

plan WESTLOCK COUNTY



WESTLOCK COUNTY  
MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

BYLAW NO. 05-2016

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# Acknowledgements

Westlock County Council and Municipal Planning Services Ltd. would like to thank the many community members who contributed to this plan by attending public meetings, participating in workshop exercises, sharing local knowledge, and providing written feedback. The Westlock County Municipal Development Plan is the result of your community pride and hard work.



# Executive Summary

Westlock County has demonstrated steady and continued growth over the last 10 years. Subdivision and development permit numbers have been consistently moderate to high and it is anticipated that this steady, moderate growth will continue over the next 25 years. Plan Westlock – the Municipal Development Plan of Westlock County provides a snapshot in time of the County’s current goals and objectives and establishes a policy framework for supporting growth and development within the County while ensuring that the rural character, agricultural land base and distinctive ecological features that contribute the uniqueness and quality of life of County residents are not compromised.

The Plan review process was initiated in early 2014. Data was collected and public consultation sessions were held. The draft MDP was prepared and reviewed by administration in the spring and summer of 2015 and the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of public consultation was held in January 2016. At that time the County hosted two open houses and a full day planning workshop to explain changes to the Plan and garner feedback. The final MDP revisions and Council approval of the MDP took place in March of 2016.

Highlights of some of the MDP policies include:

## **Residential Policies**

- The County’s residential growth strategy, which recognizes the need to accommodate a diverse mix of housing choices for existing and future residents.
- Parcels for country living are encouraged to be small subdivisions (four parcels per quarter section including farmsteads, vacant parcels, agricultural parcels and fragments) located along year-round maintained roads.
- A maximum of 8.08 ha (20.0 ac.) can be removed from an Agricultural quarter section for country residential use. Parcels for country residential living will be encouraged to be no greater than 10 acres per subdivision area and be located on low productivity agricultural land. However, larger parcels may be allowed to accommodate existing large, spread-out farmsites.
- Higher intensity residential developments (more than three country residential use parcels per quarter section) are encouraged to locate away from existing confined feeding operations and near existing urban areas and hamlets where access to infrastructure and community services is more readily available.

## **Economic & Community Development**

- The MDP identifies growth node locations throughout the County which offer the potential for additional more intensive industrial, commercial, country residential and recreational development. The County encourages the development of planned business parks, recreation destinations and residential subdivisions in identified growth nodes. New development will be designed to best utilize existing infrastructure, integrate natural and physical features and to provide buffering measures from adjacent residential and/or institutional land uses.
- Westlock County supports the “Right to Farm” of County residents. Land use policies protect productive agricultural land from being fragmented and re-designated for other uses. However, the County also recognizes that in some locations (near urban and community areas) the best agricultural lands are also the most desirable commercial and industrial lands and so the Plan provides opportunities for high intensity nodes of commercial and industrial uses in these areas.



- The County also recognizes that the intensity and scale of agricultural operations is changing and provides protection for agri-industrial uses throughout the County.
- Small scale agricultural operations and value added agricultural operations are encouraged throughout the County to provide opportunities for cottage industries and local agri-business development.

## **Other Highlights**

- The MDP includes policies to protect the natural environment, including, rivers and valleys, lakes, aquifers, wetlands, flood susceptible areas and other environmentally significant features. The unique environmentally significant areas that abound across the County have been identified and incorporated into the MDP.
- The MDP was developed with a strong emphasis on maintaining and improving the efficiency of the existing municipal infrastructure. Development along higher standard roads including arterial and collector roads, within the County are encouraged.
- The MDP also includes policies addressing:
  - Municipal cooperation between the County, the Town of Westlock, the Village of Clyde, and the Summer Village of Larkspur to help plan and promote the region; and
  - Heritage conservation policies to protect, preserve, and promote heritage resources for future generations.

## **Concluding Remarks**

When finalized and adopted, Plan Westlock will supersede the previous MDP adopted by Council in 2003. The new MDP is consistent with the Provincial Land Use Framework and Land Use Policies. The Plan upholds the vision of community members, stakeholders and County Council. Plan Westlock provides responsible land management and economic development strategies to support the values and aspirations of County residents and the greater Westlock region.



# 1 | Introduction

Westlock County is an expansive rural municipality located in west-central Alberta, just over 50 km north-west of the City of Edmonton. With traditional agricultural roots, a growing population and increasing demand for residential and recreational development, Westlock County's future is full of promise and opportunity.

This Municipal Development Plan (MDP) seeks to find a balance between sustainable agricultural practices, residential growth pressures, creating opportunities for development diversification and ecosystem health.

Agriculture has been the primary economic driver for the County for the past century. Westlock County continues to foresee agriculture and agricultural services as a major economic force throughout the municipality. Conserving agricultural land and implementing measures to strengthen and diversify agricultural activities remains a priority in this Plan.

Resource development, including oil and gas, sand, gravel and aggregate extraction, plays an increasingly significant role in the development and economic success of the County and its residents. Oil and gas development, both within the County and regionally, contribute to improved living standards and service provision in the community. Westlock County recognizes the importance of resource development to the economic wellbeing of the community, as well as the need to minimize conflicts between resource extraction development and other land uses.

Urban growth in neighbouring centres, especially the Town of Westlock, has a significant impact on development levels and demands on land, infrastructure and services within the County. Likewise, development in the County affects its urban neighbours. The County recognizes the importance of inter-municipal cooperation in mitigating potential conflicts between urban and rural development.

Residential development within the agricultural land in Westlock County continues to be in demand. Westlock County recognizes that many people wish to enjoy the benefits of rural living on acreages. However, country residential development can affect the agricultural land use on neighbouring properties. This Plan seeks to find a balance between preserving the rural character of the County and protecting working landscapes, while still allowing country residential developments where appropriate.

Westlock County recognizes the importance of its *Natural Capital*. Natural capital means:

“Looking at the County's economy as including land, natural resources, and ecosystem services such as: water recharge areas, ground water, surface water systems, natural tourism, and recreation assets, rather than the narrower definition of “economy” as referring exclusively to man-made capital (goods and services).”

The County's natural capital is an asset to be maintained and enhanced for future generations because it supports important economic, ecological and social activities. The County recognizes that sustaining natural capital is a precondition for economic prosperity. Well-managed landscapes link economic prosperity to environmental protection for the long-term benefits of clean water, air, aesthetically

# 1 | introduction

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pleasing landscapes and ecologically sound habitats. Development decisions must preserve the County's natural capital and the ability of future generations to enjoy at least the same level of prosperity as today.

In the face of continued growth, this Plan broadly seeks to maintain the rural character of Westlock County, enable sustainable economic diversification, encourage vibrant and resilient communities, and to preserve the County's natural capital for future generations.

## 1.1 Legislative Requirements

The Alberta Municipal Government Act (MGA) gives extensive governing powers to municipalities in relation to land management and land development. The MGA requires municipalities with a population of 3,500 (or more) to adopt a Municipal Development Plan (MDP) in order to outline a broad set of goals, objectives, and policies that will guide land use management practices within the County for years to come. The province also regulates land use and land management through the Provincial Land Use Policies and the Subdivision and Development Regulation. Additionally, the Land Stewardship Act and the Land Use Framework are provincial statutes and policy documents that direct the province to develop regional plans for each of the province's seven watersheds in order to guide future land use and development. When the North Saskatchewan Regional Plan (NSRP) is finalized and approved by the province it will apply to the County. The Westlock County MDP supports and is consistent with all applicable provincially legislated requirements.

The main focus of the MDP is to assist Council – and the County's approving authorities – in achieving and maintaining orderly and efficient land use and development. The MDP takes into account both the past and present human and physical environments. Considering where the community has been, where it is currently, and where it wants to go enables the County to set in place a “plan” for how to reach its desired destination. Plan goals, objectives and policies are supported on baseline environmental data, available municipal infrastructure information, stakeholder interests and the socio-perceptual concerns identified by the community, administration and Council throughout the Plan review process. This multi-faceted and strategic approach to developing the MDP ensures that the vision enshrined in the Plan represents the needs and objectives of current County residents and stakeholders.

Westlock County recognizes that other provincial and federal statutes will have a role to play in the future development of the County. In a spirit of cooperation, consultation and communication, the County looks forward to working with government agencies and community stakeholders in the implementation of this plan in order to achieve a pattern of land use and development that is attractive, efficient, sustainable, and beneficial to County residents and the larger region.

## 1.2 MDP Review Process

Beginning in early 2014, Westlock County Council and administration, with assistance from Municipal Planning Services, began the process of preliminary data collection in order to complete a profile of the County today. Over the following 24 months, Westlock County conducted public consultation sessions within the community and prepared a draft of this MDP. The County actively solicited meaningful public input on the draft MDP over the fall of 2014 and winter of 2015/2016 prior to the finalization of the Plan in 2016.

### 1.2.1 Project Phasing

The following outlines the phasing of the MDP project:

**Figure 1: Project Phasing**



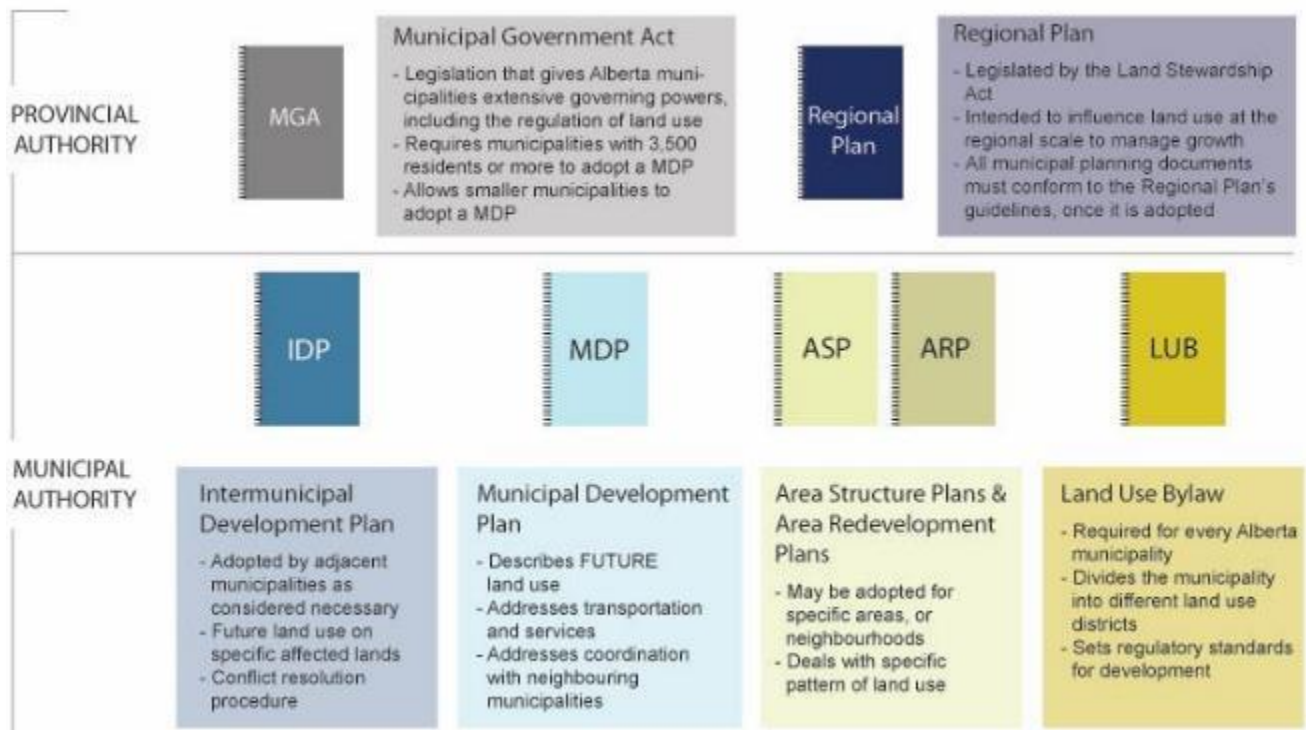
## 1.3 Guide to the Plan

The Municipal Development Plan provides a broad land use, infrastructure, and transportation framework for the future development within the County. It includes a series of policies which address the preferred characteristics of future development and the development process within the County.

The broad provisions of an MDP are often implemented through the preparation of Area Structure Plans (ASPs) and/or Area Redevelopment Plans (ARPs). Specific development issues between adjacent municipalities can be addressed through an Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP). These are considered statutory plans and are subject to provisions in the MGA. All of a municipality's statutory plans must be consistent with each other. This implies that all of a municipality's ASPs and ARPs must conform to the MDP and any IDPs adopted by the municipality.

In addition, changes to the Land Use Bylaw (LUB), which regulates land use and development throughout the County, must also be consistent with the MDP.

**Figure 2: Statutory and Regulatory Planning Documents**



Development that does not conform to the MDP will not be approved; however, an amendment to the Plan may be considered by Council if such development is thought to be desirable.

When Council is determining the suitability of a proposed MDP amendment Council will evaluate the amendment in relation to how it conforms to the Plan Goals identified in Section 1.5 of the MDP and the application plan objectives contained within each section. Amendments that conform to the Plan Goals and objectives may be approved.

For the purposes of land use planning and development, this Plan will serve as the senior municipal land use planning document, and will be implemented, among other ways, through the Westlock County Land Use Bylaw.

Decision making on all development permit and subdivision applications will conform to the spirit and intent of the goals, objectives and policies of this Plan.

The boundaries of the land use classes described in this Plan's Future Land Use Map are approximate only and might not follow legal surveyed boundaries. Minor adjustments or variances that may be required to land use classes, the location of future roads, quantities or figures shall not require an amendment to this Plan. In addition, Municipal Development Plans should be periodically reviewed to take into account changing circumstances and municipal preferences.

## 1.4 Plan Philosophy and Principles

Sound planning and development initiatives are necessary in order to achieve a balance between supporting large and small scale agricultural pursuits within the County while also planning for resource-based industry, industrial sector growth, commercial development and; in appropriate locations; residential growth.

### 1.4.1 Philosophical Principles

Westlock County's philosophy for managing growth and its land base is reflected in this Municipal Development Plan. The philosophy comprises three principles:

- Principle #1:** Land uses and development activities must respect and maintain the integrity of Westlock County's land base and ecological resources.
- Principle #2:** Growth must be managed and directed in a compatible, transparent, equitable manner that recognizes the diverse needs and aspirations of all County residents.
- Principle #3:** Smart growth principles will be applied to maintain the integrity of the land base and to promote sustainable development such that the needs of the present generation are met without compromising the County's rural character or the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

### 1.4.2 Planning Principles

The Municipal Development Plan policies also recognize three fundamental planning principles that are embodied in the Municipal Government Act and the Provincial Land Use Policies.

- Principle #1:** In carrying out their planning responsibilities, municipalities are encouraged never to lose sight of the rights of individual citizens and landowners. Municipalities must assess the impact of any planning decision on individuals having regard to the purpose statement of the planning legislation.
- Principle #2:** Municipalities should establish land use patterns which make efficient use of land, infrastructure, public services and public facilities and which contribute to the development of healthy, safe, and viable communities by encouraging appropriate mixes of all land use types and a wide range of economic opportunities.
- Principle #3:** Planning should be proactive, comprehensive and carried out in a fair, open, consistent, and equitable manner.

### 1.4.3 The Approach

Traditionally, developments in rural Alberta have been characterized by the following features: high consumption of land; low housing density; car dependent land use patterns that are poorly suited for

walking and/or cycling; neighbourhood designs that emphasize privacy rather than community; less efficient use of infrastructure and higher costs for new infrastructure; single-family detached houses for a limited range of incomes and demographics; and/or fragmented working and natural lands crisscrossed with both active and abandoned oil and gas lines, wells, and facilities.

Westlock County recognizes that some of these features are necessary for ensuring the continued success of both small-scale and large-scale agricultural activities and residential developments within the County as well as major resource sector economic drivers that employ many County residents. At the same time, the County recognizes that these features, when applied to un-planned multi-lot developments may not be compatible with best planning practices because they can result in developments that consume the forests, wetlands, and agricultural lands necessary for ecosystem health, water security, and the long term agricultural capability of County lands while also placing a heavy burden on the County's infrastructure systems. Through the application of best planning practices, these negative impacts can be mitigated to continue to ensure a range of opportunities through-out the County for commercial, residential, industrial, and agricultural land uses while minimizing infrastructure costs and negative impacts on adjacent land users.

The County's approach to land management requires that the Municipal Development Plan balance the integrity of the rural way of life and small "town" feel of existing hamlet areas and residential subdivisions within the County while creating opportunities for furthering agricultural, commercial, resource based and industrial sector growth. In order to achieve this balance, the County recognizes that this Municipal Development Plan must provide policies that facilitate sustainable rural community development and growth. Community development is multi-faceted; encompassing not just economic imperatives, but also environmental, social and cultural components. Each of these components is integral to the success of the others. Just as environmental stewardship can lead to innovative economic opportunities, economic growth can lead to social and cultural development, improving people's quality of life, and the overall desirability of the community as a place to live, work, and recreate.

## 1.4.4 Smart Growth

To facilitate sound planning and development within the County, Plan Westlock is structured around principles of *Smart Growth* that have been modified slightly to apply more specifically to a rural setting. These principles emphasize the value of enhancing quality of life for residents and preserving significant natural areas in order to ensure that new growth and development in the County will be socially, fiscally and environmentally responsible well into the future. The Smart Growth themes that are evident in this Plan include:

- Fostering an identity which is unique, vibrant, diverse, and inclusive.
- Nurturing engaged citizens. Community members and volunteers will participate in community life and decision-making.
- Nurturing the redevelopment of existing hamlet areas and residential subdivisions through the provision of prescriptive land use policies.
- Facilitating the provision of diverse housing opportunities. People in different family types, life stages and income levels will be able to afford a home in the County.
- Maximizing the use of existing infrastructure.



- Encouraging growth in existing hamlets and in proximity to urban centres with access to municipal and regional infrastructure, and use investments in infrastructure (such as roads and schools) efficiently.
- Preserving open spaces, natural beauty and environmentally sensitive areas by encouraging development with design features that protect the natural landscape and water features.
- Encouraging economic development through economic renewal by supporting new and existing economic assets within the community, traditional regional economic drivers and by identifying growth nodes and corridors.

## 1.4.5 Purpose

The purpose of County’s Municipal Development Plan is to establish a clear 25-year vision for land use and development. The plan establishes a policy framework for implementing the community’s vision for lands use and land management. It also establishes an evaluation framework for measuring how successfully the plan has been implemented when it is next reviewed.

## 1.5 Plan Goals

The MGA provides considerable municipal discretion concerning the contents of Municipal Development Plans. Additionally, the Provincial Land Use Policies provide direction to municipalities in the areas of ecosystem health, resource extraction, management of agricultural lands, water resources and the historical resources. Goals within the County’s MDP are consistent with the requirements in the MGA and the Provincial Land Use Policies. The following goal statements represent the Westlock County’s approach to implementing provincial directives relating to land use and land management as well as the goals identified by the community through the consultation process. These goals are supported by plan objectives and policies.

### Municipal Development Plan Goals

1.5.1	<b>Maintain and enhance the County’s agricultural industries and regional economic drivers.</b>
1.5.2	<b>Facilitate sustainable growth and development in the County by balancing economic growth, environmental protection and the preservation of the County’s rural way of life.</b>
1.5.3	<b>Encourage cost effective, orderly economic development and renewal strategies by supporting land development within Hamlet growth nodes and highway growth corridors to efficiently utilize existing infrastructure and sustain and enhance existing communities.</b>
1.5.4	<b>Encourage growth of the County’s economic development capacity by providing opportunities for resource-based, commercial and industrial development.</b>

1.5.5	Encourage connectivity through the development of a variety of transportation choices including safe infrastructure for walking and cycling and driving in hamlet areas and multi-lot residential areas.
1.5.6	Maintain high quality and cost effective infrastructure within the County.
1.5.7	Maintain a physical separation between incompatible land uses.
1.5.8	Establish land management policies and regulations that minimize negative impacts on working landscapes and significant natural features.
1.5.9	Encourage the provision of diverse housing opportunities in order to ensure that people in different family types, life stages and income levels will be able to afford a home in the County.
1.5.10	Enhance existing regional and community partnerships and seek new collaborative opportunities.
1.5.11	Review the Municipal Development Plan every 5 years to ensure that the County's planning documents are consistent with legislative requirements and reflect the current community.

# 2 | Community Profile

## 2.1 Settlement History

Prior to European colonization in North America, the area now within Westlock County was home to First Nations, including Chipewyan, Slavey, Blackfoot and Cree peoples. With the signing of Treaty 6 beginning in 1876, the region was opened to European settlement.

The Westlock district was surveyed between 1884 and 1910, opening the land for homesteading. Successive waves of homesteaders settled in what was to become Westlock County in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Aided by the construction of railroad lines from Edmonton in 1911 and 1912, new communities formed, including the Village of Clyde, the Town of Westlock, and the Hamlets of Busby, Dapp, Fawcett, Jarvie, Nestow, Pibroch, Pickardville, Tawatinaw and Vimy. These communities provided vital services to the growing agricultural population, including schools, post offices, grain elevators and general stores.

Early European settlers were drawn to the region by aggressive federal settlement initiatives. No one single ethnic group settled what was to become Westlock County. Rather, successive waves of British, Finnish, French, German, Irish, American, Scottish and Ukrainian immigrants contributed to the settling and development of the region.

Westlock County was established in its current form as a Municipal District in 1943, and officially renamed Westlock County in 1998.

