

Town of Big River
Official Community Plan

SCHEDULE "A" to
BYLAW NO. 2015-01

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Authority and Purpose

In accordance with Section 29 of The Planning and Development Act, 2007 or a successor thereto, the Council of the Town of Big River adopts this Official Community Plan (OCP) to provide the Town with goals, objectives and policies relating to the future development of the community. It is intended to guide Council in future development decisions for the health, safety, and general welfare of the community. As a guiding document to the Zoning Bylaw, the OCP will assist in prioritizing actions and decisions to improve and protect the quality of life for all residents in the Town of Big River.

The OCP is a legal statutory document that is required by the Planning and Development Act, 2007 or a successor thereto, and is the first Official Community Plan for the Town.

1.2 Scope

The policies of this OCP shall apply to all land within the Town of Big River boundaries. The Plan is intended to guide the growth and development of the Town to a population of approximately 1,000 in 2034. Policies which address the potential future development of areas outside the current limits of the Town indicate future intent and such policies should be considered by the R.M. of Big River when development proposals are received and for regional planning purposes. All development within the Town shall conform to the objectives and policies of this OCP.

1.3 Planning Process

The Town of Big River Council retained AECOM to assist in developing an Official Community Plan and to update the Zoning Bylaw. Professional planners met with the Steering Committee (comprised of the Mayor, all members of council and the Town Administrator) to progress toward a comprehensive plan that reflects the community's goals and vision of the future.

The Mayor and Council were involved throughout the development of both documents. During scheduled meetings, the planning team confirmed progress, provided opportunity for review, clarified issues, and incorporated comments into the OCP. Their local knowledge was invaluable, and greatly contributed to the content, leading to a document reflecting the community's vision and goals. With their contribution, the planning team was able to create a plan reflecting the current structure of Big River, which also identifies the need and opportunity for future development.

All residents of the community were invited to participate in the planning process. The public consultation program included two open-house community forums, public surveys forms, and a public hearing. Many engaged residents attended the Public Open House meetings, where they reviewed information, images and plans, and participated in discussions with planners and council during informal discussion sessions. The planning team gathered comments from residents regarding their views of the community, and thoughts on current issues and future growth. Comments and concerns were gathered and recorded on comment sheets available during meetings and also from copies available at the Municipal office. AECOM staff directed the planning process, guided members of the steering committee and prepared the document for government approval. Alterations and comments from representatives at the Community Planning Branch of the Ministry of Government Relations were incorporated into the final document.

The OCP is not meant to be a static reference. The planning process should continue in council meetings and public events. Various factors will impact the necessity to review and update the document to maintain accuracy and relevance. Some indicators may be: any rapid or significant changes to the local market, housing construction, noticeable demographic, density or population changes. As a minimum, it is recommended the OCP be reviewed and updated every five years.

1.4 Implementation

The purpose of the OCP is to provide a policy framework to help guide the physical, environmental, economic, social and cultural development of the Town. This document will help direct planning and development within the Town to ensure that future growth is undertaken in a sustainable and orderly manner which considers the Town's resources and needs. The interpretation of the plan calls for the exercise of judgement and discretion in a manner that balances the achievement of long-term goals with the specific circumstances associated with a particular land use or development application. The OCP should be consulted as a guiding tool for social programs, and community goals and initiatives.

Primary reference materials to support this OCP are: The Planning and Development Act, 2007 (PDA) and The Statements of Provincial Interest Regulation 2012 (SPIs).

This OCP and corresponding Zoning Bylaw were prepared by Professional Community Planners, in accordance with, and pursuant to section 29 of The Planning and Development Act, 2007.

Further to content of this OCP and in accordance with The Planning and Development Act, 2007 Section 52 council's discretionary approvals will consider if an application complies with the zoning bylaw, is compatible with other developments, and is consistent with the provincial land use policies and statements of provincial interest.

In accordance with Section 46 of The Planning and Development Act, 2007, council has authorized the preparation of a Zoning Bylaw for the municipality. It is the primary document with which the Official Community Plan is implemented; however other tools include the subdivision approval process, servicing agreements, comprehensive development reviews and capital works programs.

The word "shall" means that an action is mandatory. The word "may" means that the action is discretionary, and will be based on the planning goals of the Municipality and sound planning principles.

1.5 Document Scope

The policies of this Official Community Plan apply to all lands within the Town of Big River and all development within the Town boundary will conform to the objectives and policies of the plan. Policies which reference future development of areas outside current limits of the Town indicate future intent and such policies will only apply at such a time if these areas are annexed into the Town. Identification of areas for future growth is intended to facilitate appropriate growth and development of the urban centre. There should be open communication and discussion between the Town and the R.M. of Big River to ensure proper coordinated planning for both municipalities.

In accordance with The Planning and Development Act, 2007 Section 8, where applicable, the OCP policies have been made consistent with provincial land use policies. Statements of Provincial Interest have been incorporated into the various policy sections. These statements are intended to reflect the Province of Saskatchewan's position regarding the related planning issues.

This Plan is designed to assist decision makers in securing current and future goals of the community while evaluating the future effects of decisions regarding land use planning. The Official Community Plan is intended to identify planning and development issues, conditions and trends, opportunities and constraints in the following areas:

- Physical / natural environment
- Population / demographics
- Residential housing / dwelling characteristics
- Existing and future urban land use
- Infrastructure and servicing
- Application review and development regulation

Development applications will not be approved unless they meet the policies described within this document.

The OCP is intended to guide the growth and development of the Town of Big River, and the objectives and policies herein contained apply to all lands within the jurisdictional boundaries, and all development within these boundaries are required to conform to the plan. The Plan recognizes the following principles;

- Economic diversity, economic security, and fiscal responsibility;
- Environmental protection and stewardship;
- Equity in land use decisions and a fair distribution of community services and resources;
- Efficient use of land, infrastructure and other resources in the Town;
- Accommodating growth and change;
- Decision making based on democratic institutions and public consultation.

The interpretation of this plan calls for the exercise of good judgement and discretion in a manner that balances the achievement of long-term objectives with the specific circumstances associated with a particular land use, subdivision, or development application. The policies and guiding principles included in the plan are intended to provide guidance and direction in the evaluation of applications, and in general are not intended to be solely used to prescribe site-specific land use and/or other design regulations.

2. COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

2.1 Community Overview

Further Resources:

www.bigriver.ca
www.jkcc.com/brindex

Big River is an urban municipality in west-central Saskatchewan. It is settled on the south-east shore of Cowan Lake and approximately 16 kilometers west of Prince Albert National Park. It is generally located at the following coordinates: 53°50'00"N, 107°02'00"W. Primary access to Big River is by Highway 55 which runs directly through the Town as 4th Avenue. Highway 55 provides access south to Dabden, Canwood, Shellbrook and Prince Albert. It continues north to Green Lake and as far as La Loche and Cluff Lake. The built community has developed in a grid cluster rising east from the shoreline. The Town currently comprises an area of 270 ha (667 acres).

The Town was established as a residential node for labourers involved in the emerging forestry industry to the area. According to "Timber Trails" the first mill was constructed by William Cowan 1909. By 1911 the CNR complete a spur line from Shellbrook and the mill was the largest producer in the British Empire. The population boomed to around 3,000 people and the grid row housing reflected the quick build to the quintessential "company town". Further industries that established the area were commercial fishing and trapping. Through various periods of characteristically Saskatchewan 'boom and bust' events, Big River is now a modern and very well established town with unique character reflecting a proud development history. *For a detailed and intriguing reference to Big River history, 'Timber Trail: History of Big River and District' compiled by the Big River Historical Society, is highly recommended. www.jkcc.com/brindex*

Similar to many Saskatchewan communities, Big River is an attractive community for people seeking a quiet, "small-town" atmosphere while enjoying modern services. In a typical 'northern' structure, the townsite is somewhat secluded. Nearby neighbours include Green Lake approximately 75km north and Dabden approximately 40km south (among others) and the City of Prince Albert is the nearest major service centre. It is a somewhat independent community with no great economic centre of gravity to sustain large markets or employment centres. The Town is an attractive place to settle for young and old seeking the Town's atmosphere and superb access to beautiful landscapes of forests and lakes.

According to Statistics Canada Census, in 2011, there was a population of 639 people within the formal boundaries of the community. As described later, the total amount of this service area is considerably higher. Predominant demographic segments of the population identified are the 20-35 year and 50-70 year age cohorts.

The Town has an intersecting, linear commercial core which includes shopping, restaurants and support services. A proportionally significant industrial/commercial exists at the north end of Town. The Town has well used community services such as T.D. Michel Elementary School, Big River High School and the Community Centre.

Highway 55 is a busy transport route leading to other employment centres. Many vehicles pass through the Town as part of a recreational travel, access to northern communities and industrial/commercial transport. A half mile east is a registered runway open for public air traffic (CKX8).

The nearest First Nation Reserve is Big River I.R. 118 approximately 30 km south-southwest (approximately 50 km to the townsite). There is dispersed housing on reserve with the core centre developed south of Little Whitefish Lake. The R.M. of Big River surrounds the Town. There is reportedly a stable and friendly relationship between the R.M. and Town.

2.2 Community Overview (Regional Role)

Big River is known as "Natures Doorstep", an area which remains largely undeveloped and is rich in wildlife and natural resources. The Town has a close relationship with its surrounding forests and lakes. The lumber industry has provided direct and support services employment to the area from the early years up until today. The local mill was purchased in 2011 and has officially reopened for full production. Commercial fishing from the numerous lakes has provided an ongoing market. While being on the fringe of the North, it is reasonably near the Saskatchewan's extensive grain belt and cropland further east and takes advantage of opportunities that it may provide. Except for some land cleared for farming and a few natural meadows, the Town is surrounded by the northern boreal forest and lakes.

The regional area provides many opportunities to enjoy nature, from camping and boating at one of the many lodges or lakes in the summer, to hunting and fishing in the autumn, to snowmobiling or skiing during the winter. Eco Tourism is an ever increasing market for the area along with multiple rallies and festivals. The Town has a strong tie to surrounding region as it serves as the node for many cottagers, seasonal residents, and tourists to the greater Big River area.

Surrounding natural resource amenities provide further opportunity for economic development and contribute to the aesthetics and characteristics of the Town. An appropriate pace of development is required to maximize the infrastructure efficiencies.

2.3 Opportunities

Big River has numerous positive characteristics creating opportunities for future growth. There are also important social and geographic attributes important to fostering community development.

The Town has established as a pleasant, functional community with a number of amenities. Facilities include a community centre, elementary and high school, recreational areas, an arena, dock, track, campground, 9-hole golf course, ATV trails, extensive four season trails, toboggan hill, museum, and library. Access to these facilities is an advantage for attracting and retaining residents while stimulating new development. These facilities all play a role to enhance the strong community fabric which provides a stable foundation for proper growth.

The Town has two high quality schools. Each has surrounding open space, physical activity space and good local access. The school facility space also provides further opportunity for meaningful events that build relationships between individuals and the community itself.

There is moderate amount of undeveloped land within the central Town area. When appropriate, infill of empty lots will provide an immediate supply of housing. Care must be taken that not all the empty corners are 'filled in' as these to play an important role within the defining character of Big River. Surrounding the Town boundaries there is open land that has not yet been developed with incompatible uses. These also pose likely possibilities for future expansion when required. The Town lands along the south and south-west shores of Cowan Lake create interesting possibilities for development whether residential, recreational or other. The open lots and undeveloped lands are a key benefit. New initiatives can begin from a clear site without the delay of 'existing non-conforming' structures, demolition, or phased exit for current uses.

The developed urban area is well situated in terms of connectivity to the existing street network. The grid pattern is very adaptable to accommodate future growth access.

There is opportunity to maximize benefits as a central service provider to the region. The Town as an urban centre provides opportunity for employment generating activities, medical services, entertainment and other services common to towns this size that are not feasible in the surrounding smaller centres or cottage developments. Although Big River is a moderately sized community, it has the advantage to allow for a full range of recreation and relaxation activities for all age groups.

The natural landscape does not completely restrict future areas for expansion. There are low areas and gradual transition to higher elevations, along with physical barriers of the lake. However with proper design these should not be considered constraints, but priceless opportunities common only to Big River and a reason to support development in itself.

Both commercial and residential infill opportunities exist. Housing within the community is generally in good condition, but some units may be considered outdated and have potential to be replaced with new units. There is a small surplus of open land within the commercial corridors that would support carefully approved infill development.

There is a strong history of high dedication from residents to volunteer time, effort and funds for various activities and events in the community. It is recognised that the level of support from volunteers has a directly positive impact on the physical creation and maintenance of recreational resources such as the ATV trails, ski trails and local event space.

2.4 Constraints

Along with many opportunities, there are also several constraints that affect the Town. In order to properly identify and mitigate development constraints, they should be measured from several perspectives. Development constraints may be real or perceived; yet have the same resulting effect. They can be physically defined or exist in a social context. Other hindrances may be financial, administrative or political. Care must be taken that the constraints listed below are used as a starting point and a resource to assist with classifying new constraints as they become apparent. With appropriate planning and consideration many of the constraints can be overcome.

There are physical barriers that confine the limits of development for Big River. Some of the primary concerns are: Highway 55, Cowan Lake, decommissioned CN Rail corridor, Lagoon, and un-cleared forest areas.

Highway 55 acts as a physical constraint separating the east and west sides of the urban community. It clearly plays a role for transportation and commerce; however these same positive aspects are what burden the Town's primary street with trucks, noise and commotion. With the mill operational along with mining and resource developments in the North, there will be an ever increasing presence of industrial transport along this street. An option to realign the Highway out of Town exists, but seems unlikely. Transferring the traffic east also moves the problem east which continues the same issues next to the schools and potential new development areas. Urban design and landscape architecture can quite easily play a key role to the solution. Adding bulb-out curbs, islands, signage, pedestrian controlled crossings and proper lighting are some of the options that can define 4th Avenue with commercial and social appeal and minimize speeding vehicles. With a safer pace of traffic, residents will feel more comfortable along the street, travelers will more prone to stop and commercial initiatives will be drawn to locate here. There is currently a speed notification display for northbound vehicles which have reportedly been successful to reduce traffic speeds along 4th Avenue. Further discussions should be pursued with Ministry of Highways to support any modifications that would increase safety for all users of this space.

Similarly, the pre-existing rail line right of way defines a swath of open park like corridor through the Town. At one point, this may have served a very industrial function for the lumber mill and elevator, but is now an open system that can have positive and negative impact to future development. It should be thought of as an opportunity, but constraints lie in its physical size and position within the Town. It should be carefully treated as a whole park system. Ambitious development ideas should avoid segmenting it into isolated parcels of park as this would diminish its strength as a linear park joining various areas of Town to the wilderness beyond. Once it is divided it would likely be missed and very difficult to ever re-create. Peripheral development along the corridor can benefit from the many views and vistas of the natural landscape. Development should be phased in along the periphery so the linear park is maintained, while providing residential infill.

Cowan Lake, with its many benefits and defining presence to the Town, is none-the-less a physical barrier to the west townsite. Any potential developments must consider a peak water level on Cowan Lake of 478.7m (based on a 1:500 year event).

The current availability of lots for development is also a constraint to future development. While there are many open lots to accommodate some new development, there would be a short supply of housing if a serious market upswing took place. Until there is a drastic increase in demand for residential lots, the infill areas will provide sufficient supply. This should be a priority to ensure concept planning and preliminary engineering is to a sufficient point as to be shovel ready, (or fully installed) to manage any abrupt growth.

