suggesting a complex, interconnected system.

A woman wearing a bright red jacket, a black wide-brimmed hat, and black pants is performing on a stage. She is holding a microphone and has one leg raised in a dynamic pose. The stage is dark with some green and red lighting. In front of her are several large black speakers. Behind her, a large, diverse crowd of people is seated in the audience, many of whom are cheering and raising their hands. The setting appears to be a large indoor arena or theater.

MEDICINE HAT MASTER PLAN | mymh 42



2

Employment sectors should be designed to accommodate growth of existing businesses and attract new compatible industries.

## GUIDING POLICY:

1. The North Employment Sector should be designed to accommodate commercial and industrial development of varying scales and intensities as indicated in figure 4 (page 17). Important elements that will contribute to the success of this area's development include:
  - a. retaining a long-term supply of large unfragmented blocks of land that are suitable for both medium and large-scale industrial operations;
  - b. reserving lands in proximity to the north power plant for industrial development that have may have specific energy needs;
  - c. ensuring appropriate zoning, development regulations and setbacks are in place that are suitable for medium and large-scale industrial operations;
  - d. working in conjunction with the Town of Redcliff and Cypress County to allocate land for a major east to west transportation and utility corridor;
  - e. modifying site infrastructure and servicing standards to suit the needs of large scale industrial development; and
  - f. conducting a constraint analysis of the area and completing in advance required studies or preliminary requirements for regulatory approval processes.

2. The West Employment Sector should be designed to accommodate light industrial development and agricultural development (including greenhouses) as indicated in figure 7 (page 20). Important elements that will contribute to the success of this area's development include:
  - a. supporting the further development of a greenhouse corridor west of Highway 3 and south of Holsom Road;
  - b. ensuring development does not impact the operations of the airport; and
  - c. restricting the potential airport runway expansion area to only temporary land uses.



*The West Employment Sector is home to Auto-Star Compusystems Inc., a local software company which serves international clients.*





Ian Hennes

*Locally owned Hell's Basement Brewery opened in 2016, continuing a Medicine Hat brewing tradition which began in the 1800s.*



The Cyclepath

*Launched in Medicine Hat in 1995, The Cyclepath provides bicycle sales and service to all levels of cyclists in the area.*

## HOME GROWN AND THRIVING IN AN ONLINE WORLD

It's no secret that online shopping has increased significantly in the past decade. Of younger Canadians between 18 and 34, about 38% would *choose* to shop online over a physical store.\*

So what does this mean for small Medicine Hat businesses? Will all locally operated businesses disappear? The retail landscape is changing, but physical stores shouldn't be discounted yet. In 2019, e-commerce sales in the U.S. only accounted for about 10% of all retail sales\*\*, and marketing expert Brent Barr at Ryerson University says the numbers are similar for Canada.

"There is a premise that everything has moved to online and it really hasn't", says Barr, "It's still very much in-store, brick and mortar is still the dominant force of retail."

Why? Consumers like to physically interact with products in a tangible

way. They like the immediacy of taking items home at the moment, without delay. They like not having to pay for shipping and avoiding the hassle of returns by mail. Lastly, people like the experience of visiting a physical location and interacting with other shoppers and sales associates.

To better compete with e-commerce, successful small businesses focus on things that boost their local appeal, such as:

- Building long-term relationships with great customer service;
- Adding value to the on-location experience, including exciting and engaging events;
- Having a mobile-friendly website and offering incentives online;
- Talking to customers and adapting to their wants and needs; and
- Having strong community relationships outside the business.

\*Strategic Counsel survey conducted for the CIRA, 2017.

\*\*U.S. Census Bureau, 2019







# EFFICIENT PUBLIC SERVICES



## myMH PRIORITIES:

1

City services and facilities should be designed to provide efficient service to the most people.

2

City assets should support, not impede, the financial health of the city.

3

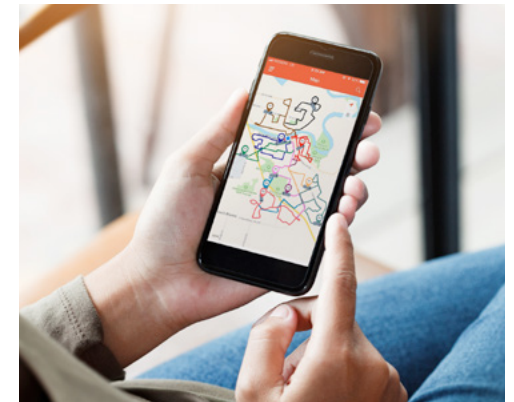
Create a viable and connected transportation network.

## THINKING SMART ABOUT ESSENTIALS

As Medicine Hat continues to grow, there will be significant long-term costs associated with new development. Therefore, maximizing the efficiency of the services we offer and our municipal infrastructure makes solid economic sense. This means offering appropriate levels of service throughout the city based on density and location to effectively meet the needs of residents. While facilities and infrastructure must not only be constructed and installed, they must also be maintained and eventually replaced. Therefore, their size, location and lifespan must be strategically chosen to protect the financial health of the City. Asset management plans provide guidance in analyzing long-term maintenance costs, and in determining methods which are efficient and fiscally responsible.

## GETTING AROUND

Designing an effective transportation network means providing viable options for multi-modal transportation. City residents have expressed their desire for transportation options such as public transit, cycling and walking. By efficiently designing the transit system to offer service where users need it most, and integrating our recreational trail system to existing sidewalks and the road network, the dependency on personal vehicles may be reduced and accessibility enhanced.



*The City's transit app allows users to see the location of buses in real time, expected arrival times and more.*



## MULTI-PURPOSE FACILITIES - BETTER TOGETHER!

There are many financial and social benefits to locating civic and recreational facilities under one roof. The first and most immediate advantage is the reduction of operational cost of multi-purpose facilities. Grouping facilities together creates maintenance and operations efficiencies, which acts to minimize operational costs. Increased membership revenue can also be expected, as the facility can accommodate a larger population. Parents accompanying their children to hockey practice can use the fitness facilities during their child's play time, for example.

Furthermore, housing a range of facilities under one roof creates a natural gathering space for the community that can function as a neighbourhood hub. Multi-purpose facilities that include child care, schools, satellite libraries, food/commercial options as well as sport facilities, helps with social cohesion and well-being for the community, year-round.

With their increased offerings, the revenues of multi-purpose complexes also have more room to grow compared to stand-alone facilities. Membership fees, rental space and other revenues can be reinvested into the facility.



1

City services and facilities should be designed to provide efficient service to the most people.

## GUIDING POLICY:

1. The City should ensure the efficiency and quality of our recreation system by:
  - a. creating an updated, integrated Parks and Recreation Plan that is consistent with MDP policies;
  - b. focusing on creating larger recreation centres that serve either the entire city or a sector of the city;
  - c. locating recreation centres in strategic locations that provide development spinoffs and the realization of this Plan's goal of **intensification**; and
  - d. combining smaller recreation facilities into multi-purpose facilities.
2. The City should continue to provide safe, efficient, and effective fire suppression, prevention, rescue, and hazardous material response by:
  - a. maintaining a target fire suppression response time;
  - b. maintaining a three fire station system for as long as feasible until a fourth station is required; and
  - c. requiring alternative fire protection measures, such as building sprinklers, to ensure safety when development is outside of target response areas.
3. The City should support the healthy development and social wellbeing of our residents by:
  - a. assisting in the provision of accessible and attainable housing;
  - b. promoting and encouraging the development of social services and community organizations that benefit all residents;



- c. encouraging and facilitating activities and initiatives which support diversity and inclusiveness, and which foster a sense of belonging to the community; and
- d. developing a Social Wellbeing Plan.



2

City assets should support, not impede, the financial health of the city.

#### GUIDING POLICY:

1. **City assets** should be viewed and managed as a perpetual liability that has both ongoing operational and maintenance costs and a cyclical replacement cost.
2. The City should make infrastructure decisions based on both Land Use Plans and an Asset Management Plan. The Asset Management Plan should:
  - a. maximize the economic lifespan of our infrastructure without compromising the safety of our community;
  - b. prioritize the rebuilding of infrastructure that has the most impact and creates redevelopment opportunities;
  - c. plan for future increased density and corresponding infrastructure needs;
  - d. implement progressive design standards, and proven state-of-the-art materials and processes; and
  - e. recognize the role of natural assets in relieving the burden on existing municipal infrastructure.
3. Infrastructure should be used to the design capacity with an

acceptable margin of safety. Any residual capacity within our infrastructure should be identified and communicated to the development industry to support redevelopment opportunities.

4. The City should evaluate and prioritize building new infrastructure on the basis of:
  - a. ensuring first and foremost the health and safety of the community;
  - b. selecting infrastructure projects that have the added benefit of driving economic development, if given the option;
  - c. delivering infrastructure as and when required; and
  - d. using a phased approach when possible to minimize up-front costs or the creation of **stranded assets**.
6. To increase the efficiency of delivering major infrastructure, the City should create sector based servicing plans prior to any **Area Structure Plans** (see sector maps, pages 16-22).