## 2.2 Demographic Characteristics

### 2.2.1 Population Characteristics

Between 1996 and 2006, the population of Westlock County remained relatively stable at approximately 6,900 residents. Between 2006 and 2011, however, the population grew by over ten percent.

**Table 1: Westlock County Population over Time**

Year	Population	Percent Change
2011	7,644	+10.6%
2006	6,910	+0.01%
2001	6,859	-1.4%
1996	6,958	-

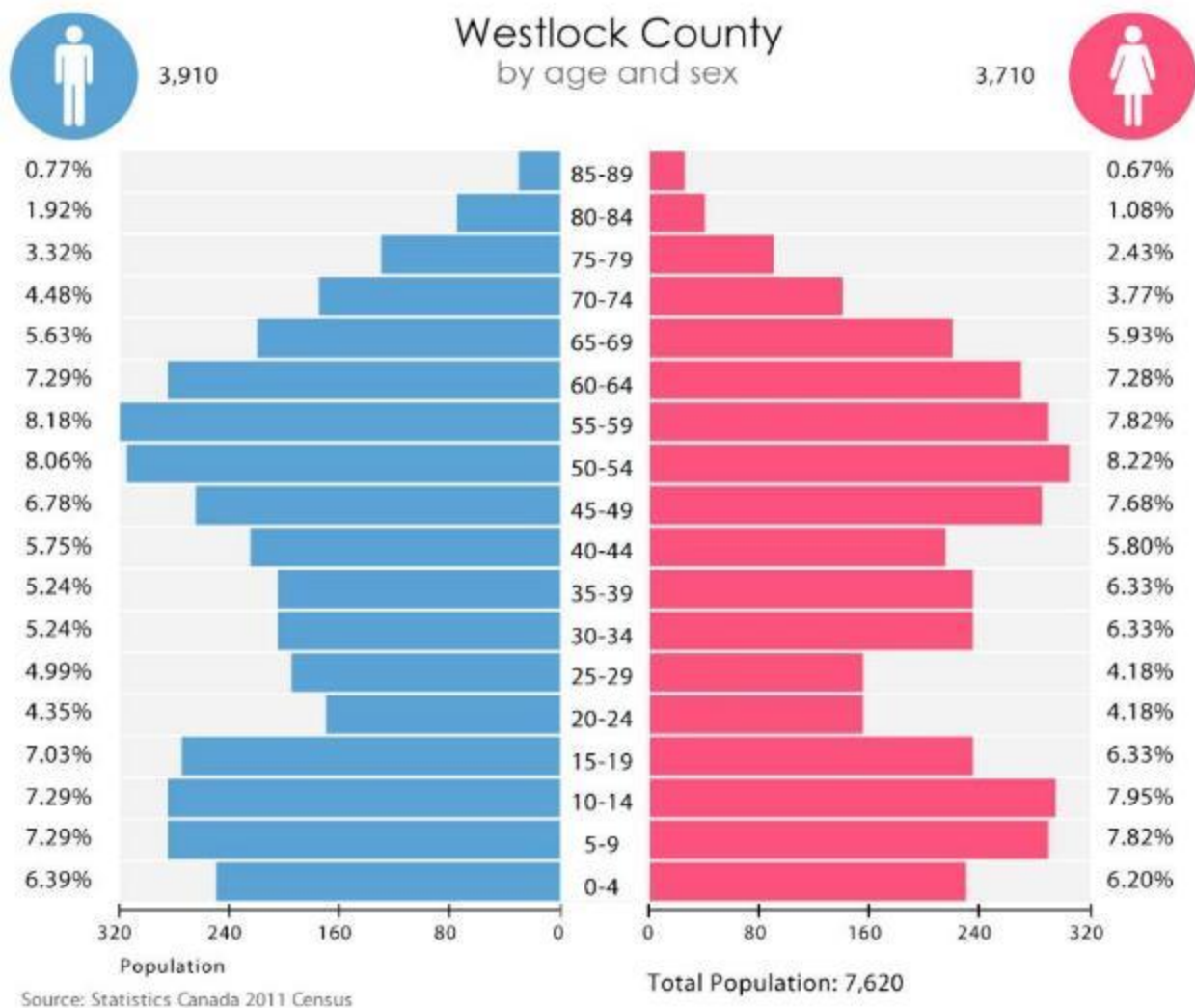
## 2 | community profile

### 2.2.2 Age

As of the last census figures in 2011, the median age of the population of Westlock County is 41.4<sup>1</sup>, which is only significantly older than the median age of the population for Alberta as a whole, at 36.5.

The population pyramid shows a smaller percentage of residents between the ages of 20 and 39. This likely indicates that individuals in this demographic range have relocated outside of the County for education and employment opportunities. While the population pyramid demonstrates a high proportion of older residents (45 and older), the number of residents 19 years and younger is large. There is a slight decrease in the number of children in the 0-4 year cohort.

**Figure 3: Population Pyramid for Westlock County**



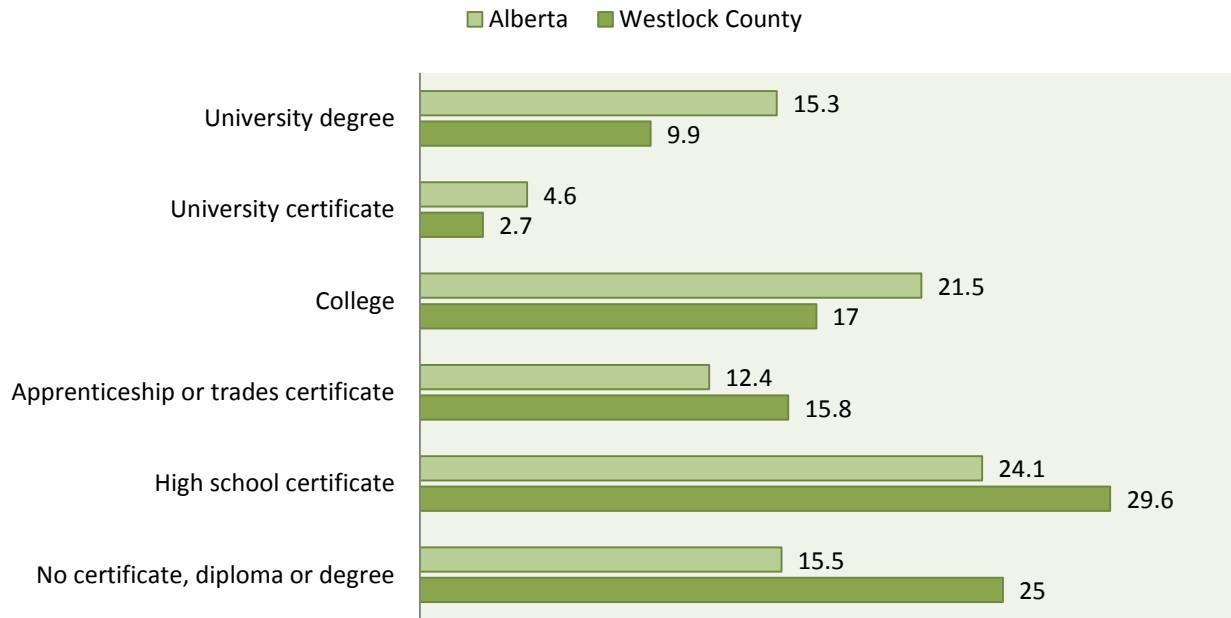
<sup>1</sup> All Statistical data is based on the 2011 Canada Census.

### 2.2.3 Education

The Pembina Hills Regional Division No. 7 serves Westlock County with schools located in the Town of Westlock (Grades K-12) and Busby (Grades K-6). Pembina Hills also offers an outreach education program out of R.F. Staples in the Town of Westlock, and schools on Hutterite colonies.

The educational background of the population of the Westlock County is shown on Figure 3. Education levels for the rest of Alberta are also shown for comparison.

**Figure 4: Education Level Obtained**



Source: Statistics Canada 2011 Census (Note: Figures have been rounded by Statistics Canada)

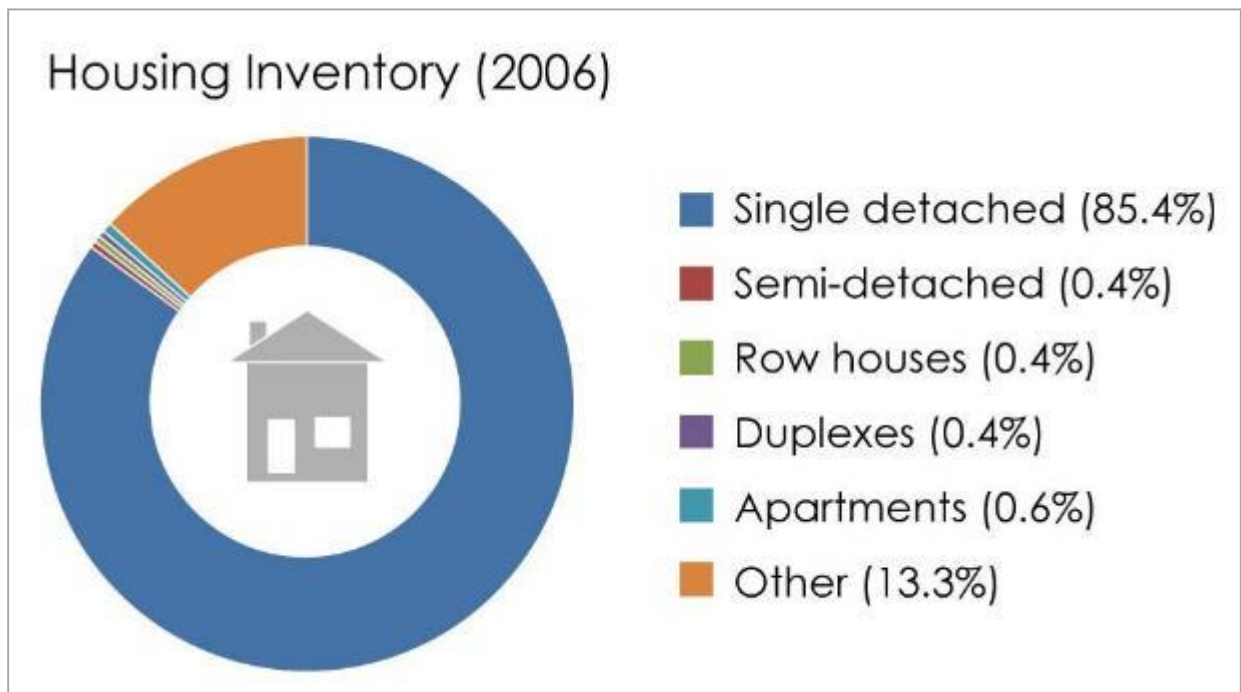
### 2.2.4 Income

From the most recent census figures available (2011), the median pre-tax household income for residents of Westlock County is \$63,696, which is comparable to the Alberta median household income of \$63 988.

### 2.2.5 Housing

Westlock County contains a total of 2 800 dwellings. The vast majority of the housing inventory is made up of low density single detached houses. The other major housing option in the County is manufactured, or movable, homes.

**Figure 5: Westlock County Housing Inventory**

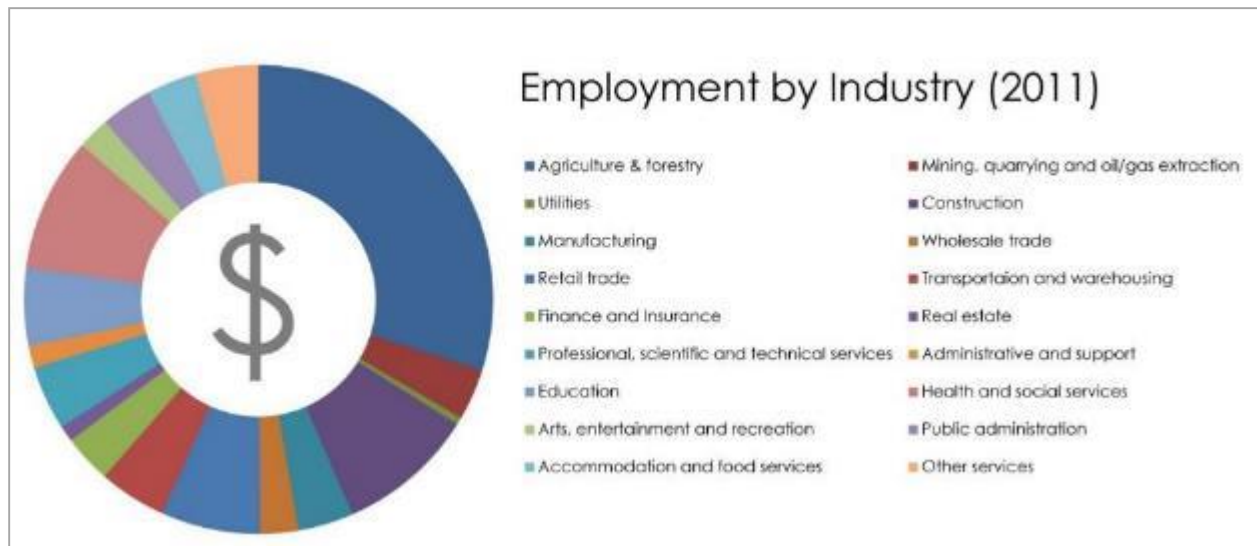


Source: Statistics Canada 2006 Census (Note: According to Statistics Canada “Other” includes mobile homes and other movable structures such as houseboats and railroad cars).

### 2.2.6 Economic Base

Throughout most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, agriculture was the economic underpinning of Westlock County. This continues to be the case today, with approximately 29.6% of all County jobs coming from agricultural industries.



**Figure 6: Westlock County Employment by Industry, Age 15+**

Source: Statistics Canada 2011 Census

## 2.3 Environmental Characteristics

### 2.3.1 General

Westlock County is located within the Boreal Forest Natural Region, and the Dry Mixed-wood Natural Sub-region. Comprising approximately 58% of the province, the Boreal Forest Natural Region is Alberta's largest Natural Area. It is typified by short summers, long winters and sweeping expanses of deciduous, mixed wood and coniferous forests intermixed with fens and wetlands. About 50% of the Dry Mixed-wood Natural Sub-region is suitable for cultivation, particularly barley and forage crops.

### 2.3.2 Fish and Wildlife

Wildlife diversity in the Boreal Forest Natural Region is highest in the south-central and eastern portions of the region, in which Westlock County is located. Common avian species in this area include the Yellow Tail, Sedge Wren, Great-crested Flycatcher, Chestnut-sided Warbler and Blackburnian Warbler, and additional species flourish in deciduous, coniferous and/or mixed forests. Common mammal species include the red squirrel, snowshoe hare, southern red-backed vole, cinereous shrew, least chipmunk, deer mouse, white-tailed and mule deer, black bear, moose, ermine and American beaver.

Within the Natural Region comprising Westlock County, lakes and ponds provide habitat for the ducks, grebes, American Bittern, Marsh wren, boreal chorus frog, wood frog, Canadian Toad, northern redbelly dace, Iowa darter, lake whitefish, burbot, goldeye, lake chub, longnose and white suckers, emerald and spottail shiners, slimy sculpin, ninespine stickleback, walleye, yellow perch and northern pike

## 2 | community profile

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### 2.3.3 Environmentally Significant Areas

Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs), in the context of this plan, refers to those areas within the County that have been designated by Alberta Environment and Parks as representing places that are vital to the long-term maintenance of biological diversity, soil, water, or other natural processes, at multiple spatial scales. They are identified as areas containing rare or unique elements, or areas that include elements that may require special management consideration due to their conservation needs. The province does not regulate or restrict development within these areas; rather the information has been provided to assist municipalities and other decision makers when they are establishing land management policies.

Westlock County has a number of ESAs within its boundaries. The ESAs include areas of national and provincial significance concerning elements of conservation concern, focal species habitat, important wildlife habitat, riparian areas and natural areas. All of the County's ESA's are identified on **Map 8.6 - Environmental Features**.

### 2.3.4 Conservation Areas

Conservation Areas in Alberta are lands which are managed by the Alberta Conservation Association (ACA). The purpose of these lands and the ACA is to manage important wildlife and/or fisheries habitat resources on public and private lands in order to conserve, protect, enhance and provide access to these habitat resources. Conservation Areas may include lands which have been directly purchased, donated, or leased to the ACA and lands affected by a Conservation Easement in which the ACA has an interest.

All lands identified within the Conservation Site database are available for public use, whether privately owned by the Alberta Conservation Association or its partners, or public lands managed by ACA on behalf of the Crown<sup>2</sup>.

There are currently zero (0) recognized Conservation Areas within the Westlock County. However, in the future the County and residents may decide that it is of value to utilize Conservation Easements to conserve, protect and enhance habitat resources within the County.

## 2.4 Current Land Uses

Current land uses within the County include agriculture, residential, commercial, industrial, public and quasi-public as well as resource extraction, transportation, communications and utility uses.

### 2.4.1 Agriculture Uses

Agriculture uses including forestry, silviculture<sup>3</sup> and the provision of services to the agricultural community have traditionally been, and remain, the County's economic backbone.

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<sup>2</sup> "Land Management Program Agreement". Retrieved from: [http://www.abconservation.com/go/tasks/sites/default/assets/File/pdfs/02AboutUs/02RolesandResponsibilities/Land\\_Management\\_Program\\_Agreement.pdf](http://www.abconservation.com/go/tasks/sites/default/assets/File/pdfs/02AboutUs/02RolesandResponsibilities/Land_Management_Program_Agreement.pdf). On: 22 December 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Silviculture means the science and art of cultivating forest crops based on knowledge of the life history and general characteristics of forest trees and on the varying factors at particular sites.



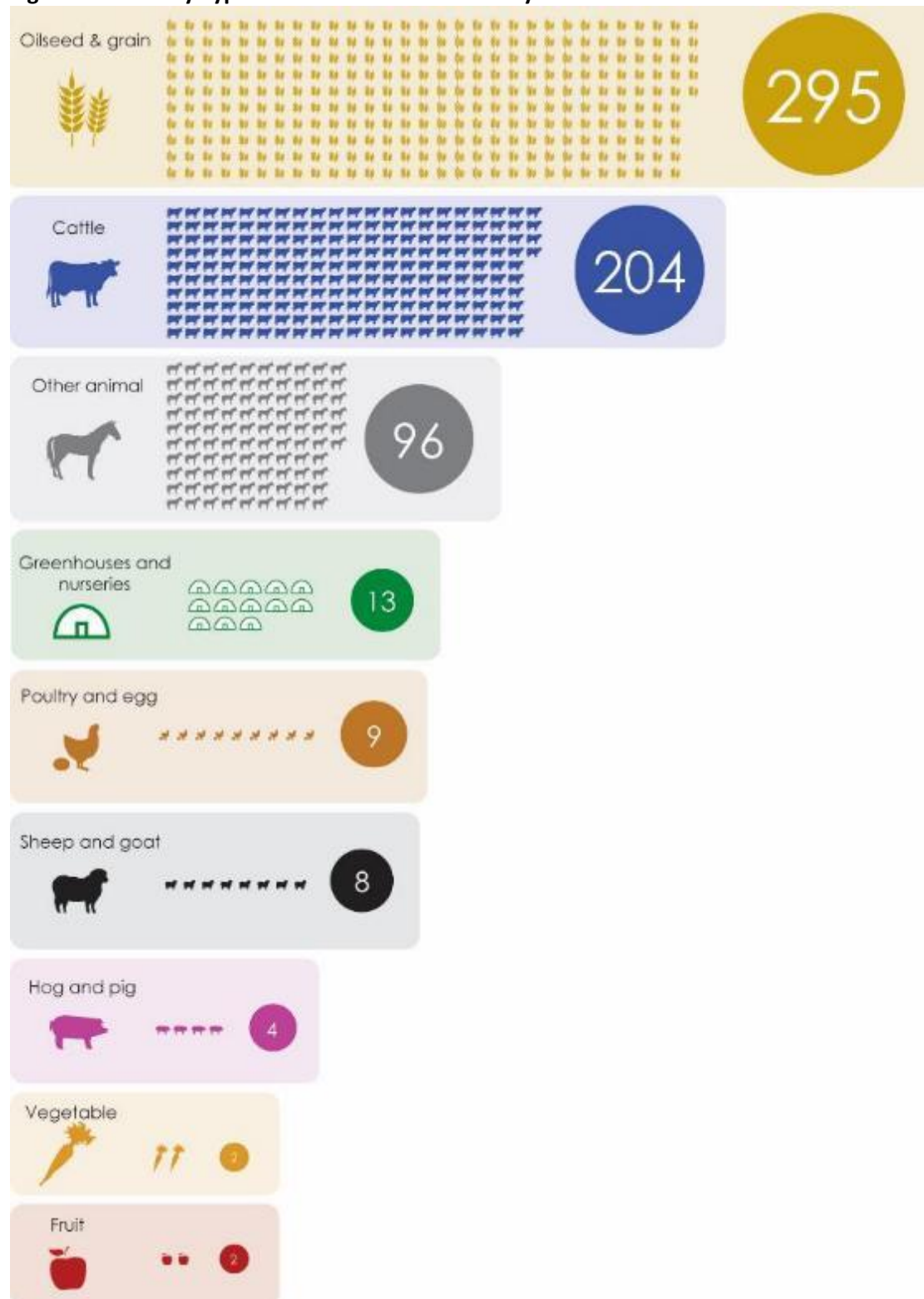
Cattle ranching and farming, and oilseed and grain farming comprise the largest number of farming operations in the County, accounting for approximately 21% and 38% of the agricultural operations in the County, respectively.