Over time, residents have purchased empty adjacent residential lots for use as an extension of their primary lot. While this is not inherently a constraint, it must not become a common occurrence. It removes the lot from inventory after expensive infrastructure has been installed. Serviced lots are intended for construction of a primary residence, not a garage/shop/yard space. There is potential for these lots to be improved by a new primary residence as originally intended. The main intent is to have an independent primary residence with accessory buildings on serviced lots. These lots should be taxed separately and not counted as an unofficial repotting scheme.

Commercial lots are not necessarily in short supply, but they are however intermixed with residential housing and adjacent lots treated as park. For some uses there is no conflict. For others there may be negative impact to surrounding houses and sites. At the time of development application, decisions should take into account the applicant's solutions to minimize noise, dust, have appropriate screening, and proper storage from the surrounding feel of the area.

The limited variety of housing options is also identified as a current constraint. Throughout the Town, housing is primarily single detached residential, including some mobile homes. Comments from the public consultation along with indications from other small communities indicate that there is a moderate demand for multi-unit housing options such as duplex, townhomes and condominium in communities similar to Big River. A mix of housing to suit demand must be incorporated into the local market to attract and retain the full range of residents.

Some residents perceive the status of civil infrastructure as a concern, and although it is not directly restricting development, it is still a valid assessment of local perception of the community. The primary examples are: lagoon is very close to Town, overland surface drainage system, and un-paved roads. Council, administration and residents should continue to seek out funding sources and allocate the funds required to pave roads with possible curb and gutter. The existing surface drainage system also causes some negative perceptions but does not necessarily restrict growth. The rural cross-section ditches should, over time, be converted to curb and gutter, and improvements should include catch basins and underground transfer. As much as possible, all new development should be designed for underground storm water management. Some existing streets are unpaved. This adds to the general perception that the community is not as up-to-date as it should be regarding infrastructure. Again this does not hinder growth, but should gradually be addressed and required for new areas in conjunction with other infrastructure.

Water is supplied by local aquifers to the water treatment plant completed in 2007. While not a concern for the short term, design and expansion will have to be completed by the time the local population progresses beyond 800. Further assessment of the water system will be conducted in 2015. Further and current information can be obtained at that time.

The municipal lagoon has been upgraded in 2008 to manage some further growth. While both the lagoon and the sewage pumping systems function adequately to meet current demands, both will need to be upgraded eventually to accommodate future development. Further periodic study will determine the best course for upgrades. A confirmed capacity of supply and management must be done for all new developments as the lagoon is intended to service RM residents as well. The lagoon has an operating capacity to a population of 840.

The tree stands and wooded area of Town pose no immediate concern but must be acknowledged. They will be considered an obstacle to some site developments requiring construction and site clearing. Care must be taken to not wastefully shed healthy treed sites based on brief construction decisions. Thought and site planning can save many of these valuable trees that add to the Big River atmosphere. This should not be a mandatory practice, but developers must be able to present their thought process and justification for clearing. A larger concern will present itself to the east as there is attractive land for immediate development that is fully covered with trees. These again should be maintained as much as possible to be incorporated into new areas and designs.

There is a site with potential contamination from pre-existing fertilizer storage at Hoehn Rd and George St. The Town has an assessment report on file regarding this site. There are other potentially contaminated sites in the vicinity of 1st Ave. and 1st Street. The Town will determine what process is required to identify any potential contamination. This is useful land for development to the Town and it is a priority to identify the necessary steps to pursue any cleanup that may be required. An environmental engineering consultant is currently monitoring the sites and conducting Environmental Site Assessment for Ministry of the Environment.

2.5 Community Vision

The Community Vision for The Town of Big River: "To maintain the existing 'local community' atmosphere while planning future growth having a positive contribution to the community and which improves the overall quality of life for residents." Some of the key perceptions from the public consultation and steering committee meetings which define the atmosphere of Big River are:

- Small town feel and pace of life
- Northern town (but with benefits of south)
- Historic pride
- Hard working
- Outdoor recreation and lifestyles
- Organized community events
- Interesting diversity of personalities, age, initiatives (as opposed to "Government town", "farming town")
- Friendly to young, retired and seniors
- Tourism, a place people come to relax and build memories (locals live here!)
- Hub for cottage country
- Winter events & festivals
- Summer events & festivals
- Clean, safe, enjoyable
- Local pride to be in/at/from "Big River" i.e. the Town itself has become a brand

2.6 General Goals & Principles

Objectives and policies specific to individual land uses are established in later sections of this document. However, some general goal and objective statements define the vision and desired future, within which, more specific objectives and policies are established. Such land use policies are directed to ensure needs and requirements of individual land uses are met while minimizing adverse impacts upon others, road networks, municipal services and the natural environment.

As a community in the prairie-boreal transition zone, bordered by farmland, rail lines, and a highway, Big River has unique growth objectives. The intent of Council is to establish policies within the OCP to guide future growth to meet the special needs of the Town. The following statements provide focus for the OCP, and its policies, as they relate to development within the Town. The goals are not ranked by priority but collectively represent the future aspirations of the Town.

The overall goals of the Town are identified as follows:

- The Town will be a safe, sustainable and healthy community for residents and visitors;
- Future development will maintain the "small town feel", and contribute to the existing relaxing and friendly atmosphere;
- Provide services and facilities that will allow seniors more opportunity to remain in the community;
- Provide a range of services and facilities that will appeal to young families and create a draw for new residents;
- Maintain a slow pace of all traffic within Town boundaries;
- Create and maintain playgrounds, rest areas, and landscaped open-space park systems that are both highly visible and easily accessible;
- Provide a range of housing options that meet housing needs of a full range of age groups, household sizes and levels of affordability;
- Provide good quality, functioning level of basic civil infrastructure services for the entire Town;
- Improve the visual appeal of the Town through established planning process, landscaped spaces and detailed features to create a quality community image and feel;
- Ensure sufficient recreational open-space is available to all residents;
- Enhance the economic base by encouraging and supporting the creation of new businesses fulfilling particular local niche markets;
- Promote responsible development of land uses within the community that result in enhanced viability, enjoyment and character of the Town.
- Minimize land use conflicts within Town and adjacent areas in the RM;
- Maintain positive communication and beneficial cooperation between the Town, R.M of Big River, and Provincial agencies.
- Work with local governments, agencies, any appropriate First Nations community and industry for the mutual improvement of service capacity and quality of life within the regional community;
- Encourage the creation (and retention) of social and recreational facilities which serve to enhance the quality of life for the Town and region.
- New construction will be complete in a timely manner after receiving development/building permit approval

2.7 General Objectives and Policy Statements

The Town will continue to recognize the importance of creating and sharing a broad common view for the region as it relates to land use, economic development, infrastructure and servicing, transportation, drainage, water and wastewater, environmental stewardship, community promotion and tourism, as well as social and cultural opportunities.

- a) Strive to ensure the efficient use of land and efficient provision of municipal services and infrastructure.
- b) Maintain a rational and effective system to facilitate and manage growth.
- c) Recognize the importance of regional cooperation for economic growth. The Town will continue to seek and develop mutually beneficial relationships with nearby municipalities, and First Nations groups and work toward achieving shared regional interests and outcomes.
- d) The Town will consult and work with Provincial Government agencies to identify both municipal and regional requirements and necessary actions to support regional strategies and delivery of regional infrastructure.
- e) The Town will collaborate with the R.M. of Big River on land use planning matters in support of orderly development on neighbouring R.M. jurisdictional lands and potential restructuring agreements.
- f) Where any rezoning, subdivision or development within the Town may directly or indirectly affect adjacent rural land use, roads, drainage courses, or other capital works, the Town will, where appropriate, consult with the R.M. of Big River or other group having jurisdiction.
- g) When appropriate, the Town will pursue annexation to accommodate future development requirements, existing development needs, land use and compatibility issues, utility servicing and community infrastructure needs, issues and requirements.
- h) This OCP acknowledges that the restructuring process may take 6-12 months or more, and the process must begin early enough to allow time for further planning and engineering designs prior to land development construction so areas are available for market demand.
- i) To promote steady and manageable population growth by supporting opportunities for employment and enhancing the quality of life which encourages in-migration and retains existing residents.
- j) The Town will continue to monitor the population and demographic structure in order to respond to essential needs and services including but not limited to: housing, infrastructure, health services, education, economic concerns, and recreational / leisure needs.
- k) The Town bylaws will take necessary action to require new construction be complete within 3 years of issuing a development/building permit.
- l) Long-term ownership of serviced lots with no intention to construct a primary building will be discouraged, especially if housing stock is in low supply.

2.8 Guiding Principles

Planning is a shared responsibility among provincial and municipal governments and community individuals. Strong communities embrace the principle of shared responsibility, where citizens and decision makers are responsible for stimulating and sustaining the environment and economy. Their decisions and actions are in a spirit of partnership and open cooperation. These guiding principles are broad statements intended to assist decision makers as they consider the impact of their choices both locally and regionally.

2.8.1 Balance of Interests and Flexibility

Planning decisions should consider and balance the interest of all stakeholders. This will involve understanding the effect of development on the cultural, natural, social and economic environments. There may be situations where one interest outweighs another and trade-offs may be necessary. Council will apply this flexibility to determine an outcome that is in the best interests of the community.

2.8.2 Sustainability

Planning decisions should be enduring. This means that decisions regarding the management and development of our resources will be made with consideration to the requirements of present and future generations ensuring healthy, prosperous, liveable communities. Conservation, reclamation, rehabilitation, mitigation and prevention are all tools that could be employed to ensure growth and development are sustainable. The application of sustainable planning, development and production practices benefits everyone and demonstrates the areas commitment to the global community.

2.8.3 Mutual Respect

Mutual respect between stakeholders is fundamental to good planning. Differences in status, culture, traditions, social and economic views, and values must be respected as we plan together to create a community. The needs and views of all people must be mutually respected as Council works together with its public in the management of common resources, and the development of economic, social, and environmental opportunities.

2.8.4 Cooperation

Cooperative planning maximizes the use of people and resources. Planning in collaboration with multiple jurisdictions and industry sectors allows for greater access to resources, a larger market base, shared responsibility and wealth, and increases the opportunity for growth and success across regions.

2.8.5 Consultation

Consultation is integral to good development. The Council of Big River is committed to providing opportunities for active and meaningful consultation with all segments of the community. The Municipality will engage residents during the preparation of plans to guide land use and development, and to communicate with the public as development opportunities are considered. The public engagement process, notification period and appeal mechanisms clearly outlined in *The Planning Development Act, 2007* will be implemented in all cases. The Municipality will encourage developers to engage the public to avoid conflicts, and resolve issues that might arise prior to development approvals. Open discussion and cooperation are essential to resolving land use issues between municipalities or other jurisdictions to facilitate orderly development.

2.8.6 Initiative and Enterprise

Community success is achieved by combining planning with individual initiative and enterprise. Planning provides direction and timing for infrastructure development to support individual business decisions. Council recognizes that opportunities may be missed if infrastructure is not available in a timely manner. Council is committed to ensuring that the local land use decisions support enterprise and business initiatives. Council will negotiate fairly with developers to ensure that the cost of development is appropriately borne by those who benefit.

2.8.7 Learning and Innovation

Planning involves a process of learning and analysis. The Municipality accepts their role with developers to gathering and understand information as it relates to development decisions. The application of innovative solutions to planning issues will be carefully considered as they may provide opportunities for successful development that might not have otherwise occurred.

3. POPULATION

3.1 Overview

Population data covering the last 14 years was obtained from the Ministry of Health and Statistics Canada. Input from administration and council provided clarification on growth patterns regarding the resident population. Discrepancies exist between the various data sources, mainly caused by separate definitions of who is counted as a "community resident". Population counts provided by Ministry of Health are consistently, and substantially, higher than Statistics Canada data (by 35%-55%), compiled yearly and provide a detailed age-gender breakdown. Statistics Canada data is more accurate regarding a demographic description, but available count data is intentionally rounded and only distributed every five years. Current estimates and historic growth rates were determined by considering all sources and applied to an estimated, realistic total population count that was deemed reasonable by Town administration and Council.

Some unique factors must be taken into account when reviewing the population profile of Big River. The Town has unique characteristics which affect the overall population turnover, in-migration and growth. Reasons to move into the community vary. Labour, family, lifestyle, all play a role to the in-migration decisions. There are also seasonal residents that are likely counted elsewhere and add to a fluctuating functional population. The RM and surrounding areas impact the Town as people come in for services and use the infrastructure. As well, Big River has a number of events and festivals that cause drastic and sudden temporary influx of people. (e.g. Ness Creek Festival, ATV rallies, etc.) While the historic and projected evaluation is primarily relevant to the Town site, the regional residents certainly have an impact on the local market and infrastructure usage.

3.2 Historic & Current

When reviewing Ministry of Health data, two scenarios are identified which determine growth patterns.

First: within the Ministry of Health total population data from 2000-2014 a trend is recognized. In this case it is important to compare RM trends as well. There is a consistent rise in Town population from 2000-2006. This corresponds to an opposite yet consistent drop in RM total population for the same period. This may reflect migration from RM to Town. From 2007-2009 there is a common plateau. Migration and changes seem to be mitigated or non-existent. This ends suddenly with an increase in Town population between 2009-2011 of 425 people, which again mirrors a rapid drop in RM count of 334 mostly during 2009-2010. This could potentially represent another surge of in-migration to the Town from the RM and region. From 2011-2013 there is a slight rise in population that essentially maintains both Town and RM at a constant level.

While the majority of possible migration was likely between the RM and Town, some movement between the area and other centres would have also taken place. Without any data to track this and no clear indication of those numbers it is conceivable that in-migration balanced with out-migration. There is an interesting period in 2007-2009 where the Town population is stable, yet the RM has a slight reduction. This could be an example where the RM outmigration was not fully balanced by supplementary in-migration.

