

TOWN OF BIRCH HILLS

OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN

Prepared for:

THE TOWN OF BIRCH HILLS

Prepared by:

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SASKATOON, SK

FEBRUARY 2017



The Town of Birch Hills

Bylaw No. 03/17

A Bylaw of the Town of Birch Hills to adopt an Official Community Plan.

The Council of the Town of Birch Hills in the Province of Saskatchewan, in open meeting assembled enacts as follows:

- (1) Pursuant to Section 29 and 32 of *The Planning and Development Act, 2007* the Council of the Town of Birch Hills hereby adopts the Official Community Plan, identified as Schedule "A" to this bylaw.
- (2) The Mayor and Administrator are hereby authorized to sign and seal Schedule "A" which is attached to and forms part of this bylaw.
- (3) This bylaw shall come into force on the date of final approval by the Minister of Government Relations.

Read a First Time the 8th day of March, 2017

Read a Second Time the 12th day of April, 2017

Read a Third Time the 12th day of April, 2017

Adoption of this Bylaw this 12th day of April, 2017



(Mayor)


(Administrator)



Certified a True Copy of the Bylaw adopted by Resolution of Council

On the 12th day of April, of the year 2017



THE TOWN OF BIRCH HILLS
OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN

Being Schedule "A" to Bylaw No. 03/17
of the Town of Birch Hills





(Mayor)



(Administrator)

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 AUTHORITY

In accordance with Sections 29 and 32 of *The Planning and Development Act, 2007 (The Act)*, the Council of the Town of Birch Hills has prepared and adopted this Official Community Plan to provide the Town with goals, objectives and policies relating to approximately twenty years of future growth and development within the community.

Section 32 of *The Act* provides that the Official Community Plan is required to contain statements of policy with respect to:

- (1) sustainable current and future land use and development in the municipality;
- (2) current and future economic development;
- (3) the general provision of public work;
- (4) the management of lands that are subject to natural hazards, including flooding, slumping and slope instability;
- (5) the management of environmentally sensitive lands;
- (6) source water protection; and,
- (7) the means of implementing the Official Community Plan.

The Province of Saskatchewan adopted the Statements of Provincial Interest Regulations effective 29 March 2012 applicable to community planning and development under Section 7 of *The Act*. Section 8 of *The Act* provides that every Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw must be consistent with the Statements of Provincial Interest Regulations.

In general the Statements of Provincial Interest Regulations address:

- Agriculture and Value-Added Agribusiness
- Biodiversity and Natural Ecosystems
- First Nations and Métis Engagement
- Heritage and Culture
- Inter-municipal Cooperation
- Mineral Resource Exploration and Development
- Public Safety
- Public Works
- Recreation and Tourism
- Residential Development
- Sand and Gravel
- Shore Lands and Water Bodies
- Source Water Protection
- Transportation

1.2 SCOPE AND PURPOSE

The policies in this Official Community Plan address the need for future land use planning in the Town of Birch Hills as well as other matters related to its physical, social and economic development. The policies are intended to provide the Town of Birch Hills with direction and guidelines for establishing bylaws, programs and decision making on future land use and development proposals in the Town.

This Plan is intended to guide the growth and development of the Town of Birch Hills approximately for the next 15-20 years.

All development within the incorporated area of the Town of Birch Hills shall conform to the objectives and policies contained in this Official Community Plan.

2 PROPOSED GOALS

The planning goals for the Town of Birch Hills are as follows:

- (1) To support economic development and growth as a means of enhancing the quality of life for the current and future residents of Birch Hills.
- (2) To direct the development and growth of Birch Hills in a manner that is sustainable, consistent with the values of the community, orderly and cost-efficient.
- (3) To encourage housing development in a variety of forms and locations to address the diverse needs of residents specifically including issues of housing affordability.
- (4) To encourage the provision of an adequate supply of developable land to meet existing and future market demands for residential, commercial and industrial uses.
- (5) To promote and encourage an attractive and thriving downtown.
- (6) To protect and promote the significant historical, cultural and heritage resources in the Birch Hills area.
- (7) To ensure that the Town's current and future infrastructure requirements are planned and developed in a manner which facilitates growth in an environmentally and financially sustainable manner.
- (8) To ensure that land use planning is fully integrated with the Town's long term strategic, financial, infrastructure, transportation, environmental and asset management planning initiatives.
- (9) To protect natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas for the benefit of current and future generations.
- (10) To encourage healthy and active lifestyles among Town residents.
- (11) To work with other local and senior governments to strengthen regional partnerships and initiatives.
- (12) To ensure that the Town maintains its commitment to an open, consultative and transparent planning and decision making process.
- (13) To support and complement the Statements of Provincial Interest Regulations in the realization of the goals and objectives of this plan.

3 OBJECTIVES & POLICIES

3.1 RESIDENTIAL

3.1.1 Residential Findings

- Birch Hills had a 2011 population, according to Statistics Canada, of 1,064; experienced an annual population increase of 1.06% between 2001 and 2011 and accelerated to 2.58% between 2006 and 2011. Continued economic growth in the region, combined with a desire to reside in a bedroom community near the City of Prince Albert suggests that the population of the Town will continue to increase.
- In the spring of 2015, there were a total of 401 single detached dwellings within the Town. While single detached dwellings are the dominant form of housing in Birch Hills, other forms of residential development include manufactured (mobile) homes, and multiple unit dwellings in the form of apartment buildings, four-plexes and semi-detached dwellings. The Council of the Town recognizes the importance of a diversity of housing type contributing to the affordability of living in Birch Hills, including permitting areas for manufactured dwellings.
- As of the summer of 2015, there were of 21 Town-owned serviced undeveloped residential lots in the Town.
- Using an average annual growth rate of 1.06%, an additional 20.5 acres (8.3 ha) of land would be needed by 2031 to accommodate new residential development. Assuming a higher average annual growth rate (3.5%), increases this number to 103.75 acres (42.0 ha) that would be required by 2031. Both of these projections account for the existing 21 serviced residential lots in the Town. It is imperative for the Town of Birch Hills to identify appropriate areas for both short and long-term residential development.
- The Statements of Provincial Interest Regulations provides the following statement concerning residential development, which is addressed in the objectives and policies that follow:
 - *The province has an interest in citizens having access to a range of housing options to meet their needs and promote independence, security, health and dignity for individuals, enhancing the economic and social wellbeing of communities.*

3.1.2 Residential Objectives and Policies

Objective 3.1.2.1: Future Residential Land Use

To identify the areas, within Birch Hills and outside of the Town's current boundaries (if applicable), that are most suitable for future residential development in order to provide adequate land for future residential development.