3

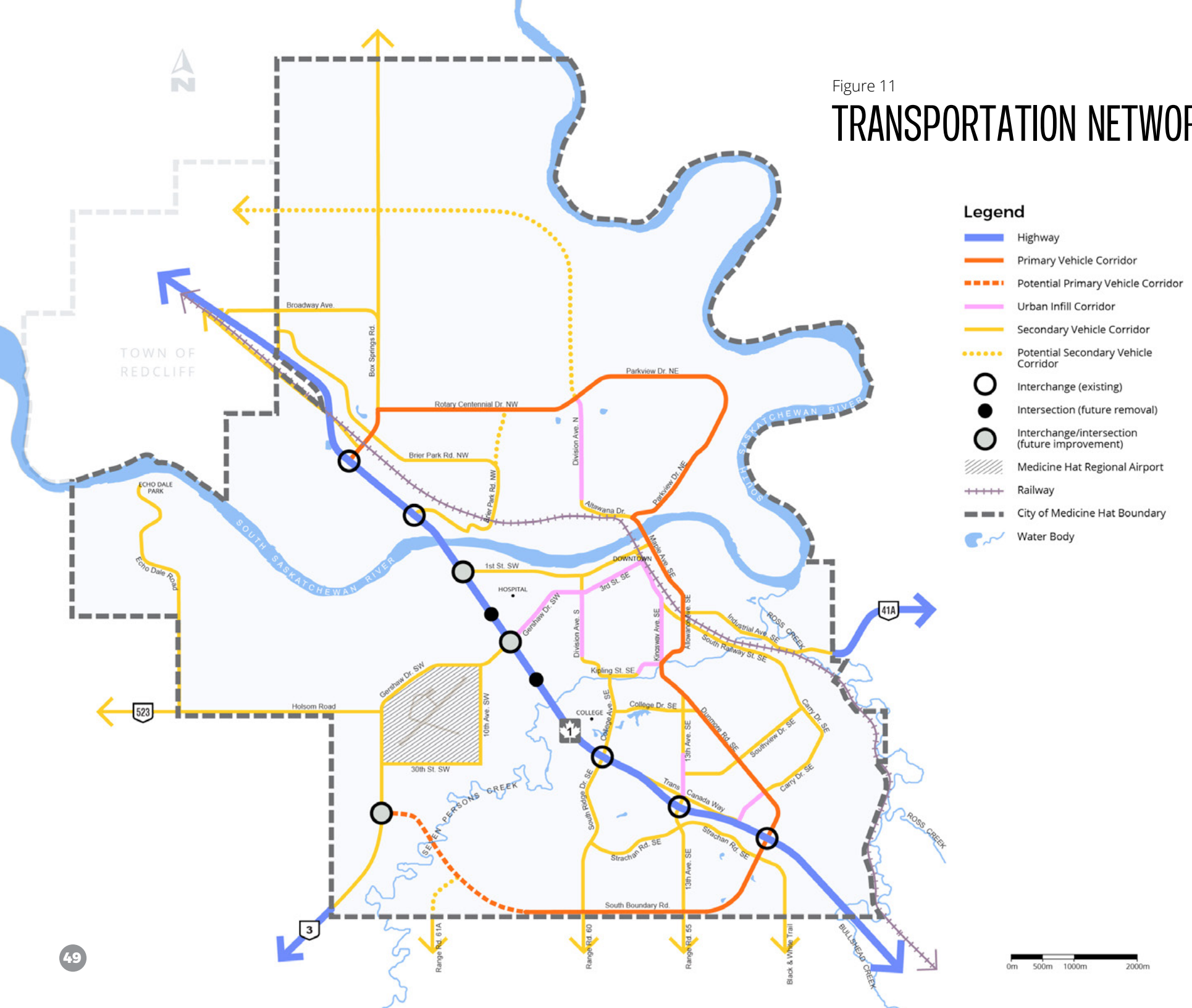
Create a viable and connected transportation network.

#### GUIDING POLICY:

1. The City should create an integrated multi-modal Transportation Plan that is consistent with MDP policies.
2. The City should maintain and expand its **active transportation** network, with consideration for:
  - a. **micro-mobility** options and universal access;

Figure 11

# TRANSPORTATION NETWORK





- b. matching design with the level of usage;
  - c. seamless connections between trails, public sidewalks and private sidewalks;
  - d. designing separated multi-use trails which run parallel to primary roadways;
  - e. incorporating traffic calming measures wherever a multi-use trail crosses a street;
  - f. appropriate wayfinding signage in appropriate locations, with information such as distances, routes and maps; and
  - g. including an additional pedestrian/cycling bridge across the South Saskatchewan River.
3. The City should recalibrate the transit system by:
- a. exploring service delivery options that match service levels with demand;
  - b. enhancing customer experience through the use of technology;
  - c. developing ridership through community engagement, training and educational campaigns; and
  - d. ensuring the transit network is fully integrated into the larger multi-modal mobility network, including sidewalks, trails and cycling lanes.
4. The City should improve the street network by:
- a. strategically enhancing street features to redefine the purpose of certain corridors;
  - b. completing missing vital links in the existing street network, as shown in figure 11 (page 49);
  - c. reviewing long-term river and creek crossings;
  - d. reviewing and updating the established goods movement corridors;
  - e. strategically planning enhancements along the existing Trans-Canada Highway and Alberta Provincial Highway 3; and
  - f. working collaboratively with the Province on a future highway bypass design.



## EVOLVING MOBILITY

On-demand transportation, self-driving vehicles, car sharing, ride sharing, electric assist bicycles, scooters and mobility aid devices: the emergence of new forms of mobility are profoundly changing our daily habits. This trend is being driven by a series of converging technological and social trends that could lead to faster, cheaper, cleaner, safer, more efficient, and more desirable forms of mobility.

No longer is the personal vehicle seen as the only viable means of local transportation. More and more often, residents of Medicine Hat are seeking alternative and multiple means of transportation to reach their destinations. However, the safe and efficient movement of people and goods hinges critically on the underlying infrastructure such as streets, sidewalks, trails, transit hubs and stations, parking, and the electric grid. Even data networks will form part of the future transportation networks as multi-modal transportation relies on user data to evaluate customer preference, traffic data, and other circumstances to arrive at the most convenient and cost-effective mobility plan—whether that entails a shared car, bus, bike, or all.

The City of Medicine Hat needs to ensure our infrastructure is designed efficiently and will accommodate these changes in technology and residents' transportation needs.







# ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP



## myMH PRIORITIES:

1

The sensitive areas of our prairie landscape should be conserved and managed.

2

Water management practices reflecting our semi-arid desert climate and our constrained watershed should be implemented.

3

Reduce the overall environmental impact of our city.

4

Expand and maintain the city's urban forest in all viable public spaces.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF SUSTAINABILITY

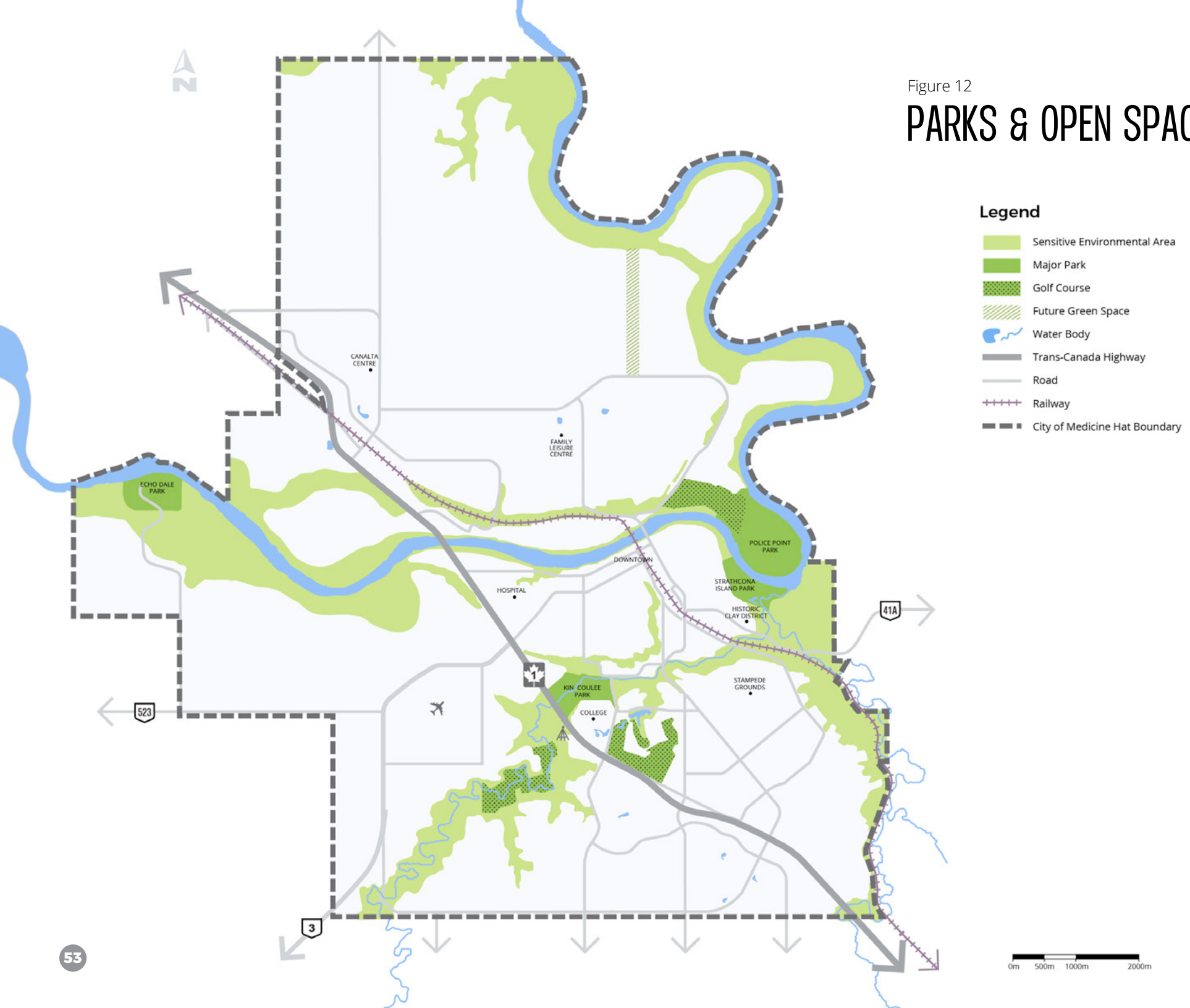
A healthy natural environment is necessary in order to have a flourishing community and a thriving economy. Generations of inhabitants have altered Medicine Hat's natural landscape, but prioritizing mindfulness of our ecological footprint and the resulting impacts will help to ensure the sustainability of the sensitive prairie ecosystem of southeastern Alberta. One such impact is the toll on our water supply; the availability of fresh water is becoming increasingly constrained throughout southern Alberta. Through policy, this Plan addresses protection of the region's **watershed** by ensuring responsible use of our water supply, and by conserving natural areas surrounding the South Saskatchewan River, creeks and coulee system. Additionally, the potential negative impacts of natural events is well-known to Medicine Hat residents. Through best practices and attentive land use, we can continue to mitigate the impacts from events such as severe flooding and slope failure within the city.