Second: In spite of data which indicates potential migration patterns, discussions with council and administration have clarified a more likely alternate scenario. There is consensus that data patterns do not show migration but rather RM residents who keep a mailing address in Town (the determining factor for Ministry of Health population count). This is a common occurrence across Saskatchewan and always a factor when assessing Ministry of Health data. The effect here seems to be significantly pronounced. In other areas, this would not be seen as a realistic deciding factor for projections. However, given the residential composition of both municipalities and a local

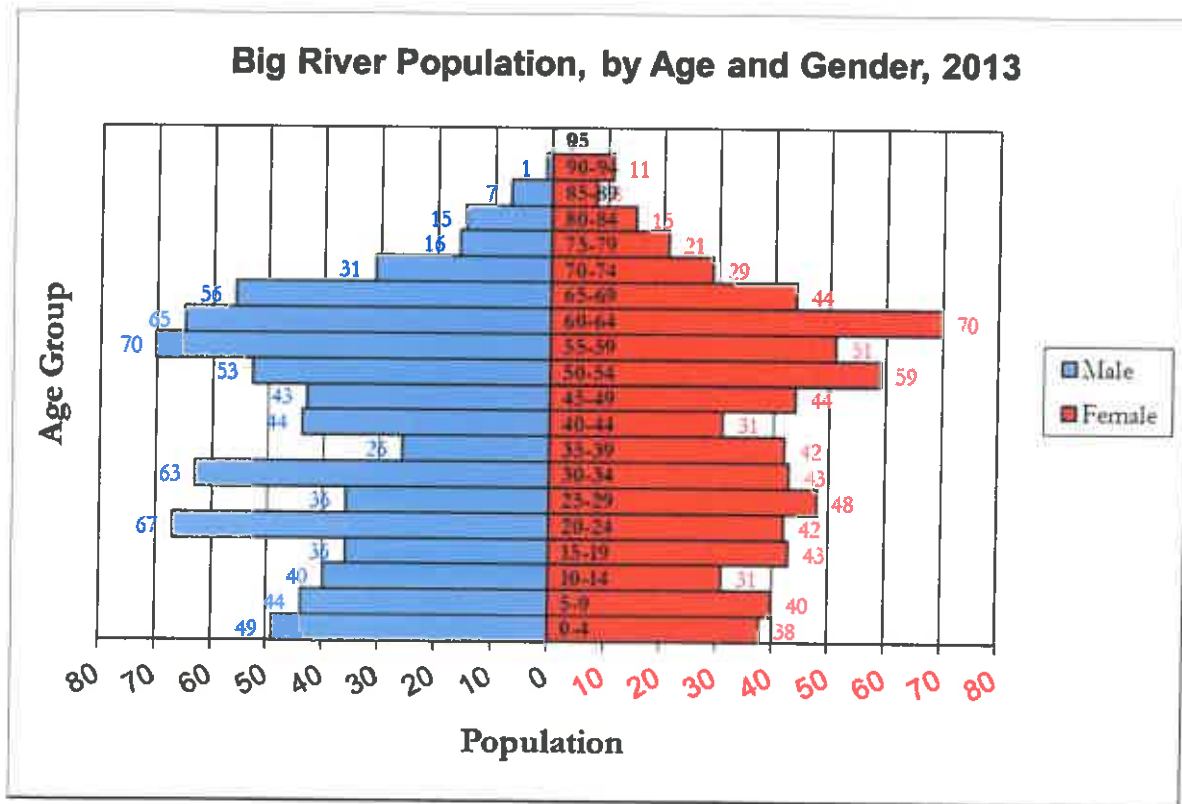
understanding of the 'cabin country' development culture that has taken place to the region, this has been determined to be a justified base for projections.

Council and administration agree that the Statistics Canada count is a more accurate reflection of the Town's population and the Ministry of Health data a more correct representation of growth patterns experienced.

Information from Ministry of Health, as well as from Statistics Canada, indicates that Big River has a broad population base with two predominant population segments. Both data sources show that the 20-35 and 50-70 age cohorts comprise the bulk of the population base; the older group being slightly larger. There is no indication of a drastic or significant 5 year age-group that is unusually high or low. One characteristic of note is the rapid reduction of residents above the 70 year age level. This is a common trait for small communities, resulting from seniors' migration to larger urban centres for medical/health considerations and also a reflection of the natural death-rate.

The demographic breakdown of the local population does not indicate a dominant age cohort, but does indicate that the older population (age 60 +) is primed for expansion. Over the next twenty years there will be a proportionally high increase in the senior population (65+ age group). Statistics Canada reports that when seniors reach their mid-70's, there is a growing trend to downsize their housing and look for housing options with reduced maintenance. As the growth trends observed in the senior populations are expected to continue there could be a significant impact on the Town's future planning and development to accommodate older age groups. There are increasing demands on the health care system which may require special consideration.

Chart 1. – Big River Population, by Age and Gender, 2013



Source: Ministry of Health Covered Population, 2013

3.3 Projection

Using the Statistics Canada data to imply current population, Big River has a firm foundation as a moderately sized community with a current population of approximately 678 people.

The study of past population trends provides a basis for projections of future population, but is at best an approximate estimate, particularly in an area that is strongly influenced by the economy of the resource sector. These projections should be used with the understanding that between now and some future time, there may be changes to the growth rate that will alter the overall population. Any new development or infill within the Town will cause a spike in the total population count and an increase to the growth rate. The vision, objectives and policies of this OCP should be the primary baseline for planning decisions; population estimates provide a reference point for future anticipated needs.

Growth scenarios provide a range of population projections to account for varying factors that contribute to growth in a community. The projected growth scenario data is intended to provide a basis for decisions regarding future development and service. However, population projections are not the final explanation to predict future growth. Periodic, backward-looking assessments must be made to determine which growth scenario the Town is currently experiencing; then apply the growth influence to the decisions at hand.

It is difficult to accurately analyse growth through birth-rate, death-rates and migration due to the unique factors of Big River, the region and a lack of consistent data. This is a community where many young adults move away to other centres for education/employment while they are in age groups that would typically start a family. Conversely, there is a trend for young families (or those starting families) to locate here specifically for the family-friendly atmosphere. As well, more people tend to move to the area for retirement. This is also offset by those who transition to a larger center during their post-employment years.

Population data gathered from the Ministry of Health made it possible to project future populations with realistic growth rates. Based on the Ministry of Health data, the average annual growth rate between 2000 and 2013 (adjusted for outliers) is 1.3%, with a median growth change of 2.4%. For regional context, the RM indicates a -1.1% average annual change. Prior to 2006 the Town had consistent growth around the 2.5% range. The 1.3% rate is affected by recent plateaus and a period of rapid growth.

Chart 2 represents three growth scenarios identified from available data; a high rate of 3.0% annual growth rate, a more modest 2.0% annual growth rate; and an option for 0.0% representing a fixed population level. The 2.0% rate is deemed the most realistic predictor for Big River over the short-term. 3.0% is certainly reasonable to include natural growth and healthy housing market if the pace increases. A scenario of equalized growth at 0.0% could also be possible and is worth tracking as the lowest rate acceptable. At this time given market conditions in the area and Saskatchewan as a whole using any rate below 0% would seem irrational for planning purposes. (in some cases a negative rate is desirable, but not here)

Although the historical average annual change is lower, a 2.0% growth rate is still most the reasonable to apply for future growth. Much higher rates have been recorded within the last 10 years. With the baby-boom generation entering the retirement age their market power will be attracted to the local quality of life and lake-country setting that has been a popular aspiration for their generation in particular. It is early to determine the effect that the operational Mill will have on the community, but only a few years are required for people to move to the area and cause a market demand for housing, services and facilities. Data does not point toward a strong indication that local residents will create an abnormally high contribution to the growth through the natural birth-rate. The 15-25 year female age group is a proportionally balanced segment of the total and is not near the level required for a drastic local increase in the next 10 years. As well, the young age groups, 5-15 are proportional to the overall breakdown, and could be on the low side. There will not be abnormal requirements to manage an overwhelming number of young residents.

This should be used to the Town's advantage to provide the young people with a high standard of resources which would otherwise not be possible if facilities and budgets were 'spread too thin'.

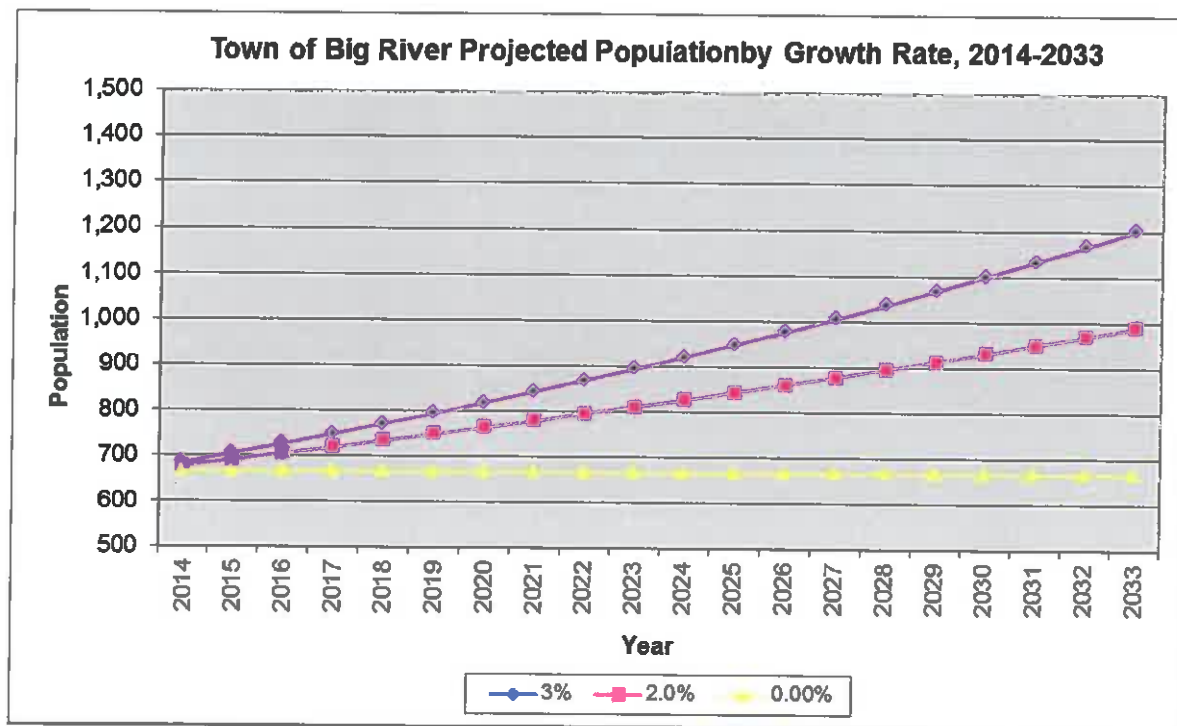
Based on historical patterns, the population can be expected to grow at a consistent, manageable pace, with periodic development projects causing prompt increases. Assuming a 2.0% annual increase, it is anticipated that Big River will experience an increase of approximately 310 residents over the next twenty years. This can be segmented as approximately 15 people per year for the first 10 years and around 18 per year for the following 10 years to 2033.

The opportunities section of this report lists many reasons that the total population is expected to grow. Of note, Big River maintains a specific draw for certain Saskatchewan (and western Canada) people seeking a more rural lifestyle with "town" amenities. The schools and outdoor opportunity is a draw for families wanting close proximity for students. As well, local businesses, adjacent operations and community facilities make Big River an attractive location to live for people of all ages.

With the lumber mill operational and reported estimate of approximately 150 jobs required, there could very likely be an influx of 400-500 people to the area. This would also be combined with reduced out-migration as people remain in the local area instead of finding employment elsewhere and increases due to the mill support service industry.

Further assessment should be done in 2016 to reflect on market demand and population changes.

Chart 2. – Town of Big River Population, by Growth Rate, 2014-2033



4. LAND USE CONCEPT

This section outlines existing land use designations within the Town of Big River and provides a brief overview of their purpose

Land use principles are a foundation to guide action. The application of sound land use principles ensures that the requirements of individual uses are met while minimizing adverse impact upon other lands, road networks, other municipal services and the natural environment. The Land Use Designation Plan, which forms part of the Official Community Plan Bylaw, reflects a pattern of existing land use and designates the areas for future development. The designation of land use reflects the Town's perspective on community development and provides a framework for decision making. Any future development within these areas will be subject to the relevant objectives and policies contained in the OCP and supported through the Zoning Bylaw and development application process.

General and Urban Design:

The overall intent to guide existing and future development is based on the belief that Big River is a great place to be; that there are strengths and opportunities to be appreciated. An understanding that what is here is already very good and new initiatives are to refine and improve on it. Not seek out drastic changes that alter the flow of the Town.

Big River has a sense of openness. There is a buoyant connectivity to nature and Cowan Lake. The Town is less like a typical grain belt farming town, and also does not fit the characteristics of 'northern community', nor is it a cottage dominated resort-village. It is a blend; somewhere between, while distinct. With over a century of design impact, reconstruction, and modernization, Big River has a character of its own not easily apparent elsewhere in Saskatchewan.

There is consistent local day-to-day activity with a sense of calmness. Periodic spikes of exciting seasonal events cause brief waves of buzz, which when complete, make the usual pace welcomed and appreciated. Locals had acknowledged that Big River is a "fun" place to live, that they enjoy living somewhere others come to for recreation and relaxation. Residents stated strong support for the distinct parts of Town: the main streets, dock and lakefront, hill and cemetery area, school areas, industrial hub, golf course and campground area, and all residential areas in-between. Many people also acknowledge that public areas provide twice the pleasure as they are enjoyed equally in summer and winter.

Common design features are: the straight streets following a traditional grid pattern, separate sidewalks with overland drainage, well treed, large lots, intermixed open space and the rail corridor. Ironically, development occurred using the typical prairie grid to parallel the rail tracks and Highway, while in this case the rail and shore are both curvilinear.

Open lots and lands offer a good beginning to site development. Sites have the opportunity to be designed properly from the start as opposed to integrating many existing uses on the sites. Not having to wait for urban renewal is a time and cost saving advantage to growth in Big River.

Residential: This designation recognizes existing residential development and lands subdivided or intended for future residential development. The Residential designation is further distinguished by Low, Medium and High Density districts in the Zoning Bylaw. Big River is primarily low density with an emergence of medium and some high density options. The Sundby Crescent Mobile Home area with higher units per acre falls within the low density category. There is currently a broad range of lot sizes and shapes. In general, council supports subdivision and replotting schemes that will create additional residential sites to be scheduled for development. The residential designation is also intended for places of worship, schools, senior homes, open space and discretionary uses.

Core Commercial (4th Avenue & Main Street): This designation recognizes existing commercial developments and lands subdivided or intended for future Core Commercial use. This designation establishes an internal, central area of the Town intended for designated commercial activities of a community nature. Big River does not use Core Commercial to create a centralized hub. The intent is for 'Traditional Main Street Zone' commerce along Main Street and 4th Avenue, with some extensions. This is to accommodate a broad range of uses including retail, service commercial, office, institutional and mixed use. It should foster and promote compact, pedestrian oriented development with easy access for cycle and automobile. Future applications must ensure street continuity, proper scale, and compatible design that complements or improves surrounding land uses.

Arterial Commercial: This designation recognizes land to be subdivided or intended for future Arterial Commercial uses. These uses are distinct from community core businesses in that they serve a broader regional area, or cater to the travelling public. Distinctions are made between core and arterial commercial uses in the Zoning Bylaw through the range of permitted and discretionary uses accommodated within each zoning district. Arterial commercial sites will typically be a large site, with front parking and a primarily paved lot. These sites are to be located at the edges of Town and transition to the industrial area, and good accessibility from Highway 55. These uses likely generate activities generally not desirable in the main town area such as traffic, noise, light, signage, staff shift changes, or storage.

Industrial: This designation reflects existing industrial development and identifies future development areas intended for industrial purposes. Industrial development is intended to be limited to light and low intensity enterprises with minimal servicing requirements. Due to existing lagoon setback constraints, most industrial development is to be located in the north end of Town adjacent existing parcels. Industrial uses are to accommodate requirements for larger lots, truck traffic, storage, noise and more intensive business that is not desirable with the Town area.

Community Services: This designation reflects areas and facilities that deliver institutional, recreational, social, and infrastructure services in the community. With no specific pattern, this use is intended to be dispersed throughout the community. Sites for CS likely require easy access, sufficient parking to accommodate event attendees, and flexible hours of use.

Parks and Open Space: This designation reflects the public open areas within the Town. This is to specifically regulate park, courtyard, plaza, and natural areas.

Lakefront: This designation specifically regulates the west edge of Big River to create and maintain desirable uses along the lake for all residents and visitors.