Policy (a) The Town will ensure that new residential development locates in the areas noted as **"Future Residential"** on the Future Land Use Concept. At the time of subdivision, these areas will be zoned, in the Zoning Bylaw, for residential uses and compatible development. Prior to such rezoning, development in these areas will be regulated to prevent development of uses which would conflict with the long term use of these areas.

Policy (b) If and when sufficient land is no longer available to accommodate additional residential development, the Town will ensure that new residential development shall locate in the areas noted as **"Potential Residential"** on the Future Land Use Concept. Prior to the build-out of land identified as Potential Residential on the Future Land Use Concept, noted

herein, the Town shall undertake the necessary studies and analysis to identify the lands necessary to accommodate residential development for the next 15-20 years.

- Policy (c)** Subject to policies contained in Section 3.9 – Intermunicipal and Interjurisdictional Cooperation, Council will initiate required actions to bring the areas noted as "**Potential Residential**" within the corporate limits of the Town through municipal boundary alteration. These areas will be zoned, in the Zoning Bylaw, for future urban development or for residential uses and compatible development when they are included within the corporate limits of the Town. Those lands that are designated and zoned for future urban development will be rezoned for residential uses and compatible development once plans for such development have advanced to the point where the appropriate residential zoning designation has been clarified and once the provision of municipal services has advanced to the point where additional development in the area can be serviced in a cost-effective manner.
- Policy (d)** Support residential subdivision development in order to ensure a three to five year supply of serviced lots, based on the rate of serviced lot uptake in the preceding years. Where Council is of the opinion that a sufficient supply of desirable lots is unavailable, or a sufficiently wide range of lots for certain dwelling types is unavailable, this guideline may be adjusted.

Objective 3.1.2.2: Housing Diversity

To provide a variety of housing options to address the needs of residents of the community and to address housing affordability issues.

- Policy (a)** The Zoning Bylaw shall contain residential zoning districts that will facilitate a wide range of residential uses. These districts will provide appropriate development standards to address building forms and dwelling unit densities. Certain community facilities will be permitted in all residential districts.
- Policy (b)** Supportive housing, such as personal care homes, will be facilitated in all areas of the Town. The Zoning Bylaw will contain development standards for these uses.
- Policy (c)** The Town will accommodate affordable and alternative housing opportunities for residents by facilitating the development of secondary suites, garden suites, and garage suites. The Zoning Bylaw will include appropriate standards to ensure that these uses are not detrimental to the residential character of the areas where they are located.

Objective 3.1.2.3: Infill Development

To ensure that infill development supports and enhances Birch Hills's existing residential areas.

- Policy (a)** In order to enhance the viability of the downtown and to optimize the use of existing infrastructure and services, consideration will be given to higher density residential and mixed use residential/commercial developments in proximity to the town centre. Proposed developments shall be compatible with nearby land uses and shall be capable of being economically serviced.

- Policy (b)** In order to facilitate access to downtown commercial services by seniors or others with mobility constraints, seniors housing, community services and other essential services will be encouraged to locate in close proximity to the downtown.
- Policy (c)** In order to provide a variety of housing options and to optimize the use of existing infrastructure and services, consideration may be given to higher density residential developments in appropriate locations in existing neighbourhoods. Proposed developments shall be compatible with nearby land uses and shall be capable of being economically serviced.

Objective 3.1.2.4: New Residential Areas

To ensure that new residential areas are designed in a manner that provides a high quality living environment and a range of housing options.

- Policy (a)** New residential areas shall be designed to be pedestrian friendly, walkable, and connected by orienting development to serve pedestrian and cycling traffic in addition to automobile traffic.
- Policy (b)** Residential uses shall be properly buffered from incompatible uses, railways, and major roadways.
- Policy (d)** The development of new residential areas should contain a variety of housing forms, including such housing as single detached dwellings, semi-detached and two unit dwellings, secondary suites, and multiple unit dwellings, to accommodate a range of users, including seniors.
- Policy (e)** Multiple unit dwellings should generally be located with satisfactory access to residential entrance points and should be sited to minimize potential conflicts with other residential uses.
- Policy (f)** The Town will ensure that new residential areas connect to and complement existing and future developments, by requiring that concept plans be submitted to the Town for approval prior to consideration of rezoning applications associated with formal subdivision applications. Once the initial concept plan has been accepted by Council, and subdivision and development commences, no subsequent subdivision that is inconsistent with the approved concept plan and all policies in this document will be permitted without acceptance of a revised concept plan by Council.

Objective 3.1.2.5: Home Based Businesses

To facilitate economic development and foster entrepreneurship through home based businesses that are clearly secondary to the residential use of the property and compatible with the surrounding residential environment.

- Policy (a)** Home based businesses that are clearly secondary to the principal residential use of the dwelling unit and are compatible with the residential environment shall be accommodated.
- Policy (b)** The amenity of the overall residential environment shall be preserved by ensuring home based businesses are compatible with nearby residential properties and that they do not

generate traffic, parking, noise, electrical interference, vibration, odour or other elements that are not normally found in the residential environment.

- Policy (c)** Land use conflicts shall be minimized by specifying the types of activities to be fully permitted as home based businesses in the Zoning Bylaw and ensuring that these uses are compatible with a residential environment.
- Policy (d)** Those types of home based businesses that are generally compatible with a residential environment, but may involve certain activities that are not acceptable in all locations, may be specified in the Zoning Bylaw as discretionary uses, and permitted only at Council's discretion.
- Policy (e)** The Zoning Bylaw shall contain development standards pertaining to permitted and discretionary home based businesses, including standards for parking, use of accessory buildings, storage, product sales, resident and non-resident employees, number of business-related vehicle trips per day, and other relevant matters.

Objective 3.1.2.6: Compatible and Complementary Land Uses

To provide for complementary land uses within residential neighbourhoods.

- Policy (a)** The predominant use of land within residential areas shall be residential. A range of complementary institutional and community-oriented uses that are compatible with a residential environment shall also be permitted. Examples of complementary uses include places of worship, schools, community centres, public parks and recreation facilities, health services, and neighbourhood convenience commercial. These activities shall be compatible with the use and scale of the residential area, shall provide a needed service, and shall appropriately address issues of transportation, parking, and land use conflicts.