Medicine Hat has taken a leadership role in environmental stewardship through ongoing involvement in renewable energy initiatives and the award-winning **HAT Smart** conservation program. We should continue this commitment with further investment in such initiatives, and by encouraging the efficient use of energy throughout all sectors of the community.

Finally, the city's tree canopy is a valuable asset which will be conserved and expanded through policies in this Plan. Situated in a semi-arid prairie landscape, trees were scarce in Medicine Hat's early history. However, now lining our streets and infusing our parks, the city's **urban forest** is lush and thriving. The city's substantial tree canopy provides solar protection, purifies the air, increases resilience during rainstorm events, contributes to neighbourhood appeal and improves the walkability of city streets.

Figure 12

# PARKS & OPEN SPACE







1

The sensitive areas of our prairie landscape should be conserved and managed.

## GUIDING POLICY:

1. The City should take measures to foster the well-being of **Sensitive Environmental Areas** (SEA's) as shown on figure 12 - page 53. Such measures should include:
  - a. maintaining City ownership of SEA's;
  - b. keeping SEA's in a natural state whenever possible;
  - c. restricting land use in SEA's to **low impact** passive public parks;
  - d. keeping an updated inventory of SEA's;
  - e. partnering with senior levels of government, non-profit organizations and education institutions to actively monitor the conditions of SEA's;
  - f. discontinuing land uses that are negatively impacting SEA's; and
  - g. rehabilitating damaged areas of SEA's, including the removal of **invasive** plant species.
2. Where a parcel of land is the subject of a proposed subdivision and contains a SEA, any land that meets the requirements of section 664 of the Municipal Government Act (the "Act") will be provided as **Environmental Reserve**. Through the MSSM, the City will establish the amount of land that qualifies as Environmental Reserve in accordance with section 664 of the Act.
3. Land within SEA's that does not qualify as Environmental Reserve, should be acquired through the use of **Conservation Reserve** in accordance with the section 664.2 of the Act.
4. The City may consider the use of **Municipal Reserve** in lieu of Conservation Reserve where it deems appropriate.

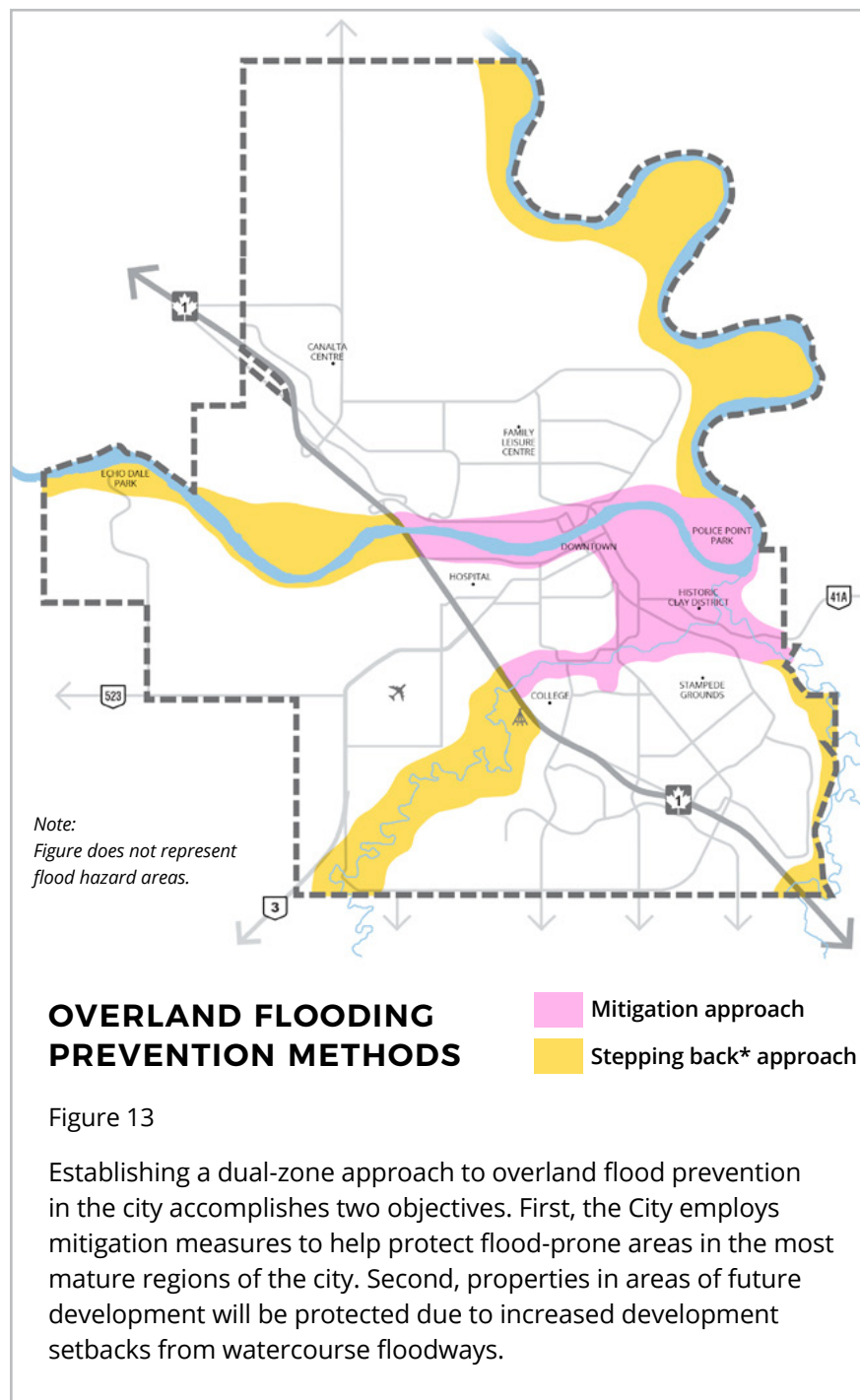


*River and creek valleys which wind through the city provide an integrated system of open space.*

## ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL RESERVE

Environmental Reserve lands are intended to protect the natural environment, protect people and property from hazardous conditions (e.g. flooding) and provide public access to or along lakes and rivers.

In brief, as part of a proposed subdivision of a parcel of land, section 664.1 of the Municipal Government Act states that the land owner may be required to provide part of the land as Environmental Reserve. This may occur if, for example, the parcel consists of natural features such as a coulee or natural drainage course, exhibits instability or is subject to flooding. Environmental Reserve designation may also be required if a strip of land is next to the bed and shore of a body of water.



Flood mitigation berm and stormwater outfall near Industrial Avenue SE.