Potential Future Development: This designation applies to land that is identified to accommodate the future growth of the community. Lands classified under Future Development have appropriate geographic characteristics that merit consideration for future urban development within the goals identified by Big River. In this district land use will be controlled through policy, Community Development Reviews and required detailed proposals for urban development. A Neighbourhood Development Plan or Concept Plan (depending on scale) and CDR process may be required prior to any development being considered for annexation, rezoning or subdivision. New developments will complement the existing Town.

Areas shown with a Potential Future Development designation outside the Town boundary are not under the administrative jurisdiction of the Town. The policies and related Zoning District regulations do not apply to those areas, as they are under the full management of the R.M. of Big River. Areas identified as potential Future Development outside the Town boundary are considered to be lands that could be utilised to achieve future development needs of the Town, subject to further discussion with the RM with respect to reaching a mutual agreement on use and restructuring.

5. RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Background

The majority of sites in Big River are developed as residential lots. Relatively older homes are intermixed with newer developments. Mobile homes are mostly concentrated to Sundby Crescent. Residential units are primarily single detached dwelling units, with some multi-units dispersed throughout. Residential areas flow through all sections of the Town. "Ladder Road" defines the east boundary, Cowan Lake the west, with a loose landuse transition into the north and south.

There is immediate opportunity for residential infill within the Town. In addition, subdivision and replotting schemes can allow for new lots and residential construction. Servicing considerations may need to accommodate some open areas. The range of lot sizes is to be expanded by now offering a range of housing types. Many owners have purchased adjacent lots that are left open for landscaped area. There is considerable opportunity for infill development to accommodate new growth. With subdivision and replotting schemes additional sites can be scheduled for development. Infill can take place on 6th Ave North, north-east of the Sundby Cres, adjacent Ausland Street, surrounding the hill site, to the south-east and other open lots that are used as yard by adjacent owners.

Some residents have purchased adjacent lots to expand their usable amount of 'lot size'. This should only be allowed in specific circumstances so serviced lots are not taken out of the market. Where this has taken place a review must be done to ensure each lot is used effectively. There may be some collaboration with owners to construct an appropriate primary residence and/or to provide some higher residential use beyond garage/shop/yard space. The Town discourages the practice of removing serviced lots from the market if there is no intention by the owners to construct the intended use on the property. Appropriate replotting however, may still take place, and in some instances may be promoted by the Town, to better utilize any awkwardly positioned parcels that may exist in town.

There is a mixed variety of housing styles in the Town. Bungalows, two level, split level, duplex, mobile home, and cottage styles are seen across all areas. Most housing is similar to existing design layouts and housing styles seen in other towns of similar size. Big River has no conventional suburban design development.

Residents support further development of low density residential growth. There is also a clear demand for greater variety of housing options. It is important to the community that new areas provide a range of housing types for people of various ages and income levels. Comments from residents, Council, and inquiries from prospective buyers all indicated that diversified housing would be welcome and supported. During open-house meetings, there were very favourable responses to the townhome style developments. As well, modern multi-unit buildings and seniors housing were well received.

While higher density development is generally supported, concerns about the potential for "brick cube" three storey walk-up apartments and the two level multi-unit (approx. 10 side-by-side) with very little in the way of architectural design were noted. Density does not appear to be the issue, as many people support the townhomes and three level condominium style units with balconies, planters, multiple facade features with proper lighting. 'Bare land unit' condominium is also a relevant way to provide higher density housing and allow new variety into the residential market.

One of the primary reasons people enjoy living in Big River is the community atmosphere. There is a draw for people from rural areas seeking an urban home in a quieter neighbourhood than what is available in larger centres. Future developments must be phased in to compliment and improve the existing community.

Like many Saskatchewan communities, Big River provides for mobile homes in one residential area. The placement, construction, certification and maintenance of these residences are to meet safe building standards and applicable building code. They are an important component to the residential supply within the Town.

5.2 Objectives

- a) Provide for, maintain and improve the quality of the Town's residential environment through responsible land use planning and management,
- b) Build and maintain a sustainable community that meets the requirements of residents by ensuring efficient use of land, municipal services and infrastructure.
- c) Maintain the "Big River" atmosphere, while allowing controlled development of a range of housing types and options.
- d) Complete residential infill development, to an appropriate density, within the Town boundaries.
- e) Define suitable areas for future residential development, ensuring it is consistent with upgrades to the long-term infrastructure capability.
- f) Establish priorities for the development of residential areas.
- g) Provide for the development of affordable housing options.
- h) Accommodate live-work spaces, home occupations and home based businesses where appropriate.
- i) Identify and mitigate possible conflicts between residential and other land uses.
- j) Establish a high standard of subdivision development, building construction and property maintenance in residential areas throughout the Town.
- k) Deliver an adequate and effective standard of municipal infrastructure service.
- l) Encourage use of sustainable practices when renovating or constructing new buildings, as well as in the design of new subdivisions.
- m) Maximize the efficient use of all serviced lots for new construction of primary residences.
- n) Provide for condominium developments where appropriate.
- o) Provide opportunity for appropriate secondary suites in a primary residence.
- p) Manage the development of lots for mobile home units.

5.3 Policies

The following policies support the achievement of the above objectives:

- a) The Land Use Designation Plan will direct the development of residential and compatible land uses to accommodate a variety of housing forms provided for within the Zoning Bylaw. In planning new residential areas or rezoning land for residential use, Council will give consideration to:
 - i. Compatibility of adjacent land uses
 - ii. Proper management of environmentally sensitive and/or hazardous areas
 - iii. The ability to provide cost effective municipal services
 - iv. The impact on financial and capital planning for the Town
 - v. Appropriate subdivision design and site planning
 - vi. The use of natural topography, drainage patterns and other site features to minimize the cost and risks associated with storm drainage
 - vii. Provision of dedicated lands pursuant to The Planning and Development Act, 2007
 - viii. Provision for pedestrian/cycling trails and other appropriate amenities that will enhance the community
- b) Residential building construction will be regulated by the Town's building bylaw, the Provincial Building Bylaws, and the applicable National Building Code to ensure a high quality of housing at all levels.
- c) Redevelopment and infill of existing residential areas will be supported to maximize the use of existing infrastructure and services.
- d) Provision for the development of mobile, modular, and RTM homes will be regulated by the zoning bylaw and must meet Canadian Standards Association and National Building Code requirements.
- e) Provision will be made for low, medium and high density residential dwelling units. Multiple-Unit Dwellings will be directed to sites considered by Council to be compatible with adjacent residential developments having regard to suitable street and vehicular access.
- f) Future residential expansion will be encouraged on suitable land adjacent to existing residential areas providing municipal services can be economically supplied and maintained to the area, and the development will not result in land use conflicts.
- g) A Comprehensive Development Report shall be submitted by any developer proposing to develop or subdivide land for multi-parcel residential development, to support an application to Council. The Comprehensive Development Report shall address all matters of land use, integration with neighbouring lands, and the provision of all services to the development. Requirements of a Comprehensive Development Report are attached as Appendix B.
- h) Council shall require the developer of new residential subdivisions to enter into a servicing agreement as provided for in Section 172, of The Planning and Development Act, 2007 to ensure that all new developments are provided with adequate services.
- i) Provision to accommodate suitable live-work uses, where appropriate and where land use conflicts will not occur, will be regulated by the Zoning Bylaw.

- j) Home based businesses will be provided for as a discretionary use, and will be subject to the regulations and standards as outlined in the Zoning Bylaw.
- k) Home Occupations will be permitted as an accessory use in residential areas, subject to the regulations and standards as outlined in the Zoning Bylaw.
- l) Where feasible new developments and renovations to existing structures should incorporate generally accepted sustainable development practices.
- m) Council may acquire and develop land for residential purposes where there is a need to accommodate current market demand.
- n) The Town will encourage all property owners, through the use of both formal and informal measures, to maintain minimum property maintenance standards. Landscaping will be required on all new lots and on public open spaces established in conjunction with new developments, and will be the responsibility of the developer.
- o) Council will consider negotiation with any First Nations group that may express interest in creating an urban reserve area within, or in vicinity of the Town of Big River, with respect to provision of utility services or other infrastructure.
- p) The Town will collaborate with the R.M. on land use planning matters in support of orderly development on peripheral lands.
- q) The Town will seek to protect and maintain environmentally sensitive lands and natural drainage courses in the rural / urban fringe, from unsuitable land uses and developments.
- r) Mobile home units will be provided as a Residential use in the Zoning Bylaw and subject to council review regarding appearance, condition, and age of the unit.
- s) The development or placement of Mobile homes will be primarily concentrated to the Sundby Crescent or an adjacent expanded area.
- t) A property owner may replace an existing Mobile Home with a newer unit within a 6 month period from the date of the existing unit's removal.
- u) All mobile home applications will be at councils discretion with consideration given to aesthetics, visual appeal and landscaping to ensure a proper fit within the existing community.
- v) Under separate bylaw, the Town will establish building and property maintenance standards and provide reasonable enforcement mechanisms to encourage acceptable and safe housing conditions in terms of health, safety and appearance
- w) Any proposed condominium or 'bare land unit' condominium developments shall comply with requirements of The Planning & Development Act, 2007; Condominium Property Act, 1993; Condominium Properties Regulations, 2001 and the Land Surveys Act, 2000.
- x) Sufficient representation will be made to administration and council that a condominium applicant understands the process required for the development and operation of a condominium site.

- y) Servicing agreements and development levies will take into account the nature of a condominium development and have special provisions regarding servicing, infrastructure and other municipal services that may require particular agreements with the Town.
- z) Where applicable through regulations in the Zoning Bylaw, secondary suites will be permitted as a discretionary use for one-unit dwellings. Appropriate development standards intended to minimize landuse conflicts shall be applied through the Zoning Bylaw. Appropriate building and plumbing code, and fire safety standards shall also be applied to the review and construction of secondary suites.

6. COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Background

The current commercial development pattern is centralized to Main Street and 4th Avenue as the linear core of the Town. There are other nearby businesses, such as the larger lot industrial area and many home based businesses. Outside of the Town boundaries, the lumber mill and recreational areas impact the Town from a regional perspective.

Residents expressed support for a strong commercial core while allowing some arterial commercial operations that fit with the goals of the community. People want to have a friendly "town centre" as an attractive node for business activity. Expansion of existing businesses and replotting are a few of the steps that should be explored to determine an expansion to the core and further vitalization.

Businesses in Big River cater primarily to community residents. Local businesses do not necessarily compete with any larger urban centres. It is however still common for people to be attracted to services in the larger centres to take advantage of larger selection and for items not provided in Big River. As a result, there are moderate goods and services available in Town. A base of local commercial operations is critical to the future vitality of the Town if growth is to take place. A variety of commercial sites are important components for the community to encourage further development and retain residents within the community.

Highway 55 provides opportunity to extend the commercial corridor for traveling public north and south to incorporate land areas currently undeveloped. This type of commercial infill development will provide greater link between the community, mill site, industrial subdivision and areas in northern Saskatchewan for a diversity of commercial operations providing goods and services to the community as well.

Attractive businesses that suit the overall goals of Big River should be promoted by the municipality. Proper scale and operations will be considered during the application phase so that new business compliments the streetscape with desirable and beneficial activities.

Allowing home based business can benefit the community by creating employment opportunities, providing enhanced services, and assisting in stimulating the community economy through purchase of local goods, which can potentially lead to expansion into the commercial area. However, care must be taken to ensure that home based businesses do not result in increased noise, odour, litter and traffic, outside storage, or decreased property values, thereby detracting from the intended residential character of the area. Council is concerned with maintaining appropriate regulations to minimize public concerns while still providing for enhanced small business opportunity.

Many businesses cater to the tourists' needs, including gas stations, cafes and motels/hotels, and much more. There are also healthcare facilities, an RCMP detachment, financial institutions, a library and museum. Financial institutions located in Big River are Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce and Debden Credit Union.

Media available in Big River include radio stations in Prince Albert, Saskatoon, North Battleford, Regina and Edmonton; television stations in Prince Albert and Saskatoon; cable television service; newspapers including the Gateway News Letter, Prince Albert Herald (daily), Saskatoon Star Phoenix (daily), and Shellbrook Chronicle.

Economic development and small business contacts include the Economic Development Committee and the 55 West Enterprise Region.

6.2 Objectives

The following objectives support the achievement of viable commercial areas:

- a) Develop and promote a vibrant, attractive and strong linear commercial core that functions as the heart of the community and a hub for business.
- b) Provide for increased density of commercial development.
- c) Encourage diversification and development of new businesses.
- d) Support business development that maximizes the use of existing infrastructure and minimizes the need for road development and servicing upgrades.
- e) Facilitate an available supply of land for commercial development.
- f) Accommodate live-work style dwellings on 4th Avenue and provide opportunity for mixed-use development with ground floor retail use.
- g) Support future arterial commercial development within the Town's financial and servicing capabilities which are in compliance with the overall objectives for commercial development.
- h) Ensure that home based businesses do not negatively impact the viability and vitality of businesses located within commercial areas.
- i) Accommodate and promote commercial development which is of a size and type most suited to serve the needs and requirements of residents and surrounding region
- j) Provide planned locations for commercial uses not requiring the full range of municipal services.
- k) Encourage compatibility among types of commercial uses located adjacent to Highway 55.
- l) Promote commercial development adjacent to Highway 55.
- m) Promote tourism related development at strategic locations in Town (primarily 4th Avenue and Main Street)
- n) Encourage commercial uses to locate where they minimize potential land use conflicts to existing and future land uses
- o) Provide for home-based businesses where these uses will not adversely impact neighbouring properties.

6.3 Policies

The following policies support the achievement of the objectives:

- a) Designate commercial land to accommodate the anticipated needs for commercial services.
- b) Commercial development on lands adjacent to residential areas shall minimize potential land use conflicts, and may include provision for buffering through landscaping, fencing, screen or other appropriate measures.
- c) New commercial developments shall be required to locate in the areas identified for commercial development, which are appropriate for the type of use.
- d) The Town will provide information and assistance to existing and potential business owners with regard to potential funding and other assistance programs that may be provided by the levels of government for the development of commercial services and the improvement of existing commercial areas.
- e) Adequate provisions for parking must be provided, and will be regulated in the Zoning Bylaw.
- f) Adequate provisions for signage must be provided, and will be regulated in the Zoning Bylaw.
- g) The Town will work with the business community to create and maintain attractive streetscapes in commercial areas and will be proactive in promoting and ensuring property maintenance standards are addressed. Landscaping will be required for all new developments, as regulated by the Zoning Bylaw.
- h) Council will support the development of community facilities in proximity to the commercial business area as a means of complementing commercial uses.
- i) At council's discretion, incentives to support and retain local businesses in the community may be established.
- j) Existing detached dwellings located in the commercial area will be accommodated as a discretionary use in the zoning bylaw. This will allow for the continued use of single detached dwellings while providing for potential commercial development in the future.
- k) Arterial commercial areas will be established where appropriate.
- l) New commercial development requiring rezoning of land will be evaluated based on the following factors:
 - i. Site planning (including provision for drainage, suitability of the site for construction, and landscaping)
 - ii. Land use compatibility with existing developments,
 - iii. The impact on the commercial sector.
 - iv. The ability of the Town to provide efficient and economical municipal services
 - v. Integration with the effective flow of vehicular traffic on local streets
 - vi. Review and approval of a potentially required CDR.