**Figure 7: Wheatfield at Sunset**

## 2 | community profile

Figure 8: Farms by Type of Farm in Westlock County



Source: Statistics Canada 2011 Census

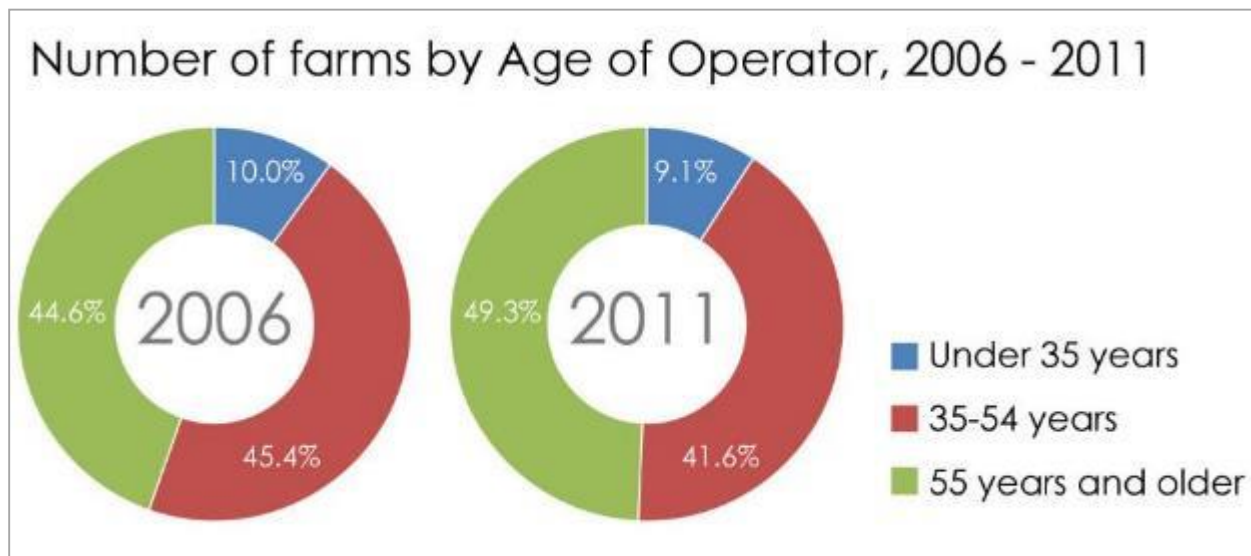
Table 2: Change in Westlock County Farm Area & Ownership

	2001	2006	2011
Farms Under – 10 Acres	27	13	19
Farms – 10 to 129 Acres	80	114	101
Farms – 130 to 239 Acres	227	174	140
Farms – 240 to 399 Acres	145	116	109
Farms – 400 to 559 Acres	141	111	79
Farms – 560 to 759 Acres	115	84	68
Farms – 760 to 1 119 Acres	123	105	90
Farms – 1 120 Acres and over	164	175	171
<b>Total # of Farms</b>	<b>1,022</b>	<b>892</b>	<b>777</b>

Information from the previous agricultural censuses indicate that the number of farm operations in Westlock County is decreasing rapidly. This trend is consistent with data throughout the province. Only farms under ten acres saw an increase between 2006 and 2011, while farm operations over 1,120 acres remained relatively stable.

The percentage of farm operators under 35 years of age is low, and decreasing steadily. These factors impact the economic feasibility of the small family farm and threaten the County’s traditional agricultural community and the County’s economic sustainability.

Figure 9: Age of Farm Operators, 2006-2011



Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 Census of Agriculture

## 2.4.2 Residential Uses

There are three types of residential uses that characterize the County. These include: acreage subdivision in the agricultural area, multi-lot country residential developments in recreation communities, as well as residential developments in the County's Hamlet Areas.

### Country Residential Subdivisions

Throughout the agricultural areas of Westlock County, country residential (or acreage) subdivisions have been limited to one or two parcels per quarter section. This has been done by regulation in the County's Municipal Development Plan and Land Use Bylaw. Up until the passing of this Plan, the number of country residential parcels allowed per quarter section was determined based on the agricultural capability of land. Better quality farm lands have been limited to one parcel per quarter section, while lands with poorer quality lands were allowed up to two. However, site-by-site amendments have been passed to allow increases to these limits, resulting in a large number of quarter sections where additional parcels, beyond the usual limits, have been permitted.

Country residential development has occurred primarily in the southern portion of the County, due to proximity to regional employment centres and access to main transportation routes. This area is also the location of some of Westlock County's best agricultural land.

Continued pressure for country residential subdivision and development is anticipated for the life of this Plan, as provincial and regional population is expected to grow. The policies of this Plan intend to provide opportunities for such development, while also balancing the need to protect agricultural lands and providing fairness to County landowners.



Figure 10: Multi-lot Country Residential Subdivision

**Multi-lot Country Residential Areas**

There are a number of multi-lot residential areas within the County. These areas currently include:

**Table 3: Location of Multi-lot Country Residential Developments**

MULTI-LOT RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT	LEGAL DESCRIPTION
Komarnisky Subdivision	SE 25-61-24-W4
Long Island Lake	NW 7-63-25-W4
Moon Acres	NW & NE 33-58-23-W4
O’Brian Estates	NW 31-59-26-W4
Regal Park Village	NW 20-58-23-W4
Richfield Estates	NW 17-59-26-W4
Spruce Hill Estates	NW 30-59-23-W4
Timber Wood Estates	NE 7-60-26-W4
Westlock Trailer Park	SE 3-60-27-W4
Westview Estates	E ½ SW 2-60-27-W4
Willow Layne	SE 29-59-26-W4
Windsock	SE & SW 31-59-25-W4
Westair	SE & SW 31-59-25-W4

Some of the multi-lot residential developments contain a large number of full time residents while other areas would be best described as seasonal, recreation residential communities. Landowners in the recreation residential communities reside in these developments on a part-time basis and utilize the properties predominantly for recreation and relaxation.

**Urban Residential Areas**

Westlock County includes nine Hamlets: Busby, Dapp, Fawcett, Jarvie, Nestow, Pibroch, Pickardville, Tawatinaw and Vimy. The County’s hamlets are primarily located adjacent to existing and decommissioned rail lines.

Planning for growth (and where appropriate, restrictions on growth in the Hamlets) is an important policy area of this Plan.

**2.4.3 Industrial Uses**

For the purpose of this Municipal Development Plan the term "industry" refers to manufacturing, warehousing and storage; and includes both light and heavy industry. Industries that may have high levels of noxious emissions or noise that may impact adjacent land uses are referred to as heavy industry.

## 2 | community profile

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Medium industry may have noxious emissions or noise, however, the impact of this type of development on adjacent land uses would be deemed minimum. Light industry is not noxious and is generally compatible with other uses. Natural resource extraction industries include such uses as gravel pits and oil and gas wells.

The County also includes a multi-lot industrial development south of the Town of Westlock adjacent to Highway 44, within the IDP area.

At present, industrial uses within the County can be classified as light industrial or heavy industrial, as defined in Westlock County Land Use Bylaw.

### **Light Industrial**

Light industries are industrial uses that involve the manufacturing, processing, fabrication, storage, transportation, distribution or wholesaling of goods and services. The activities associated with light industries are fully contained within an enclosed building and do not emit noise, smoke, odour, dust or vibration beyond the boundaries of the building. Light industries can also include the retail of good and/or services to the general public as secondary components to the industrial use.

### **Heavy Industrial**

Heavy Industrial uses involve the same activities as described under light industrial uses, except that they are carried out in such a manner as they may emit noise, smoke, odour, dust or vibration beyond the boundaries of the lot on which they are located. As such, they may have a greater impact on neighbouring properties and uses.

### 2.4.4 Commercial Uses

Commercial uses within the County can currently be classified as Highway Commercial and Urban Commercial. However, there are also some secondary commercial uses in the rural area which would include welding shops and trucking businesses, many of which operate in association with a rural residence.

#### **Highway commercial**

Highway commercial uses are generally commercial uses which service the traveling public. They are for the most part located adjacent to or close to highways. Existing Highway commercial developments within the County include service stations, gas bars and restaurants.

#### **Urban Commercial**

Urban commercial developments located in or near the hamlet areas include hotels and motels, farm equipment sales, antique stores, farmers markets and general commercial retail services.

### 2.4.5 Public and Quasi-Public Uses

Public and quasi-public uses include public administration and services, and uses for the purposes of community hall and places of worship, instruction, culture, enlightenment, community activities, cemeteries, the provision of utilities, and public utilities. The County currently includes a number of public and quasi-public uses including churches, cemeteries, community halls, utility corridors and schools.

### 2.4.6 Transportation, Communications and Utility Uses

Transportation, communication and utility uses include rights-of-ways, and municipal services such as substations, sewage and refuse disposal facilities, water tanks, water treatment facilities, reservoirs, and pumping stations which are normally associated with transportation, communications and/or utilities.

#### Roadways & Bridges

The County maintains an extensive municipal road network and works cooperatively with regional and provincial partners to ensure the safety and efficient provision of regional roadways.

Westlock County is serviced by one primary east-west provincial highway, Highway 18. This route provides access to neighbouring communities in the County of Barrhead and Thorhild County.

Two important highways provide north-south access. Highway 2 links the County to Edmonton to the south, and Athabasca to the north. Highway 44 links to the Edmonton region and Highway 16 to the south, and provides access to the Slave Lake Region to the north.

Other secondary highways within Westlock County, including Highways 651, 777 and 661 provide a further network of interconnections between larger highways and the County's hamlets.

#### Railway

Access to the County by rail is still well established within the County. One major rail line runs through the County, linking its hamlets and municipal neighbours to markets to the east and west.

#### Utility right-of-ways and pipelines

Numerous pipelines and utility rights-of-ways exist for the purposes of collecting oil and gas from well sites and batteries; transporting oil and gas products; supplying natural gas to consumers; collecting and disposing of sewage, as well as to connect residents to regional potable water and communications utility providers.

## 2.5 Municipal Services

The information below summarizes the current municipal servicing systems within the County's Hamlet and rural communities<sup>4</sup>.

### 2.5.1 Waterworks Systems

There are a number of waterworks systems within the County that provide service to different areas within the County. Some are operated and maintained by the County and some are operated as a partnership between the County and the Regional Water Commission.

The rural areas are serviced predominately by private wells while the County's Hamlets and rural communities are serviced by a combination of private wells, County maintained and operated wells and

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<sup>4</sup> "Rural community" means a multi-lot residential subdivision area that has not been classified by the province as a Hamlet. A rural community may include a community hall, place of worship or other municipal recreation facilities and may also include commercial uses.

## 2 | community profile

water treatment facilities and in some areas, the Regional water line. More detailed information about the region's water system is contained in **Table 4**.

**Table 4: Water Infrastructure within Westlock County**








HAMLET AREA	REGIONAL WATER LINE	PIPED POTABLE WATER	PRIVATE WELLS
BUSBY			
DAPP			
FAWCETT			
JARVIE			
VIMY			
PIBROCH			
PICKARDVILLE			
RURAL COMMUNITIES			
TAWATINAW			
NESTOW			



### 2.5.2 Sanitary Sewer System

Municipal sanitary services are available in seven of the County’s Hamlets. The wastewater systems for each hamlet are shown on **Table 5**.

**Table 5: Sanitary Sewer Systems within the Westlock County**

HAMLET AREA	LIFT STATION	LAGOON	PRIVATE SEWAGE DISPOSAL SYSTEMS
BUSBY			
DAPP			
FAWCETT			
JARVIE			
VIMY			
PIBROCH			
PICKARDVILLE			
RURAL COMMUNITIES			
TAWATINAW			
NESTOW			

### 2.5.3 Natural Gas

Natural Gas service is provided by the Pembina River Natural Gas Co-op and ATCO Gas to County residents.

### 2.5.4 Solid Waste Management

Solid waste management in the County is provided by six solid waste sites, located throughout the County. **Table 6** presents the waste management infrastructure within the County.

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**Table 6: Solid Waste Management Infrastructure**

LOCATION	WASTE MANAGEMENT FACILITIES
BUSBY	Transfer station – NW 27-57-27-W4
FAWCETT	Transfer station – SE 17-64-01-W5
JARVIE	Transfer station – SE 30-63-26-W4
PIBROCH	Transfer station – NW 19-61-27-W4
PICKARDVILLE	Transfer station – SE 26-58-27-W4
VIMY	Transfer station – SW 3-59-24-W4
WESTLOCK COUNTY	Regional Landfill – SE 27-59-26-W4

# 3 | General Objectives and Policies

## 3.1 Cultural Landscapes

Westlock County includes unique natural features and rich landscapes. Westlock County places value on the County’s significant cultural landscapes. The County supports the UNESCO World Heritage Committee definition of Cultural Landscapes:

“Cultural Landscapes represent the combined works of nature and man. They are illustrative of the evolution of human society and settlement over time, under the influence of physical constraints and/or opportunities presented by their natural environment and of successive social, economic and cultural forces both external and internal.” (UNESCO/ICMOS, 1995, np)

<b>Objective 3.1.1</b>	<b>Encourage the preservation of significant cultural landscapes throughout the County</b>
<b>Policy 3.1.1.1</b>	The County will require Heritage Resource Impact Assessments to be included with proposed subdivision and development applications in locations where the proposal may impact significant cultural landscapes.
<b>Policy 3.1.1.2</b>	The County will encourage the promotion and sensitive use of historic resources to promote tourism, where appropriate.
<b>Policy 3.1.1.3</b>	The County will require that proposed subdivisions and developments on the “main streets” of urban areas protect built heritage and enhance the historic significance and character of these areas.

## 3.2 Environmental Management

Westlock County includes a range of valuable and unique environmental features. This natural capital supports not only the County’s ecosystem but also the economic, social and cultural systems throughout the County. Recognizing that a successful and sustainable future is dependent on the vitality of all of the interconnected systems (built and natural environment, economic, social and cultural) the County has adopted a strong approach, for environmental management.

The County recognizes that the goal of environmental protection cannot mean total ecological integrity. Simply put, a municipality cannot reasonably expect to maintain the full structure of the ecosystem and

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still have roads and buildings. Rather the goal must be the achievement of an environment which does not show symptoms of stress such as:

- Decreased water quality;
- Significant hazards to land users and adjacent land users; and/or
- Significantly reduced biodiversity.

The County supports a Low Net Negative Environmental Impact approach to environmental management that will help to ensure that over all, the County’s natural and built heritage and the processes that connect them will prosper well into the future. The goal is to ensure that the cumulative impact of development decisions affecting the ecological, social and heritage assets of the County will be mitigated to ensure that any negative environmental impacts are as low as is reasonably possible. Adopting a low net environmental impact approach to environmental management allows the County to encourage sustainable development in all areas without unduly impacting ecosystem health, working landscapes or the County’s cultural landscapes.

The following objective and policies have been adopted by the County, relating to environmental management:

<b>Objective 3.2.1</b>	<b>Identify and preserve significant ecological sites throughout the County</b>
<b>Policy 3.2.1.1</b>	The County will encourage the protection, of native vegetation and biodiversity in agricultural land management through support of such programs as ALUS, Cow’s and Fish, Ag Service Board, etc.
<b>Policy 3.2.1.2</b>	The County may require a Biophysical Assessment or evaluation to be submitted at time of subdivision or development application when a proposed development may have an impact on identified natural or environmentally sensitive features.
<b>Objective 3.2.2</b>	<b>Development should only occur on lands that do not have critical development constraints</b>
<b>Policy 3.2.2.1</b>	Groundwater of sufficient quantity and quality should be available to support the proposed development. Development will be discouraged in areas where reserves of potable water are inadequate.
<b>Policy 3.2.2.2</b>	Development will be discouraged in areas characterized by wetlands, swamps, muskeg or saturated soils. Development will also be discouraged in valleys, ravines or seasonal draws. Where development is allowed in areas exhibiting these characteristics the development must adhere to provincial regulations, guidelines and wetland mitigation policies.
<b>Policy 3.2.2.3</b>	Development shall be prohibited on slopes in excess of 15% or on slopes which are subject to slippage or mass movement.

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- Policy 3.2.2.4** Development is discouraged from locating on soils which have extremely fast percolation rates and/or which might result in the possibility of groundwater contamination.
- Policy 3.2.2.5** No permanent structures will be allowed within the 1:100 year flood plain of any river, stream or lake shore. A certificate from a qualified, registered professional engineer or architect will be required by the County to confirm that the development has been properly flood proofed.
- Policy 3.2.2.6** The County shall encourage flood plain and flood prone areas to be kept in their natural state.
- Policy 3.2.2.7** On municipal lands within flood areas, new development should be limited to recreational uses.
- Policy 3.2.2.8** Unless unique site requirements determine otherwise, development proposals should conform to the Alberta Environment Land Conservation Guidelines so far as they pertain to setback requirements from valley breaks, ravines and watercourses.
- Policy 3.2.2.9** Development on sandy or unstable soil may only be allowed if measures to control erosion are implemented, to the satisfaction of the Development Authority.

### **Objective 3.2.3 To discourage the fragmentation of working landscapes**

- Policy 3.2.3.1** The County will encourage new pipelines, electrical and transmission lines, rail lines and road developments to be located adjacent to quarter section or property boundaries and/or within recognized corridor to limit the further fragmentation of lands within the County.
- Policy 3.2.3.2** The County will discourage the premature conversion of productive agricultural land to other uses when equally viable alternatives exist.
- Policy 3.2.3.3** Developments for non-agricultural uses will be encouraged to locate on lands of lower agricultural capability and in areas where possible negative impact on agriculture are minimized.

## 3.3 Reserves and Conservation Easements

In certain instances – as outlined in the Municipal Government Act – the subdivision process can involve the dedication of Reserve lands to the County. Currently the Municipal Government Act identifies three (3) types of reserves which may be taken during subdivision by a municipality. They are: Municipal Reserves, Environmental Reserves and Environmental Reserve Easements. Conservation Easements

## 3 | general objectives & policies

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cannot be taken by a municipality at time of subdivision but can be utilized by a private land owner or a Municipality to protect significant environmental areas.

Municipal Reserves can be used by a municipality as public parks, public recreation areas, for school authority purposes or as buffers between parcels of land which are used for different purposes. Depending on the circumstances, money may be taken by the County in lieu of Municipal Reserve dedication.

Environmental Reserves, Environmental Reserve Easements and Conservation Easements are three tools municipalities can use to ensure that:

- a) development does not occur on hazard lands;
- b) significant environmental areas are protected; and
- c) the public can access Significant Cultural Landscapes.

Environmentally sensitive ecological features require special attention when being considered for development. Such areas include lands subject to a flooding hazard, ravines, steep slopes, and areas subject to erosion. Council intends to have regard for these sensitive areas when making development decisions.

<b>Objective 3.3.1</b>	<b>To conserve and protect significant cultural landscapes and environmentally sensitive ecological features for future generations</b>
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<b>Policy 3.3.1.1</b>	The County shall take the full amount (10%) of Municipal Reserves owing as a result of subdivision, in accordance with Provincial legislation.
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<b>Policy 3.3.1.2</b>	Where it is deemed that Municipal Reserve land is not required within a proposed subdivision for the residents of the area, the County will accept money-in-lieu.
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<b>Policy 3.3.1.3</b>	Municipal Reserve parcels in the County shall be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(a) concentrated in a few large parcels on suitable sites rather than scattered through subdivisions; and</li><li>(b) evaluated and inventoried with the aim of making more efficient use of the Reserves through consolidation and/or sales.</li></ul>
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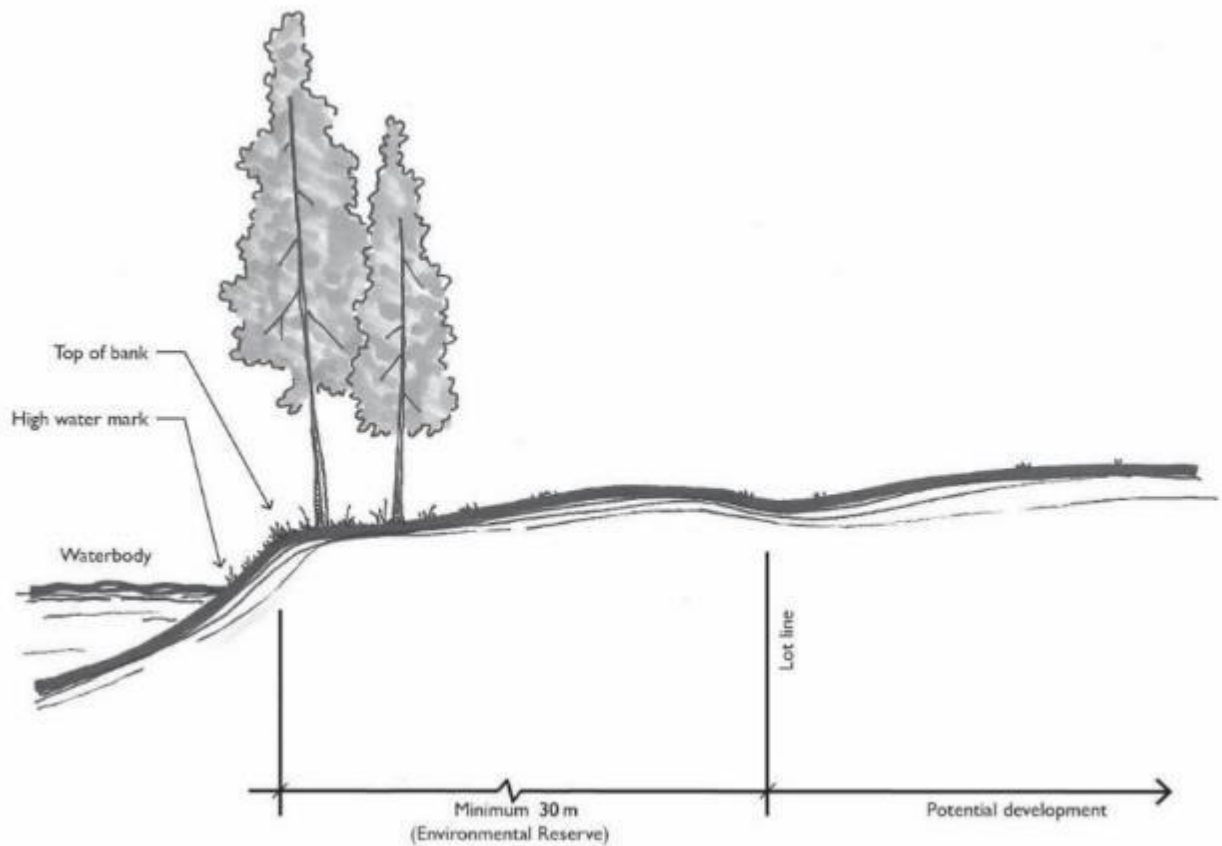
<b>Policy 3.3.1.4</b>	Prior to disposing of any Municipal Reserve, Council shall review the applicability and effect of such disposition on surrounding land uses and the area's recreational potential.
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<b>Policy 3.3.1.5</b>	The County may require subdivision and development applications adjacent to water bodies and watercourses to prepare an engineering and/or geotechnical study to determine an adequate setback based on soil conditions and slope stability.
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## Policy 3.3.1.7

An Environmental Reserve of not less than 30 m (98 ft.) in width from the high water mark of a river and/or the top of bank of a lake shall be required as a condition of subdivision approval. As a condition of development approval where there is no subdivision, a comparable setback of 30 m (98 ft.) shall be required from the high water mark of river and/or the top of bank of a lake to the wall of the nearest building. **Figure 11** illustrates the recommended water buffer adjacent to a river.