5. Increased development setbacks, beyond the conventional safe slope development setback, from both the top and bottom of the South Saskatchewan River valley, creek corridors, major coulees, and significant slopes should be considered as part of the design of new development areas in order to:
  - a. allow for public access and potentially a trail system;
  - b. reduce the geotechnical risk of slope failures on development;
  - c. protect significant viewsheds;
  - d. provide the opportunity for scenic single loaded streets (e.g. McCutcheon Drive NW); and
  - e. allow adequate space for wildlife corridors and to retain the long-term biodiversity of these special valley landscapes.
6. Municipal infrastructure, **flood mitigation infrastructure**, essential public services, and public utilities may be located within SEAs. However, all reasonable measures should be taken to minimize the impact on the environment, including avoidance of this option whenever practically possible.
7. The City should commit to strong resiliency to overland flooding by:
  - a. establishing a dual zone flood protection strategy (see figure 13), whereby a flood mitigation approach is used in the City Centre Sector (area with the majority of mature development) and a "stepping back from the water"\* approach is employed in greenfield areas;



- b. completing and continuing to maintain flood mitigation infrastructure within the City Centre Sector; and
  - c. maintaining an emergency flood response plan.
8. Within the City Centre Sector, where there are no neighbourhood scale flood mitigation measures (e.g. berms), private development is not encouraged in the **Flood Hazard Area** of:
- a. a 5,480m<sup>3</sup>/s South Saskatchewan River flood event;
  - b. a 133m<sup>3</sup>/s Seven Persons Creek flood event; or
  - c. a 206 m<sup>3</sup>/s Ross Creek flood event.

However, such development may be allowed provided that the proposed development contains appropriate site specific flood mitigation measures, is located outside of the floodway, and does not negatively impact adjacent properties.

9. To protect greenfield areas (future neighbourhoods) from flood damage, private development should not be allowed in the Flood Hazard Area of:
- a. a 5,480m<sup>3</sup>/s South Saskatchewan River flood event plus an additional metre in elevation;
  - b. a 133m<sup>3</sup>/s Seven Persons Creek flood event plus an additional metre in elevation;
  - c. a 206m<sup>3</sup>/s Ross Creek flood event plus an additional metre in elevation; or
  - d. a 37m<sup>3</sup>/s Bullshead Creek flood event plus an additional metre in elevation.
10. Municipal infrastructure (e.g. streets, bridges, utility systems, storm water management facilities, flood mitigation measures, etc.) and amenities (e.g. recreation fields, parks, trails, boat launches, campgrounds, etc.) may be located within a Flood Hazard Area. However, municipal infrastructure or amenities which are highly susceptible to flood damage should be in higher elevation locations whenever feasible, to reduce risk to the public and to city systems.



*Downtown, c.1960s.*



*Harlow neighbourhood, 2013*

## REDUCING THE IMPACTS OF FLOODING

Overland flooding is a naturally occurring event in some low-lying areas of Medicine Hat, and most commonly occurs between mid-May and mid-July. After a serious flood in 2013, series of protective berms were built in areas of the city near the river and creeks which are most susceptible to flooding. Barrier devices were installed to close gaps in the berms and to protect the lower level of City Hall. Storm water backflow devices were installed at many storm sewer outfalls to prevent rising river water from backing up into the storm sewer system. Additionally, three sanitary sewer lift stations located in the flood fringe have undergone improvements to prevent sewer backup.

Studies indicate that the potential for flood damage in Medicine Hat from the river will likely become more severe\*. To better protect property and riparian areas, increasing the development setbacks from the river's edge is a reasonable response, and is reflected in policies on pages 55 and 56 of this Plan.

\*Stantec (2013) and Alberta Environment (2020)



2

Water management practices reflecting our semi-arid desert climate and constrained watershed should be implemented.

### GUIDING POLICY:

1. The City should promote and encourage the practice of water conservation. Opportunities to reduce our water usage include:
  - a. use of water efficient fixtures at City facilities;
  - b. use of xeriscaping principles within our park system and other landscaped areas and an adjustment of irrigation methods and frequency;
  - c. supporting rainwater harvesting, storm water irrigation systems, and **grey water** reuse;
  - d. providing education and incentives to households and businesses to reduce water usage; and
  - e. reducing peak water usage through methods such as restrictions or rate options.
2. The City should incrementally improve the quality of storm water runoff. Potential measures include:
  - a. protecting existing natural wetlands;
  - b. rehabilitating the **riparian areas** of river and creeks;
  - c. reducing the amount of impervious surfaces and encouraging storm water infiltration;
  - d. adding bio-swales and other micro storm water infrastructure in established neighbourhoods;
  - e. implementing naturalized storm water management systems in new neighbourhoods; and
  - f. reducing the use of chemicals (i.e. pesticide and herbicides) on public lands.

3. A regional drought management study should be undertaken to improve community resilience. Important considerations include:
  - a. the long-term impacts of increasingly severe weather events on our region;
  - b. exploring opportunities for alternative water sources to supplement the river, such as aquifers or canals, to mitigate the increased demand on our water supply; and
  - c. collaboration with our regional municipal partners on water, wastewater and storm water infrastructure.
4. The City will endeavour to follow principles of the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan with respect to surface water quality and will adhere to applicable legislative requirements.



3

Reduce the overall environmental impact of our city.

### GUIDING POLICY:

1. The City should continue offering incentives and education which encourage efficient use of energy within the community.
2. The City should reduce the impact of solid waste by continually exploring opportunities to reduce its financial and environmental impacts.
3. The City will endeavour to follow the framework principles of the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan with respect to air quality and will adhere to applicable legislative requirements.





4

Expand and maintain the city's urban forest in all viable public spaces.

### GUIDING POLICY:

1. The City should endeavour to increase the number and quality of trees located on public land by:
  - a. establishing tree planting targets and use a tree inventory program to manage the urban forest;
  - b. protecting existing trees where feasible; and
  - c. establishing minimum requirements in the **Municipal Servicing Standards** for street designs that accommodate tree planting in boulevards and medians within new neighbourhoods.
2. The City should incentivize tree planting by introducing a subsidy program for the purchase and planting of trees on private property.



Dennis Buchko

*The tree canopies in the Southeast Hill area showcase Medicine Hat's thriving urban forest.*







# 4 WHERE WE GROW



## myMH PRIORITIES:

1

Mitigate the effects of incompatible developments on adjacent properties.

2

Ensure orderly and financially efficient long-term growth by effectively planning development.

3

Establish urban villages by increasing density in strategic locations and along specific transportation corridors.

4

Encourage minor increases in density through infill development in established neighbourhoods to optimize use of existing land and services.

5

Establish an urban redevelopment process that is financially feasible, predictable and results in a net positive experience for neighbourhoods.

When planning city growth, the following strategic approaches are used regarding **greenfield** and **infill** development to satisfy need and to encourage a balanced housing spectrum, while also ensuring the fiscal responsibility of City operations.

### 4.1 PURPOSE-BUILT SERVICING LEVELS

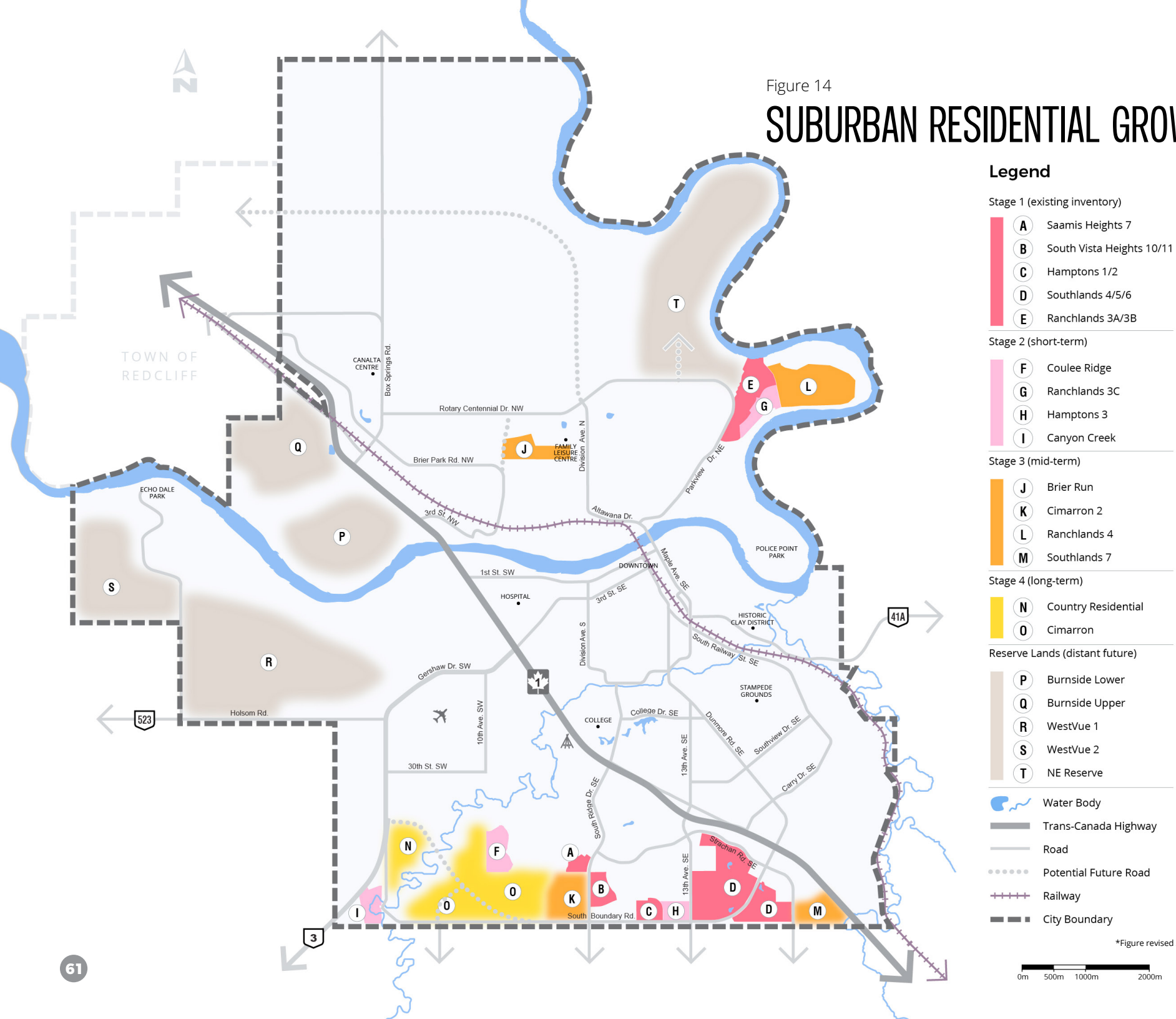
Medicine Hat's growth management strategy does not place limits on the market by specifying minimum thresholds of density in greenfield areas. This allows for developers to provide a suitable type of product to meet the needs of the market, whether it is larger suburban lots, smaller affordable lots or sites for multi-unit housing. An important compromise is that as the density of a suburban area decreases, there is a corresponding lowering of service levels to match the area's reduced needs. This ensures that financial resources are being deployed where they have the most impact and where the need is higher while still retaining an acceptable minimum threshold of services across the entire city.