3.2 COMMERCIAL

3.2.1 Commercial Findings

- Commercial development within the Town of Birch Hills is located primarily along Bellamy Avenue between 1st Street and 3rd Street.
- Highway commercial development (larger scale, better suited for highway adjacency and oriented towards vehicles) is limited in Birch Hills, however, some of the larger lot commercial developments are concentrated along Simpson Avenue, north and south of the rail line. Potential exists for the development of highway commercial sites along Highway #3 and Highway #25.
- The Town of Birch Hills has a distinct downtown core and as the community continues to develop and grow, it is important to continue to enhance and encourage appropriate development in this area, for it to remain the “heart” of the community. In addition to commercial development in the downtown, important community services are also located here, including churches, the post office, and the Royal Canadian Legion, among others. The continued revitalization of Birch Hills’s downtown will help the Town benefit from new business opportunities as it grows.
- The Town of Birch Hills also has several vacant commercial lots and buildings located in the downtown core area. Encouraging new commercial developments to locate in the well-defined core area will ensure Birch Hill’s community centre remains viable and vibrant as the community grows.
- There are currently five town owned commercial lots available for development. Identification and designation of appropriate areas for both short-term and long-term future commercial development is an important consideration for the Town as it grows.
- Encouraging visual improvements to the core area, including removing or replacing abandoned buildings and properties, improving streetscape and roadway enhancements, and general aesthetic upkeep will help promote the Town as a business-friendly centre.

3.2.2 Downtown Commercial Objectives and Policies

Objective 3.2.2.1: Downtown Strength

To promote and enhance the attractive and viable downtown commercial area of the Town of Birch Hills, centered around Bellamy Avenue.

Policy (a) The downtown shall continue to be prioritized as a primary location for retail activity, services, government functions and cultural activities in the community.

Policy (b) The character of the downtown may be enhanced by:

- encouraging development with minimal front yard setbacks, grade level direct entrances, and clear glazing at street level;
- encouraging residential / commercial mixed use and small- to mid-scale commercial developments to locate in the downtown.

Policy (c) Consideration may be given to the enhancement of the downtown commercial area through:

- the construction of infrastructure;
- investment in public buildings;
- public realm improvements such as streetscapes and public park development;
- encouragement of public - private partnerships;
- tax abatement incentives;

- incentives to promote the use of vacant and underutilised buildings or sites;
- planning and building permit fee rebates; and
- the promotion of the Town of Birch Hills as a place for new business development.

Policy (d) Work towards increasing the opportunities available to re-use vacant or underutilized buildings and sites in Birch Hills by addressing the constraints that exist for potential developers.

Policy (e) Support, encourage and facilitate the creation of a viable and coherent vision for the future development of the downtown area by continuing to ensure commercial development remains concentrated in its well-defined central location with important community services in close proximity.

Policy (f) Provide opportunities for increased levels of overall activity in the downtown by promoting a mix of compatible uses within the area.

Objective 3.2.2.2: Supply of Land

To ensure an available supply of land for downtown commercial development.

Policy (a) The Zoning Bylaw will contain a community centre commercial district to provide for a wide range of downtown commercial and other compatible uses.

Policy (b) Zone the area shown as “**Community Centre Commercial**” on the Future Land Use Concept for downtown commercial uses and other compatible development.

Policy (c) Consideration will be given to extending downtown commercial zoning to those areas shown as “**Community Centre Commercial**” on the Future Land Use Concept, as demand warrants to include a mix of commercial, institutional and multi-unit residential uses that would not conflict with the long term future use of this area.

3.2.3 Highway Commercial Objectives and Policies

Objective 3.2.3.1: Highway Commercial Corridors

To enhance the visual and functional quality of the highway commercial corridors in the Town.

Policy (a) Ensure a standard of landscaping and screening is provided to achieve aesthetically appealing gateways.

Policy (b) Facilitate the development of visually appealing entry points into the Town along Highway #25 and Highway #3 by:

- initiating the preparation of a coordinated highway entry enhancement master plan or strategy;
- providing financial support from the implementation of such a master plan or strategy; and
- establish landscaping requirements and signage standards in highway commercial areas.

- Policy (c)** New commercial developments will be required to connect to and complement existing and future development in Birch Hills through the requirement of a concept plan, submitted for Council approval prior to consideration of rezoning applications associated with formal subdivision applications. Once the initial concept plan has been accepted by Council, and subdivision and development commences, no subsequent subdivision that is inconsistent with the approved concept plan and all policies in this document will be permitted without acceptance of a revised concept plan by Council.

Objective 3.2.3.2: Highway Commercial Zoning Districts

Highway commercial development should accommodate uses that by virtue of their scale or locational requirements are not readily suited to a downtown location.

- Policy (a)** The Zoning Bylaw shall contain commercial districts that provide for an appropriate range of uses and development standards.

Objective 3.2.3.3: Highway Commercial Land Use

To ensure that sufficient land is designated along Highway 3 and Highway 25 for the development of Highway Commercial uses.

- Policy (a)** Ensure new Highway Commercial development locates in the areas noted as "**Future Commercial**" on the Future Land Use Concept. Prior to the time of subdivision, these areas will be zoned, in the Zoning Bylaw, for commercial use. Prior to such rezoning, development in these areas will be regulated to prevent development of uses which would conflict with the long term use of these areas.
- Policy (b)** If and when sufficient land is no longer available to accommodate additional commercial development, new commercial development will be encouraged to locate in the areas noted as "**Potential Commercial**" on the Future Land Use Concept. Prior to the build-out of land identified as Potential Commercial on the Future Land Use Concept, noted herein, the Town shall undertake the necessary studies and analysis to identify the lands necessary to accommodate commercial development which will be required over the next 15-20 years.
- Policy (c)** Subject to policies contained in Section 3.9 – Intermunicipal and Interjurisdictional Cooperation, Council will initiate required actions to bring the areas noted as "**Potential Commercial**" within the corporate limits of the Town through municipal boundary alteration. These areas will be zoned, in the Zoning Bylaw, for future urban development or for highway commercial uses and compatible development when they are included within the corporate limits of the Town. Those lands that are designated and zoned for future urban development will be rezoned for highway commercial uses and compatible development once the provision of municipal services has advanced to the point where additional development in the area can be serviced in a cost-effective manner.

3.2.4 Residential Commercial Objectives and Policies

Objective 3.2.4.1: Commercial Development in Residential Areas

To facilitate residential convenience commercial developments in new residential areas.

Policy (a) Neighbourhood commercial convenience developments may be provided in new residential areas. The scale of development shall be appropriate to complement the residential character and to serve the daily convenience needs of the residents of the area.

Policy (b) Residential commercial convenience developments should be strategically located in close proximity to residential entrance points or at major intersections.

3.3 INDUSTRIAL

3.3.1 Industrial Findings

- Industrial development is generally located in the north end of the Town, immediately north of the rail line.
- Industrial development in Birch Hills largely consists of construction (including electrical, plumbing and heating, etc.) and automotive industries. Birch Hills businesses also provide products and services catering to the agricultural sector, including individual farmers and farm service businesses, over a larger area.
- There are currently no privately or Town-owned serviced, undeveloped industrial lots in the Town. Identification of areas for both short-term and long-term future industrial is needed as the Town moves forward. Providing opportunities for industrial development within Birch Hills will assist the Town in capitalizing on new and existing economic opportunities in the region.