**Figure 11: Recommended Environmental Reserve Setback**



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- Policy 3.3.1.8** Additional reserve and/or setback may be required by the County if there are concerns with flood susceptibility or bank stability on the site.
- Policy 3.3.1.9** The amount of Environmental Reserve required adjacent to other bodies of water and water courses will be based on the recommendations of any engineering and/or geotechnical study requested by the County or using the guidelines for ER width developed by Alberta Environment and Parks located in **APPENDIX B**.
- Policy 3.3.1.10** Where Environmental Reserve Lands are not necessary to provide public access to the feature, the County shall, at the time of subdivision, consider the option of an Environmental Reserve Easement as provided for in the Municipal Government Act.
- Policy 3.3.1.11** Municipal Reserves may be required as an open space buffer of sufficient size and composition to act as a noise and visual barrier where required between disparate land uses. No more than 10% of the land may be taken as a Municipal Reserve.
- Policy 3.3.1.12** The County may consider proposals to designate future Conservation Areas.
- Policy 3.3.1.13** At the discretion of the subdivision approving authority, the use of Conservation Easements may be considered as an alternative to traditional environmental reserve during the subdivision process. The use and control of these features and areas shall be clearly stated in the easement agreement. Conservation Easements are provided for under the Alberta Land Stewardship Act and the Land Stewardship Act.
- Policy 3.3.1.14** A Conservation Easement may be considered to preserve significant natural features and areas that do not qualify as Environmental Reserve under the Municipal Government Act. The use and control of these features and areas shall be clearly stated in the easement agreement.

### 3.4 Emergency Preparedness

The County requires that emergency preparedness be a consideration in the approval of new developments throughout the County. Requiring emergency preparedness measures to be a consideration in the design and approval of new developments will best ensure the safety of all County residents.

The following objective and policies have been adopted by the County relating to emergency preparedness:



## **Objective 3.4.1      New developments shall be designed to ensure high levels of emergency preparedness within a rural context**

**Policy 3.4.1.1**      The County shall encourage the use of effective wildfire prevention techniques and the development of on-site firefighting measures to reduce the risk of wildfires resulting from development.

**Policy 3.4.1.2**      The County shall consider the following as conditions for approval for development which is too remote to be adequately serviced by existing firefighting services:

- (a)      the provision of a suitable on-site water supply for firefighting purposes;
- (b)      the use of fire resistant building methods;
- (c)      the installation of spark arrestors on chimneys; and/ or

the removal of trees, shrubs, and fuels in proximity to certain developments.

**Policy 3.4.1.3**      The County may ask developers to provide for appropriate fire protection measures in an application for development, subdivision or an Area Structure Plan.

**Policy 3.4.1.4**      The County may require the provision of an emergency access to multi-parcel developments in forested areas.

**Policy 3.4.1.5**      Residential development will be prohibited in those areas which are too close to sour gas facilities, in accordance with Provincial legislation and regulations.

## 3.5 Recreation

As the demand for recreational land for both public and private use increases, so does the need for planned recreational facilities and areas. This Plan recognizes and encourages local recreational uses based on the capabilities of an area to sustain intensive or extensive development. Recreation development should be located in areas and under circumstances where it does not adversely affect the agricultural economy and community, or the natural environment. Two areas within the County have been identified as important areas for recreational development these areas are:

- Hamlet of Tawatinaw
- Long Island Lake

Recreation can also form an important component of the tourism potential of the region, and is to be encouraged as much as possible within the term of this Plan, provided, of course, that the tourist activities or facilities do not threaten the potential development of additional economic activities, the agricultural economy and community, or the natural environment.

# 3 | general objectives & policies

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The following objectives and policies have been adopted by the County relating to recreation in the County:

**Objective 3.5.1      To encourage the recreational developments in areas which will not impact working landscapes**

**Policy 3.5.1.1**      Council shall encourage the development of public serving recreational facilities/uses within the Agricultural Use Area and within hamlets:

- (a)      if they are compatible with the capabilities of a site or surrounding areas;
- (b)      on lower capability agricultural lands, unless Council decides that the benefits to the community justify the use of higher capability agricultural lands; and/or
- (c)      the site is located near or adjacent to a lake or river if the proponent can demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the Development Authority, that the proposal is compatible with the lake/river environment.

**Objective 3.5.2      To ensure that recreational uses are compatible with the environment and surrounding land uses**

**Policy 3.5.2.1**      Subdivision and development for recreational purposes shall occur in accordance with the following design principles:

- (a)      The density of development shall be directly related to the land suitability assessment for the specific site;
- (b)      The design shall be directly related to the site’s topography vegetation, soil, and drainage characteristics. In this regard, the development proposal shall include a detailed analysis of the environmental constraints of the site and the means by which the proposal will protect and harmonize with the natural environment;
- (c)      The design shall protect wildlife habitat; and
- (d)      The design shall protect, maintain and re-establish, where necessary, cover, and maximize the quality of the natural features.

**Policy 3.5.2.2**      Any amendment to the Land Use Bylaw to allow additional subdivision or development of lands within the watershed of Long Island Lake shall first require adoption of an Area Structure Plan by Westlock County Council, addressing the environmental impact on the lake and its watershed and perceived social impacts on the existing community. It shall be the developer/proponents responsibility to pay for preparation of any Area Structure Plan.

**Objective 3.5.3 To minimize municipal costs associated with recreational developments**

**Policy 3.5.3.1** The County shall require the proponent of a recreational activity to identify all municipal costs associated with the development. The assignment of these costs shall be the basis for an agreement to be entered into as a condition of subdivision approval or the issuance of a development permit. Normally, however, all development servicing costs associated with the development will be carried by the proponent.

**Policy 3.5.3.2** In all instances, any financial involvement in recreational trails by the County will be considered by Council of the County on a project by project basis.

**Objective 3.5.4 To protect and encourage trail development while also protecting adjacent land owners from potential negative impacts through the careful regulation of the recreational use of rights-of-way**

**Policy 3.5.4.1** Multi-lot residential developments will be required to provide multi-modal trail networks to the satisfaction of the Subdivision Authority at time of subdivision.

**Policy 3.5.4.2** Where trails are provided as part of a multi-lot development, buffering measures within the trail right of way shall be provided to reduce noise, dust and the potential for trespassing on private property.

## 3.6 Tourism

Westlock County supports tourism initiatives and encourages the development of local hospitality operations, museums, churches, cultural centers, golf courses, and other special events including special event facilities.

The following objectives and policies have been adopted by the County relating to tourism in the County:

**Objective 3.6.1 To support and promote cultural tourism initiatives within the County**

**Policy 3.6.1.1** The County will encourage the utilization and/or development of cultural, historic and recreational resources to promote tourism, where appropriate.

**Objective 3.6.2 To support and promote existing tourism destinations within the County**

## 3 | general objectives & policies

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**Policy 3.6.2.1** The County will endeavour to promote existing tourism destinations within the County and nearby recreational tourism opportunities.

**Objective 3.6.3** **To cooperate with regional partners to encourage local and regional tourism**

**Policy 3.6.3.1** The County will co-operate with area tourism groups, municipal neighbours, and tourism zones in promoting local tourism linkages with neighbouring communities.

**Policy 3.6.3.2** The County shall encourage private sector developers to facilitate tourism development, and may assist in accessing government funding programs to develop new, or upgrade existing tourism attractions.

**Objective 3.6.4** **To support and encourage new tourism developments within the region**

**Policy 3.6.4.1** The County will promote and encourage new developments within Westlock County and among its regional partners that benefit local and regional tourism initiatives.

### 3.7 Transportation and Infrastructure Servicing

The development of transportation and utility systems can have a significant impact on land use within Westlock County. Although the County does not have the authority to regulate Provincial Highways, pipelines, transmission lines and similar installations that are under provincial control in many instances, Council is given an opportunity to comment on the proposed locations of these facilities. It is Council's intention to encourage the appropriate authorities to have regard for the policies of this Plan.

The following objectives and policies have been adopted by the County relating to transportation and municipal servicing:

**Objective 3.7.1** **To discourage the fragmentation of working associated with the development of linear transportation, communication, or utility facilities and services**

**Policy 3.7.1.1** Council shall encourage transportation, communication, or utility facilities and services to locate so that they:

- (a) minimize impacts on working landscapes;
- (b) minimize the fragmentation of land, and/or the creation of fragmented parcels;

- (c) follow road allowances wherever feasible;
- (d) use corridors to integrate a number of utilities;
- (e) minimize disruption of recreation, wildlife, and historic resources; and
- (f) avoid disruption of existing or future urban centres.

**Policy 3.7.1.2** Where land is taken for roads, rail lines, pipelines or other transmission lines, the County shall endorse only those proposals which minimize fragmentation.

**Objective 3.7.2 To minimize conflicts between transportation, communications or utility facilities and other land uses**

**Policy 3.7.2.1** Council shall encourage high voltage power lines and high pressure pipelines to locate away from residential areas.

**Policy 3.7.2.2** Council may consider the establishment of a Dangerous Goods Route when Council feels that dangerous goods are being transported on County roads in sufficient quantity to be a significant hazard to the travelling public.

**Policy 3.7.2.3** Where proposed transportation and utility lines and facilities may adversely affect adjacent lands or land uses, the County shall recommend or require as a condition of development of the line or facility such buffering as deemed appropriate to minimize any negative impacts.

**Policy 3.7.2.4** The County may require future subdivision or development proposals adjacent to transportation and utility lines and facilities to provide such buffering as deemed appropriate.

**Policy 3.7.2.5** The County shall encourage wireless communication facilities to consider good planning and design so as to have the least impact on the natural environment, and the least visual impact on nearby residents. The County shall also encourage the developers of wireless communication facilities to provide an opportunity for public consultation.

**Policy 3.7.2.6** The co-location of multiple devices on wireless communication facilities is preferred. Where appropriate, new facilities should be built to standards to accommodate multiple devices. Individual facilities are strongly discouraged. Should co-locations not prove feasible, clustering of wireless communication facilities is preferred.

**Policy 3.7.2.7** The roads shown on **Map 7.2 Future Land Use** as “Resource Roads” shall be developed to arterial road standards relating to width, grades, site lines and access. All other roads in the County shall be considered either local County Roads, or local internal subdivision roads, and developed to appropriate standards.

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**Policy 3.7.2.8** Direct access from private property onto all County roads shall normally be controlled, following the County’s approved access and approach design standards.

**Policy 3.7.2.9** In order to minimize safety hazards and land use conflicts around airports, the County shall encourage the regulation of building heights in the areas around all publicly licensed and paved airports in the County.

**Objective 3.7.3 To encourage regional cooperation in the provision, operation and maintenance of infrastructure services**

**Policy 3.7.3.1** The County shall endeavour to cooperate with other municipalities in the upgrading of intermunicipal roadways.

**Policy 3.7.3.2** The County shall endeavour to cooperate wherever possible with other municipalities and/or the provincial government with planning, development and operation of sanitary waste disposal facilities and sewage lagoons.

**Policy 3.7.3.3** The County shall endeavour to cooperate with other municipalities and Alberta Transportation to ensure bridge infrastructure within the County is maintained.

**Objective 3.7.4 To ensure that all subdivision and development conforms to municipal and provincial infrastructure and servicing standards**

**Policy 3.7.4.1** Subdivision shall not be allowed where access to graded and graveled or paved roads in good condition does not exist, or where construction of a roadway and access to then-current County standards to the site is not undertaken by the landowner/developer.

**Policy 3.7.4.2** Development shall not be allowed where access to graded and graveled or paved roads in good condition does not exist, or where construction of a roadway and access to then-current County standards to the site is not undertaken by the landowner/developer.

**Objective 3.7.5 To ensure that municipal services and utilities are provided in an economical and efficient manner and are reflective of need, environmental constraints, land use considerations and existing infrastructure**

**Policy 3.7.5.1** Service roads adjacent to Provincial Highways in the County shall be considered as local internal subdivision roads and developed to appropriate standards

- Policy 3.7.5.2** The County shall require that land use adjacent to the Provincial Highways and their associated accesses conform to the Access Management Guidelines as outlined by Alberta Transportation. As well, the County’s system of collector and arterial roads shall be afforded a similar level of protection from encroachment and proliferation of direct access.
- Policy 3.7.5.3** All municipal infrastructure systems, such as new roads, sewage collection and water distribution systems created as a result of private development, which may include dedication to the County or subdivision, shall only be assumed by the municipality if the system has been constructed or upgraded to a standard which is acceptable to the County and which meets or exceeds all appropriate Provincial and Federal standards.
- Policy 3.7.5.4** The County will include access to regional piped water supply systems as one of the criteria in making its land use decisions (such as decisions respecting the approval of multi-lot country residential development) based on whether the development is to be provided with water supply services from the regional system. As well, the County will encourage landowners near the regional system to connect to the system.
- Policy 3.7.5.5** The County shall implement a program of maintenance and improvement for local roads designed to enhance traffic flow. Through the subdivision and development processes, the County shall endeavour to make the most efficient use of existing roadway facilities. Developments with the potential for substantial road impact (high traffic volumes or heavy trucks) will be directed to those roads that are designed and constructed to accommodate such development.
- Policy 3.7.5.6** Direct access from private property onto Provincial Highways shall be discouraged and limited wherever possible, especially where access onto local roads is available. Application for subdivision in the Agricultural Use Area will be specifically designed to minimize accesses onto Provincial Highways and local arterial roads through the use of service roads or redesigning the subdivision boundaries to redirect accesses onto local roads. The cost of consolidation or service roads and the costs of resolving all of Alberta Transportation’s concerns with respect to access to the Provincial Highway will be the responsibility of the developer.
- Policy 3.7.5.7** Development will be encouraged to utilize identified haul roads and enter into haul route agreements with the County.
- Policy 3.7.5.8** The County will encourage rail service to future industrial areas to improve industrial developments' accessibility to markets.

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### **Objective 3.7.6 To encourage other levels of government and their agencies to provide safe, reliable transportation routes through the County.**

**Policy 3.7.6.1** The County will encourage the Province of Alberta to improve and maintain highways through the County connecting to major industrial and commercial centres in the province.

**Policy 3.7.6.2** The County will encourage the federal government, its agencies, and rail operators to improve and maintain existing rail corridors to ensure safety, and to encourage economic opportunities for rail-dependent industries within the County and in the wider region.

**Policy 3.7.6.3** The County will encourage agencies and rail operators to improve railway crossings within the County.

**Policy 3.7.6.3** The County will explore opportunities for increased infrastructure funding at multiple levels of government to maintain and improve municipal infrastructure.

## 3.8 Resource Extraction

Sand, gravel, coal, oil and gas are important non-renewable resources in Westlock County. In order to benefit the County's and the region's economy, these resources must be protected and extracted efficiently, but not at the risk of irreparably damaging working or cultural landscapes within the County. Therefore, it is the intent of this Plan to encourage the utilization of extractive resources in areas of least detrimental impact and to reclaim the land for other productive uses.

The County recognizes the significant benefits resource extraction provides locally and regionally. Resource extraction activities can result in increased noise, traffic, dust, and other nuisance issues. Certain developments may not be suitable in proximity to resource extraction uses. For the life of this Plan, the County wishes to prioritize resource extraction, and may limit certain other developments or land uses which may be incompatible.

The following objectives and policies have been adopted by the County relating resource extraction in the County:

### **Objective 3.8.1 To encourage appropriate resource extraction industries**

**Policy 3.8.1.1** The developer of a resource extraction industry or activity shall be required at the time of application for a development permit, to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the County, that any necessary provincial permits and approvals pertinent to the development have been obtained.



**Policy 3.8.1.2** Any resource extraction industry that requires a development permit, unless exempted by Provincial legislation, shall enter into and abide by a development agreement with the County, to deal, among other matters, with road use and their maintenance.

**Policy 3.8.1.3** Development permits for sand, gravel, clay or marl extraction shall not be issued until any necessary approvals are obtained in accordance with Provincial legislation.

**Policy 3.8.1.4** Development permits for gravel extraction should be issued on the basis of whether the proposed use will fully and efficiently utilize the capability of the deposit. Deposits suitable for construction aggregates should be reserved for that use.

**Policy 3.8.1.5** Applicants for commercial aggregate resource extraction development shall be required to submit to the County a survey prepared by a qualified professional that identifies the total working area of an extraction site. If the site (taking into consideration expansions to the preliminary working area boundary) is, or would be larger than 2.02 ha (5.0 acres), the applicant must comply with the requirements for the provincial approval of a Class I pit.

**Objective 3.8.2 To ensure that land disturbed by resource extraction activity is reclaimed to an acceptable standard**

**Policy 3.8.2.1** The County should require development agreements in connection with sand, gravel and other mineral extraction operations and should make provisions for the:

- (a) reclamation of the land that was disturbed to its former agricultural capability or to a post-extractive use whichever Council feels is more beneficial;
- (b) control of on-site noise, dust and weeds;
- (c) storage of topsoil;
- (d) separation of the resource extractive operation from any multi-lot residential subdivision, hamlet, or urban municipality with a suitable open space buffer;
- (e) designation of all aggregate haul roads to reduce noise, excessive maintenance costs, and dust problems; and
- (f) if required by the County, the provision of security such as an irrevocable letter of credit to ensure reclamation will be completed.

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### **Objective 3.8.3 To minimize municipal costs associated with resource extraction development**

**Policy 3.8.3.1** The County will not approve a development permit application or approach permit for resource extraction until the developer enters into a haul road agreement with Westlock County.

**Policy 3.8.3.2** The developer of a natural gas or oil well site shall be required to obtain approval from the County regarding the construction, upgrading and maintenance of access roads.

**Policy 3.8.3.3** Resource industries which utilize County infrastructure shall be required to participate in the maintenance and upgrading of that infrastructure if the need arises, as determined by the County.

### **Objective 3.8.4 To ensure that resource extraction and resource processing developments generate a low net negative impact on cultural and heritage resources**

**Policy 3.8.4.1** Developers may be required to contact the Heritage Branch of the Alberta Government in order to determine if a Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) is required.

**Policy 3.8.4.2** If an Impact Assessment (HIA) is required and the HIA identifies the presence of heritage resources then the developer will be required to take appropriate mitigating measures, to the satisfaction of the appropriate provincial agency, prior to development approval.

### **Objective 3.8.5 To limit conflicts between those uses which are incompatible with resource extraction developments and uses**

**Policy 3.8.5.1** The County will identify areas that may have high potential for resource extraction, specifically areas of sand, gravel, and aggregate deposits.

**Policy 3.8.5.2** The County shall discourage development on land which has a high potential for resource extraction development, where the development would prevent subsequent extraction until the deposit has been removed and the land has been reclaimed.

**Policy 3.8.5.3** Haul routes for resource extraction developments shall meet the current County road design standards and be located, to the satisfaction of the County, in such a manner that impacts on agricultural uses and existing residential developments are minimized.

# 4 | Specific Plan Objectives and Policies

The following land use and development objectives and policies shall apply to all lands and developments within Westlock County and shall be used by the County to guide decision-making regarding land use and development within the County.

## 4.1 Agricultural Area Policies

The County's most enduring resource is its working landscapes. The agricultural, forestry, and resource lands generate significant employment, and are central to the collective history, culture, and sense of place of the County's residents.