### 4.2 MEASURED STAGING

In greenfield growth, a measured development staging approach is applied (figure 14 - page 61). First, the completion and build-out of existing neighbourhoods under development will occur prior to commencing in new growth areas, which defers capital infrastructure projects and puts less stress on City finances. It also hastens the

Figure 14

# SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL GROWTH\*



\*Figure revised April 12, 2021

0m 500m 1000m 2000m



completion of new neighbourhoods, which is a financial benefit to developers and minimizes the disruption to existing residents. To ensure a continuous supply of greenfield land, each stage includes different regions of the city. This provides the market with options and does not restrict all development activities to one location or one developer. As a stage nears completion, a new stage is activated and development commences. Premature development of an area is to be avoided, as this practice negatively impacts City finances and does not allow for a reasonable timeframe for the build-out of existing communities.

### 4.3 ENERGIZED INFILL

A balanced approach of accommodating a portion of our population growth through infill development is encouraged. The infill strategy focuses on allowing for small-scale redevelopment of our existing neighbourhoods, while concentrating major projects primarily within the Downtown area and within the three urban villages (figure 16 - page 67). While there is no specific target for the percentage of population growth to be accommodated by infill development, policies within this Plan encourage as much infill as the market and the community deems acceptable. A benefit of an increased level of infill is the tempering of greenfield growth, thus furthering the objective of delaying capital infrastructure expenditure in the city's outer areas.



*Along 3rd Street NW in the mature Riverside neighbourhood is one of several City-owned parcels with potential for infill development (see figure 5 on page 18).*

### 4.4 BALANCED GROWTH

In order to maintain a positive financial position and long-term economic stability, the City should strive to balance growth of residential and non-residential development as much as possible. Commercial and industrial developments comprise a large portion of the city's municipal tax base and ensures our resilience against changing economic realities. Failing to attract an equivalent amount of commercial and industrial operations to the city will result in a tax imbalance, and will place more burden on the residential tax base.

The proximity of significant residential opportunities for employees is a desirable feature for existing and potential employers in Medicine Hat. Local residents also like to live reasonably close to where they work and play. This growth should be achieved in two ways: by intensifying existing employment areas and urban villages and by relocating non-compatible commercial operations to designated non-residential areas such as our North and West Employment Sectors (see figures on pages 17 and 20).

### 4.5 EFFICIENT USE OF INFRASTRUCTURE

The Suburban Residential Growth Map (figure 14 - page 61) is designed to implement the growth objectives. Previous development decisions over past decades has established a logical sequence in the stages of development in Medicine Hat. This means that, to some extent, we are path dependent in where we grow as we have already invested capital to build infrastructure in certain areas. Altering from this trajectory, while possible, may cause negative financial impacts to the City.

The progression through each stage of growth is dependent on actual population growth. Therefore, the City should not prematurely expend capital on major infrastructure projects until deemed necessary due to increased population densities and growth. This ensures the most efficient use of financial resources and utilization of city infrastructure to its maximum capacity.

## INDUSTRIAL/ COMMERCIAL GROWTH







1

Mitigate the effects of incompatible developments on adjacent properties.

## GUIDING POLICY:

1. Land use and density should be consistent with the intent of the designation identified under the Sector Map (figure 3 - page 16) and the Urban Transect (figure 2 - page 13). Specifically:
  - a. the North and West Employment Sectors, which are intended for long-term employment growth, should avoid residential land uses to prevent potential land use conflicts; and
  - b. the City Centre Sector and the Residential Sectors (North, West, and South) should primarily contain residential land uses with supporting compatible non-residential land uses (e.g. retail, services, recreation, health care, etc.). Further development of industrial uses, nuisance uses or any other incompatible land use should be avoided in these sectors.
2. Subdivision and development should adhere to any required setbacks, as identified in various Provincial legislation, plans, or guiding documents, with regards to: highways; railways; energy infrastructure (including but not limited to active oil and gas wells, abandoned oil and gas wells, sour gas facilities, electrical transmission lines, and pipelines); a wastewater treatment facility; a landfill; or confined feeding operations.



*Transportation infrastructure such as the railway marshalling yard in the city centre present significant setback requirements for development.*

3. Electrical generation facilities such as natural gas generators, utility-scale solar photovoltaic, wind turbines, or any co-generation facilities, should be restricted to the Employment Sectors with adequate setbacks from any residential areas.
4. No new or expansion of existing confined feeding operations should be allowed to locate within the city.
5. Developments that generate substantial amounts of light or reflection of light (e.g. illuminated greenhouses or utility-scale solar photovoltaic facility); particulates or steam; odour; electronic interference; or noise should incorporate mitigating measures to avoid negatively impacting residential areas or any safety impacts on the Medicine Hat Regional Airport.
6. Developments that create a human health and safety risk (e.g. risk of anhydrous ammonia release or storage of explosive materials) should only be located within the Employment Sectors and must be adequately separated from residential areas and other sensitive land uses (e.g. schools, daycares, healthcare facilities, etc.). Encroachments of residential areas and other sensitive land uses into an established setback area of existing developments must not be allowed.



2

Ensure orderly and financially efficient long-term growth by effectively planning development.

### GUIDING POLICY:

1. The City should ensure that there is a long-term land supply for both residential and non-residential growth. A total land base, equivalent to a minimum of 60 years of population and/or employment growth, should be maintained to ensure our growth is not restricted. The City may pursue the expansion of the municipal boundary as required to prudently manage land supply.
2. The Suburban Residential Growth map (figure 14 - page 61) will guide the sequence of greenfield development over the next 30 years. Commencement of a subsequent stage should not occur until the estimated time of build-out of all remaining serviced lots is less than five years. City Council must provide authorization prior to the commencement of the planning process for an Area Structure Plan.
3. Prior to the subdivision and development of a greenfield residential area, the following requirements should be met:
  - a. City Council approval of an Area Structure Plan and Neighbourhood Plan;
  - b. completion of a financial impact assessment of the development area on City capital and operating budgets;
  - c. essential supporting municipal servicing infrastructure (transportation, water, sanitary sewer, storm water, electric, and natural gas) is in place or has approved municipal funding; and
  - d. the subject area is located within a Fire Services response zone, or incorporates alternative fire suppression measures.
4. Area Structure Plans and Neighbourhood Plans must conform with higher order statutory plans including the Municipal Development Plan, the Intermunicipal Development Plan and the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan. They must also be prepared in accordance with the requirements of Municipal Servicing Standards.
5. Premature fragmentation of greenfield residential areas, through subdivision or development of the land, should not be allowed. Exceptions to this, at the discretion of the City, may include:
  - a. municipal infrastructure;
  - b. interim use of the land for agricultural purposes, public parks, or outdoor non-intensive recreation; and
  - c. subdivision or consolidation of land for the purposes of preparing land for future greenfield residential area development.
6. The City should monitor and report yearly to City Council on the available long-term land supply, number and location of serviced lots, and ratio of greenfield development to infill development. As Municipal and Federal census information becomes available, reporting of updated population growth projections and demographics should also be provided.
7. The City will seek dedication of land for Municipal Reserve, or monetary compensation in place of Municipal Reserve, at the time of subdivision in accordance with the MGA, policies of this Plan, and Municipal Servicing Standards.
8. The City should identify and allocate land for schools within residential areas through consultation with local school boards and in accordance with the Municipal Government Act and Municipal Servicing Standards. The City and local school boards should enter into an updated agreement that addresses, but is not limited to:
  - a. required amounts and transition of reserve land for school sites;
  - b. school siting and neighbourhood interface guidelines;
  - c. joint use of sites and infrastructure;



- d. disposal or retention of surplus school sites; and
  - e. population forecasts.
9. Underutilized or surplus school sites within mature neighbourhoods should be retained as reserve land where possible, as ongoing redevelopment of neighbourhoods will drive increased long-term demand for school space. Interim use of the buildings or sites for community purposes is encouraged.