3.3.2 Industrial Objectives and Policies

Objective 3.3.2.1: Industrial Land Use

To ensure that sufficient land is designated within the Town to accommodate Industrial development opportunities.

- Policy (a)** The area shown as "**Industrial**", on the Future Land Use Concept will be zoned for industrial uses and compatible development.
- Policy (b)** If and when sufficient land is no longer available to accommodate additional industrial development, new industrial development will be encouraged to locate in the areas noted as "**Potential Industrial**" on the Future Land Use Concept. Prior to the build-out of land identified as "**Potential Industrial**" on the Future Land Use Concept, noted herein, the Town shall undertake the necessary studies and analysis to identify the lands necessary to accommodate industrial development which will be required over the next 15-20 years.
- Policy (c)** Subject to policies contained in Section 3.9 – Intermunicipal and Interjurisdictional Cooperation, Council will initiate required actions to bring the areas noted as "**Potential Industrial**" within the corporate limits of the Town through municipal boundary alteration. These areas will be zoned, in the Zoning Bylaw, for future urban development or for industrial uses and compatible development when they are included within the corporate limits of the Town. Those lands that are designated and zoned for future urban development will be rezoned for industrial uses and compatible development once the provision of municipal services has advanced to the point where additional development in the area can be serviced in a cost-effective manner.
- Policy (d)** In order to accommodate a range of economic development opportunities, the Zoning Bylaw will make provision for light industrial, limited heavy industrial, and railway industrial development.

Objective 3.3.2.2: Industrial Development Opportunities

To attract new industrial operations to Birch Hills.

- Policy (a)** Ensure development opportunities are available by maintaining a supply of readily serviceable land for appropriate industrial activities for the Town of Birch Hills. Industrial activities shall be directed to the area immediately north south of the railway tracks where existing industrial is presently located as identified on Map 1 - Future Land Use Concept.

Objective 3.3.2.3: Land Use Conflicts and Development Design

To minimize the potential for land use conflicts between industrial development and other uses while encouraging visually appealing industrial areas.

- Policy (a)** Lands identified for industrial development shall be adequately buffered, screened and separated from incompatible land uses.
- Policy (b)** Industrial development shall be directed to areas which are readily accessible to major transportation infrastructure, which are capable of being economically serviced, and which shall not have adverse impacts on the natural environment, including groundwater resources.
- Policy (c)** Heavy industrial uses, which may create land use conflicts in the normal course of operations, shall be located in areas which provide appropriate separation from residential areas and from highways and other entrance ways into the Town.
- Policy (d)** Visually appealing industrial development will be facilitated and encouraged by establishing appropriate landscaping requirements and signage standards in all industrial areas.
- Policy (e)** Appropriate buffers shall be provided at the time of subdivision to minimize conflict between industrial areas and other, incompatible uses.
- Policy (f)** New industrial developments will be required to connect to and complement existing and future development in Birch Hills through the requirement of a concept plan, submitted for Council approval prior to consideration of rezoning applications associated with formal subdivision applications. Once the initial concept plan has been accepted by Council, and subdivision and development commences, no subsequent subdivision that is inconsistent with the approved concept plan and all policies in this document will be permitted without acceptance of a revised concept plan by Council.

Objective 3.3.2.4: Servicing Capacity

To ensure that the locations and types of industrial development proposed for the Town of Birch Hills are consistent with capacities of the Town's infrastructure to support such development, given the wide range of servicing requirements for different forms of industrial development.

- Policy (a)** In the Zoning Bylaw, those industrial uses that have the potential to use significant volumes of water or contribute significant flows to the sanitary sewer system as a result of industrial processing operations will be listed as discretionary uses.

- Policy (b)** Prior to the approval of a discretionary use application in an industrial zoning district or for an industrial development, Council must be satisfied that it is feasible to service the subject development with municipal water and sanitary sewer systems. Costs, if any, associated with demonstrating such feasibility shall be borne by the applicant.
- Policy (c)** All industrial developments will be serviced by water and sanitary sewer and any other appropriate services which are available.

3.4 TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

3.4.1 Transportation and Infrastructure Findings

- Primary access to Birch Hills is provided via Provincial Highway #3 from the north and Highway #25 to the south.
- The Town owns and operates a water treatment plant (WTP). The design of the plant is 800 m³ / day. In 2011, the WTP was supplying a daily average of 220 m³ / day of treated water to approximately 1,300 residents. Capacity for growth of the community is available at the WTP, however, due to the age of the plant, upgrades will be needed in the medium term future.
- The Town owns and operates a sewage lagoon with two lagoon cells. Plans to upgrade the Town's sewage pumping station will result in capacity for approximately 2,100 people, and would serve the Town for an additional 20 years, based on a very robust growth rate over the time period.
- The Town of Birch Hills provides garbage pickup on a weekly basis. Additionally, the Town also provides blue recycling bins which are collected every other week through the year, and compost is collected once a month from April through October.
- The Town of Birch Hills has an airport within its municipal boundaries. The airport is classified as a Secondary Airport, according to the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure. Members of the flying club and RCMP both make use of the asphalt and turf runways. The Airport consists of 2750 ft. of paved runway complete with taxiway, and aircraft parking area. It is equipped with radio controlled lighting, lighted wind sock, rotating beacon and security fence. The airport is also equipped with spray pad to accommodate spray planes. The Birch Hills Flying Club plays an active role in managing the airport.
- Rail infrastructure is also located within Birch Hills with the establishment of Northern Lights Rail – a shortline rail line between Birch Hills and Melfort. The rail line is located directly north of Simpson Avenue, on the northern edge of the Town. Consideration for protection of the rail line and development constraints related to rail traffic is imperative for the Town of Birch Hills.
- The Town of Birch Hills has no formal asset management plans, although they utilize a database of assets that depreciates each asset for its term of useful life.
- The Statements of Provincial Interest Regulations provides the following statements concerning public works and transportation:
 - *The Province has an interest in safe, healthy, reliable and cost-effective public works to facilitate economic growth and community development.*
 - *The Province has an interest in safe, cost effective transportation systems that meet existing and future needs for economic growth, community development and diversification.*

3.4.2 Integrated Decision Making

Objective 3.4.2.1 Integrated Infrastructure Planning

To integrate planning, finance and engineering to effectively manage existing and new infrastructure in a sustainable, innovative and cost effective manner.

Policy (a) The Town will continue to inform their decision making processes by preparing and coordinating strategic planning, financial planning, asset management planning and other similar initiatives.

Policy (b) The Town will pursue innovative opportunities to enhance municipal service delivery.

- Policy (c)** The Town shall undertake comprehensive infrastructure and transportation studies, as necessary, to plan for changes or improvements to the Town's infrastructure systems to meet current engineering standards, accommodate growth and improve operational efficiency.