Working landscapes are irreplaceable and contribute to the high quality of life enjoyed by all Westlock County residents. Working landscapes within the County must be carefully and equitably managed in order to retain the integrity and value of these areas for the benefit of future generations while supporting economic growth within the agricultural community.

In order to encourage the future viability of a diverse range of agricultural operations within the County, the Municipal Development Plan includes objectives and policies to not only protect, where appropriate, but also enhance the agri-based economy and rural lifestyle.

The following objectives and policies have been adopted by the County relating to agricultural areas within the County:

**Objective 4.1.1 To ensure that working landscapes remain an integral and viable component of the regional economy and rural social structure**

**Policy 4.1.1.1** The Agricultural Use Area is to be, for the most part, conserved for working landscapes, including agriculture, forestry and resource extraction.

**Policy 4.1.1.2** However, industrial, commercial and residential uses will be allowed in the Agricultural area where provided for in the County's Land Use Bylaw.

**Policy 4.1.1.3** While the primary use of the Agricultural Use Area is for extensive agriculture and confined feeding operations involving the production of feed grains, cereal grains, forage crops, specialty crops, livestock and other animals on a commercial basis, other uses which, in the opinion of Council, do not adversely affect present or future agricultural pursuits may also be

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permitted on a discretionary basis provided that the development will not adversely affect the agricultural community.

**Policy 4.1.1.4** Within the Agricultural Use Area, a wide range of resource utilization uses may also occur provided that such uses do not negatively impact other surrounding uses.

**Policy 4.1.1.5** The County will give due consideration to the protection of good quality agricultural land and the location of existing agricultural operations when applications for Land Use Bylaw amendments or subdivision are being determined.

**Policy 4.1.1.6** The minimum parcel size for extensive agricultural uses shall normally be a quarter section less any subdivisions for permitted or discretionary uses.

**Policy 4.1.1.7** Notwithstanding **4.1.1.6** above, extensive agricultural parcels may be less than a half quarter section in area where the parcel is fragmented by reason of one or more public roadways, railways, rivers, creeks or other natural barrier which impedes the crossing of cultivation equipment.

**Objective 4.1.2** **To minimize negative impacts of agricultural operations on the quality of the environment and adjacent land uses by encouraging good stewardship of the land through the provision of information and the use of beneficial management practices<sup>5</sup> (BMPs)**

**Policy 4.1.2.1** The County will provide information to the agricultural community regarding beneficial management practices (BMPs) and other conservation practices that conserve or enhance the health of soil resources.

**Policy 4.1.2.2** Input shall be provided to the Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB) in responding to application for new or expanded Confined Feeding Operations (CFOs) based on the technical and locational merits of each application. The County's policy is that all such confined feeding operations and manure storage facilities must fully satisfy all the requirements and regulations adopted under that Act, specifically the minimum distance separation requirements and the land base requirements.

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<sup>5</sup> Beneficial Management Practices (BMP) are a practice, or system of practices, designed to minimize the impact of agricultural activities on natural resource while at the same time maintain economic viability of the agricultural industry. The Province of Alberta defines a BMP as "any management practice that reduces or eliminates an environmental risk."

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**Policy 4.1.2.3** Minimum distance separations for CFOs shall conform to standards set out in the Agricultural Operations Practices Act.

**Policy 4.1.2.4** In addition to the minimum distance separation requirements provided through regulations adopted under the Agricultural Operation Practices Act, the County's policy is that confined feeding operations requiring registration or approval and manure storage facilities requiring authorization under that Act shall not be allowed within 2.4 km (1.5 miles) of the corporate boundaries of any urban municipality within Westlock County or within 0.8 km (0.5 miles) of the Community Areas designated on **Map 7.2**, which areas shall be considered an urban fringe when calculating the regulations approved under the Agricultural Operation Practices Act.

**Policy 4.1.2.5** Confined Feeding Operations will be discouraged from locating in environmentally sensitive areas where slope instability and or groundwater contamination may be of concern.

**Policy 4.1.2.6** In addition, for the purposes of implementing the regulations adopted under the Agricultural Operation Practices Act, the policies of Area Structure Plans within Westlock County respecting confined feeding operations shall be applied in addition to the Municipal Development Plan policies.

**Objective 4.1.3** **To provide opportunities for low net environmental impact Country Residential development in the Agricultural Use Area without unnecessarily fragmenting working landscapes**

**Policy 4.1.3.1** Country residential development will be allowed within the Agricultural Use Area shown on **Map 7.2 Future Land Use**, subject to the policies noted below.

**Policy 4.1.3.2** Country residential subdivisions should be located in proximity to gas, electrical, and telephone lines which have existing spare capacity to sustain the additional usage. Where subdivisions do not have direct access to existing maintained roads, it shall be the responsibility of the developer to register a new road and construct or pay for construction of roads, to County standards.

**Policy 4.1.3.3** Country residential development will be cognizant of the need to preserve resource extraction, recreation, historical, and archaeological features. It is the County's policy that the effect a country residential development may have on the environment will be an important consideration in

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dealing with country residential subdivision and development proposals and Land Use Bylaw amendments.

- Policy 4.1.3.4** Where a subdivision for country residential purposes is proposed, the developer shall be required to enter into a development agreement with the County wherein the developer agrees to be responsible for all the costs associated with the subdivision and development.
- Policy 4.1.3.5** Subdivisions shall not be approved where access to existing graded and graveled or paved roads does not exist, or where construction of roadways and accesses to County standards to the site are not undertaken primarily by the landowner/developer.
- Policy 4.1.3.6** Documentation indicating that satisfactory arrangements have been made regarding the development's sewage disposal system may be a condition of approval for country residential development and/or subdivisions.
- Policy 4.1.3.7** The assessment of the suitability of a proposed country residential subdivision will **not** take into consideration required setbacks for private sewage disposal systems. Rather, if a subdivision results in the reduction of setbacks between an existing or proposed private sewage disposal system and a property line then the developer will be required to ensure that the existing or proposed private sewage disposal system conforms to all relevant provincial regulations affecting private sewage disposal systems.
- Policy 4.1.3.8** Spatial buffers or setbacks may be required between country residential uses and adjacent uses which may, in the opinion of the approving authority, be incompatible.
- Policy 4.1.3.9** The subdivision of a naturally fragmented parcel shall not be approved for any use, unless the fragmented parcel is fragmented by reason of one or more public roadways, railways, rivers, or creeks.
- Policy 4.1.3.10** In addition to the criteria indicated in **Policy 4.1.3.9**, a natural fragmentation may also be considered to be a barrier to the crossing of cultivation equipment created by substantial topography, such as a ravine or gully. The determination that such a topographic barrier is a natural fragmentation for the purpose of subdivision shall be at the sole discretion of the Subdivision Authority.
- Policy 4.1.3.11** The County may refuse to approve an application that proposes to subdivide a fragmented parcel if:

(a) in the opinion of the municipality, the construction and maintenance of the roadway adjacent to the parcel would serve no greater or long-term public interest; and

(b) the municipality is responsible for the maintenance of the roadway upon completion of its construction or upgrading.

**Policy 4.1.3.12** Fragmented parcels of 8.09 ha (20.0 ac.) or less, shall normally be considered country residential parcels.

**Policy 4.1.3.13** In the case where another policy of this plan would allow for a subdivision to occur and the subject site also contains a fragmenting feature as described in **Policies 4.1.3.9 and 4.1.3.10**, and where the fragmented area contains adequate developable area, the County will encourage the developer to subdivide the fragmented area, as the first subdivision from the subject site.

**Policy 4.1.3.14** Once a farmstead has been subdivided from a quarter section, the subdivided farmstead shall be considered a country residential use for the purposes of this Plan and the Land Use Bylaw.

**Policy 4.1.3.15** The maximum number of country residential lots, including fragmented parcels, vacant lots, abandoned farmstead separations and farmstead separations, permitted per unsubdivided quarter section is two (2).

**Policy 4.1.3.16** The total area of all country residential lots shall not exceed 6.06 ha (15.0 ac.), per quarter section.

**Policy 4.1.3.17** Notwithstanding the policies listed above, lots which include areas described as “pan handles”, that is, lots which consist of lengthy narrow sections leading to a wider development site, shall not be approved by the Subdivision Authority. Exceptions to this policy shall be allowed if, in the opinion of the subdivision authority, the proposed subdivision does not interfere with an existing agricultural operation and:

- (a) the subdivision is to separate an existing farmstead from the balance of the quarter section; and
- (b) the lengthy narrow section is directly adjacent to the property line or quarter section line, whichever the case may be; or
- (c) the lengthy narrow section is at least 100 m from the property line or quarter section line, whichever the case may be.

**Policy 4.1.3.18** In order to limit negative impacts on the agricultural capability of the agricultural parcels. Vacant country residential parcels shall be located in the corners of the quarter section or on land with lower agricultural capability.

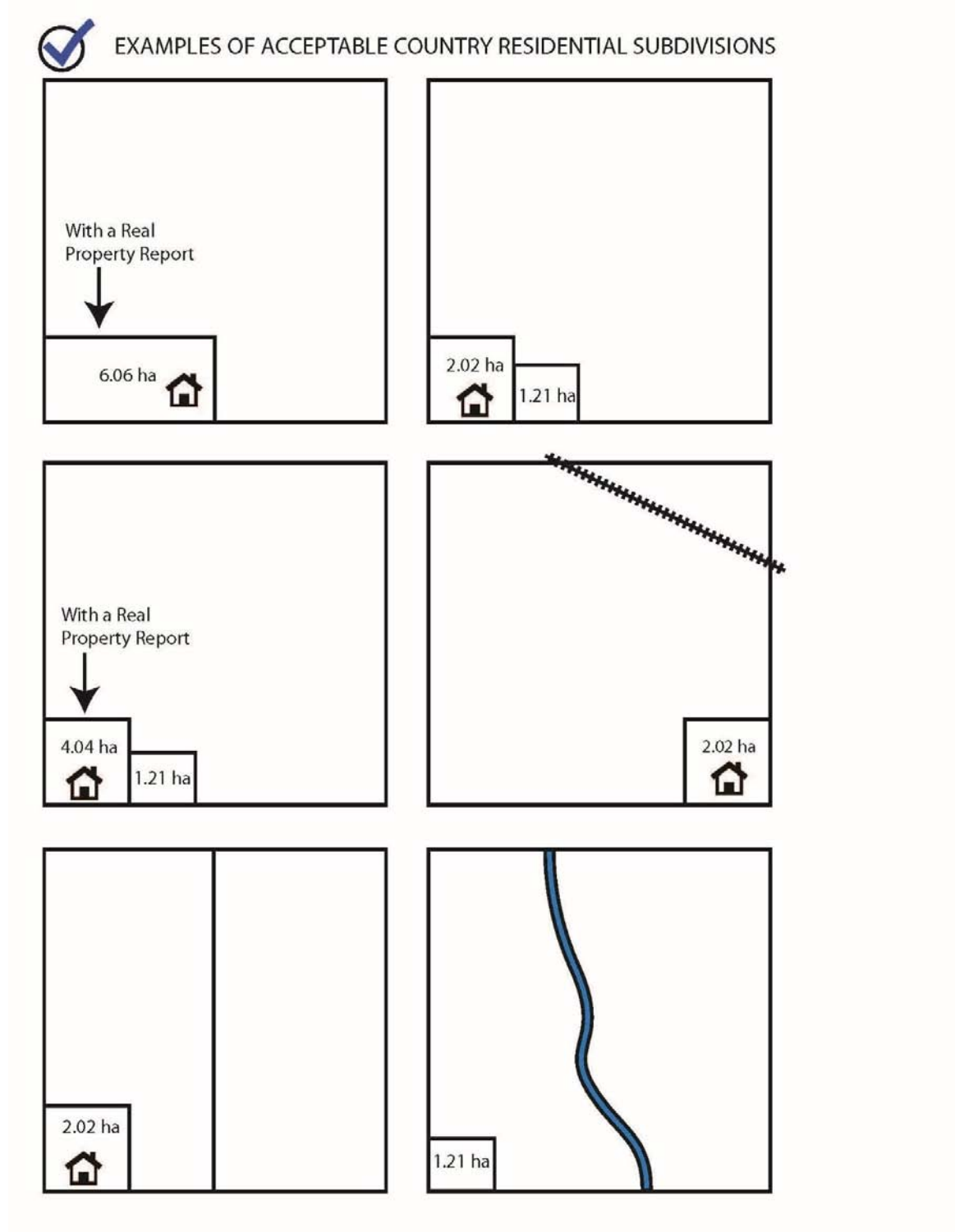
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- Policy 4.1.3.19** Where a subdivision would result in a second country residential parcel, and the proposed parcel is vacant, the proposed parcel shall be located adjacent to an existing country residential parcel or on land that is not conducive to agricultural use.
- Policy 4.1.3.20** The subdivision authority shall not approve vacant country residential parcels that unnecessarily fragment or otherwise negatively impact the agricultural use of the remnant part quarter section.
- Policy 4.1.3.21** Country residential development will be prohibited in those areas which are too close to sour gas facilities, in accordance with Provincial legislation and regulations.
- Policy 4.1.3.22** Documentation indicating that arrangements satisfactory to the County have been made regarding the development's water supply, sewage disposal, and storm water management systems, including access to the systems for maintenance and any necessary easements, may be conditions of approval for multi-lot country residential development.
- Policy 4.1.3.23** The maximum area of a vacant country residential (acreage) use lot shall be 1.2 ha (3.0 ac.).
- Policy 4.1.3.24** A maximum of one (1) vacant country residential use parcel (acreage) shall be allowed per quarter section.
- Policy 4.1.3.25** Vacant country residential parcels will be encouraged to locate in the following areas:
- (a) on developable lands characterized by the poorest quality soils on the quarter section; and
  - (b) that have direct access to a developed road; or
  - (c) on lands directly adjacent to an existing CR use parcel or existing farmstead with direct access to a local road.



Figure 12: Permitted Country Residential subdivision examples (note: diagram not to scale)



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**Objective 4.1.4** To provide opportunities for low impact commercial development in the Agricultural Use Area without unnecessarily fragmenting working landscapes

**Policy 4.1.4.1** Commercial uses operated as secondary uses to agricultural operations may be allowed within the Agricultural Use Area where provided for in the Land Use Bylaw.

**Policy 4.1.4.2** Highway Commercial uses and General Commercial uses shall be allowed as discretionary uses in the Agricultural Use Area where provided for in the Land Use Bylaw, but not within approved multi-lot country residential developments.

### 4.2 Residential Policies

Westlock County has experienced limited multi-lot country residential development outside of the hamlets. However, interest in this type of development is expected to increase with regional growth pressures and increasing demand for rural residential developments. This trend affects the social, economic and environmental community of the County.

Generally, country residential and recreation residential developments are not connected to municipal sewer or water services while the urban residential developments do have access to municipal water and sewage disposal systems.

This Plan strives to achieve a balance between providing opportunities for residential development while still supporting and preserving the livelihood and quality of life of the existing and future agricultural community, the physical environment and the existing Hamlet communities.

Multi-lot residential development shall be allowed in Westlock County subject to the following policies:

**Objective 4.2.1** To provide opportunities for low-impact multi-lot residential development in appropriate locations

**Policy 4.2.1.1** Country residential subdivision and/or development shall be discouraged:

- (a) within an area likely to be subjected to high levels of noise from industry, transportation facilities, or other sources of noise;
- (b) in close proximity to a resource extraction operation;
- (c) within the minimum distance separation between a single dwelling and a confined feeding operation as determined through the use of Schedule 1 of the Standards and Administration Regulation adopted pursuant to the Agricultural Operation Practices Act; or
- (d) adjacent to river banks, unless the banks are certified as being stable by an engineer prior to development, or, alternatively, unless the land

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owner takes all responsibility for the impact of any bank instability currently or in the future.

- Policy 4.2.1.2** Country residential subdivision and/or development shall be prohibited within a 1 and 100 year flood plain or flood fringe areas. If the flood plain or flood fringe area has not been delineated the developer will be responsible for providing the required information, at no cost to the County, at time of application.
- Policy 4.2.1.3** Residential subdivisions should be located in proximity to gas, electrical, and telephone lines which have existing spare capacity to sustain the additional usage.
- Policy 4.2.1.4** Residential subdivisions shall have direct access to existing maintained roads, at the cost of the developer. Multi-lot residential subdivisions shall be encouraged to locate in proximity to paved County roads or provincial highways. If a road needs to be improved to meet current County standards then the costs for required improvements will be borne by the developer.
- Policy 4.2.1.5** Where a subdivision for residential purposes is proposed, the developer shall be required to enter into a development agreement with the County wherein the developer agrees to be responsible for all the costs associated with the subdivision and development.
- Policy 4.2.1.6** Documentation indicating that satisfactory arrangements have been made regarding the development's sewage disposal system may be a condition of approval for country residential development.
- Policy 4.2.1.7** Spatial buffers or setbacks shall be maintained between country residential uses and adjacent uses which may be incompatible for any reason.
- Policy 4.2.1.8** A multi-lot country residential subdivision shall be considered to be any subdivision which will create four (4) or more parcels for residential and/or agricultural use on a quarter section.
- Policy 4.2.1.9** Where provided for in the Land Use Bylaw, the minimum lot size in residential area may be as low as 0.2 ha (0.5 ac.), provided that the entire lot is suitable for residential development.
- Policy 4.2.1.10** Multi-lot country residential subdivisions shall be controlled by the County Council through the process of Land Use Bylaw amendment and, where there is an Intermunicipal Development Plan or an Area Structure Plan, by amendment to the appropriate Plan.

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**Policy 4.2.1.11** Multi-lot country residential developments will be discouraged, but not prohibited, from locating on good quality agricultural land, and shall be encouraged, but not required, to locate on poorer quality agricultural land.

**Policy 4.2.1.12** The County will require an Area Structure Plan be prepared and approved prior to the approval of any amendment to the Land Use Bylaw to allow a multi-lot country residential subdivision where the land being proposed for development that is 8.09 ha (20.0 ac.) or greater in area, except that the County may require the preparation of a conceptual plan or outline plan if:

- (a) the preparation of an Area Structure Plan is considered by the County to be impractical or inappropriate given:
  - (i) the small scale of the lands and lots proposed for development; or
  - (ii) the existing fragmentation of the quarter section in which the development is located.

**Policy 4.2.1.13** Council's consideration of Land Use Bylaw amendments for multi-lot country residential use development will include the following criteria:

- (a) The site should possess features such as trees, ravines, hilly terrain or other topographical features which would provide an attractive residential environment. When the amendment is to allow a currently vacant parcel from a quarter section, the site should not normally include cultivated land or good quality agricultural land. Where a site is fully or partially treed, all possible means will be undertaken to retain the maximum amount of tree cover.
- (b) The density of development shall be directly related to the development capability of the land resources, such as potable water supply, topography, vegetation, soil and drainage. In this regard, proponents for multi-lot country residential development may be required to provide the County with an assessment of environmental constraints on the site and the means whereby negative impacts on the natural environment may be mitigated.
- (c) Unless the proposed parcel is for the second or third parcel to be subdivided from a quarter section, access to individual lots will be provided by internal roads or service roads developed to standards acceptable to the County, and not directly onto Provincial Highways or County grid roads.
- (d) There shall be an adequate supply of potable water for the development as proposed. The supply may be provided by wells or by other options, such as by hauling or by communal systems, in accordance with Provincial regulations. If the well option is to be considered, the Council will ask that the report required under the

Water Act for multi-lot residential subdivisions be provided at the Land Use Bylaw amendment stage for its consideration. If the communal system is to be considered, Council will require that the creation or expansion of such systems be undertaken at the developer's cost, and not at the County's cost.

- (e) Sanitary sewage shall be treated and/or disposed of in accordance with Provincial requirements. In this regard, the Council will ask that information be provided at the Land Use Bylaw amendment stage for its consideration. If a communal system is to be considered, Council will require that the creation or expansion of such systems be undertaken at the developer's cost, and not at the County's cost.

**Objective 4.2.2 To encourage low net multi-lot residential developments in locations which generate no or low impacts on the County's working and cultural landscapes**

**Policy 4.2.2.1** Multi-lot country residential developments will adhere to the following conservation design-based principles in order to mitigate potential negative impacts:

The ecology of the subject site must be considered. Environmentally sensitive lands and working landscapes should be left undisturbed wherever possible, but incorporated into the overall development. Wildlife corridors or connections between habitat areas should be maintained wherever possible.

Development will be directed to lands within the subject site that are deemed by the County to be of lesser environmental and/or agricultural significance.

The natural landscape and topography should be considered and incorporated into the overall design of the development.

**Policy 4.2.2.2** Multi-lot country residential developments should be clustered or grouped to reduce potential land use conflicts and minimize servicing costs.

**Objective 4.2.3 To minimize municipal servicing costs associated with multi-lot residential developments**

**Policy 4.2.3.1** The County will require the proponent of a multi-lot country residential development to identify all municipal servicing costs associated with the development. The assignment of these costs between the County and the developer will be the basis of a development agreement to be entered into prior to a subdivision approval or upon the issuance of a development permit. Normally, however, all development servicing costs associated with the development, including the provision of internal roadway systems to a high standard and the upgrading of other County roads leading to the site in order

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to provide good access to the residential site will be the responsibility of the developer.

**Policy 4.2.3.2** The development process for multi-lot country residential development shall ensure that storm water is managed in accordance with good engineering practices and both Provincial and County requirements.