3

Establish urban villages by increasing density in strategic locations and along specific transportation corridors.

## GUIDING POLICY:

1. Strategic locations within the city (see figure 16 - page 67) should be transitioned into nodes of denser development. Intensification efforts should be focused on underutilized areas within these locations, such as surface parking lots. These urban villages should complement and enhance the existing primary function of the existing locations (e.g. shopping, recreation, health care, entertainment) to create multi-purpose destinations. Depending on the context, location and available land, desirable additions to these urban villages may include:
  - a. compatible and supporting commercial or institutional uses;
  - b. mid to high-rise residential buildings;
  - c. public spaces and pocket parks;
  - d. recreational, cultural or entertainment facilities; and
  - e. transit facilities and structured parking.



## WHY INTENSIFICATION?

*Urban intensification* may be described as adding density (more homes and/or businesses) to established, or mature, areas of a city which are currently unused or underutilized. This practice can achieve several positive benefits.

First, by increasing population densities in existing urban areas, less greenfield land will be required for new housing, which means less conversion of agricultural and natural lands.

Second, research shows that when density increases beyond a certain level, automobile use declines in favour of transit, walking and cycling.\* This can contribute to fuel savings, healthier residents, more social activity and reduced emissions.

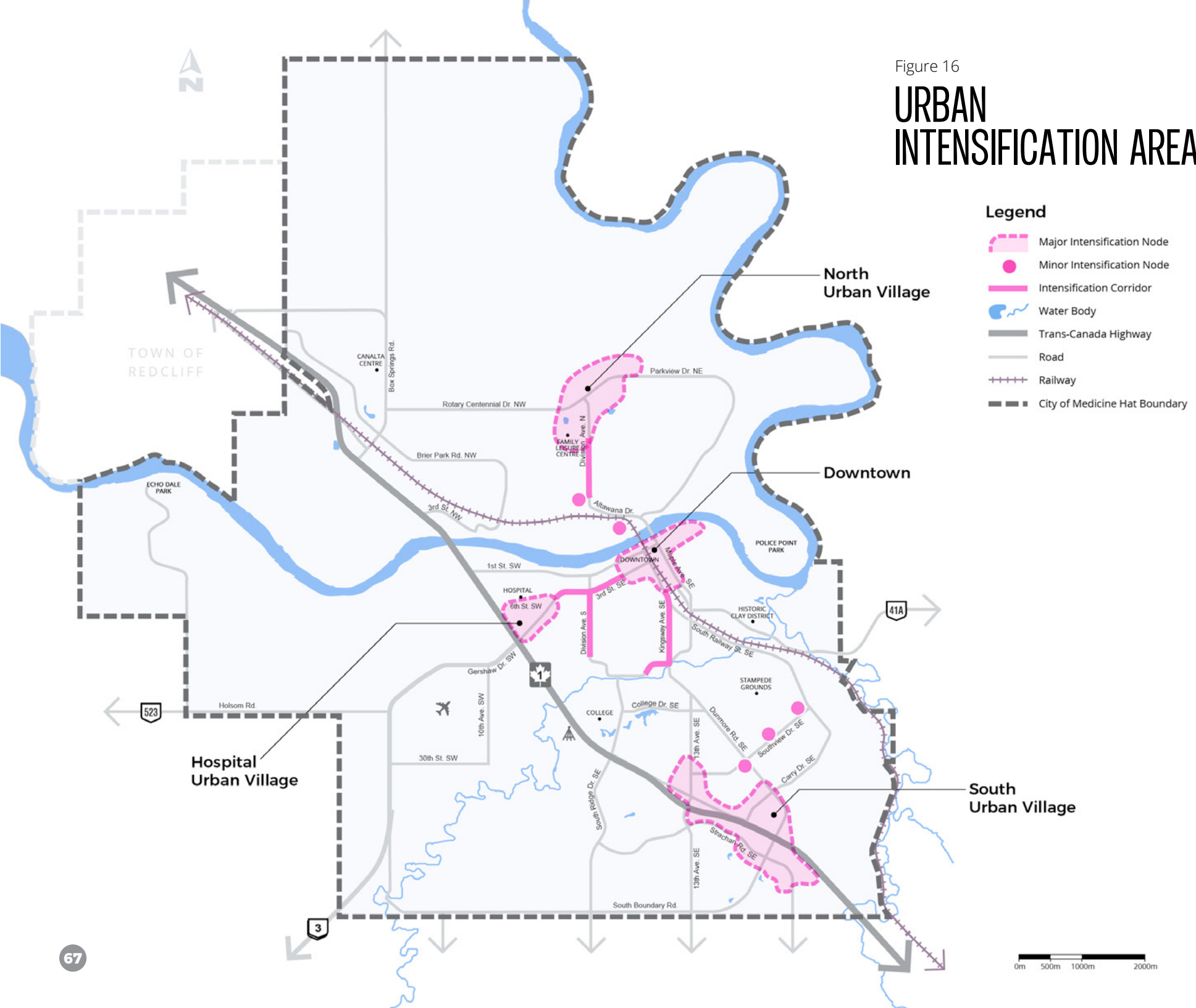
Third, where infrastructure capacity exists in developed areas or may be increased at manageable cost, adding more development and people to these areas makes more efficient use of existing infrastructure such as underground services and fire stations. It also makes better use of “soft” infrastructure such as public schools and social services.

In short, strategically increasing density in already urbanized areas plays to the city’s strengths rather than spreading its resources too thinly over an ever-wider territory.

\*Intensification: what it is and what it promises”, The Neptis Foundation, c.2010.

Figure 16

# URBAN INTENSIFICATION AREAS







*A higher density residential development located along a primary corridor.*

2. Specific transportation corridors which connect urban villages (see figure 16 - page 67) should be transitioned to livable main streets which support higher density development, while maintaining their function as primary traffic corridors. These **intensification corridors** should reflect a high-quality urban environment by incorporating:
  - a. low to mid-rise medium density residential buildings;
  - b. low to mid-rise mixed-use buildings with compatible ground floor commercial businesses which provide goods and services for residents in adjacent neighbourhoods;
  - c. major single use buildings that serve adjacent neighbourhoods and benefit from being located on a primary transportation corridor;
  - d. off-street parking space behind, above or underground buildings;
  - e. minimal building setbacks to establish strong street definition;
  - f. multi-modal street design that provides transit connectivity, and that encourages cycling;
  - g. walkable environments with features such as wide sidewalks, universal design pedestrian crossings, pedestrian-level lighting, street trees and street furniture; and
  - h. placemaking features which contribute to creating appealing, character-rich destinations.

3. Functional plans should be created for the retrofitting of primary traffic corridors which will be affected by increased development.
4. Minor intensification nodes should support more site-specific locations for increased density.



4

Encourage minor increases in density through infill development in established neighbourhoods to optimize use of existing land and services.

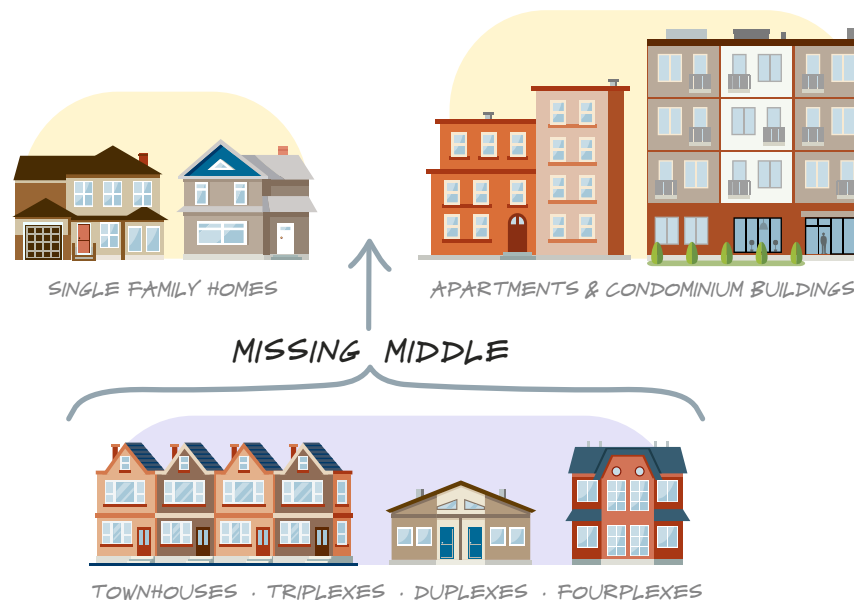
## GUIDING POLICY:

1. Small-scale infill projects should be encouraged and supported in established neighbourhoods. Small scale residential intensification proposals should consider:
  - a. sufficiency of infrastructure capacity;
  - b. compatibility in height, scale and design of other buildings in the neighbourhood;
  - c. respectful continuity with the streetscape;
  - d. compatibility with surrounding land uses;
  - e. appropriate landscaping;
  - f. adequate provisions for parking, lighting, and fencing; and
  - g. a variety of housing types and ownership options.
2. The City supports the development of multiple secondary suites and backyard suites on low density residential lots where appropriate. Reviews of such proposals should consider:
  - a. size and location of the lot;
  - b. provision of off-street parking;

- c. proximity of development on adjacent properties; and
  - d. architectural design of proposed development.
3. Redevelopment and consolidation of existing low density residential lots should be encouraged to accommodate construction of fourplexes and rowhousing within the City Centre sector. Desirable architectural features include:
    - a. front doors facing the street;
    - b. stacked designs to decrease site coverage and to accommodate yard space and off-street parking;
    - c. private yard space available to each dwelling; and
    - d. raised basements to allow egress.
  4. Underutilized neighbourhood commercial sites or institutional sites should be creatively repurposed, including redevelopment as more dense mixed-use buildings.