Objective 3.4.2.2 Asset Management

To ensure a clear picture of the current state of the Town's municipal infrastructure in order to manage it effectively over the long-term.

- Policy (a)** Utilize and implement Asset Management Plans in order to sustainably provide an appropriate level of service to residents and visitors.
- Policy (b)** Ensure consistency between all long term planning documents going forward including this Official Community Plan, Asset Management Plans, Long Term Financial Plans, and others.
- Policy (c)** Ensure Asset Management Plans are kept up to date and improved to get the best performance out of municipal assets, realize the greatest return on infrastructure investment and to support infrastructure investment decisions.

3.4.3 Transportation Objectives and Policies

Objective 3.4.3.1: Birch Hills's Transportation Network

To provide a safe, efficient, cost effective and convenient transportation network for all users.

- Policy (a)** Developments shall be located and designed in a manner which ensures safe and efficient traffic operations.
- Policy (b)** New subdivisions shall provide for the expansion of the transportation network and the extension of roadways beyond the area being subdivided as necessary.
- Policy (c)** The Town shall continue to monitor and implement appropriate improvements to ensure that vehicle and pedestrian conflicts are minimized in proximity to schools.
- Policy (d)** Traffic impacts shall be a factor in the evaluation of development proposals. An engineering assessment may be required in order to identify traffic impacts. The costs associated with preparing the engineering assessment shall be borne by the developers. The costs of implementing the necessary transportation changes or improvements may be negotiated by the Town and the affected developers based on the extent to which the impacts of the proposed development necessitates the need for the improvements.
- Policy (e)** Council may, by bylaw, establish or adopt a system relating to vehicle weights or route designation in the municipality.

Objective 3.4.3.2: Active Transportation

To promote land use and development patterns that encourage walking and cycling while ensuring pedestrian and traffic safety.

Policy (a) Connectivity and traffic safety for pedestrians, cyclists and private vehicles shall be considered in all land use and development decisions and in the planning and design of street improvements or new roadways.

Policy (b) Opportunities should be provided for the development of walking and cycling facilities within the Town by exploring and envisioning linkages and connections between commercial areas, green spaces, destination sites and residential areas. The Town will develop a trails committee to actively pursue opportunities for trail development throughout the community and in collaboration with the RM of Birch Hills.

Objective 3.4.3.3: Highways

To ensure that Highway 3 and Highway 25 continue to function in a safe and efficient manner for the residents of Birch Hills and the travelling public.

Policy (a) The Town, in consultation with the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure, affected business and property owners, and other stakeholders, may initiate a review of the highway corridors to address issues such as traffic safety, intersection improvements, public realm and private property landscaping and signage, future development options, and funding strategies.

Objective 3.4.3.4: Railways

To ensure that the railway continues to provide vital services to the community while mitigating any negative impacts resulting from ongoing railway operations.

Policy (a) The Town shall provide for efficient and effective land use transportation planning, including consulting with Northern Lights Rail, in order to reduce the potential for future land use conflicts and to provide for appropriate protection of rail infrastructure.

Policy (b) The Town will monitor and explore opportunities to improve linkages across the railway to enhance both vehicular and pedestrian connectivity.

Policy (c) Noise and vibration levels near rail lines shall be a factor in the evaluation of development proposals. Noise and vibration assessments may be required in order to identify attenuation measures for development in proximity to rail lines, as well as to determine the viability of foundation structures. All costs associated with preparing the noise and vibration assessment and implementing the approved attenuation measures shall be borne by the affected developers.

Objective 3.4.3.5: Airport

To ensure the Town of Birch Hill's existing airport assets are protected while minimizing conflicts between airport activities and land use development within the vicinity of the airport.

Policy (a) Ensure land use at the airport does not impede the development of aviation related activities.

Policy (b) Work with the RM of Birch Hills and the Birch Hills Flying Club in ensuring airport operations are protected and land use activities in the vicinity are appropriately regulated.

3.4.4 Infrastructure Objectives and Policies

Objective 3.4.4.1: Infrastructure Costs

To ensure that future development contributes to the cost of infrastructure services in a manner that does not create a burden for existing residents and which does not impede long term growth.

Policy (a) The Town will not be responsible for costs associated with the provision of municipal services to new subdivisions, except for Town-owned developments. Where a private development requires municipal services, including drainage, the proponent will be responsible for all costs associated with providing such services.

Policy (b) Where a subdivision of land will require the installation or improvement of municipal services such as water and/or sewer lines, drainage, 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.

Objective 3.4.4.2: Infrastructure Capacities

To optimize the use of existing Town water, sewer, solid waste, and stormwater management infrastructure and capacities, ensuring that future development remains within the area serviceable by the existing system for as long as possible and minimizing municipal costs in the provision of services to areas that pose special servicing problems.

Policy (a) The Town will ensure that development can be adequately serviced by infrastructure and utility systems and services by understanding the Town's infrastructure needs and the costs associated with those needs by using the most up to date information available.

Policy (b) Continue to monitor population and business growth as it relates to water and wastewater systems.

Objective 3.4.4.3: Stormwater Management

To ensure stormwater management systems within the Town are designed effectively.

Policy (a) Stormwater management systems shall be designed by a professional engineer in accordance with appropriate engineering standards.

3.5 ECONOMIC & TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

3.5.1 Economic Development Findings

- The Town of Birch Hills is strategically located at the junctions of Highway #3 and Highway #25 which effectively services Western Saskatchewan.
- The Town provides competitive land prices for established fully serviced industrial and commercial lots.
- The Town of Birch Hills prides itself on providing excellent quality of life for employees and their families while offering access to health care and education facilities.
- The Town of Birch Hills is a part owner in the Northern Lights Rail – a shortline rail that extends from Birch Hills to Melfort, which helps to support agriculture and economic development in the region.
- Opportunities for economic and tourism development can be found throughout the many active groups, activities and facilities found within Birch Hills and region including, but not limited to: Birch Hills Flying Club and airport; snowmobiling, cross country skiing, ball and associated facilities, the civic centre, the seniors hall, the Birch Hills Memorial Museum, and the Brrr Chills Winter Festival.
- The Statements of Provincial Interest Regulations provides the following statement concerning tourism:
 - *The Province has an interest in supporting a high quality of life for Saskatchewan's citizens and visitors by providing an actively promoting recreation and tourism opportunities.*

3.5.2 Economic & Tourism Development Objectives and Policies

Objective 3.5.2.1

To attract investment and foster economic and population growth by promoting the benefits of living and working in the Town of Birch Hills.