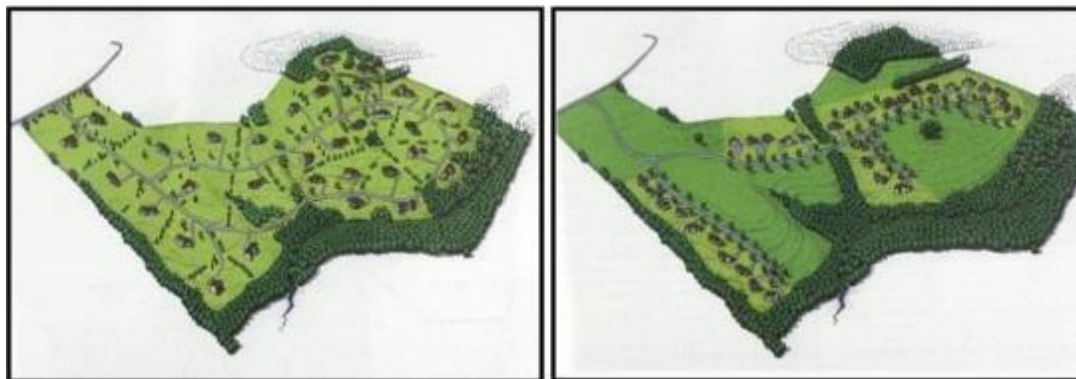
**Policy 4.2.3.3** The County may consider alternative means of providing municipal services, such as through the use of linear corridors.

**Policy 4.2.3.4** The review of multi-lot country residential development proposals, including the review of Area Structure Plans and engineering briefs related to multi-lot country residential development proposals, cost the County both in the County's staff resources and finances. The County shall require multi-lot country residential development proponents to pay for the County's review of their proposals.

**Policy 4.2.3.5** Documentation indicating that arrangements satisfactory to the County have been made regarding the development's water supply, sewage disposal, and storm water management systems, including access to the systems for maintenance and any necessary easements, shall be conditions of approval for multi-lot country residential development.

**Policy 4.2.3.6** Multi-lot country residential developments should be clustered or grouped to reduce potential land use conflicts and minimize service costs. To that end, the County will be open to innovative design in the development of multi-lot country residential development such as cluster or conservation designed subdivisions, which reduces as much as possible development costs while increasing as much as possible land conserved from development.

**Figure 13: Examples of a Standard Multi-lot Residential Subdivision and a Cluster or Conservation Subdivision Design**



Standard Subdivision

Cluster of Conservation Subdivision

**Figure 14: Example of a Bareland Condominium Recreation Residential Development**



**Figure 15: Example of a Cluster Recreation Residential Development**



**Objective 4.2.4** To ensure that multi-lot residential developments are compatible with surrounding land uses

**Policy 4.2.4.1** Buffering measures, to the satisfaction of the Subdivision Authority may be required at time of subdivision between residential uses and other, adjacent land uses.

**Objective 4.2.5** To encourage orderly growth and urban residential development within the County's unincorporated urban areas

**Policy 4.2.5.1** Notwithstanding that the use may be listed as a discretionary use in the District affecting the subject lands, the County shall discourage development within 1.6 km (1 mile) of an urban area that would adversely affect the urban centre unless, in the opinion of the County, appropriate measures are taken to mitigate adverse effects and/or the use is provided for in an approved intermunicipal development plan.

## 4 | specific plan objectives & policies

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- Policy 4.2.5.2** The County will only allow development in hamlet areas which will be compatible with the current capabilities and capacities for water supply and sewage disposal systems.
- Policy 4.2.5.3** New development in hamlets which does not have access to piped municipal potable water and piped sanitary sewer service systems should be planned and designed so that the lot size and lot configuration will permit re-subdivision to a higher density should municipal potable water and piped sanitary sewer service become available.
- Policy 4.2.5.4** Council may allow the expansion of hamlets, preferably onto lower capability agricultural land, if additional area is needed to accommodate growth. Council shall also encourage the development of vacant lots and underdeveloped opportunity sites and the redevelopment of older buildings within the hamlets, provided that the infill development or redevelopment will not adversely affect the surrounding areas.

### 4.3 Industrial Policies

For the purpose of this Municipal Development Plan, the term "industry" refers to manufacturing or warehousing and storage, and includes: rural, light, medium and heavy industry as well as natural resource extraction industries. Natural resource extraction industries, such as gravel pits and oil and gas wells, are addressed in greater detail in **Section 3.8**.

Most of Westlock County's economic base focuses on the agriculture and resource sectors. Historically, the continuation and expansion of the County's industrial base has been limited due to a finite land base and the non-renewable nature of the mining and petroleum resource sector. The County recognizes that industrial developments can be of benefit to the County by providing employment, tax dollars and services to County residents. The Plan encourages the clustering together of compatible industrial uses in rural industrial parks.

This Plan encourages the diversification of the County's economic base by identifying land and policies to support the development of a diverse range of industrial developments within the County.

#### **Objective 4.3.1 To encourage appropriate industrial development in appropriate locations**

- Policy 4.3.1.1** Industrial uses shall be encouraged to locate on lower capability agricultural land, in proximity to paved County roads or provincial highways, and in areas with access to existing water and three phase power services wherever possible.



## 4 | specific plan objectives & policies

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- Policy 4.3.1.2** Notwithstanding **Policy 4.3.1.1** above, industrial uses shall be encouraged to locate in designated industrial areas that are designed and serviced to accommodate industrial development.
- Policy 4.3.1.3** New industrial developments will be discouraged from locating within 100 metres of existing residential buildings in the Agricultural Area, outside of identified growth nodes. Within the growth node overlay area the overlay policies will apply.
- Policy 4.3.1.4** Before approving any development proposal for an industrial use, the County may require the provision of a Cumulative Effects Assessment including environmental impact information and a risk assessment (such as that provided for by the Major Industrial Accidents Council of Canada (MIACC)) to assist the County in assessing the impact of the proposed development in relation to the natural and human environments, and indicate both if and how any negative matters can be mitigated. The County may require the implementation of any mitigating actions indicated in the information and assessment as a condition of any development approval.
- Policy 4.3.15** Industrial uses (including industrial parks) shall not result in any additional costs to the County, unless the County agrees to share costs.
- Policy 4.3.1.6** All industrial uses shall obtain the approvals and permits required by provincial legislation and a development permit from the County.
- Policy 4.3.1.7** Industrial uses shall be encouraged to locate on land that is physically suited for industrial use, considering factors such as soil, drainage, slopes and the availability of necessary services.
- Policy 4.3.1.8** Industrial uses shall not be located in areas where the use is likely to subject residences, hospitals, schools, or other noise sensitive uses to high levels of noise.
- Policy 4.3.1.9** The County will normally require that appropriate site design standards be followed and that appropriate buffers be located between industrial development and other existing and future land uses and transportation arteries in order to provide adequate visual or acoustic screening. The expansion potential of the industrial development should be considered in determining the required buffer.

## 4 | specific plan objectives & policies

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**Objective 4.3.2 To encourage industrial development requiring municipal services to locate in areas with access to municipal servicing**

**Policy 4.3.2.1** Council shall encourage light industrial development that requires access to municipal services to locate where services are available.

**Policy 4.3.2.2** Council shall only consider proposals for the development of lands for industrial uses in a hamlet if the proposal is for a light industrial use.

**Policy 4.3.2.3** Industries that require urban services shall not be permitted except where such services are available from the County or a joint development/servicing agreement between the County and an adjacent urban municipality has been finalized.

**Policy 4.3.2.4** Industrial subdivision and development which, in the opinion of Council, could have a significant impact on the community and environment, shall be controlled by the County Council through the process of Land Use Bylaw amendment to an appropriate Industrial District in the Land Use Bylaw and, in areas where there is an approved statutory plan, by amendment to the appropriate Plan.

**Policy 4.3.2.5** The proponent of any new industrial development or expansion of such development shall identify any costs associated with providing new services and upgrading existing services made necessary by the proposed development. The apportionment of costs shall be negotiated by the County and be settled within a development agreement which shall be a condition of subdivision or development approval.

**Policy 4.3.2.6** In order to encourage the establishment of industry in the County, the County may establish an area within which only heavy industry, that is, industry which may negatively impact neighbouring lands, may be located. If the County does this, the area affected shall be designated through an Area Structure Plan, and appropriate Land Use Bylaw regulations shall be applied to substantially regulate both the industry and any residential development in the area affected.

**Policy 4.3.2.7** Industrial uses (including rural industrial and agri-industrial uses) that are located adjacent to residential developments and/or residential parcels must provide buffering to the satisfaction of the Development Authority in order to mitigate the potential for offsite impacts resulting from the industrial use.

## 4.4 Commercial Policies

The intent of the Plan is to accommodate commercial facilities, primarily adjacent to the highway, secondary road systems, within established hamlets, and in appropriate locations within multi-lot recreation residential developments. Commercial developments provide a service to the agricultural community, local residents, the highway traveling public and tourists to the region.

The County will not support commercial developments that adversely affect the standard of safety or convenience, or the functional integrity of any highway or road. The Plan also recognizes that specific commercial uses may require unique site locations in order to serve the rural community.

**Objective 4.4.1 To minimize the impacts of commercial activities on working landscapes and cultural landscapes**

**Policy 4.4.1.1** The County shall consider proposals for commercial development:

- (a) that will not unnecessarily fragment the working landscape; and
- (b) that do not conflict with adjacent land uses.

**Policy 4.4.1.2** Commercial subdivision and development which, in the opinion of Council, could have a significant impact on the community and environment, shall be controlled by the County Council through the process of Land Use Bylaw amendment to an appropriate Commercial District in the Land Use Bylaw and, in areas where there is an Intermunicipal Development Plan or an Area Structure Plan, by amendment to the appropriate Plan.

**Policy 4.4.1.3** Commercial uses shall be encouraged to locate on lower capability agricultural land wherever possible.

**Policy 4.4.1.4** In consideration of a proposal for a Commercial District, an assessment of the proposed development may be required which:

- (a) precisely defines the boundaries of the proposal;
- (b) designates suitable building sites;
- (c) ensures the functional integrity of the adjacent roads is maintained through the use of service roads and limited access points;
- (d) defines standards of development which may include architectural, landscaping and sign controls;
- (e) identifies methods and facilities for servicing; and
- (f) includes groundwater and soil permeability tests.

## 4 | specific plan objectives & policies

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### **Objective 4.4.2 To minimize conflicts with adjacent land uses**

**Policy 4.4.2.1** Council shall encourage commercial development in hamlets if the resultant servicing requirements do not exceed the servicing capabilities of the hamlet or negatively impact the character of the hamlet.

**Policy 4.4.2.2** The County will normally require that appropriate site design standards be followed and that appropriate buffers be located between commercial developments and other existing and future land uses and transportation arteries in order to provide adequate visual or acoustic screening. The expansion potential of the commercial development should be considered in determining the required buffer.

### **Objective 4.4.3 To minimize municipal servicing costs associated with commercial development**

**Policy 4.4.3.1** The Development Authority shall require the developer of a commercial development to identify all municipal servicing costs associated with the development. The assignment of these costs between the County and the developer will be the basis of an agreement to be entered into prior to a subdivision approval or upon the issuance of a development permit. Normally, however, all development servicing costs associated with the development will be carried by the developer.

## 4.5 Urban Expansion and Existing Communities

There are three incorporated urban centres (the Summer Village of Larkspur, the Village of Clyde and the Town of Westlock) surrounded by Westlock County which provide a range of commercial, industrial, residential and institutional services to the wider community. This Plan recognizes the right of a municipality to determine its own growth. However, the Plan also recognizes that urban uses may have negative effects on adjacent rural uses such as agriculture, and vice versa. It is therefore the intent of this Plan to support the continued orderly growth of the incorporated urban centres based on their Municipal Development Plans and cooperation with the County.

This Plan also recognizes several unincorporated centres - the hamlets of Busby, Dapp, Fawcett, Jarvie, Nestow, Pibroch, Pickardville, Tawatinaw and Vimy - and designates them as Community Areas. These are primarily residential communities which provide important social and commercial functions to the agricultural community. It is the intent of this Plan to promote the orderly growth and development of these Community Areas.

**Objective 4.5.1**      **To ensure incorporated urban centres and hamlet areas are able to expand in an orderly manner and in a manner that encourages the sustainability of the community**

**Policy 4.5.1.1**      The municipalities of Village of Clyde and the Town of Westlock should be encouraged to expand in areas which would minimize the removal of:

- (a) higher capability agricultural land;
- (b) regionally significant natural resources; and
- (c) environmentally sensitive areas.

**Policy 4.5.1.2**      The County may support future urban centre expansion and annexation in which:

- (a) the lands are immediately adjacent to existing municipal boundaries;
- (b) the land is suited for or can be economically adapted to urban uses and servicing;
- (c) the lands are needed for urban growth;
- (d) the lands are predominantly vacant and suitable for urban development; and
- (e) the staging of development is in conformity with the urban municipality’s Municipal Development Plan.

**Objective 4.5.2**      **Development on lands near urban centers or hamlet area should be in harmony with future growth requirements for future conversion to urban uses**

**Policy 4.5.2.1**      The County and the Town of Westlock have historically co-operated in planning future land use, development and servicing of the fringe area around the Town in the County. The County will continue to work closely with the Town in the detailed planning of the lands near them both, and by continuing to do detailed planning with the goals being the best utilization of the land and the minimization of long range land use conflicts and servicing costs.

**Policy 4.5.2.2**      The County will also work with the Village of Clyde in the detailed planning of lands surrounding the urban centres, if the urban municipality so wishes. The results of this dialogue may be in the form of Area Structure Plans or simple agreements respecting either land uses and/or the provision of municipal piped water supply and sewage disposal services and/or development consultation with the urban municipalities.

## 4 | specific plan objectives & policies

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**Policy 4.5.2.3** Residential development, together with community services and limited general commercial and industrial development compatible with the hamlet environment, shall be encouraged within or immediately adjacent to existing hamlets, contingent upon site-specific suitability of any development.

**Objective 4.5.3** **To ensure that hamlets have enough land within their respective boundaries to undertake comprehensive land use planning and development of servicing schemes**

**Policy 4.5.3.1** Residential development, together with community services and limited general commercial and industrial development compatible with the hamlet environment, shall be encouraged within or immediately adjacent to existing hamlets, contingent upon site-specific suitability of any development.

**Policy 4.5.3.2** More development shall be encouraged in those hamlets where municipal piped water supply and sewage collection and disposal services are already available, or can be economically made available.

**Policy 4.5.3.3** Areas Structure Plans should be used to establish development patterns for each of the Community Areas which will maintain their distinctive attributes and provide residential opportunities different from those provided in the urban municipalities.

**Policy 4.5.3.4** Hamlet expansion should be discouraged from occurring on higher capability agricultural land.

**Policy 4.5.3.5** Development in hamlets which do not have communal water supply and sewage disposal systems should be planned and designed so that the lots are of a size and the subsequent development is of a configuration which would permit re-subdivision to a higher density should communal water supply and sewage disposal systems eventually be available.

# 5 | Overlay Area Policies

The Overlays in this Section apply to special areas, to which objectives and policies are applied in addition to those of the underlying Land Use Areas. The additional special regulations and procedures may involve special processes and special interest groups. Also, development in these areas may require additional information to be submitted by the applicant in order to ensure the suitability of potential development sites.

The overlay areas are shown on the **Map 7.2 Future Land Use**.

## 5.1 Statutory Plan Overlays

The Statutory Plan overlay identifies areas within Westlock County where there are existing statutory plans such as area structure plans or area re-development plans. Developments in these areas are required to conform to all applicable policies within the relevant statutory plan as well as the objective and policies in the County's Municipal Development Plan.

Currently, there is one approved Statutory Plan Areas within the County. The approved statutory plan is:

- Halfmoon Ridge Estates Area Structure Plan.

The Statutory Plan Overlay areas are shown on **Map 7.2 Future Land Use**.

## 5.2 Environmentally Sensitive Area Overlay

The Environmentally Sensitive Area Overlay identifies areas in Westlock County where the physical characteristics of the land may make development difficult or unfeasible, and/or where developing the land would have a significant impact on recognized ecological features. Development in these areas may require additional information to be submitted by the applicant in order to ensure the suitability of potential development sites. The Environmentally Sensitive Area Overlay areas are shown on **Map 7.2 Future Land Use**.

- Policy 5.2.1**      The Development Authority may require that any proposal for development within the Environmentally Sensitive Area Overlay be accompanied by either, or both, a flood susceptibility analysis or a bank stability analysis prepared by a registered engineer that assess the suitability of the subject site and the proposed development from the

points of view of flood susceptibility and/or bank stability. Further, if a development is approved after such an analysis is provided, the Development Authority shall require that any recommendations of the analysis be implemented by the landowner/developer and registered against the title of the subject lands so as to warn future landowners of the engineering requirements for development.

## 5.3 Pembina River Flood Hazard Area Overlay

The Pembina River flows through the western portion of Westlock County. The river is characterized by a serpentine channel with a wide flood plain. The Pembina River has flooded in the past, and there is an acknowledged risk of future flooding, particularly within the flood plain.

Westlock County recognizes that the area provides high quality agricultural land, recreation opportunities and attractive vistas. However, flood risk in the area is of great concern. As a result, development within the flood risk area and adjacent to the banks of the Pembina River may require additional information to be submitted by the applicant to ensure the suitability of potential development sites. The Pembina River Flood Hazard Area Overlay area is shown on **Map 2: Future Land Use**.

**Policy 5.3.1** In accordance with the requirements of Section 693.1 of the Act, additional controls, regulations or prohibitions may exist for development within the floodway of the Pembina River, as issued by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

**Policy 5.3.2** The Subdivision Authority shall require that any proposal for subdivision within the Pembina River Flood Hazard Area Overlay be accompanied by one or more of the following: a survey prepared by an Alberta Land Surveyor showing the 1:100 flood limit on the subject site; a flood susceptibility analysis and/or a bank stability analysis prepared by a registered engineer that assess the suitability of the subject site and the proposed development from the points of view of flood susceptibility and/or bank stability.

**Policy 5.3.3** The Subdivision Authority shall not approve a subdivision for any use other than agricultural production (pasturage or cultivation only) on lands that do not have a developable building footprint outside of the 1:100 flood limit of flood fringe and/or are susceptible to bank instability.

**Policy 5.3.4** The Development Authority shall require that any proposal for development, other than agricultural cultivation, within the Pembina River Flood Hazard Area Overlay be accompanied by one or more of the following: a survey prepared by an Alberta Land Surveyor showing the 1:100 flood limit on the subject site; a flood susceptibility analysis and/or a bank stability analysis prepared by a registered engineer that assess the suitability of the subject site and the proposed development from the points of view of flood susceptibility and/or bank stability.



## 5.4 Growth Node Area Overlay

The Growth Node Area Overlay identifies areas along provincial highways where the County wishes to encourage more intensive growth and development. These areas are preferred for more intensive industrial, commercial, recreational & residential development. They have been identified because of the proximity to transportation and utility infrastructure, other municipal services and social and community services. By focusing more intensive development to these areas, the County hopes to mitigate negative impacts on agricultural uses, municipal infrastructure and rural lifestyles throughout the rest of the County.

- Policy 5.4.1** The County will encourage new higher density or higher intensity developments to locate within the Growth Node Area Overlay.
- Policy 5.4.2** Multi-lot residential, commercial, recreational and industrial developments within the Growth Node Area shall conform to all relevant specific plan objectives and policies provided for in this Plan, and any policies established in approved Area Structure Plans affecting the proposed development.
- Policy 5.4.3** Population and employment growth within the growth nodes will be accommodated by directing growth to:
- (a) areas within the growth nodes that are adjacent to similar existing or approved uses
  - (b) areas that can be reasonably and cost effectively offer municipal water and wastewater services.
- Policy 5.4.4** Recreational and tourism oriented development will be given priority within growth node areas that contain existing or approved recreation and tourism developments or by virtue of their resource based recreational potential.
- Policy 5.4.5** The County will discourage the development of non-recreational or tourism oriented developments within growth node areas that contain unique environmental features that would be most conducive to the development of future recreational or tourism related uses. These features may include: water bodies, water courses and river valleys or areas where existing substantive recreational developments are located.
- Policy 5.4.6** Concurrently with the submission of an application to amend the County's land use bylaw to facilitate higher density or higher intensity development within the growth node areas the County will require the application to provide an Area Structure Plan or Outline Plan that describes and

identifies the appropriate type and scale of development within the plan area.

**Policy 5.4.7**

Growth node areas will be planned and designed to:

- (a) cumulatively attract a significant portion of population and employment growth
- (b) provide a diverse and compatible mix of land uses, including residential and employment uses, to support vibrant communities
- (c) provide high quality public open spaces that create attractive and vibrant places
- (d) generally achieve higher densities than the surrounding areas
- (e) achieve an appropriate transition of built form to adjacent areas.

# 6 | Plan Administration

## 6.1 Authority of the Plan

Pursuant to the Municipal Government Act, R.S.A., 2000, this Plan shall be adopted by Westlock County, as the Westlock County Municipal Development Plan. Subdivision, development and re-development of lands within Westlock County by the municipality and general public shall be in accordance with the provisions of this Plan. Council shall encourage the Provincial and Federal governments to have regard for the provisions of this Plan in the development and re-development of crown lands, and in the formulation and implementation of Provincial and Federal policies and programs, within Westlock County.