*An infill duplex in Riverside which integrates well into the mature neighbourhood.*



## IS MEDICINE HAT MISSING A “MIDDLE”?

*Missing middle* describes a range of housing types between single-detached houses and apartment buildings that have gone “missing” from many North American cities. These are multi-unit housing types, such as duplexes, triplexes and rowhouses, that are compatible in scale with single-family homes. Such housing options sit in the mid-range of the spectrum between single family homes and apartment or condominium complexes. Fitting seamlessly into low-rise residential areas, such developments sensitively increase density while encouraging walkability, locally-serving retail and community services and public transportation options.

These developments offer affordable housing options for couples, singles and young families for whom apartment style living is not suitable, or for people who wish to transition from renting to home ownership.

Rowhouses, semi-detached and other similarly structured homes provide the added benefit of an increased tax base, as a higher number of units may be developed on existing lots.





5

Establish an urban redevelopment process that is financially feasible, predictable and results in a net positive experience for neighbourhoods.

## GUIDING POLICY:

1. To ensure the orderly redevelopment of a neighbourhood, **Area Redevelopment Plans** (ARP) should be completed prior to any substantial redevelopment projects within the area. An ARP should address:
  - a. vision and neighbourhood character;
  - b. proposed land uses and densities;
  - c. opportunities and potential for infill and intensification;
  - d. development standards;
  - e. parks and open space;
  - f. infrastructure and community service capacities; and
  - g. transportation network and accessibility.
2. To achieve greater transparency in the redevelopment process, City procedures should:
  - a. ensure ease of public access to information about proposed developments; and
  - b. ensure that mechanisms for public feedback and input are established.
3. The City should actively assist and engage in urban redevelopment projects by:
  - a. transitioning internal City development activities to a mixture of both greenfield and infill redevelopment; and
  - b. actively acquiring, consolidating and preparing land parcels for redevelopment, either internally or through the private sector.
4. The City should facilitate and streamline urban redevelopment by:
  - a. creating open, direct, and regular dialogue with the development industry;
  - b. ensuring that land use regulations and other City policies or procedures support redevelopment; and
  - c. coordinating City infrastructure and servicing replacements with relevant planned developments.
5. The City should explore redevelopment incentives, grants and otherwise creative approaches to encourage and assist private redevelopment projects.
6. In a circumstance where an existing land use (e.g. Industrial) is incompatible with potential redevelopment, the City may examine opportunities to relocate such land uses to more suitable locations, and may consider offering assistance in such relocation.
7. The City should encourage the formation of community-led **neighbourhood associations**. These organizations can lead to positive outcomes such as:
  - a. creating awareness of planning and redevelopment projects;
  - b. assisting the City in understanding the priorities and needs of neighbourhoods;
  - c. ensuring that mechanisms for public feedback and input are established;
  - d. increasing a sense of community within neighbourhoods; and
  - e. creating opportunities for neighbourhood association funded community amenities.
8. The City should create a **brownfield** redevelopment strategy which:
  - a. supports the intensification objectives identified in this Plan;
  - b. examines methods for effective, environmentally sensitive land rehabilitation; and
  - c. during the development of this strategy, considers the inclusion of incentive programs.



*To the east of Woodman Avenue is an example of a brownfield redevelopment. The area was historically used as a greenhouse operation, which was discontinued in 1987. By the early 2000s, remediation was completed and the area was repurposed as a five-hectare residential neighbourhood with various housing options.*

## NEW LIFE FOR OLD SPACES

Redevelopment of brownfield sites has many economic, social and environmental benefits for the property owner, adjacent land owners and the community as a whole.

A vacant, derelict or underutilized site tends to have a negative impact on the surrounding area in several ways. It is likely to negatively affect the value of nearby properties, and may discourage new development. It can also potentially attract vagrancy and criminal activity. Furthermore, if the site was previously used for a commercial or industrial purpose, there may be contaminants such as fuel or chemicals in the ground which can leach into groundwater and/or become airborne.

Remediation of such a site diminishes (in some cases, may reverse) the environmental damage. This can improve property values, increase tax revenue for the municipality and help to strengthen the community fabric.

Breathing new life into brownfield areas helps improve public safety and can lead to more residential and green space. In the case of new commercial development on the remediated site, it may mean additional employment opportunities, which can benefit the community as a whole.



# 5 APPENDICES

## DEFINITIONS

**Accessible** - Designed in a manner that allows ease of reach or ability to participate in activity or opportunities, including access to goods, services, buildings, places and spaces.

**Active Transportation** - Any mode of transportation by which people use their own energy to power their motion including walking, rolling, running, cycling, cross-country skiing, skateboarding, snow-shoeing and use of a manual wheelchair.

**Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP)** - A statutory plan as defined by the Municipal Government Act, that directs the redevelopment, preservation or rehabilitation of existing lands and buildings, generally within *existing areas* of a municipality.

**Area Structure Plan (ASP)** - A statutory plan as defined by the Municipal Government Act, that directs the future land use patterns, transportation and utility networks, and sequence of development in *new communities*.

**Asset Management Plan** - A planning tool for managing existing and new municipal assets in order to maximize benefits, reduce risks and provide satisfactory levels of service to a community in a sustainable manner.

**Autonomous Vehicle** - A vehicle that is capable of sensing its environment and navigating safely with little or no human input.

**Bio-Swale** - A linear channel designed to concentrate and convey stormwater runoff while removing debris and pollution.

**Boulevard** - The area between the edge of a roadway and the legal property line of the immediately adjacent property, except the area covered by a public sidewalk.

**Brownfield Site** - An abandoned, vacant, derelict or underutilized property where past actions have resulted in real or perceived contamination and where there is an active potential for redevelopment.

**Built Environment** - People-made places and spaces designed and constructed to serve their

social, economic and environmental needs.

**City** - Where capitalized as the “City of Medicine Hat” or the “City”, refers to the City of Medicine Hat as a municipal government, or corporation. Where written in lower case as “the city” or as “Medicine Hat”, refers to the physical area of the municipality.

**City Asset** - any resource, facility, infrastructure or property that is owned by the City of Medicine Hat.

**Compact Development** - A land use pattern that uses land efficiently through creative and intensive site, neighbourhood and district design. Generally includes a variety of land uses and dwelling types, particularly medium and higher density forms.

**Conservation Reserve** - A municipality may require land to be provided as conservation reserve if it contains features such as wildlife corridors, significant tree stands, or other environmentally significant features.

**Constraint Analysis** - A study identifying real or perceived impediments to development.

**Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)** - An initiative that assists in creating healthy and safe communities through environmental design. It is based on the premise that the design of the physical environment directly affects users' behaviour.

**Critical Mass of Population** - A sufficient number of residents in an area, which has the result of self-sustaining human occupancy and activity, and further growth.

**Density** - Population density is a measurement of population per unit area.

**Environmental Reserve** - Land that is not suitable for development and contains features such as a wetlands, coulee, floodplain, or natural drainage course. Environmental reserves are used to reserve natural features of land, prevent pollution, ensure public access, and prevent the development of land that is unstable or subject to flooding.

**Escarpment** - A steep slope formed by the erosive action of water, and normally adjacent to a watercourse.

**Façade Setback** - The distance between a building or development and a front property line.

**Flood Hazard Area** - All areas at risk of overland flooding; is typically divided into floodway and flood fringe and may also include areas of overland flow.

**Flood Mitigation Infrastructure** - Measures taken to permanently protect individual buildings or other developments from flood damage.

**Floodway** - The portion of a flood risk area where flood waters are the deepest, fastest and most destructive.

**Functional Plan** - A conceptual design plan for servicing or transportation, supported by research and technical studies, but which does not contain detailed engineering.

**Greenfield Development** - New residential or non-residential land uses constructed on previously undeveloped land, such as agricultural land.

**Grey Water** - The relatively clean waste water from baths, sinks, washing machines, and other home appliances.

**Growth Management Strategy (GMS)** - A planning document that aligns other plans, policies and strategies for the orderly and appropriate growth of a municipality.

**HAT Smart** - A City of Medicine Hat initiative whose mandate is to educate consumers and promote energy conservation and renewable energy initiatives in the community.

**Heritage Site** - A manmade structure, natural site or other area of historical, cultural and/or architectural significance.

**High Density Residential** - Housing that includes mid-rise apartments over five stories and high-rise housing developments.