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| Policy (a) | The Town, in partnership with other regional stakeholders, will pursue opportunities to market and promote Birch Hills's investment properties, events, services, and culture and heritage. |
| Policy (b) | Where appropriate, the Town will continue to support existing and pursue new town-wide special events. |
| Policy (c) | The Town will continue to encourage the maintenance and support of existing businesses in the town by delivering municipal services in cost effective ways, while continuing to build, maintain and operate Town infrastructure in a manner that is sustainable. |
| Policy (d) | The Town of Birch Hills will continue to collaborate in providing tourism amenities and opportunities for the region, and seek out mutually beneficial opportunities with other organizations and authorities in the interest of promotion, preservation, and enhancement of tourism in the region. |

3.6 COMMUNITY SERVICES AND RECREATION

3.6.1 Community Service and Recreation Findings

- The Town of Birch Hills provides its residents with a host of services including elementary and high school education, police protection (RCMP), fire protection, emergency management planning, town library, and a variety of recreational facilities, clubs and organizations.
- Notable recreation services include skating and hockey at the Arena; curling at the Curl-a-drome; cross-country ski trails at the golf course; dance and drama classes at the Birch Hills Dance Centre; cribbage and carpet bowling for Seniors at the Birch Hills Seniors Hall; drop in adult sport activities at the school; crafts, story time and computers at the library; summer playground program; tennis; ball hockey, unicycling at the Youth Centre; golfing at the Birch Hills Golf Course; baseball and slowpitch at the Lions Park Ball Diamonds; horseshoe; biking; skateboarding; and, basketball.
- The Birch Hills & District Historical Society runs a well-established museum. The facility features a thrift shop, exhibits and a coffee shop. The Museum also features a Memorial Wall at the front entrance of the museum that honours pioneers and community builders.
- Health Care services are provided in Birch Hills by the Birch Hills Health Facility on the west side of the Town. The Centre is administered by the Prince Albert Parkland Health Region. The facility has a 30-bed long-term care and primary care site, in addition to home care, mental health, addiction services and a health centre with visiting physicians, nurse practitioner and diagnostic services.
- The Town of Birch Hills has four churches. Outside of the Town, the Birch Hills Public Cemetery is located ½ mile east in the NW ¼, Section 22, Township 46, Range 24, W2M (RM of Birch Hills No. 460).
- Educational services are administered by the Saskatchewan Rivers Public School Division No. 119. One school, the Birch Hills Public School, provides education from Kindergarten through to Grade 12.
- Private daycare services are also available in the Town.
- The Statements of Provincial Interest Regulations provides the following statement concerning recreation:
 - *The Province has an interest in supporting a high quality of life for Saskatchewan's citizens and visitors by providing an actively promoting recreation and tourism opportunities.*

3.6.2 Community Service Objectives and Policies

Objective 3.6.2.1: Community Service Management

To support, encourage and facilitate, where feasible, the development and enhancement of community facilities and programs for the benefit of the residents of the Town and region.

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| Policy (a) | The Town will continue to support the volunteer organizations that participate in the delivery of services to the community. |
| Policy (b) | The Town will continue to work with other levels of government in the provision of social, cultural and recreation programs and opportunities. |
| Policy (c) | The Town will consult with the Saskatchewan Rivers Public School Division No. 119 with respect to the provision of new schools, school capacity and school expansion issues, and opportunities for joint use facilities. |
| Policy (d) | Neighbourhood scale community facilities, such as places of worship, schools and day care centres, may be located within residential areas. |

Objective 3.6.2.2: Public Service Delivery

To support public service delivery agencies in the provision of services and, where appropriate, to assist in the programming of services to the public.

Policy (a) The Town will encourage extensive participation by service clubs, community and public agencies, developers, the RM of Birch Hills, and other interested groups, in the development of recreation and other community facilities.

Policy (b) The Town will examine, from time to time, the feasibility of expanding or adjusting the types of programs and facilities in the community in accordance with town demographics and population growth, by monitoring shifts in population structure and shifts in the demands and needs of the population.

Objective 3.6.2.3: Cooperation and Communication

To encourage the coordination and integration of community facilities where appropriate.

Policy (a) The Town will facilitate cooperation and communication between service clubs and groups, community service agencies and other stakeholders in the development or redevelopment of community facilities in the Town.

3.7 AMENITIES AND DEDICATED LANDS

3.7.1 Findings

- Within the Town of Birch Hills, the Lion's Park Campground, located between the Birch Hills Golf Course and the Lions Ball Park provides both electrified and non-electrified camp sites. A total of six electrified sites have been built at this location complete with picnic tables, barbeques and garbage stands. Additionally, an ample overflow area is available where residents and visitors can set up tents.
- In addition to the campground, the Town also has a toddler play park, a sports ground, a skate park, a golf course, and passive park space.
- No formal trail system exists in the Town, however the idea of linear parks and a trail system for residents and visitors, is an interest for the Town of Birch Hills.
- The Statements of Provincial Interest Regulations provides the following statement concerning Saskatchewan's biodiversity, unique landscapes and ecosystems:
 - *The Province has an interest in biodiversity and natural ecosystems for present and future generations.*

3.7.2 Amenities and Dedicated Lands Objectives and Policies

Objective 3.7.2.1

To safeguard and enhance Birch Hills's green space in order to contribute to the wider objectives of sustainable community development.

- Policy (a)** The Town shall adopt appropriate policies to ensure the protection and enhancement of the Town's green and recreation spaces.
- Policy (b)** The Town will encourage extensive participation by service clubs, community and public agencies, and other stakeholders in the development of parks, green space and trail systems.
- Policy (c)** Natural and scenic areas of significant value, wherever possible, shall be placed in public ownership.
- Policy (d)** The integration of natural features, existing vegetation, habitat, and wetland areas in the development of the Town's parks, open space and trail systems shall be encouraged.
- Policy (e)** The Town will consider the development of walking trails as an alternative to traditional park space, in the development of green and recreation spaces.

Objective 3.7.2.2

To make provision for municipal reserves when land is subdivided.

- Policy (a)** The following factors shall be considered in making decisions on the provision of municipal reserves:
- (i) Smaller municipal reserve areas within new residential subdivisions should be provided for neighbourhood parks and playgrounds.

- (ii) In commercial and industrial subdivisions, cash-in-lieu of municipal reserve dedication will be considered as the primary method of meeting the municipal reserve requirement, unless the requirement can be transferred to an acceptable area and dedicated.

Policy (b) Municipal reserves shall only be used to convey storm water runoff to storm water storage basins and shall act as temporary water storage to allow for water retention for a design period of no longer than a twenty-four hour period after a storm event. Areas that are designed to store or retain water for more than twenty-four hours after a storm event shall be classified as storm water management facilities and shall be identified as "utility parcels" on subdivision plans.

Objective 3.7.2.3

To support, encourage and facilitate connectivity and walkability throughout the Town.