- m) Mixed use spaces which incorporate an attached residential component in conjunction with a ground floor business will be discretionary in commercial areas, subject to meeting provisions of the Zoning Bylaw.
- n) Home occupations which are secondary to the residential use of a parcel are permitted as an accessory use in all residential districts.
- o) Home Based businesses are provided for in low density residential areas, as a discretionary use, in the Zoning Bylaw. Proposals for home based businesses will be evaluated based on the following general factors and performance criteria established by the zoning bylaw:
- The extent of increased vehicular and pedestrian traffic in the neighbourhood.
 - Compatibility with neighbouring properties and potential for land use conflict.
 - The number of employees involved in the business, and hours of operation.
 - Outdoor storage and other requirements that may impact the character and function of the neighbourhood.
- p) Zoning regulations shall be used to encourage development which is orderly, easily serviced and accessible, is responsible to health, safety and environmental objectives, and which is generally accepted as aesthetically pleasing. Development regulations, including those providing for minimum setbacks from public roads or highways, adequate parking and loading areas, and sign standards, shall be established in the Zoning Bylaw.
- q) Proposals for commercial development should be evaluated on the need for additional services, or as a result of the expansion of new tourist activities in a particular area, which could not be accommodated by the existing commercial uses.

7. INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

7.1 Background

Carrier Forest Products is currently operating the lumber mill south of Big River after its prior closure, and purchase in 2011. There are currently 100 employees, with plans for a second shift sometime in 2014. The mill officially re-opened in May 2014 as a saw and planer mill. When running at capacity it is described to produce 40% of Saskatchewan lumber supply. The operator anticipates approximately 250 additional jobs for harvesting, trucking, and reforestation.

The mill reopening is a significant move forward for the Big River economic area. The Town will experience increased demand for almost all services across all markets. With increased employment to the area housing demand will rise and new subdivision is expected. Support industry and tertiary markets will all benefit from the new circulation of money. Care must be taken to maximize economic benefit without haphazardly ignoring proper design and pre-existing industry that has supported residents independent of the mill.

Big River currently has industrial serviced lots at the north end of Town along Hoehn Road and Boundary Road. This is a well-used area for light industrial operations. Industrial operations do bring benefits to the community through employment, service provision, and establishing demand for residential accommodation in proximity to these work places. Further and more specific economic assessment must be pursued to determine the extent of industrial sites that may be required in the long-term to service the Mill. Not all applications will be favorable to be located near Town due to conflicting landuses and environmental concerns. Ongoing discussion with the RM will provide coordination for future site expansions.

The north industrial area has easy access from Highway 55, a service road from the east, egress to the north-east, and has minimal conflicting landuses. New operations should concentrate and thrive off each other in this centralized area. Lot size to accommodate the mill service support, in town traffic routes and noise should be considered for future expansions.

Existing areas for limited, light industrial development are indicated on the Land Use Designation Plan. There is not a strong desire to expand or attract higher intensity operations. Many residents want no negative impact on the community. Given the un-restricted area for future development to the north, it is likely that opportunity for further expansion of industrial land is feasible. There are some areas required for future lagoon expansion that must be left open or for short-term use only until such a time they are required for the expansion.

As previously described in the General Goals above, open communication with the R.M. must include the appropriate plan for Town expansion for industrial operations. This must be done in advance so both administrations are supportive of development that will impact stakeholders.

7.2 Objectives

The following objectives support the achievement of viable industrial areas:

- a) Attract new light industrial and light manufacturing operations in support of diversifying the local economy.
- b) Reserve land for light industrial uses at locations where land use conflicts are minimized.
- c) Carefully consider the social, environmental and economic effects of industrial development on the community in order to determine the acceptable level of industrial activity.
- d) Designate areas that are suitable for orderly and economical industrial development, with particular emphasis on servicing and transportation efficiencies.

7.3 Policies

The following policies support the achievement of the objectives:

- a) The Town will designate suitable land to accommodate light industrial uses in appropriate locations.
- b) Industrial uses will be regulated through the Zoning Bylaw to ensure land use conflicts are minimized.
- c) The Town will work with Saskatchewan Watershed Authority, Saskatchewan Environment and other agencies as appropriate, in addressing issues related to the supply of water, the disposal of waste material and control of emissions including odour, noise and vibrations.
- d) The Land Use Designation Plan identifies areas of existing industrial land use. Future industrial development will be considered based on:
 - i. Land use compatibility with existing development.
 - ii. The ability of the Town to provide efficient and economical municipal services.
 - iii. Impact on financial and capital planning by the Town.
 - iv. Site suitability and planning aspects including screening, drainage, landscaping, vehicular access, and traffic safety.
 - v. Appropriate development regulations as provided by the zoning bylaw.
- e) Infill of industrial land or expansion of developed areas will be encouraged while planning, designing and constructing new areas.

8. COMMUNITY SERVICES DEVELOPMENT

8.1 Background

The provision of adequate community services for the benefit, comfort, health and safety of all residents and visitors is a key consideration for all decisions made by Council. Service initiatives should not focus consistently on one age or group unless necessary due to special circumstances. Big River has a broad range of residents and municipal projects should be established in a fair manner to accommodate all people.

Council believes that providing access to a variety of community services is important in maintaining the quality of life for all residents. Education and library services, health and home care, social services, and housing for seniors are examples of services that are important to the community. The Town will support the development and integration of these public services in conjunction with new residential and commercial developments.

The Town has established community facilities including: Town Office, Fire Hall, Rink Arena, Community Center, multiple religious institutions, outdoor sports areas, passive park space, playgrounds, a farmer's market space (Settlement Square), and a variety of outdoor activities in Town, on the Lake and in the surrounding region.

Health care services are currently provided, but an expansion to the facility and consistent placement of local doctors are identified as a service that is needed. Provision of medical service (either private or public health care) is an important factor to the long term social and economic function of the Town, particularly with increasing population growth, and potential for a significant aging senior population. Ambulance services are provided privately by Spiritwood/Big River Ambulance Care Ltd. The Big River Health Centre is a fully integrated facility which is part of the Prince Albert Parkland Health Region. The Health Centre has 34 long term beds and 1 interim bed. It also houses offices for community-based staff including home care, public health and visiting therapies.

Educational services are administered by the Saskatchewan Rivers School Division. Elementary and high school education is provided at T.D. Michel Community School and the Big River Community High School within Town. Ongoing relations should be maintained with the Saskatchewan Rivers School Division to assess any requirements for future expansion. By sharing expertise and resources, schools and communities act in concert for success.

Adult education is provided in Big River by the North West Regional College, which operates an Adult Education Centre, and a Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Centre.

Of notable issue is the requirement for some students to cross 4th Avenue (Highway 55) in order to access the school area. Crossing during inclement weather, low visibility or dark periods remain a safety concern. Design upgrade discussion should take place to pursue the installation of lighting and controlled crossings to result in better pedestrian access to the school sites. Low cost urban designs, such as: better lighting and surface material, with more formalized crossing locations will create a stronger sense of place, increase their use and overall safety.

The school provides a dual role for education and as a venue for recreational and social events. There are opportunities for joint resource sharing of facilities with the Town.

Ongoing consideration must be given to provide opportunities for passive recreation space in the community. Many residents related their quality of life and community image to how the open spaces are managed. Park open-space and path systems that are landscaped and maintained throughout the community were key comments identified at public open house sessions. Ongoing maintenance is a must, and professionally landscaped open space areas will be required to an extent that they improve the visual appeal and opportunities for quality rest areas and relaxation.

This provides both an important amenity in the Town, and also contributes to the character of Big River by encouraging active forms of transportation and recreation throughout the Town and into the surrounding region.

There is specific support for continued maintenance and development of playground sites. The existing sites are held in high regard, and are a source of local pride. There is a noticeable sense of accomplishment that the community has not forgotten the value of outdoor recreation for children (and parents) during this current digital age.

Council is committed to ensuring that the community is adequately protected and responsive in the event of an emergency. Protective services include fire, RCMP, ambulance and other emergency measures. Fire protection is provided by volunteer fire fighters under the direction of a permanent Fire Chief. The fire hall in Big River has trucks owned by the Town and the R.M. of Big River. As well, 911 operators have radio communication to relay emergency information to local trained First Responders. Royal Canadian Mounted Police provide protection to the community from their office on east edge of Town.

The Town Office is located in the north-east section of Town. This is an accessible and visible location for the office. There is sufficient room for significant parking and outdoor activities. The office is combined with the Community Hall, library, and the RM administration office. This area is conveniently located for current residents, and the furthest walking route is approximately 1000m (approx. 10 minutes). These facilities are well-used by residents and the surrounding area. This site is also centrally located for potential expansion to the east.

The Planning and Development Act includes provision for council to require municipal reserve lands in conjunction with any subdivision development. This requirement can be addressed through dedication of land, or provision of cash-in-lieu of land, at Council's request. Monies received in lieu of land dedication are held in an account and may be used to development of public recreational facilities. Consideration to the most appropriate means of addressing municipal reserve requirements should be addressed on a case by case basis.

Recreational facilities include:

- Big River Community Centre
- Curling rink with three sheets artificial ice
- Skating rink with artificial ice
- Nine-hole golf course
- Two Regional Parks: one with camping and laundry facilities, picnic and day camping at Cowan Lake shoreline
- Government dock at end of Main Street, used for fishing and day camping
- Snowmobile trails that are groomed, signed, and have warm-up shelters
- Ski Timber Ridge for downhill skiing
- Ball diamonds
- Football/Soccer field
- Numerous lakes for fishing, boating and camping
- ATV Trails
- Settlement Square

8.2 Objectives

The following objectives are to support established Community Services and improve the quality of life for Big River:

- a) Support community service providers, and where appropriate, assist programming of services for the public.
- b) Work in cooperation with other municipalities and other service delivery agencies for the joint provision of services.
- c) Maintain existing passive and programmed recreational facilities and programs to suit the number of users and interest from community residents of all age groups,
- d) Ensure new developments provide appropriate community amenities with linkages to existing facilities.
- e) Identify and meet the varied, changing needs of the community for health care, social, cultural and recreational activities and facilities.
- f) Reduce the effect and duration of community nuisances (e.g. excessive noise, vandalism, improper garbage removal, etc.) which reduce the quality of life for the residents of the community.
- g) Ensure protective services and appropriate emergency preparedness for the Town and the Region, including a base of trained individuals to provide a minimum level of firefighting and first aid services.

8.3 Policies

The following policies support the achievement of the above objectives:

- a) Identify recreational and cultural facilities that are required to meet the present and future needs and prioritize the development and funding of these facilities.
- b) Designate sufficient open space, parks and recreational lands to accommodate the present and future needs, and ensure ongoing maintenance and improvements to these areas are planned and implemented.
- c) Become familiar with and encourage funding from assistance programs provided by senior level of government for community facilities.
- d) The Town may work with professional Landscape Architects to create high quality Municipal Reserves, and other open space land to serve the active and passive recreational needs of the community.
- e) Encourage the formation, and support the activities of, clubs, associations and cultural groups, providing opportunities for participation in diverse cultural, craft and non-structured recreational and leisure time activities.
- f) Evaluate and update relevant bylaws on a regular basis. (e.g. the control of littering, noise, vandalism, dogs etc.) to determine their scope and effectiveness to maintain a high quality of life. Where necessary, update these bylaws.

- g) Cooperate and liaise with residents to report and track crimes, vandalism and suspicious behaviour in order to provide a safe community.
- h) Identify means to attract health care services and providers to the community.
- i) The Town may work with service delivery agencies, other municipalities, First Nations and other jurisdictions, by:
 - i. Participating in activities which enhance the delivery of services
 - ii. Ensuring infrastructure development that supports public service uses
 - iii. Supporting, as appropriate, the joint use of community facilities as a means of providing cost efficient services to the public
- j) Proposed community service developments will be evaluated based on:
 - i. Location, site layout and proper vehicular access
 - ii. The compatibility of land use
 - iii. The provision of adequate municipal services
- k) Strategies will be developed for the conservation of water in maintaining parks and open space, including, but not limited to:
 - i. Controlled water techniques to reduce water consumption
 - ii. Indigenous vegetation and drought resistant trees
 - iii. Use of untreated storm water and runoff for irrigation
 - iv. Dedication of land in natural low areas, and drainage swales.
 - v. Community beautification will be a focus in developing and maintaining public spaces with particular attention to maintaining aesthetically pleasing entrances into the Town.
 - vi. Council supports the preservation and integration of natural watercourses and wetlands into the storm drainage system and the natural park system in the Town, where appropriate.
- l) Every subdivision servicing agreement will fulfil the requirements for dedicated lands regarding recreational and park space.
- m) Where there is subdivision of land, any area that is determined to be hazard land will be designated as environmental reserve in accordance with *The Planning and Development Act, 2007*.
- n) The Town will undertake a study to determine an appropriate program for improvement and expansion of its firefighting capacity to meet the needs of the residents of the Town as the expected growth occurs.
- o) Firefighting requirements will be considered as a part of every rezoning application, subdivision review and servicing agreement.

9. SHORELAND AND WATER BODIES

9.1 Background:

Natural shorelines and riparian areas are richly diverse habitats and an integral part of a functioning lake ecosystem. Abundant aquatic vegetation provides important habitat for fish and other aquatic species while acting as erosion control from ice and wave action. The intent is to avoid any waterfront development that would adversely impact shoreline and riparian areas. The municipality acknowledges that shore lands are a public resource. Any work in or near a water body requires authorization from the Ministry of Environment. Development impacts adjacent to water bodies are cumulative.

In general, the internal urban development areas do not manage their own Stormwater runoff for a 1:100 year event or mitigate the downstream impact to the region. Or rather, the surface water runoff is controlled through ditches and swales as it follows the land contour pattern to the surrounding lakes. Some surrounding areas in the RM region do have land with permanent and periodic standing water. (e.g. Ladder Lake) This should be considered and assessments made in advance of an expected storm level increase to groundwater and surface drainage capacity of the Lake. Saskatchewan Water Security Agency has identified a potential 1:500 year peak water level elevation for Cowan Lake of 478.7 m. This takes into account high lake levels, flood events and significant wind build-up. The elevation is based on previously recorded water levels. There may be opportunity for further study to determine a separate elevation through the use of detail topographic survey. This elevation is considered the safe building elevation. Applications for development below this elevation must show how the flood risks are mitigated or removed. Neither the Town nor the provincial agencies support unsafe building locations within Cowan Lake's high water 1:500 level.

9.2 Objectives:

- a) To allow for the sustainable development of water bodies and shore lands while allowing for appropriate development and public access.
- b) Landuse developments will be compatible with the long-term sustainability of Cowan Lake, Ladder Lake and Big River (the river)
- c) Town will have input on regional or intermunicipal landuse decisions for a fair balance between any competing needs for water bodies and shore lands.
- d) Ensure fair access to lake resources for Town and regional users in the short and long term.
- e) Support the intent of the *Provincial Wetland Policy*
- f) Protect and enhance the ecological and recreational value of water bodies for public access and use.
- g) Cooperate with provincial agencies on the management of shorelines as it relates to any potential lakeshore subdivisions
- h) Development will not restrict public recreation, tourism and fishing uses on Cowan Lake.

9.3 Policies:

- a) The Town will work with the relevant agencies, organizations and industries to determine locally appropriate development standards for local water bodies and shore lands.
- b) Local access to Cowan Lake and shoreline at Main Street will be preserved, enhanced and maintained for recreational use.
- c) New developments will consider the impacts on Cowan Lake and Big River shore lands and aquatic life habitat.
- d) The Town will minimize, mitigate or avoid potential development impacts to waterways, watersheds, water bodies, wetlands, shore lands, aquifers and groundwater.
- e) Construction and operations methods and practices adjacent to Cowan Lake and Big River will be assessed for impacts due to noise, light, sediment runoff, dust, etc. Mitigation methods may be required to minimize impact.
- f) Sanitary sewer systems within 467m of Cowan Lake or Big River are required to be self-contained or piped systems to avoid excessive nutrient loading
- g) Applicable federal and provincial approvals must be acquired prior to any alteration or development along the shoreline.
- h) Development applications will be considered for their impact on public recreation, tourism and fishing on Cowan Lake and Big River.

10. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT AND EXPANSION

10.1 Background

There is sufficient area within the Town boundary to accommodate many types of residential and commercial development over the short term. If the existing undeveloped land base within the Town is developed at a low density rate of 4 units per gross acre, and based on an average household size of 3 persons per household unit, this area can accommodate approximately 100 people, which will be sufficient for approximately seven years. Some parcels in this area require a serviceability study and infrastructure connections. However, there is an immediate supply of 10-15 lots that can manage short-term construction for approximately three years. In general, due to a low growth rate on a relatively small population base, it is anticipated that 24 acres will be required for new development over the next 20 years. If an increase to the rate occurs, this will correspondingly increase the amount of land base needed.

Community Service expansion should take place throughout the Town. Primary locations are in the central core area. Other sites dispersed throughout the Town should be maintained and expanded as appropriate.

Future development must continue to support and promote the existing tourism and recreation market that has been present in the community. New initiatives will undoubtedly cater to the operational mill, but the other economic drivers must not be 'left behind' as they are a stable portion of the community and will be again should the mill have another downturn.

Any additional development outside the Town limits will require annexation from the RM. Areas identified for potential future growth, to accommodate the long-term goals of the Town are identified on the Land Use Designation Map. Council is interested in working with the RM to develop plans that support commonly desired ventures. Both municipalities should continue open communication regarding expansions of the Town which can offer a broad range of services to the rural community region.

It is important that developments in the surrounding rural area do not adversely affect existing or proposed future land uses, servicing requirements, or impact upon municipal facilities. At present, there are no problems with adjacent land uses near the Town, however, where such development is contemplated, there is a need to adhere to setback distances as may be required by provincial statutes or regulations. Plans for future development must take into account the existing land uses that surround the Town (agricultural, lagoon, airstrip, cottage residential)

Land areas directly east of Town are very compatible to accommodate future growth sites. The land must be further assessed for drainage, heritage, environmental concerns and geotechnical status. Some parcels have significant tree cover which should be assessed for its value within conceptual designs. The areas here meet many requirements for connectivity, proximity to schools, transportation, servicing, and geographic advantages. At some point in the next 5 years, a conceptual plan should be created for this area to define residential, transportation, social and economic connectivity as well as provide an estimate of required infrastructure servicing and costs.

Areas designated for future growth should be planned with an overall conceptual plan for the entire area. As portions of the area are phased in and subdivided, the phases should correspond to the intent of the area plan. Among other benefits, there are considerable savings to infrastructure and services when the overall capacities are known in advance. Streets, park and parcel landuse designations will have strong connectivity to adjacent development and developers will know their share of servicing fees to be paid.

Based on existing growth patterns, municipal restructuring into this area would provide more than twenty years of development capacity. However, preparations should be in place prior to the requirement for lot sales. The process for planning, restructuring, zoning, detailed planning, infrastructure, construction and sales takes years to accomplish. The Town should periodically assess the local market and demand on housing with consideration to the Mill operations in order to determine the proper time to initiate expansion in the east development area. At this time council supports an option to potentially purchase lands identified for future growth. There is not a specific desire to act as the developer for these areas, but there is agreement that ownership may provide a confident level of land supply.

There is significant opportunity for urban infill of the decommissioned rail corridor. While these lands must preserve a valuable linear park open space connection, residential and commercial development should be promoted in appropriate areas. Areas between Mill Ave. and 1st Ave have beautiful vistas and proximity to the lake, but also pose infrastructure challenges. Commercial or residential development is well suited to lands on 1st Street North. Expansions on Ausland Street, Cowan Street and Main Street all provide high potential for residential expansions in a desirable setting, likely all backing onto the linear park network.

All future proposed development projects must be consistent with the goals and objectives of this OCP. As well, the Town administration may require a Comprehensive Development Review to be completed along with a development application for subdivision. (An overview of the potential requirements for a Comprehensive Development Review is attached as Appendix B).

10.2 Objectives

The following objectives support the achievement of viable Future Development and Expansion:

- a) Properly manage land use, development and subdivision along the rural-urban fringe in order to minimize land use conflict with the neighbouring municipality and provide for future connections.
- b) Amend the Town's jurisdictional limits as required to accommodate current and future needs and to provide for orderly development of land uses and services.
- c) Consult with RM of Big River on land use matters and development proposals located near the fringe areas of the Town.
- d) Maintain sufficient municipal services without negatively impacting existing areas.
- e) Prevent associated land use conflicts between rural and urban developments.
- f) Ensure that municipal infrastructure servicing can be expanded to accommodate future growth.
- g) Have all contaminated sites cleaned up through environmental remediation process and become available for new construction.
- h) Purchase lands for future expansion requirements if deemed the most effective way to preserve areas for future growth

10.3 Policies

- a) The Potential Future Development designation identifies lands outside of the existing Town limits, intended for consideration as future urban development of the Town.
- b) Areas designated for future growth will have a corresponding concept plan for the entire area prior to a smaller portion being approved for subdivision.
- c) New, phased in subdivision is required to follow the general intent of the overall concept plan
- d) Departures from the concept plan may occur, but designs must be justified as to how they meet the intent and provide justification for the change.
- e) The Town will consult with the R.M. on land use planning matters to support orderly development of neighbouring lands. The Town will seek agreement with the R.M. for the use of land designated as Potential Future Development identified by the Town. An agreement between the Town and R.M. to manage development within these identified growth corridors should be explored, in order to prevent the need for early annexation of these lands by the Town.
- f) The Town may alter its boundaries to ensure that they are able to retain a 5 year supply of land or for the purposes of accommodating specific development proposals where Town services are required.
- g) Areas for future development will have conceptual plans to guide subsequent phases of growth and provide efficient construction of infrastructure.
- h) Referrals from the R.M. respecting development proposals on nearby rural municipal lands will be evaluated based on the following guidelines:
 - i. The potential for land use conflict and compatibility with adjacent municipal development or planned development
 - ii. The impact on future land use
 - iii. The impact on current land use
 - iv. The effect on municipal services and inter-municipal agreements for services to the rural area
 - v. The Town will have periodic assessments to determine a land purchase strategy for future growth areas.

11. UTILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

11.1 Background

Big River must maintain a system of public service which effectively and economically meets the needs of community residents. There are two general infrastructure subjects of concern: the maintenance and upgrade of existing areas, and the proper development of new areas. Infrastructure for all areas includes the provision of civil infrastructure such as: water supply, sanitary sewer system, storm water management and road surfacing.

The majority of roads in Town are unpaved. Residents express strong support for the eventual paving of all streets, upon completion of infrastructure upgrades. As streets are paved consideration should be given to constructing catch basins for underground storm lines. This will necessitate lowering of infrastructure pipelines and streets to establish effective grade change. Some recently upgraded infrastructure lines have been installed at a lower than usual depth to accommodate future road paving.

Water is supplied by local aquifers to the water treatment plant completed in 2007. While not a concern for the short term, design and expansion will have to be completed by the time the local population progresses beyond 800. Further assessment of the water system will be conducted in 2015. Further and current information can be obtained upon completion of that report.

The municipal lagoon has been upgraded in 2008 to manage some further growth. While both the lagoon and the sewage pumping systems function adequately to meet current demands, both will need to be upgraded eventually to accommodate future development. Further periodic study will determine the best course for upgrades. A confirmed capacity of supply and management must be done for all new developments as the lagoon is intended to service RM residents as well. The lagoon has an operating capacity to a population of 840.

11.2 Objectives

The following objectives support the achievement of infrastructure development:

- a) Continue the work initiated to upgrade the water supply and sewage disposal system throughout the Town.
- b) Assist the Health Region and Saskatchewan Environment in dealing effectively with individual septic tank location, construction, leakage and sewage disposal and to pass applicable bylaws to provide regulations in this regard.
- c) Develop and deliver municipal services in an efficient manner so as to minimize the cost to the Town and when suitable consider a partnership with neighbouring municipalities to maximize benefits and minimize costs.
- d) Ensure that all costs of servicing new subdivision developments are borne by the developer.
- e) Ensure adequate storm water runoff drainage throughout the Town.
- f) Develop and maintain an adequate system of internal roads to serve the existing and future areas of the Town.
- g) Provide adequate street lighting in the areas of the municipalities where required.

- h) Provide an acceptable level of solid waste collection, recycling and disposal that is economical and environmentally safe.
- i) Increase public awareness of opportunities to implement sustainable practices including use of programs and initiatives available through local, provincial and federal programs and initiatives.

11.3 Policies

The following policies support the achievement of the above objectives:

- a) Become familiar with all funding and other assistance programs provided by the senior levels of government for the development and improvement of municipal utilities.
- b) When considering new service developments, consult with the community to assess their support for such development (recognizing the tax implications for such an initiative.)
- c) Exercise strict control over the proper use and maintenance of private septic systems and take action against misuse.
- d) Direct future subdivision and infill to areas that can be efficiently provided with municipal services.
- e) Require servicing agreements at the time of subdivision to ensure that new subdivisions are developed and serviced to the standards of the Town. The developer of a subdivision shall at their expense install all utility services of the subdivision.
- f) Monitor the adequacy of municipal services and upgrade or expand these systems to adequately meet the current and future needs of the Town.
- g) Ensure that the function of the road system is maintained by ensuring adequate local and arterial streets to meet the needs of the neighbourhood and subsequent subdivisions and demographic changes.
- h) The Town will work in co-operation with municipalities and other jurisdictions in the effective and efficient delivery of services to the community and region.
- i) The Town will work towards increasing public awareness of conservation, recycling, and reduction of waste, as well as other sustainability initiatives, through communication with community.

12. HEALTH BY DESIGN

Resources:

www.hcbd-clasp.com
www.cip-icu.ca/resource-library/healthy-communities/
www.heartandstroke.com (healthy communities)
www.saskatchewaninmotion.ca
www.uphn.ca
www.canadawalks.ca
www.saferoutastoschool.ca

12.1 Background

In recent years, health and wellbeing data has provided some startling awareness that the general population is not nearly as healthy as it should be. More importantly, the younger age groups seem to be most at risk of reduced lifespan with increased health concerns due to obesity, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, Type 2 Diabetes, heart attack and stroke. Along with genetics and diet, a majority of the cause is due to physical inactivity. The built environment plays a significant role in the level of people's activity. The Heart and Stroke foundation commissioned further study leading to the creation of the "Shaping active, healthy communities" toolkit and the "Healthy Communities Practice Guide" through the Canadian Institute of Planners and funding from Health Canada via the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer.

The principles and information from the Healthy by Design initiatives are to provide awareness of health concerns with factual data and promote solutions through urban design practice and community programs. These are particularly important to Big River as there is a significant amount of population in the young age groups and a large portion in (and about to enter) the senior ages. If opportunities for healthy activity are to take place, it must be incorporated into plans for future growth and included as the existing environment is reshaped over time.

Some of the key concepts are:

- Walkable neighbourhoods are associated with changes towards more active travel patterns
- Pedestrian friendly streetscapes encourage physical activity.
- Pedestrian friendly streetscapes are associated with fewer traffic accidents
- The built environment influences nutrition
- Recreational and open space designs must allow for physical and mental fitness and renewal

12.2 Objectives:

- a) Increase opportunities for daily physical activity as part of people's typical routine
- b) Big River will promote a pedestrian and cycle friendly environment through all four seasons.
- c) New developments and renewal of existing areas will incorporate methods to improve recreational activity as well as utilitarian activity (travel to school, work, shopping, etc.)
- d) The urban landscape will promote active transportation and healthy options of activity

12.3 Policy:

- a) Walkability will be considered for all new developments
- b) Overtime, renewal of existing areas will be done to promote active transport and connections to activity areas.
- c) Snow clearing will give equal importance to non-vehicular transportation infrastructure.
- d) Pedestrian and cycle friendly innovations will be encouraged throughout the Town (pedestrian controlled cross-walks, separate cycle paths, sidewalk and intersection designs, etc.)
- e) Periodic reports will be made regarding the status of HBD initiatives in the community through staff, committees or other representatives.
- f) Urban design practices favouring non-vehicular travel will be incorporated as much as practical (canopies, wider walks, rest spots, trees, snow clearing, art, wind-sun-shade conscious)
- g) Big River will include HBD initiatives in civic branding efforts

13. HOUSING

13.1 Background

Big River has a broad range of residents that require a variety of housing options. There are young families living in Town and also a sizable portion of retired people and a growing senior population. The Town, as always, has a responsibility to ensure a range of housing options meet the needs of residents that promote independence, ownership, security, health and dignity for individuals and enhances the economic and social well-being of the community.

13.2 Objectives

- a) Ensure residents in the community have access to employment and a range of housing options
- b) Ensure residential areas are supported by social, cultural, recreational opportunities and associated services.
- c) Planning decisions will ensure future housing developments meet the various requirements of different household characteristics
- d) Promote a development culture that encourages energy and water efficient housing construction
- e) Housing construction and design is appropriate to the immediate streetscape as a whole and fits the community atmosphere

13.3 Policies

- a) Council will encourage a mix of residential housing types and densities in new and existing areas.
- b) As appropriate to meet future needs, the Town will encourage attainable housing, assisted living and rental accommodation
- c) Along with Residential requirements, the Town will provide guidance and appropriate measures to mitigate the intrusion of residential land use into areas of incompatible uses.
- d) Infill, redevelopment and secondary suites may be allowed where infrastructure and facilities are adequate
- e) Energy efficient, water efficient and sustainable housing designs will be encouraged and may be promoted through incentive programs
- f) Future development conceptual plans may be required to show the consideration of pedestrian networks, usable open space, allowance for cycle infrastructure
- g) As described in the Residential Section, Secondary suites will be a discretionary use regulated through the zoning bylaw.
- h) All housing, including modular, RTM, mobile, traditional build, shall be constructed and placed to meet requirements of National Building Code and Canadian Standards Association.

14. PUBLIC SAFETY

Resources:

www.cpted.net

14.1 Background

The Town of Big River has an overarching position to provide safety and security for individuals, the community and property from natural and human threats. Safety of citizens and property is a primary concern to the Town. To assess probability of events, information may be gathered from air photos, historical documents, photos or water level records. Disaster comprehension can be framed using a 'likelihood & magnitude' system (low likelihood-high magnitude, low likelihood-low magnitude, etc.) Big River acknowledges that proactive prevention and mitigation of risk is significantly less costly than reactive response during a disaster. The regulations set out in this OCP will have a consistent input for decision making to ensure that the Town develops a safe and healthy environment for all residents. Hazard lands are acknowledged to be areas that are contaminated, unstable, prone to flooding, or other hazards unsuited for development because of its inherent danger to health or safety.