**Objective 6.1.1**      **To ensure that all County statutory and regulatory planning documents are consistent and up-to-date and to conduct reviews and consider amendments to the Plan as required**

**Policy 6.1.1.1**      When this Plan or any part thereof takes effect, the Land Use Bylaw of Westlock County shall be amended, if necessary, to conform to this Plan.

**Policy 6.1.1.2**      The Municipal Government Act outlines the procedure for an amendment to the Municipal Development Plan. When reviewing proposals for amendment, Council shall ensure that the change is in agreement with the plan goal and objectives. Council should require that a request for an amendment be made in writing. The submission should also address the reasons for the amendment and conformity with the Plan's goals and intent. When reviewing an amendment, Council should consult with any agencies it feels may be of assistance.

**Policy 6.1.1.3**      Planning is a continuous process and it is important that the Municipal Development Plan be monitored, reviewed and updated in order to ensure that the planning needs of the County are being met. A review may be appropriate when:

- (a) changes in economic, social or technical developments occur,
- (b) a new Council is elected, or
- (c) an amendment to the plan is made.

A major review should be undertaken at least once every five years.

**Objective 6.1.2 To recognize the unincorporated urban areas within the County**

**Policy 6.1.2.1** The Hamlets of Busby, Dapp, Fawcett, Jarvie, Nestow, Pibroch, Pickardville, Tawatinaw and Vimy are recognized unincorporated urban areas within Westlock County. Residential development is allowed within these areas. These areas are primarily residential communities which provide important social and commercial functions to the surrounding agricultural community.

**Policy 6.1.2.2** Within 3.2 km (2 miles) of incorporated urban centres within the County, development shall be encouraged in consultation with neighbouring urban centres.

**Objective 6.1.3 To engage in cooperative and collaborative communication with municipal, regional and provincial partners**

**Policy 6.1.3.1** Westlock County will consult with adjacent and/or nearby municipalities during the consideration of amendments to this Plan, amendments to the Land Use Bylaw, proposed subdivisions, or significant discretionary development permits when the proposal is within 2 miles of the adjacent municipality or when, in the opinion of Westlock County, the proposal may impact the adjacent municipality, in order to obtain the adjacent municipality's views on the proposal. The approving authority will give careful consideration to any matters raised during this consultation; however, Westlock County will not be bound by the recommendations of the adjacent municipality, unless the County has agreed to do so as part of an approved inter-municipal development plan.

**Policy 6.1.3.2** The County will also continue to work with the urban municipalities within the County in the detailed planning of lands surrounding the urban centres, if the urban municipality so wishes. The results of this dialogue may be in the form of an inter-municipal development plan or in the form of another written agreement addressing the provision of regional services.

**Policy 6.1.3.3** Council may support only those annexation proposals that they feel are required and justified. In forming their position on an annexation proposal, Council shall consider the following:

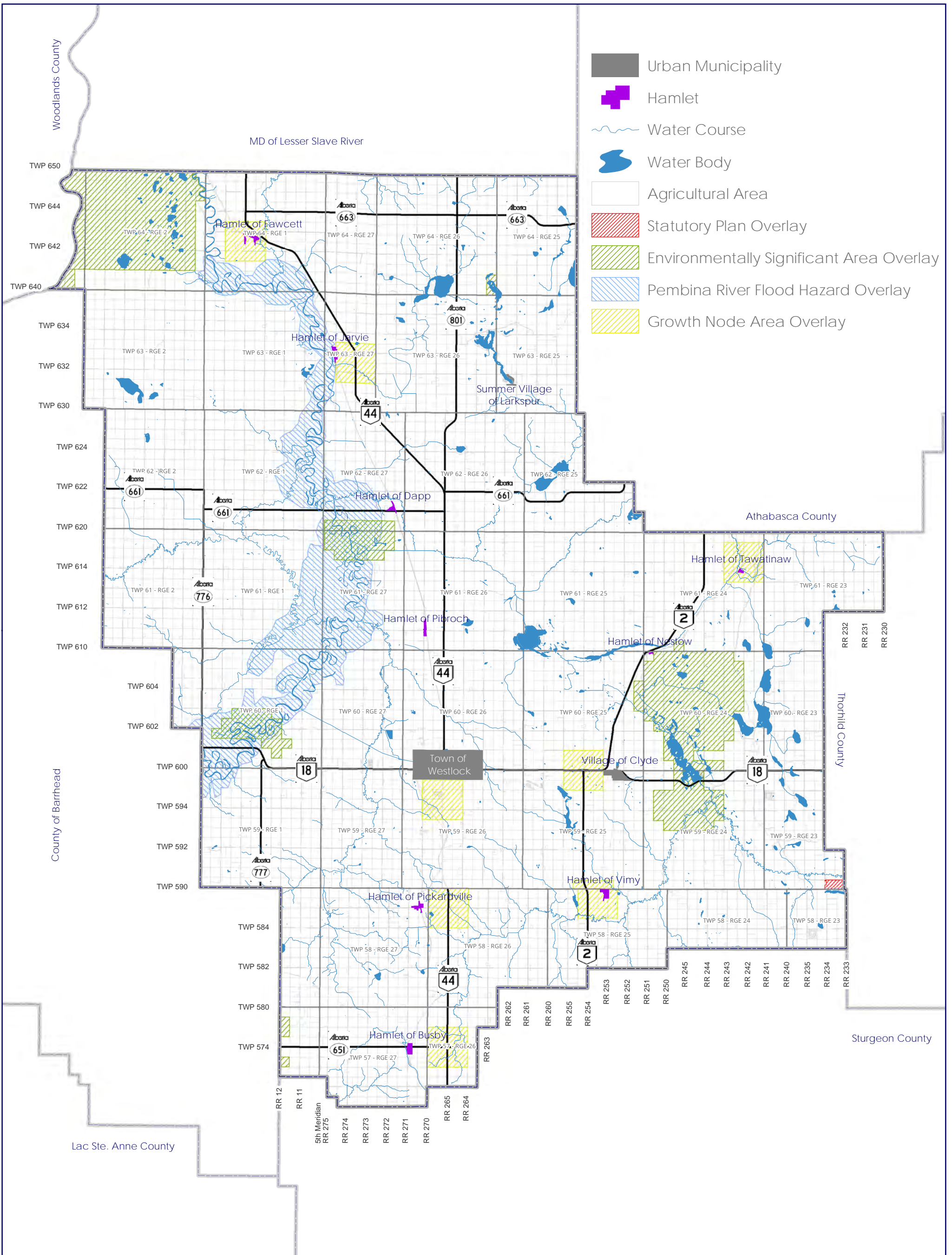
- a) Does the annexation proposal encompass lower capability agricultural land and, if not, is the expansion onto high capability agricultural land justified in light of existing growth direction options?

- b) Has the urban centre planned its future land use and development through a municipal development plan or similar planning document?
- c) Is the annexation required or does the urban centre have sufficient land within its boundaries to accommodate anticipated growth and development?

# 7 | Municipal Development Plan Maps

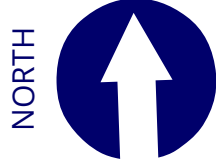
- 7.1 - Regional Location Map
- 7.2 - Future Land Use Map





# WESTLOCK COUNTY 7.2 Future Land Use

Digital Information: Geogratis and Altalis  
 Projection: UTM NAD 83 12N





# Appendix A: ESRD Recommended Minimum ER Setback

**Sustainable Resource Development Recommended Guidelines for Minimum Environmental Reserve/Easement Widths**

In reference to Section 664 of the *Municipal Government Act*, the following are recommended where a boundary to a proposed subdivision is a water body or watercourse.

**Table 1. Standard recommended minimum widths for Environmental Reserves or Environmental Reserve Easements based on type of water feature.**

Water Feature	Minimum ER Width <sup>2</sup>	Notes
Reservoirs & Regulated Lakes	30 m from right of way or easement boundary	A regulated lake is a lake where water levels are established to a predetermined elevation and actively managed through use of a licensing requirement (e.g. to pump water into the water body).
Lake (natural & controlled)	30 m from natural boundary	On controlled lakes, 30 m from sill elevation of licensed control structure.
Swamp/wetland <sup>1</sup>	Variable, include wet meadow zone	Wet meadow zone can be extensive in some situations, and in these instances the ER should be wide enough to preserve ecological function.
Large River (≥ 15m width)	30+ m	See additional requirements for hazardous lands.
Small River/Large Stream (6-15 m)	15 m	See additional requirements for hazardous lands.
Medium Stream (3 - 6 m)	10 m	See additional requirements for hazardous lands.
Small Stream (≤ 3 m)	6 m	See additional requirements for hazardous lands.
Ephemeral watercourse (no defined channel)	0 m	Use bylaw to regulate tree cutting within a defined distance from feature to maintain riparian vegetation and drainage.
Braided Stream	10 m from outside boundary of active floodway	

<sup>1</sup> Sustainable Resource Development views the term "swamp" to mean any area with hydrological conditions of sufficient duration to have developed saturated soils and hydrophytic vegetation (i.e. wetlands or peatlands).

<sup>2</sup> In addition to the recommended ER width for the water feature itself, associated landscape features may require the ER width to be modified to factor in additional inherent hazards to development.

For lands described in section 664(1)(b) of the *Municipal Government Act* (unsuitable for development because they are subject to flooding, have high risk of erosion, or have existing topographical or geo-technical constraints) the following are recommended.

**Table 2. Additional factors that may necessitate an increase in the width of an Environmental Reserve or Environmental Reserve Easement.**

Hazardous Lands	ER Modifier	Notes
Floodplain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The width of the 1:100 year flood line or 30m from the natural boundary of a watercourse or lake, whichever is less.</li> <li>The width of meander belt for watercourses that tend to meander or entire floodplain if it is highly constrained within a confined valley.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residential development within a floodplain is discouraged.</li> <li>Development within flood fringe area should only be considered if flood proofing undertaken to reduce risk of flood damage. Flood risk mapping or delineation of the 1:100 year flood line generally defines the extent of expected flood occurrence (see Alberta Environment policy and guidelines).</li> <li>The width of a meander belt is determined by multiplying bankfull width by 20 for each reach, and is split equally on either side of creek along axis of meander belt.</li> </ul>
Erosion prone areas	Provide for a toe erosion allowance.	Consider highly erosive soils and annual recession rates.
Gully, ravine, coulee, or valley escarpments	Provide for a stable slope allowance. Apply construction and building setbacks from this line.	Boundary of stable slope allowance measured from top of crest of plateau (terrace), valley slope or tableland.
Steep Slopes (>15%)	3X escarpment height or as recommended by a geotechnical report on slope stability, rate of erosion, etc.	

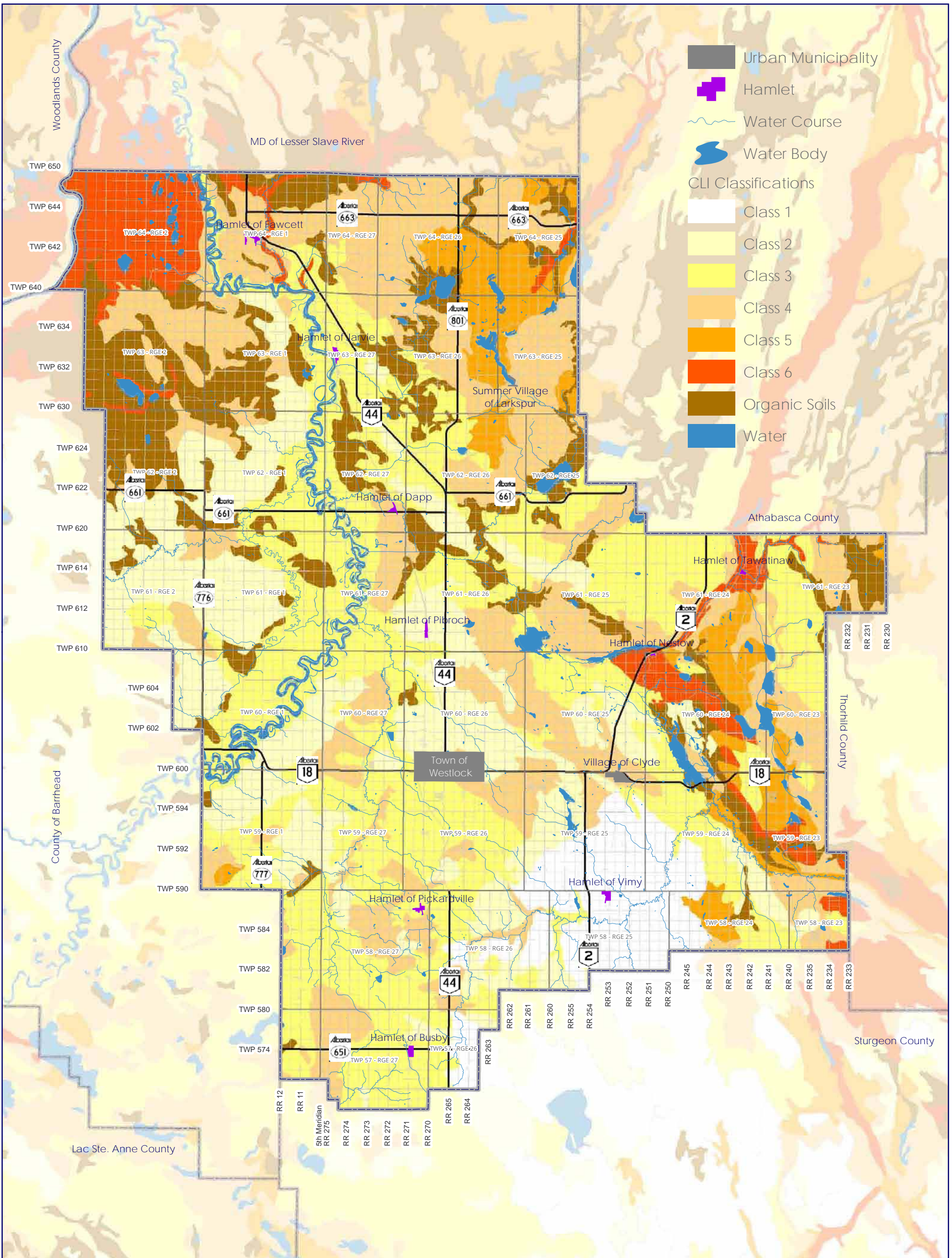
# Appendix B: Maps for Information

The following maps are included for information only and are not approved as part of the Bylaw.

- Map 8.1 - Agricultural Capability (CLI)<sup>6</sup>
- Map 8.2 - Local Topography
- Map 8.3 – Waterfowl Capability (CLI)
- Map 8.4 – Ungulate Capability (CLI)
- Map 8.5 – Parks and Heritage Areas
- Map 8.6 – Environmental Features
- Map 8.7 – Wells and Pipelines
- Map 8.8 – Existing Land Uses

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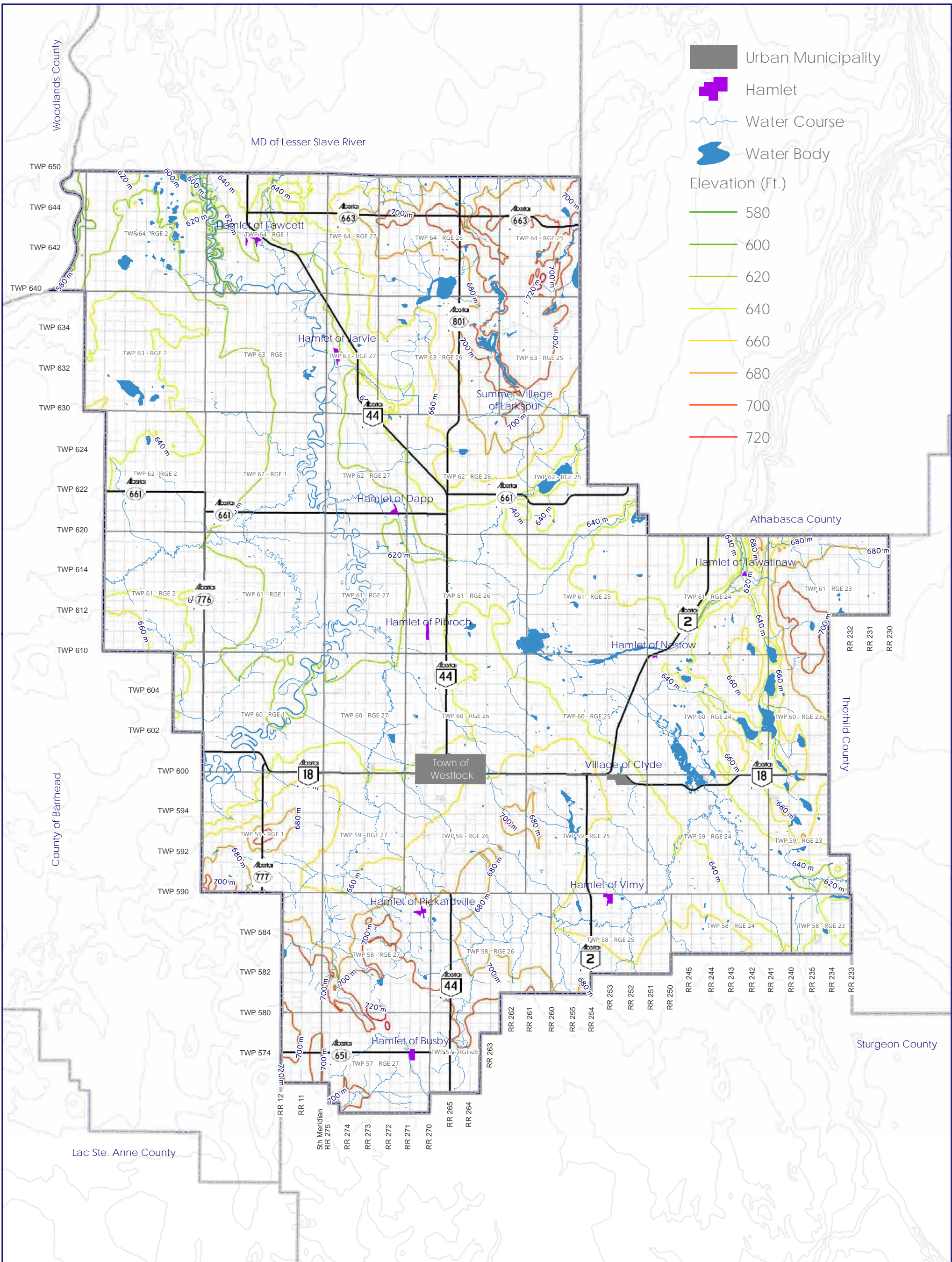
<sup>6</sup> CLI is an acronym for Canada Lands Inventory



# WESTLOCK COUNTY 8.1 Agricultural Capability

Digital Information: Geogratis and Altalis  
 Projection: UTM NAD 83 12N

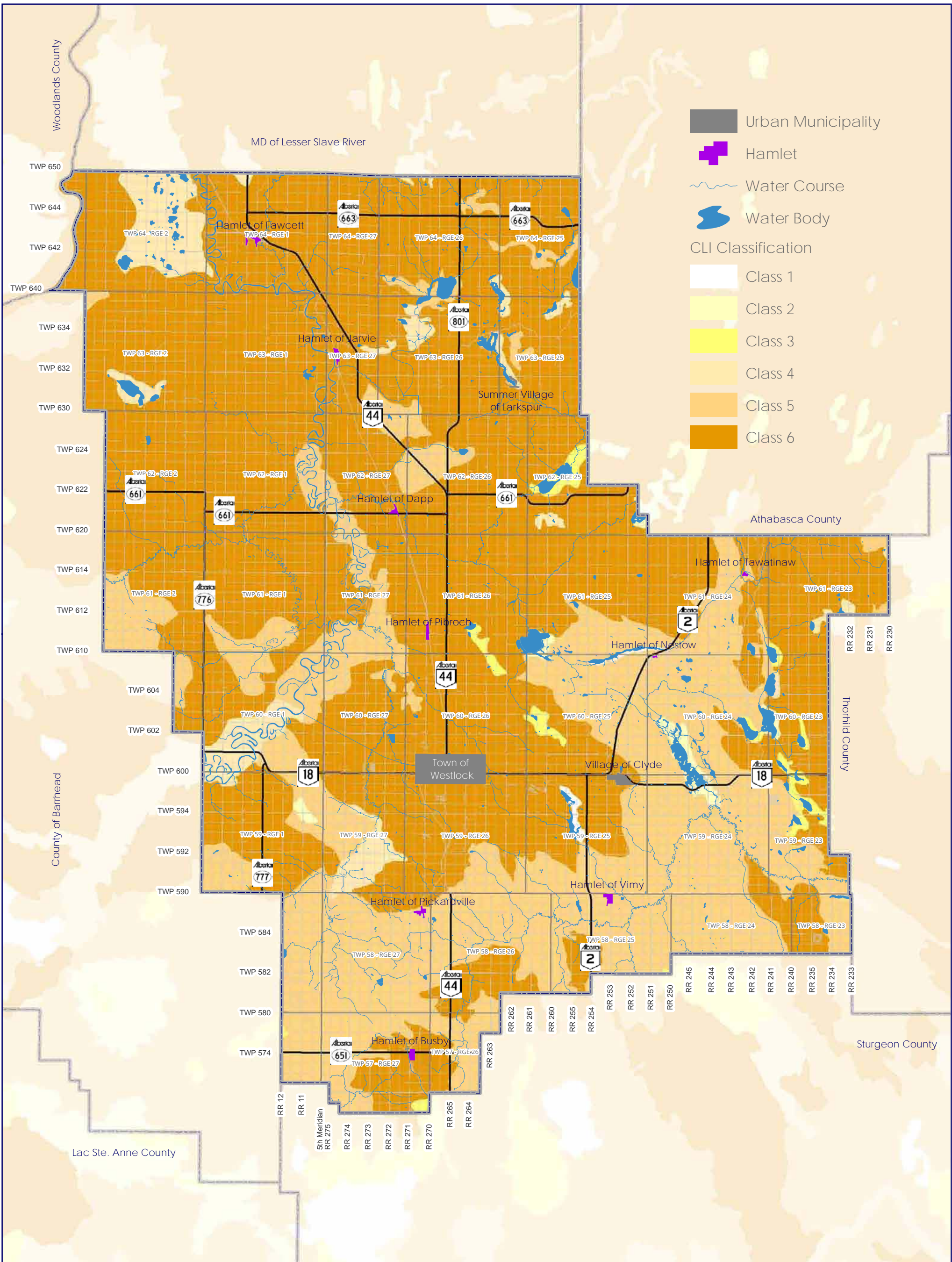




# WESTLOCK COUNTY 8.2 Local Topography

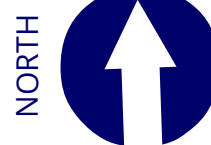
Digital Information: Geogratis and Altalis  
 Projection: UTM NAD 83 12N