Policy (a) The Town will pursue opportunities to link natural areas, parks, and walking and cycling facilities in a continuous open space system.

Policy (b) The Town will facilitate the development of a walkable community, through consideration for the provision of adequate sidewalks, pathways in linear parks and appropriate lighting. The development of pedestrian amenities should contribute to public safety.

3.8 BIOPHYSICAL CONSIDERATIONS & HAZARDS

3.8.1 Findings

- The Town has experienced limited flooding issues in the past. Drainage has only been a problem on a few select properties, located in low lying areas, during rare storm events.
- To avoid development in hazardous areas within the town, policies discouraging development on potentially hazardous land due to flooding and other hazards, such as contamination, erosion, soil subsidence and slope instability, are required.
- The Town of Birch Hills is located in the North Watershed Advisory Committee region of the South Saskatchewan River Watershed. In 2008, the South Saskatchewan Watershed Source Water Protection Plan was completed by the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority (Water Security Agency) – South Saskatchewan River Watershed Stewards Inc. Recommendations and key actions were identified respecting water conservation, climate change, ground water protection, surface water quality, apportionment of interprovincial water flows, surface water quality and protection of natural habitat. The approved watershed plans are now being implemented by all participating agencies.
- The Town's water source is two impoundment reservoirs located one kilometre from Birch Hills, filled each spring by diverted surface water from the Cromarty Creek. In the case of no significant spring run-off, a back-up raw water source is provided by the Saskatchewan River.
- The Town of Birch Hills is not severely constrained by the location of their sewage lagoon as it is located on the north side of the airport runway and golf course. Sewage lagoons, as per *The Subdivision Regulations*, require a 457 metre setback from residential subdivision. The existing location is adequately buffered by these existing land uses in terms of residential development in the long term.
- The Town, along with the RM of Birch Hills, employs an Emergency Measures Officer, who administers the Town's Emergency Management Organization Bylaw, adopted in 2013.
- The Northern Lights Rail does not transport dangerous goods or materials through the community of Birch Hills.
- The Town does not have an inventory of contaminated lands within the municipality.
- The Town has one high pressure pipeline, entering from the south to SaskEnergy's substation located on Wilson Street. Consideration is needed for high pressure pipelines, in terms of development in proximity to.
- The Statements of Provincial Interest Regulations provides the following statements concerning public safety and source water protection:
 - *The Province has an interest in ensuring the safety and security of individuals, communities and property from natural and human induced threats.*
 - *The Province has an interest in the protection of water sources that provide safe drinking water.*

3.8.2 Biophysical Constraints Objectives and Policies

Objective 3.8.2.1: Hazard Lands

To discourage inappropriate development in areas with potentially hazardous site conditions and to ensure that environmentally sensitive or hazardous lands are dedicated, as appropriate, as environmental reserve, during the subdivision process.

Policy (a) Development will be directed to areas believed to be capable of supporting such development.

- Policy (b)** The Town will ensure that the subdivision of land or the development of structures does not occur on hazard lands or, if applicable, occurs in accordance with specified mitigation measures. Any required hazard report shall be prepared by a qualified professional at the cost of the proponent of the proposed development.
- Policy (c)** The Zoning Bylaw will contain standards for development on or near hazard lands.
- Policy (d)** Environmentally sensitive areas should be used for public open space.
- Policy (e)** Future development shall be consistent with the 457 m lagoon setback, as per *The Subdivision Regulations* or a different setback as required by the Ministry of Environment.

Objective 3.8.2.2: Flooding

To protect development against the risks of flooding and other biophysical hazards.

- Policy (a)** The Town will work with the Water Security Agency, the RM of Birch Hills, and the rural community, as necessary, on potential flood protection issues in the municipality and the broader region.
- Policy (b)** As per the Statements of Provincial Interest, insofar as is practical, the development of new buildings and additions to buildings in the floodway in the 1:500 year flood elevation of any watercourse or waterbody shall be prohibited.
- Policy (c)** As per the Statements of Provincial Interest, insofar as is practical, development of new buildings and additions to buildings to an elevation of 0.5 metres above the 1:500 year flood elevation of any watercourse or waterbody in the flood fringe shall be flood-proofed.

Objective 3.8.2.3: Source Water Protection

To protect ground and surface water resources from contamination to ensure a safe supply of drinking water.

- Policy (a)** Ensure that development does not reduce the quality of water resources in the broader region by protecting Birch Hills' ground water resources from contamination.
- Policy (b)** Continue to work with the Water Security Agency in implementing the South Saskatchewan River Watershed Source Water Protection Plan.
- Policy (c)** Ensure that development protects and sustains important waterbodies, waterways, wetlands, and groundwater systems in the Town and broader region by employing site-specific planning programs, either alone or in cooperation with other agencies, organizations or governments. This may include limiting, restricting, delaying or prohibiting development in proposed development areas until site-specific planning has been completed or until the Town is satisfied that specific development projects will sustain these areas.

Objective 3.8.2.4: Contaminated Sites

To ensure safe development on brownfields and contaminated sites.

Policy (a) If contaminated sites are identified, ensure they are remediated to a level suitable for the intended use or for site suitability prior to development, to the satisfaction of the Approving Authorities.

Objective 3.8.2.5: Emergency Measures

To ensure public safety during emergency situations.

Policy (a) The Town of Birch Hills will continue to work towards community preparedness for emergency situations by continuing to implement the Town's Emergency Management Plan.

Policy (b) The Town of Birch Hills shall continue to work with Northern Lights Rail in ensuring the safety of residents during rail transportation.

3.9 INTERMUNICIPAL & INTERJURISDICTIONAL COOPERATION

3.9.1 Findings

- The Town of Birch Hills is situated at the intersection of Highways #3 and #25, just west of Highway #20 and southeast of the City of Prince Albert. Other communities in the region include the Village of St. Louis and the Village of Weldon.
- First Nation Reserves in the area include: the One Arrow Indian Reserve No. 95-IF and 95-IJ to the southwest; the Muskoday First Nation Indian Reserve No. 99 to the north; Cumberland Indian Reserve No. 100A to the east; and, James Smith Indian Reserve No. 100 to the northeast.
- Many outstanding land claims owed to several First Nations in Saskatchewan are now being settled. The Treaty Land Entitlement Framework Agreement specifies details of this process. As a part of this process, First Nations have an opportunity to obtain additional lands, including those located within urban municipalities. It is anticipated that some of these lands will be converted to reserve status.
- It is important, and will be a benefit to the region as a whole, for the Town of Birch Hills to work collaboratively with its regional neighbours on issues and areas of mutual interest such as the rural-urban fringe and regional transportation corridors.
- The Town of Birch Hills works collaboratively with the RM of Birch Hills on fire protection as well as emergency management. Agreements have also been made with the RM of St. Louis, the RM of Invergordon, Muskoday First Nation and the Hamlets of Hagen and Crystal Springs, for fire protection.
- In areas adjacent to the Town it is important to ensure that developments do not cause adverse effects upon existing or proposed future urban land uses or servicing requirements. In order to ensure future growth can occur in an orderly and planned fashion, it is imperative for the town to identify future development areas outside of current Town boundaries for long term growth.
- The Statements of Provincial Interest Regulations provide the following statement concerning inter-municipal cooperation:
 - *The Province has an interest in promoting inter-municipal cooperation that facilitates strong partnerships, joint infrastructure and coordinated local development.*

3.9.2 Intermunicipal & Interjurisdictional Cooperation Objectives and Policies

Objective 3.9.2.1: Government Cooperation

To pursue opportunities with the federal and provincial governments to enhance services and to provide innovative opportunities for Birch Hills and the region.