Cowan Lake is the local natural water body that would cause any direct threat due to an increased high-water mark from a 1:500 rain or melt event. In general, the internal urban development areas do not manage their own stormwater runoff for a 1:100 year event or mitigate the downstream impact to the region. Or rather, the surface water runoff is controlled through ditches and swales as it follows the land contour pattern to the surrounding lakes. Some surrounding areas in the RM region do have land with permanent and periodic standing water. (e.g. Ladder Lake) This should be considered and assessments made in advance of an expected storm level increase to groundwater and surface drainage capacity of the Lake. Saskatchewan Water Security Agency has identified a potential 1:500 year peak water level elevation for Cowan Lake of 478.7 m. This takes into account high lake levels, flood events and significant wind build-up. The elevation is based on previously recorded water levels. There may be opportunity for further study to determine a separate elevation through the use of detail topographic survey. This elevation is considered the safe building elevation. Applications for development below this elevation must show how the flood risks are mitigated or removed. Neither the Town nor the provincial agencies support unsafe building locations within Cowan Lake's high water 1:500 level.

There are various parcels of land adjacent the decommissioned rail corridor that may require environmental remediation. Some sites have been used for fuel and fertilizer storage that were to supply the operation of the rail line. There is not sufficient knowledge on all sites to determine what scale of remediation, if any, are required at this time. There is a general understanding by council and administration that multiple local residents over the years have noted soil and water on these sites have had a 'fuel smell' for some time and suspect nothing has ever been done to remediate. A review and assessment process must begin to identify the site boundaries, the scale (if any) of contamination and a plan created to outline the strategy for cleanup and development. There is further concern regarding the land slope towards Cowan Lake and the possibility of seepage into the lake or water table. The sites should be taxed at the appropriate rate according to their zoning designation.

To enhance the safety and wellbeing of all residents, particularly the young and old, applicable CPTED principles will be promoted for new developments, redevelopment and on a civic level to existing facilities. Common and applicable CPTED principles may require further investigation by Town staff to create a SafeGrowth specific approval document.

14.2 Objectives

- a) Future growth plans will mitigate or eliminate potential impacts of hazard lands
- b) Have a sound understanding of required actions by the Town during a disaster response event and an emergency preparedness response plan.
- c) Have a useable system which identifies maps and addresses areas of hazard lands within the Town.
- d) Ensure landuse decisions are consistent with the emergency preparedness response plan
- e) Establish a functional working relationship with R.M. of Big River specifically for the development and maintenance of a mutual aid agreement.
- f) Enhance public safety through application of practical CPTED principles
- g) To have sites with potential contamination investigated to determine existence and extent of impurities and the scale of any required remediation.
- h) To have any site with contamination be remediated and available for future development.
- i) The Town will be proactive to collaborate with the appropriate agencies for the identification of contaminated sites that may exist in the community and cooperate in the development of appropriate mitigation plans for those sites.

14.3 Policies

- a) Council or committee will create a system to identify, map and address concerns related to Hazard lands within the Town
- b) Hazard lands will be managed with the appropriate development standards and use mitigation methods that minimize risks to health and safety where development is being considered.
- c) Big River will advance beneficial input regarding their future growth plans to regional discussions
- d) Applications for development within the 1:500 year peak water elevation level for Cowan Lake will show consideration and mitigation methods regarding upstream flows and possible design implications for high lake levels
- e) Council may require further geotechnical, hydrogeological, engineering, survey or architecture and planning study to ensure proper and safe building design below the safe building elevation.
- f) Areas that may be determined too dangerous for development will be planned with alternative uses such as ER, path system, open-space.
- g) Big River will maintain relevant emergency preparedness response plans for man-made and natural disasters such as FireSmart, transportation access plans, emergency vehicle access plan, evacuation plan, public health threats and identify areas for the mass disposal of animal carcasses in the event of a catastrophe.

- h) Big River will take advantage of the Emergency Management Training Program offered by the Office of the Fire Commissioner.
- i) New facilities will be encouraged to include appropriate CPTED principles into their design
- j) New site developments and concept plans will include a general CPTED review component to address how the applicable methods are utilised or a justification for why they are not applied. Any significant issues that are identified must be addressed in the design submission prior to approval
- k) A separate document will be created to act as a summary for CPTED principles and to give context for potential development application scenarios.
- l) The Town will begin a program to identify potentially contaminated sites due to previous landuse supporting the rail line operation and other sites of interest.
- m) Various provincial Ministries will be consulted to determine the best course of action for any potentially contaminated sites and seepage to other parcels, Cowan Lake or ground water.
- n) All contaminated sites will be required to conduct environmental remediation to eventually allow new development and construction.

15. RECREATIONAL, OPEN SPACE & TOURISM

15.1 Background

Big River has significant opportunity for existing and future recreational activities. There are well established indoor and outdoor facilities for a broad range of active and passive recreational events. On a more local scale, the core parks and school parks all have a very high level of activity creating characteristics. There are a multitude of playgrounds suitable for children of all ages, open park space for non-programmed activity and formalized field space for organized (or informal) soccer, football, ultimate or other activities. Some of the park open space is kept in a more scenic natural environment which also maintains opportunities for interesting and interpretive walking paths.

Pocket park, linear parks and neighbourhood level space has mostly very good connectivity. Park and open space placement should follow a spectrum of design intent. In a phased or more localized scale, open space is meant to satisfy the needs of residents in the immediate area. Beyond this, neighbourhood scale parks are designed to complement the smaller parks and be a destination setting for larger scale events and use. These are to be used by many residents and those traveling further to enjoy them. All park and open-space is intended to have a general sense of connectivity and flow within the Town.

On a larger scale concept, the large parks and connectivity network is meant to also compliment path and trail systems in the region. Intermunicipal systems will promote social, cultural, educational, recreational and health benefits to the entire region. There are two regional parks in Town: one as a full service campground in the northeast area of Town and also the temporary camp site and picnic area and the end of Main Street and the Dock area.

Natural areas are considered an important component of land use and provide Big River a means of maintaining a natural environment and improving the aesthetics of the community.

15.2 Objectives:

- a) Establish areas for recreational and natural space protection
- b) Guide development to accommodate a strong recreational and open space network
- c) Incorporate connections to regional trail and recreational systems (trails and lake connections)
- d) Create the opportunity for interesting, fun, and entertaining social experiences
- e) Increase the health and physical activity habits of young residents.
- f) Anticipate the requirements of future residents for recreation and open space through demographics and future growth planning
- g) Parks and open space will cater to sports and non-programmed activities.
- h) Realize health and social benefits from applicable design practices provided through the Heart and Stroke Foundation, Canadian Institute of Planners, Healthy Canada by Design and CLASP
- i) Ensure the environmentally responsible use of, and access to, land and water resources for recreation, tourism, hunting and fishing by resident and non-resident persons

15.3 Policies:

- a) New park and plaza space should be required to be designed and constructed in consultation of a Professional Landscape Architect when to a large scale or when council considers it appropriate.
- b) Park and open space will have access to all residents, including barrier-free access.
- c) Neighbourhood scale parks will have connectivity to other park area by direct linear corridors or a pedestrian street linkage.
- d) Municipal park system will connect to regional greenways to provide safe routes for pedestrian/cycling and physical activity.
- e) Park and plaza space shall be designed with consideration to four season utilization
- f) An ongoing parks and recreation maintenance program and resource allocations will be sufficient to meet or exceed the requirements of the Town's open space objectives.
- g) The Town administration will work with community groups, clubs, teams, organizers and individual users to provide an efficient and purposeful usage of the open space.
- h) Principles from Healthy Canada by Design and Coalitions Linking Action and Science for Prevention (CLASP) will be considered for all new developments.
- i) Civic facilities will have amenities promoting cycling and pedestrian travel (e.g. secure storage, lockup points, change rooms, helmet check, water filling station, etc.)
- j) Big River will have a relevant contribution to regional park and corridor discussions that contribute to overall amenities of the Town.
- k) Council will encourage intermunicipal partnerships which provide greater regional openspace opportunities.
- l) A periodic assessment (approximately annual) will be done to identify any service gaps and provide solutions to accommodate change.
- m) Council will support municipal financing of new or upgraded park whether in whole or part to improve the overall park system.
- n) Landuse adjacent open space or recreational area will not reduce or limit the enjoyment of the lands
- o) Parks, open space and access to the regional resources such as Cowan Lake and surrounding trails will be acknowledged for the periodic use by tourists to the area.

16. HERITAGE RESOURCES

16.1 Background

Heritage resources are an important aspect of community development. Historical buildings are a representation of the past, which enhance tourism and economic development. The Town has buildings that are representative of earlier times. It is important that such heritage resources be protected and that the public is made aware of the importance of preserving these buildings and features of the past. For example, the Seniors Centre and Museum have significant historical significance to the community.

The Statements of Provincial Interest Regulations define a "heritage resource" as: archaeological and paleontological objects, and any property of site that is of interest for its architectural, historical, cultural, environmental, archaeological, paleontological, aesthetic or scientific value.

Resources can be identified as Tangible (historic building, archives, artefacts, etc.), or as Intangible (traditions, arts, skills, cuisine). These are valuable resources that enhance the Big River quality of life. They have a direct impact to community identity, civic pride, historical linkages, and community's sense of place. They are contributors to stronger business attraction and the community marketing initiatives.

There is a strong heritage aspect to Big River and the region. It has been an economically important area for over a hundred years with many boom-bust events. The historical implications are a valuable description of the community and should be preserved where possible. Beyond this, review and inventive thinking should be done to apply the rich history for marketing, tourism and add to the character of community identity.

16.2 Objectives

- a) To ensure that Big River's heritage resources and other cultural assets are protected, conserved and contribute to the economic, environmental and social sustainability of the Town.
- b) Protect and assist in the preservation of significant heritage features and buildings.
- c) Promote the public awareness of historical buildings, cultural themes, and events.
- d) Encourage, support and utilize sound heritage conservation practices as outlined in the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada.
- e) Include the re-use, rehabilitation, preservation of historic buildings in development planning process.
- f) Provide compatible landuse in the vicinity of lands determined to be culturally significant or sensitive.
- g) Protect and conserve heritage resources in Big River and support them within the region
- h) Landuse decisions will be sensitive to the requirement to protect heritage resources
- i) Have venues for cultural events and activities.

16.3 Policies

- a) The Town supports the preservation of historical buildings, and where appropriate, will designate such properties under *The Heritage Property Act*.
- b) The Town supports the reuse, renovations or additions that preserve the historical significance of heritage resource buildings.
- c) Council supports public awareness as a means of promoting knowledge and appreciation of existing heritage buildings and features in the community.
- d) Council will view development plans that avoid or have minimum adverse impacts on heritage resources and cultural assets in a favourable manner regarding heritage and cultural requirements.
- e) Any developments or activities that may adversely affect heritage resources are subject to a heritage resources review and, if necessary, a heritage resources impact assessment.
- f) Resources identified for protection or conservation will be selected of documentation, interpretation, public education and awareness.
- g) Big River will consult with the ministry of Culture, Recreation and Sport to determine the need for heritage assessment of proposed developments.
- h) As soon as feasible, the Town will create an inventory of municipal heritage and culture resources. (Possible formats could include index, digital, GIS, etc.)
- i) When available, Big River will support and provide involvement for a regional inventory effort.
- j) If appropriate, the Town will provide incentives to encourage investment in heritage building rehabilitation.
- k) The Town will have ongoing communication with local cultural organizations to identify opportunities to enhance the Town's cultural life.
- l) Where appropriate, the Town may promote local artists and craftspeople through pre-arranged marketing and website space.

17. TRANSPORTATION

17.1 Background

Council is committed to promoting an efficient, safe, vibrant and pedestrian friendly community with streets, sidewalks, and pathway systems that accommodate the needs of the citizens. The Town has made planning for and maintaining safe highway access and egress, now and in the future, a priority. Any major projects requiring direct or indirect access to the highway may be required to provide appropriate studies reviewing the highway interface and recommending the requirement for any improvements.

Currently, there is no pedestrian circulation plan, nor is it essential. Existing linear park areas should be gradually upgraded with sufficient lighting and surfacing that facilitates safe pedestrian movement. New park spaces must also have proper lighting and incorporate some form of walking paths.

Future developments will require Traffic Impact Assessments to determine upgrades that would be required for efficient flow and volumes at existing intersections.

The Town is responsible for managing connectivity of the neighbourhoods, communities and regions through a variety of transportation methods. This OCP acknowledges that young, seniors, and disabled residents have different transportation requirements that will be considered during community design.

Future development and growth will cause increased traffic flows to the provincial highway system. The Town will work with the applicable government agencies to identify impacts and appropriate mitigation measures through Traffic Impact Assessments (or Studies).

Information on associated plans from Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure can be obtained from the Director of Asset Management for the region.

Council is concerned with providing a safe and efficient network of streets, sidewalks, and pathways that accommodates the needs of the community. As new areas are developed care must be taken to ensure an efficient and safe flow of vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Maintaining safe highway access is a concern for existing and potential future development. Providing and financing improvements in transportation in the future is accomplished through the use of off-site development charges for infrastructure improvements and grants that are available from time-to-time along with local improvement projects in existing developed areas.

4th Avenue (Highway 55) serves as the main access road into the community. Many commercial uses are located along 4th Ave. and any future transportation system must ensure that this main corridor is a safe and effective arterial route.

Pedestrian modes of transportation are generally accomplished by the actual road surface with few sidewalks in Town. There is also significant pedestrian transportation network in the form of greenways and linear parks. Greenways are generally used as an alternate route by pedestrians to access neighbourhoods or central places in the community. They are also used for recreational pursuits such as walking, running, or cross-country skiing. Streetscape standards are needed that require high traffic flow streets to have sidewalks separated by a tree boulevard to provide for a minimum level of pedestrian comfort and safety. These types of policies enhance the pedestrian environment and create an enhanced atmosphere for residents to adopt a more pedestrian lifestyle which benefits the residents and community physically, socially and environmentally. Current design standards with monolithic curb, gutter and sidewalk on streets with high traffic flows is not conducive to a pedestrian environment as there is no buffer between vehicular traffic and the non-vehicular space.

17.2 Objectives

- a) Provide safe transportation routes for vehicular, cyclist and pedestrian traffic.
- b) Work with the Ministry of Highways and Transportation in establishing safe vehicular access points along Highway 55 within the Town.
- c) Provide well maintained roads in Town that are clear of excessive potholes and damage.
- d) Promote emission reducing travel practices.
- e) Develop a street maintenance program that establishes priorities for paving all streets within the Town.
- f) Enhance the pedestrian and vehicular environment in terms of safety, efficiency and accessibility by means of a streetscape design policy.

17.3 Policies

- a) The Town will implement a program of street maintenance and upgrading. The Town will undertake a program to complete paving of selected streets, subject to approval of the local improvement programs by the property owners.
- b) Establish traffic calming practices as needed to minimize safety issues related to traffic speeds.
- c) Streets and intersections will have the appropriate type of traffic regulations and signage needed for the safety of all residents and visitors.
- d) The Town will maintain a program of street maintenance and upgrading as needed to ensure, as much as possible, the health and safety of the travelling public.
- e) The hierarchy of streets will consist of the following:
 - i. Arterial Street – a street that serves major traffic flows between the principal areas of traffic generation with direct access to adjacent development being limited.
 - ii. Collector Street – a street that serves traffic between local and arterial streets with access to adjacent development generally allowed.
 - iii. Local Street – a street providing direct access to abutting properties along its length and only intended for local traffic, not through traffic, and connecting to a collector street.
- f) In new residential areas, street layout and concept plans shall be designed to provide efficient infrastructure and traffic systems as well as enhance neighbourhood aesthetics.
- g) Identify future transportation connections to adjacent lands to allow future planning of capacities and transportation infrastructure.
- h) Upgrade route connections to accommodate regional commuting patterns.
- i) Infrastructure options that are clean and energy efficient will be supported.