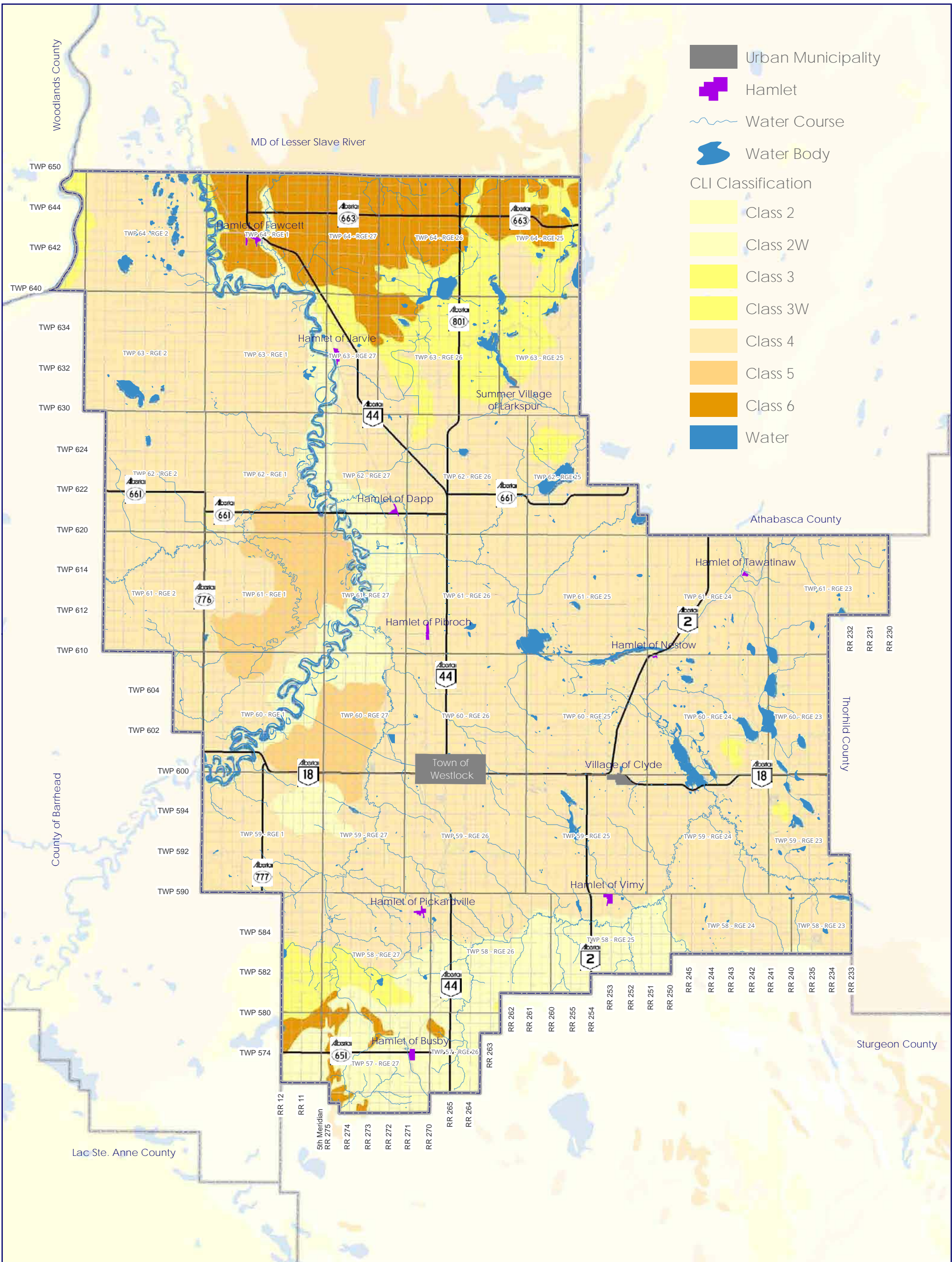




# WESTLOCK COUNTY 8.3 Waterfowl Capability

Digital Information: Geogratis and Altalis  
 Projection: UTM NAD 83 12N

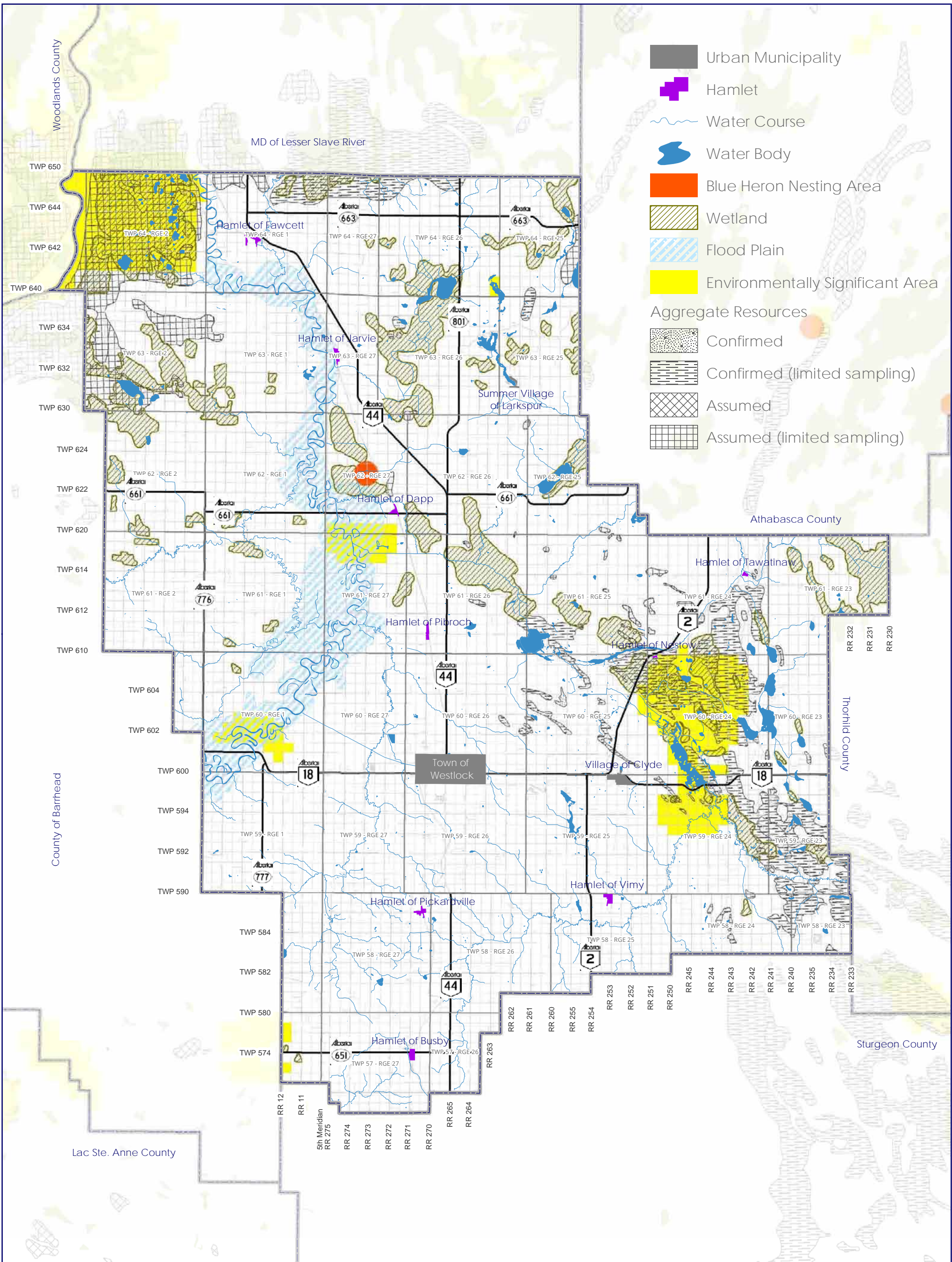




# WESTLOCK COUNTY 8.4 Ungulate Capability

Digital Information: Geogratis and Altalis  
 Projection: UTM NAD 83 12N



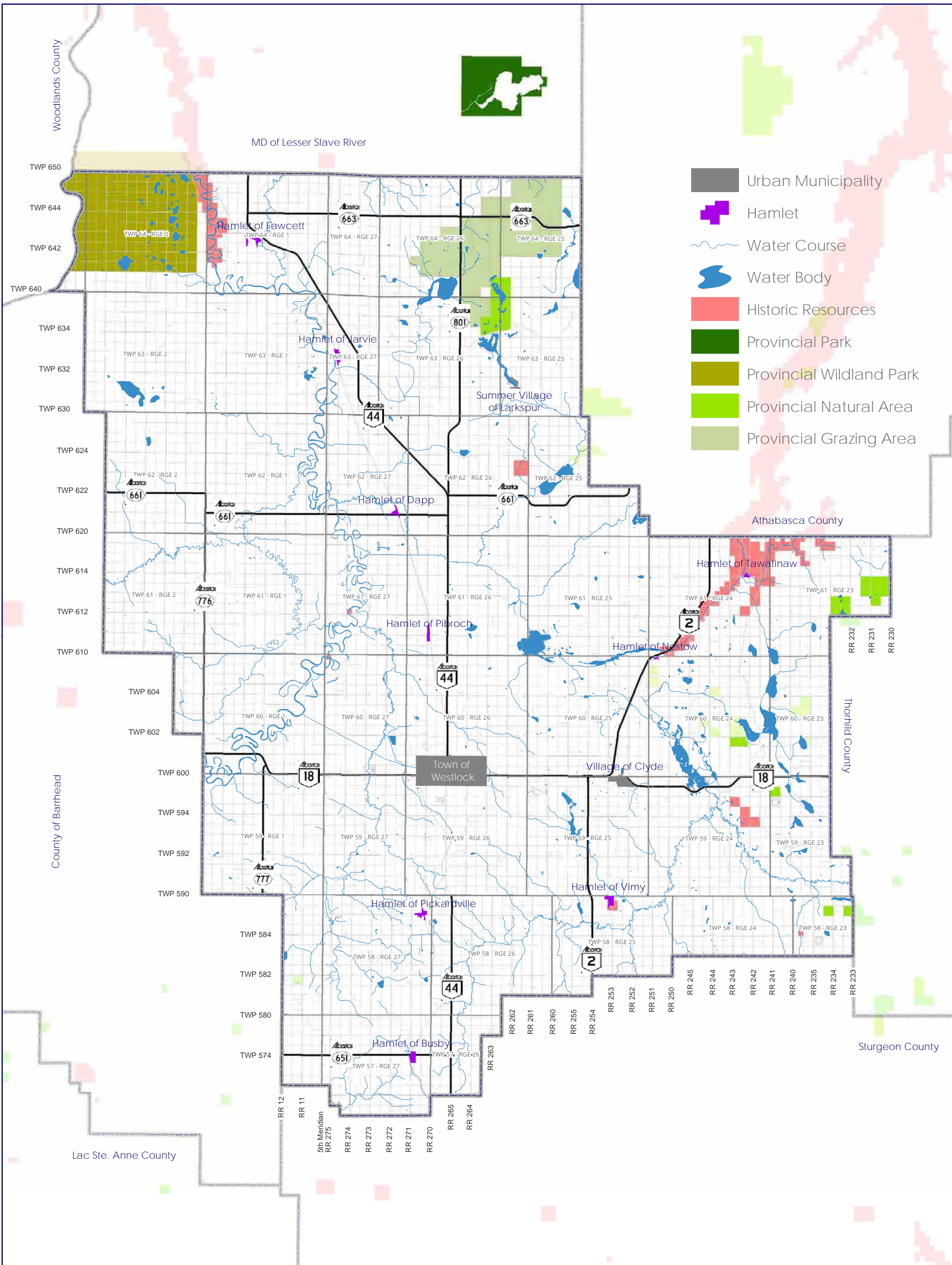


# WESTLOCK COUNTY 8.6 Environmental Features

Digital Information: Geogratis and Altalis  
 Projection: UTM NAD 83 12N

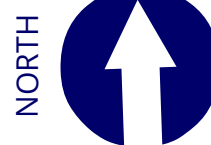


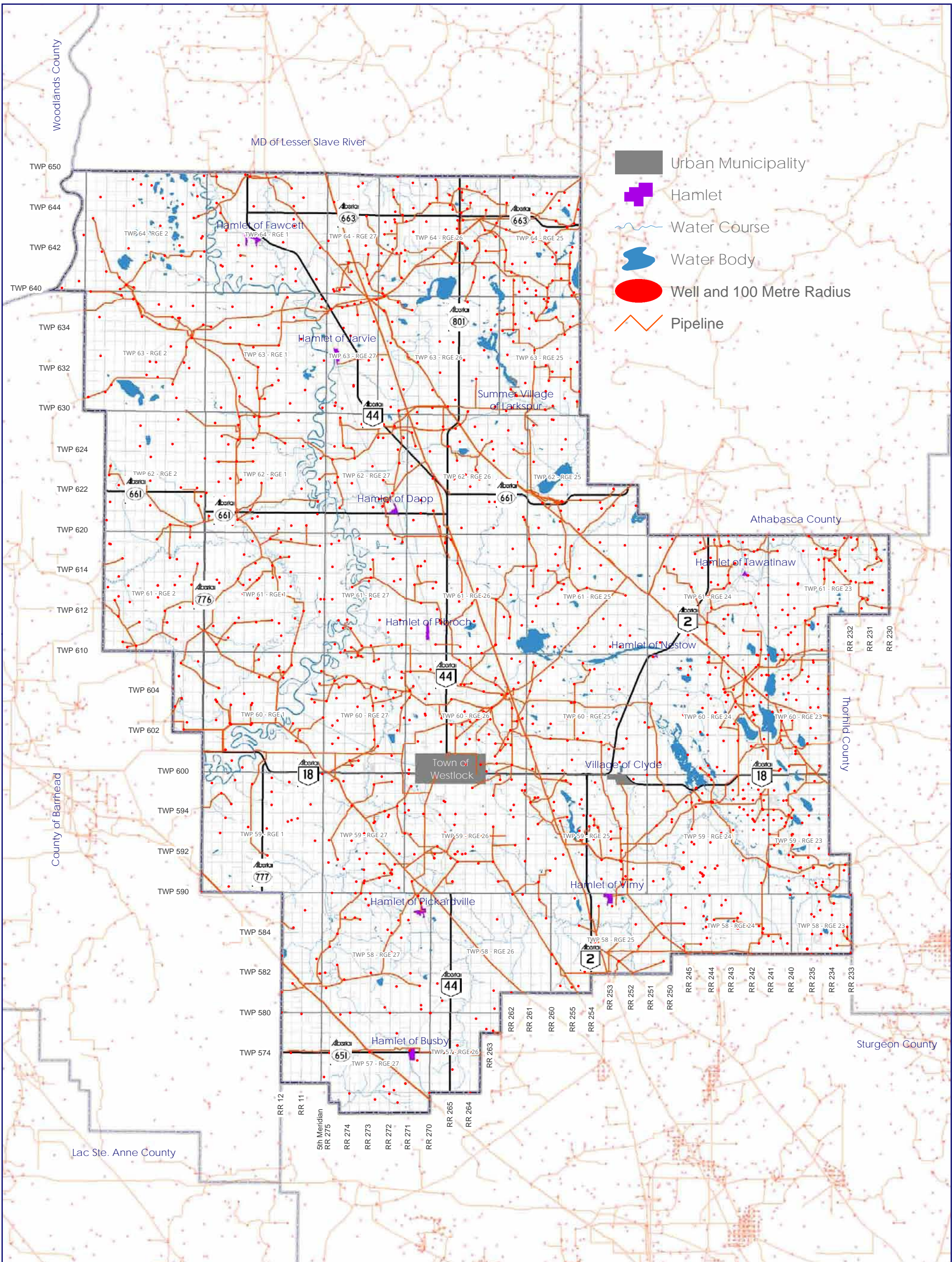




# WESTLOCK COUNTY 8.5 Parks and Heritage Areas

Digital Information: Geogratis and Altalis  
 Projection: UTM NAD 83 12N

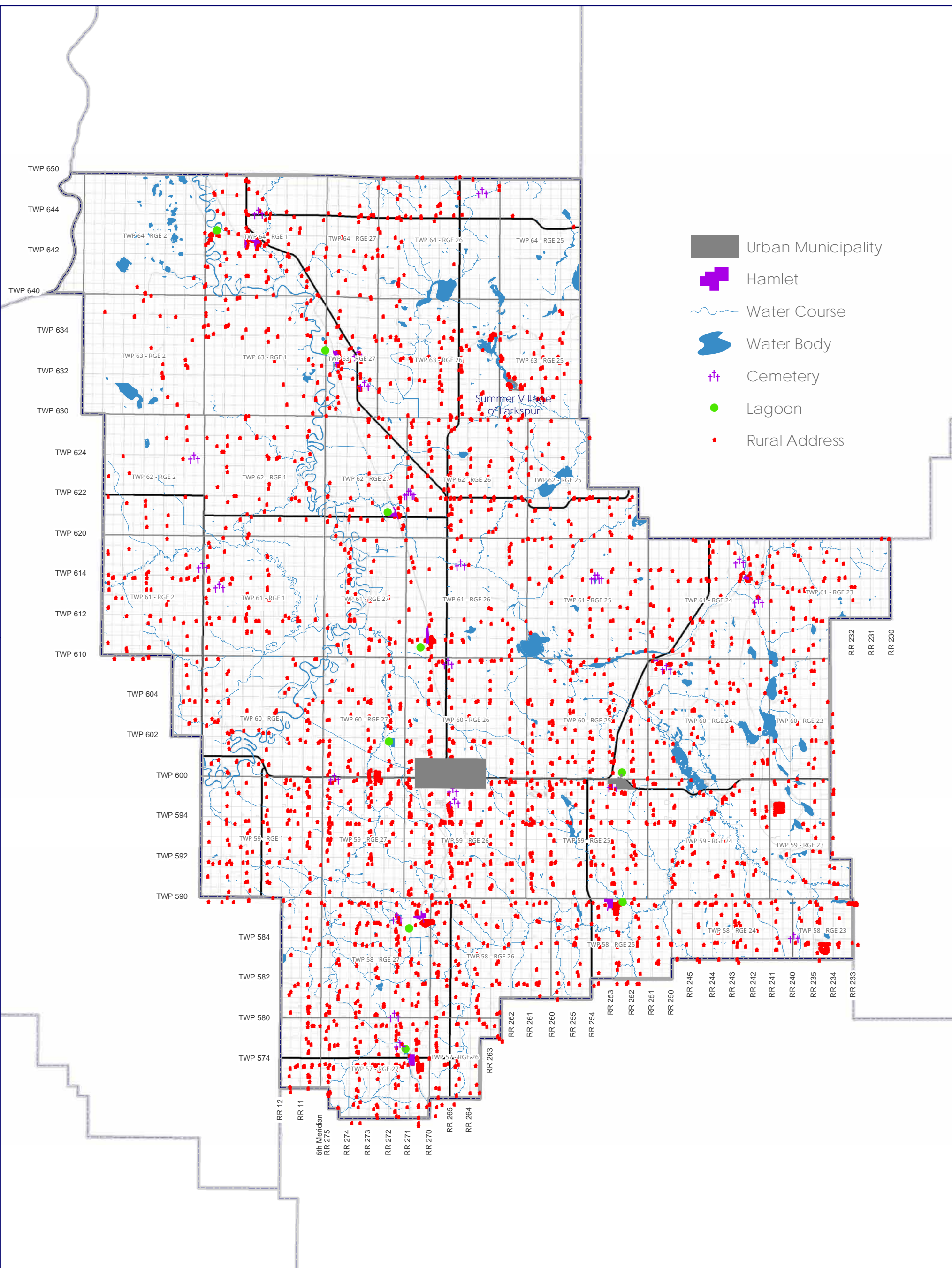




# WESTLOCK COUNTY 8.7 Wells and Pipelines

Digital Information: Geogratis and Altalis  
 Projection: UTM NAD 83 12N





# WESTLOCK COUNTY 8.8 Existing Land Uses

Digital Information: Geogratis and Altalis  
 Projection: UTM NAD 83 12N