**Infill** - The development of vacant parcels within previously built areas. These areas are usually already serviced by existing public infrastructure, such as transportation, water, wastewater, and other utilities.

**Infrastructure** - The physical assets developed and used to support the city's people and activities. The City's infrastructure inventory includes such assets as drainage, roads and right-of-way infrastructure, parks and green spaces, buildings, fleet vehicles, transit facilities, buildings, traffic control devices, recreation facilities, computer networks, library, etc.

**Intensification** - The development of a property, site or area in an existing neighbourhood at a higher density than currently exists. Intensification can be achieved through redevelopment, infill, development of vacant/underutilized lots or through the conversion of existing buildings.

**Intensification corridor** - Areas of street-oriented uses which incorporate a mix of retail, employment and residential uses, developed at overall greater densities, located along arterial roads serving as major transit routes.



**Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP)** - A plan which provides for the coordination of planning between neighbouring municipalities. Jointly approved and administered by the affected municipalities, it is particularly focused on providing guidance for the development and regulation of lands close to the shared boundary.

**Invasive Species** - A species of flora or fauna that is not native to a specific location, and that has a tendency to spread to a degree believed to cause damage to the environment, the economy or human health.

**Linear Park** - A park in an urban or suburban setting that is substantially longer than it is wide.

**Low Density Residential** - Residential development that includes single-detached homes, duplexes, backyard and secondary suites and cluster housing.

**Low Impact Development** - An approach to land development which intentionally applies methods to conserve natural resource systems and reduce infrastructure costs.

**Medium Density Residential** - Housing that includes row housing, stacked row housing and low to mid-rise apartments (or multi-unit housing) up to and including five stories.

**Micro Mobility** - refers to a range of small, lightweight devices operating at speeds typically below 25 km/h (15mph) and is ideal for trips up to 10km. Includes electric scooters, Ebikes, and similar options.

**Mixed-Use Building** - A building that can include residential, commercial, cultural and institutional uses.

**Mixed-Use District** - An urban area that can include residential, commercial, cultural and institutional uses, and where those functions are to some degree physically and functionally integrated.

**Modified Grid** - Street design with straight streets running at right angles to each other at regular intervals, with continuity of some streets broken to avoid monotony and provide a sense of enclosure.

**Multi-modal** - A street design which provides safe, attractive, and convenient travel by foot, by cycle, on transit, as well as in motorized vehicles.

**Municipal Government Act (MGA)** - Alberta's provincial law which defines how a municipality can function, develop land, raise funds for things like services, and more. The three themes of the MGA are planning and development, governance and administration, and assessment and taxation.

**Municipal Planning Commission** - A local group which acts as the principal advisory body to City Council in matters relating to land use planning.

**Municipal Reserve** - Land provided, as part of a subdivision, by the developer without compensation for park and school purposes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Government Act. This includes lands dedicated as Municipal Reserve (MR), School Reserve (SR) and Municipal and School Reserve (MSR).

**Municipal Servicing Standards** - Standards which are intended to provide specific guidelines to assist municipalities and developers in the design, preparation and submission of plans and specifications for construction of municipal improvements and systems (roadways, water distribution systems, sewer systems, storm water facilities). Medicine Hat's guidelines are described in the Municipal Servicing Standards Manual (MSSM).

**Natural Assets** - Parts of the natural environment, such as the river, creeks and urban forest, that contribute to the provision on or more engineered municipal services. (ie: fresh water provision, stormwater management, flood mitigation, etc.)

**Natural Increase** - The difference between the number of births and the number of deaths recorded over a period. (AKA natural population surplus).

**Neighbourhood Association** - A group of residents or property owners who advocate for or organize activities within a neighbourhood.

**Node** - A place in a city where people and transportation routes congregate and converge, i.e. transit-oriented, pedestrian-friendly areas where high concentrations and a wide-variety of residential, employment, retail and other uses are located.

**Off-Site Levy Bylaw** - A bylaw of the City of Medicine Hat specifying the sharing of costs between the City and developers respecting the provision of existing and future infrastructure shared between the existing and proposed city population (e.g. water and sewage treatment plant expansion, major trunk lines, major roads). The MGA establishes details of what can be included in an off-site levy bylaw.

**Open Space** - An area of outdoor land or water that is publicly owned or publicly accessible, including municipal parks, civic spaces, provincial or federal parkland, institutional campuses and other public spaces.

**Park** - Any land acquired, developed or used by the City as a public park, sports field, playground, recreational area or cemetery, title to which is vested in the name of the City. Includes land acquired by the City through subdivision as Municipal Reserve or Environmental Reserve.

**Placemaking** - Involves the planning, design, management and programming of shared use spaces to help define a community's cultural, economic, social and ecological identity.

**Redevelopment** - The creation of new units, uses or lots on previously developed land in existing neighbourhoods.

**Renewable Energy** - Energy that is collected from renewable resources, which are naturally replenished on a human timescale, such as sunlight, wind, rain, watercourse, and geothermal heat.

**Riparian Area** - Areas that surround water bodies in the watershed and are composed of moist to saturated soils, water-loving plant species and their associated ecosystems.

**Saamis Archaeological Site** - A 36 acre area located in the Seven Persons Creek valley, designated as a Provincial Historic Site in 1984.

**Sensitive Environmental Area** - A natural area site that has been inventoried prior to potential development and which, because of its features or characteristics, is significant to Medicine Hat from an environmental perspective. May include, for example, areas containing rare flora, wildlife habitat, floodplains, riparian areas, wetlands, escarpments, and/or native grasslands.

**South Saskatchewan Regional Plan** - A long term regional land use plan for the south area of Alberta including the municipalities of Calgary, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Brooks, and Airdrie.

**South Saskatchewan Watershed** - An area of land in Alberta and Saskatchewan that catches precipitation and drains into the South Saskatchewan River.

**Stranded Asset** - a resource that once had value or produced income but no longer does, usually due to external change, including changes in technology, markets and societal habits.

**Streetscape** - All the elements that make up the physical environment of a street and define its character. This includes paving, trees and vegetation, lighting, building type and style, setback, pedestrian, cycle and transit amenities, street furniture, etc.

**Sustainability** - An approach which focuses on meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. It is composed of the three pillars of economic, environmental, and social.

**Traffic Calming** - The use of physical design and other measures to improve safety for motorists, pedestrians and cyclists.



**Universal Design** - The design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability.

**Urban Design** - The process of giving form, shape, and character to groups of buildings, to whole neighbourhoods, and to a city.

**Urban Forest** - The trees located within city limits, whether planted or naturally occurring. All trees found in a city, whether in parks, roadways, natural areas or on private property are part of the urban forest.

**Urban Transect** - A method which defines a series of distinct zones in a city, which transition from natural and sparse rural areas to the dense urban core.

**Urban Village** - An urban development typically characterized by medium-density housing, mixed use zoning, good public transit access and an emphasis on pedestrianization and public space.

**Visitable Housing** - the simplest form of accessible design, allowing social visits by people using a mobility device.

**Walkability** - The extent to which the built environment allows people to walk to get to everyday destinations. Walkability can

be affected by street connectivity, mix of land uses, destinations and pedestrian infrastructure.

**Waterfront Development District** - A Downtown area of proposed long-term redevelopment. See figure 10 on page 27.

**Watershed** - A land area that channels rainfall and snow melt to creeks, streams, and rivers.

**Wayfinding Features** - A system designed to facilitate people navigating a space or orienting themselves within a physical environment.

**Xeriscaping** - A style of landscape design requiring little or no irrigation or other maintenance; commonly used in arid regions.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Plan is a result of the input, expertise and collaboration offered by dozens of organizations and hundreds of individuals. The project team would like to thank the Municipal Planning Commission, Technical Coordinating Committee, City Departments and staff, City Council and the numerous community stakeholder groups and boards that contributed to the Plan, as well as the public for their valuable insight and participation.

## ADMINISTRATION

- Robert Nicolay, Chief Administrative Officer
- Dennis Egert, Commissioner of Corporate Services
- Brian Mastel, Commissioner of Public Services
- Brad Maynes, Commissioner of Energy & Utilities
- Stan Schwartzberger, Commissioner of Development & Infrastructure

## MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

- Ted Clugston, Mayor
- Robert Dumanowski
- Julie Friesen
- Darren Hirsch
- Jamie McIntosh
- Kris Samraj
- Phil Turnbull
- Jim Turner
- Brian Varga

## myMH MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

- Dwight Brown, General Manager of Municipal Works
- Rochelle Pancoast, General Manager of Utilities Business Development & Support
- Leah Prestayko, General Manager of Community Development
- Kent Snyder, General Manager of Planning & Development Services
- James Will, General Manager of Parks & Recreation

## myMH MASTER PLAN PROJECT TEAM

- Robert Sissons, Superintendent of Planning Policy
- Shawn Champagne, Planning Officer II
- Marty Knutson, Urban Designer

Many thanks to V3 Companies of Canada and Applications Management Consulting Ltd. for the completion of the growth management strategy.

## PHOTO CREDITS

Credits are shown adjacent to images. Images without credits are provided by City of Medicine Hat staff, Ingimage and Shutterstock.