- j) There will be consideration to appropriate, cost-effective and accessible transportation systems that specifically address the needs of youth, elderly and the disabled
- k) Big River will take part in potential regional transportation planning efforts to meet development needs and expanding regional service
- l) As appropriate and practical, future developments may be required to use mitigation measures such as buffers, setbacks to minimize impacts of road system and other corridor development on surrounding lands.
- m) Onsite and offsite Stormwater retention and management for major road systems will be required during construction and operation of the structure.
- n) New subdivisions will be required to enter into a subdivision servicing agreement and all road end sidewalk construction must meet Town requirements.
- o) Pedestrian circulation systems will be assessed periodically for effectiveness and safety.

18. INTER-MUNICIPAL COOPERATION

18.1 Background

Council is involved in a number of inter-municipal initiatives that focus on a co-operative approach to providing cost efficient and effective services (fire protection, recreation-rink, community centre, health care, emergency services, landfill and mutual economic development). The Town will continue to work in partnership with other jurisdictions and agencies as a means of providing and sharing services effectively and efficiently.

The Town of Big River is responsible to manage local services, facilities, safety and infrastructure for the community. Municipal landuse decisions which impact the environment, economy and citizens do not necessarily observe political boundaries. Through intermunicipal cooperating, municipalities can manage issues of mutual concern that cross jurisdictional boundaries.

Partnership arrangements can be project based as one-time agreements. There is the possibility of service agreements as an ongoing arrangement such as: fire, infrastructure or other shared services. Where appropriate and beneficial, information sharing is also a typically positive ongoing arrangement. Intermunicipal cooperation can be formal or informal. It is very likely that many low profile informal arrangements have been taking place for some time.

The Planning and Development Act, 2007 and The Planning and Development Amendment Act, 2007 create opportunity for regional planning through a Regional Planning Authority and District Planning Commission. It is possible for councillors to play an advisory role by reviewing and advising others on the regional planning, subdivision and development matters.

18.2 Objectives:

- a) To promote inter-municipal cooperation that facilitates strong partnerships, joint infrastructure and coordinated local development within a strong region.
- b) Establish an intermunicipal process for managing land in the RM of Big River that is within the Future Development designation and beyond;
- c) Establish an intermunicipal planning process for common objectives with the RM of Big River;
- d) When required to strengthen an intermunicipal partnership agreement, work to establish a local process for intermunicipal dispute resolution in the event it may be needed;
- e) Collaborate with municipalities in the region on projects that enhance local growth opportunities
- f) Enable strategic, flexible and innovative partnerships
- g) Encourage development of intermunicipal infrastructure and service delivery
- h) Support a beneficial approach to regional growth through collaborative planning and service delivery
- i) Support regional growth through an efficient transportation system
- j) Create partnerships with surrounding municipalities for a regionally connected system of parks, natural areas and trail corridors.

- k) Have sufficient movement of people and products within the local community and through the region.
- l) Have ongoing discussion and open communication with regional municipalities
- m) Find a standardized method to compare costing levels with other regional municipalities.
- n) Act as a strong and prepared member of regional planning programs to promote local development within the region.

18.3 Policies

- a) During review of a CDR or rezoning application, council will consider existing landuse patterns and compatibility to the RM;
- b) The Landuse Designation Plan will indicate future urban annexation and growth plans that will be made in consultation with the RM;
- c) Town of Big River will pursue the establishment of a dispute resolution process with municipalities in the region;
- d) Council will follow an informational process with the R.M. to refer landuse and development proposals that could impact adjacent municipalities for their awareness and coordination.
- e) Create a study to outline beneficial joint infrastructure initiatives, such as contributions towards regional recreation facilities, as well as possible tax sharing and cost sharing agreements.
- f) Council will show recognition that cooperation and coordination between municipalities is vital to comprehensive planning for the region as a whole.
- g) When reviewing landuse development applications, the Town will consider existing and planned landuse in adjacent municipalities along with infrastructure and servicing requirements to meet current and future needs for the region.
- h) Council will coordinate with school boards, regional health authorities and joint infrastructure and recreational initiatives to promote a strong regional development environment.
- i) The Town will work with regional partners to define an integrated servicing strategy, economic, open space and recreation strategies.
- j) Where applicable, Big River will conduct knowledge sharing and administrative contribution to regional discussions.
- k) When regional partners are aligned, pursue involvement with a regional transportation plan for the long-term development of the area.
- l) Offer existing plans for park and corridor expansion for regional use to collaborate on intermunicipal connections benefiting recreation, health, social and intermunicipal relations.
- m) Gather input and perspectives regarding regional structures from local stakeholders to further define a municipal approach to regional plans

- n) Where required and appropriate, Council will provide funding to gather and maintain technical data resources.
- o) Conduct a program to identify common elements of concern (regardless of scale) with regional municipalities.
- p) Conduct periodic strategic meetings with internal committees and stakeholders to have a clear understanding of Big River's objectives and role within the regional community.

19. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

A corresponding Zoning Bylaw to this OCP has been adopted by council in accordance with *The Planning and Development Act, 2007* Section 46. The following instruments and initiatives will be utilized in implementing the Official Community Plan:

19.1 Zoning Bylaw

- a) The principal means of implementing the OCP shall be the Zoning Bylaw No. 01/2015 to be adopted in conjunction with the adoption of this Official Community Plan.
- b) The purpose of the zoning bylaw shall be to implement the objectives and policies of the Official Community Plan and to provide for the amenity of the area, and the health, safety and general welfare of the residents of the Town, through proper land use control.
- c) The objectives to be accomplished in the Zoning Bylaw are to ensure that:
 - i. Land use conflicts are avoided.
 - ii. Future development will meet minimum standards to maintain the amenity of the Town and protect property values.
 - iii. Development will be consistent with the physical limitations of the land.
 - iv. Development does not place undue demand on the Town for services.
 - v. Future land use and development are consistent with the goals of the Town.
- d) The Zoning Bylaw shall be consistent with the objectives and policies of this Official Community Plan.
- e) Amendments to the Zoning Bylaw shall only be considered where development proposals are consistent with the Official Community Plan.

19.2 Zoning Districts

The primary objectives of the zoning districts contained in the Zoning Bylaw are described below:

R1 - Residential District - to provide an area for low density residential development comprised of primarily single detached dwellings along with compatible community service and public work uses. Modular, Mobile homes, and semi-detached may be reviewed as a discretionary use.

R2 - Residential District - to provide an area for a broader range of residential development along with compatible community service and public work uses, providing a medium scale density of residential development. Primarily intended for, semi-detached, triplex, fourplex, fiveplex, townhome, condominium housing and 'bare land unit' condominium development.

R3 - Residential District - to provide an area for higher density residential development. Primarily to accommodate multi-unit, multi-storey apartment style housing, condominium and 'bare land unit' condominium developments.

C1 - Core Commercial District - to provide a concentrated area for retail commercial uses, offices, tourism, café, financial institutions, personal services, restaurants, hotels, as well as cultural and recreational facilities. The uses allowed in this district will generally require smaller sites in comparison with arterial commercial uses. To be focused primarily to 4th Avenue and Main Street.

C2 - Arterial Commercial District - to allow for the development of commercial uses which require medium to large sites, good vehicular access, or visibility to a highway or major arterial street.

CS - Community Service District - to provide for and regulate development of institutional, recreational, and other community service uses.

ID - Industrial District - to provide a development area for a range of light industrial and industrial service uses. Accommodated as permitted use or as discretionary uses where separation from other districts is required.

P- Park and Open Space - to allow and maintain high quality programmable, non-programmed, natural and landscaped open space for all public use. This applies to neighbourhood parks, core parks, linear parks, plaza and court space and other public gathering nodes.

LS - Lakeshore - this designation is to maintain specific control and public ownership of the lands adjacent Cowan Lake shoreline for current and future generations.

FD - Future Development District - to control development in areas that are not immediately required for development, but which have been slated for or may be required in the near future. Subdivision will not be permitted except for those uses that may be allowed in the district as established by the Zoning Bylaw.

19.3 Contract Zoning

For purposes of accommodating a rezoning for unique development situations, Council may consider entering into rezoning agreements, pursuant to contract zoning provisions of the *Planning and Development Act, 2007*, for site specific development based on the following guidelines:

- a) The rezoning to permit the development will not unduly conflict with adjacent land uses that are legally permitted uses within the proposed or adjacent zoning district
- b) The rezoning will be used to allow a specific use or range of uses contained within the zoning district to which the land is being rezoned
- c) The development or redevelopment of the site for the specific use will be of benefit to the immediate area and the Town as a whole
- d) The request for a rezoning must be accompanied by a description of the proposal, plans indicating specific uses, building locations, landscaping, lighting, off-street parking, and any other aspects of development that may affect the site and adjacent uses through the requirement of a CDR.

19.4 Minor Variances to the Zoning Bylaw

In accordance with *The Planning and Development Act, 2007* Section 49 & 60, Council will allow for minor variances to the Zoning Bylaw as a means of providing flexibility in the administration of the bylaw and as a way of providing timely development decisions. The Zoning Bylaw will identify how the site standards may be varied. The Bylaw will also establish a procedure for processing and recording of minor variance applications.

19.5 Concept Plans and Phasing of Development

- a) The Town directs the subdivision of land through the Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw. Subdivision will be supported where it meets the requirements of the Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw. Council will apply these tools to guide subdivision and lot design, street layout, location of municipal reserve and other dedicated lands, as well as exercise control over utility easements and leases.
- b) The development of any new area shall be in accordance with a concept plan, which may be adopted pursuant to section 44 of the Planning and Development Act.
- c) Concept plans will be used to:
 - i. Provide preliminary plans for proposed development
 - ii. Guide the phasing of development
 - iii. Identify street and block layouts
 - iv. Identify land uses and density of development
 - v. Determine any school site and park shape and location
 - vi. Determine the location and design of parks and pathways.
 - vii. Identify general drainage patterns
 - viii. Indicate transportation network hierarchy
 - ix. Clearly show all open space and MR dedications

- d) Development will proceed at a rate which meets residential, commercial and industrial land requirements. This will involve phased development that:
 - i. Occurs in an efficient and cost effective manner taking into consideration the Town's capital works program and financial capability
 - ii. Ensures a choice of location for building sites
 - iii. Is orderly and geographically contiguous
 - iv. Provides sufficient land so that market demands for land are met.
- e) Whether there is a concept plan or not, Council may use a holding provision (H) symbol to identify the zoning districts associated with future phases of development. Before removal of the H symbol to allow the next phase of development, Council will consider:
 - i. The degree of completion of the previous phase
 - ii. The construction of necessary offsite infrastructure
 - iii. The completion of specified items in a servicing agreement
 - iv. The current demand for the new development.

19.6 Rezoning of Land

- a) Council will consider the following factors when dealing with applications to rezone, subdivide, and develop land:
 - b) Conformity to the Official Community Plan
 - c) Suitability of the site for the proposed development
 - d) Compatibility of existing adjacent land use
 - e) Provision of dedicated lands as may be required for subdivision
 - f) The Town's financial capability to support the development
 - g) The adequate provision and timing of development of municipal services
 - h) The completion of a servicing agreement for onsite and offsite services.

19.7 Servicing Agreement

Where a council requires a Servicing Agreement, the Agreement becomes a condition of approval of a subdivision. The Agreement will ensure that municipal standards are met for capital works and ensure that such infrastructure development costs are borne by the developer and its customers. A Servicing Agreement will be required unless there are no services or offsite levies required for a subdivision. Council may consider a general municipal share in the cost of offsite infrastructure where the improvement is designed to serve more than the subject subdivision.

Where a subdivision of land requires the installation or improvement of municipal services such as sewer lines, streets or sidewalks within the subdivision, the developer will be required to enter into a Servicing Agreement with the Town to cover the installation or improvements including, where necessary, charges to cover the costs of improvement or upgrading of off-site services. Council will, by resolution, establish the standards and requirements for such agreements and charges, including the posting of performance bonds or letters of credit.

Council will undertake studies necessary to define the benefiting areas and the unit costs associated with required capital upgrading of offsite services. The studies will be used to determine a fair level of offsite servicing charges.

19.8 Development Levy Bylaw

Council may provide for a Development Levy Bylaw. Where a development is proposed that is of a greater density and requires the capital upgrading of services beyond those originally provided for in the subdivision of the land, Council may by bylaw provide for the recovery of those capital costs.

Council may adopt a bylaw that specifies the circumstances when offsite levies will apply to development based on the additional capital costs for services created by that development. The bylaw will contain a schedule of the unit costs to be applied.

Before adopting the bylaw, Council will undertake studies necessary to define the benefiting areas and the unit costs associated with required capital upgrading of off-site services. The studies will be used to determine a fair level of development levy charges in relation to the subdivision offsite charges.

19.9 Building Bylaw

In accordance with *The Uniform Building and Accessibility Standards Act*, the Town will ensure that building construction is regulated so that new construction is physically acceptable to the community. The Building Bylaw will control the minimum standard of construction through the issuance of building permits.

19.10 Acquisition of land

In accordance with *The Municipalities Act*, Council may purchase land for urban development. In this regard Council may consider the purchase of land for subdivision or development to:

- a) Facilitate urban development including public facilities
- b) Provide affordable housing
- c) Facilitate the relocation of non-conforming uses
- d) Facilitate Inter-Municipal and Inter-Jurisdictional Cooperation

The Town is involved in a number of inter-municipal initiatives with the RM of Big River that focus on a co-operative approach to providing cost efficient and effective services (fire protection, recreation, health care, emergency services, and economic development). The Town will continue to work in partnership with other jurisdictions and agencies as a means of providing and sharing services effectively and efficiently.

19.11 Capital Works Program

In accordance with *The Municipalities Act*, Council will prepare a capital works plan that will be co-ordinated with policies of the Official Community Plan to ensure the effective and efficient control of development and public spending.

19.12 Comprehensive Development Review

The CDR is an expansion to the development permitting process. At council's discretion a CDR may be required to provide amplifying information on the applicants request for development. Additionally, in accordance with *The Planning and Development Act* section 62 (7) no development permit is valid unless it conforms to the zoning bylaw.

Beyond the CDR, formal applications will be required at the Neighbourhood Concept Plan and Concept Plan, and Subdivision application stage.

20. MONITORING AND AMENDMENT

20.1 Monitoring

- a) The Official Community Plan establishes the policies that are expected to meet anticipated residential, commercial, and industrial needs within the financial and servicing capabilities of the community. The policies will serve as a basis for detailed planning and servicing. To ensure the effectiveness of the Official Community Plan in meeting the overall community objectives, Council will monitor the local situation and evaluate the appropriateness of this document and its policies.
- b) Council will require an administrative review of the Official Community Plan exploring the need for revisions or for legal consolidation of adopted amendments at least once every five years. An office consolidation shall be maintained to keep the working copies current.
- c) The OCP may include further indicators of measurement to identify development trends: i.e. housing starts, subdivision applications, population increase/decrease, new or demolished facilities, new business licenses, etc.

20.2 Amendment

- a) The Official Community Plan may be amended if determined desirable by Council. Amendments may also be proposed by developers and the public to facilitate specific development proposals. Council will consider such requests based on:
 - i. Appropriate community development and public interest
 - ii. Overall community objectives as established by the Official Community Plan.
 - iii. Amendments to the OCP will follow requirements of *The Planning and Development Act, 2007*.