Policy (a) The Town will pursue opportunities to take advantage of federal and provincial programs which will benefit Birch Hills and the region.

Objective 3.9.2.2: Regional Cooperation

To facilitate intermunicipal and interjurisdictional cooperation on a regional basis.

Policy (a) The Town will continue to pursue agreements and cooperation with neighbouring municipalities, planning commissions, First Nations, and other stakeholders that will address joint planning, future growth, and joint delivery of services, based on common interests of the region as a whole.

- Policy (b)** The Town will continue to work with regional partners in the delivery of emergency and safety management services.

Objective 3.9.2.3: Urban Reserves

To maintain the financial integrity of the Town, its tax base and its municipal services while ensuring compatible and enforceable land use and development standards in any Urban Reserve that may be established in Birch Hills.

- Policy (a)** Ensure an agreement is sought pursuant to part 9 of the Treaty Land Entitlement Framework Agreement before an Urban Reserve is created with reserve status. The Agreement shall be negotiated in good faith by the Town, and will be based on the objective noted above.

Objective 3.9.2.4: Annexation

To alter the Town limits based on need and to provide for orderly development of land uses and services.

- Policy (a)** In order to provide for orderly development in accordance with the development policies contained in this Official Community Plan, Council may, from time to time, seek to alter the Town boundaries in a manner that will ensure that sufficient lands are available within the Town limits. Sufficient lands are deemed to exist within the Town if they can accommodate future development for a period of twenty years and if they can be serviced in a practical, cost-effective manner.

- Policy (b)** The Town will support requests for alteration of Town boundaries that are consistent with sound land use planning principles and this Official Community Plan and is determined to be of benefit to the Town.

Objective 3.9.2.5: Communication and Referral Process

To provide greater certainty for land use decisions where impacts cross municipal boundaries.

- Policy (a)** The Town shall work collaboratively with the RM of Birch Hills to develop plans and processes that provide greater clarity for land use decisions in such areas as the rural-urban fringe, regional transportation corridors, lands within the Town that are adjacent to RM boundaries and other areas of mutual interest.

- Policy (b)** Council will work with the RM of Birch Hills when designating or amending future urban growth areas that are located within the RM, on the Town's Future Land Use Concept.

3.10 AGRICULTURAL LAND & FRINGE AREAS

3.10.1 Findings

- The Town of Birch Hills is surrounded by the Rural Municipality of Birch Hills No. 460.
- In areas adjacent to the Town it is important to ensure that developments do not cause adverse effects upon existing or proposed future urban land uses or servicing requirements. In order to ensure future growth can occur in an orderly and planned fashion, it is imperative for the Town to identify future development areas outside of current Town boundaries for long term growth.
- One ILO, located in close proximity to the Town in NW-28-46-24-W2M, has been identified.

3.10.2 Agricultural Land and Fringe Areas Objectives and Policies

Objective 3.10.2.1

To ensure that future urban land requirements are not restricted by the development of uses, such as intensive livestock operations, near or within the corporate limits of the Town.

Policy (a) The Town shall continue to work with the Rural Municipality of Birch Hills to address and resolve issues and concerns of mutual interest.

Policy (b) Intensive livestock operations (ILOs) shall not be permitted within the Town.

Objective 3.10.2.2

To safeguard municipal services from incompatible land uses.

Policy (a) The Zoning Bylaw will identify areas suitable for development within the corporate limits of the Town not immediately required for urban development as a "**Future Urban Development**" district and will identify land use restrictions and development standards so as not to jeopardize or otherwise unduly restrict future development.

3.11 NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE RESOURCES

3.11.1 Heritage and Natural Resource Findings

- The Town of Birch Hills is located within the Tiger Hills Upland of the Boreal Transition Ecoregion of the Boreal Plain Ecozone.
- There are currently two Designated Municipal Heritage Properties within the Town of Birch Hills: Bruser's General Store: In 1920, the property was opened as a general store, and operated as such until the 1940s, when it became the Town Hall. The building was host to many businesses over the last 93 years and was the town dance hall until 1967. The Building has now been restored back to the Old Dance Hall. The Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce: In 1916 the bank opened as a sub-agency to Prince Albert, becoming its own branch on April 25th, 1917.
- The Municipal Heritage Designation affords special protection under *The Saskatchewan Heritage Property Act* on all designated properties.
- It is possible that more historic sites are locally known, but are not yet recorded and recognized by the Heritage Conservation Branch as Heritage Property. Therefore it is recommended that public consultations be held prior to the onset of any development should it be located adjacent or on any of these locally-known sites.
- The Statements of Provincial Interest Regulations provides the following statements concerning Saskatchewan's heritage and culture, and biodiversity and natural ecosystems:
 - *The Province has an interest in ensuring that Saskatchewan's culture and heritage resources are protected, conserved and responsibly used.*
 - *The Province has an interest in conserving Saskatchewan's biodiversity and natural ecosystems for present and future generations.*

3.11.2 Heritage Resources Objectives and Policies

Objective 3.11.2.1: Heritage and Culture Resource Protection

To protect the heritage resources within the Town, and where such protection cannot be achieved, to implement appropriate mitigation measures.

- Policy (a)** Support the designation of provincial heritage and municipal heritage buildings and sites within the Town, including those owned by the Town, as well as those owned privately.
- Policy (b)** Ensure that the subdivision of land on potentially heritage sensitive parcels occurs (Map 2) in accordance with the guidelines and criteria identified by the Heritage Conservation Branch of Saskatchewan. The costs of any required Heritage Impact Resource Assessment to identify if any heritage resources exist on the site, and if the developer may be required to move the proposed development to a new location or undertake mitigative measures to receive clearance from the Heritage Resource Branch of Saskatchewan, will be the responsibility of the proponent of the proposed development.
- Policy (c)** The Town's land use and development decisions will be sensitive to the conservation and protection of culture and heritage resources.
- Policy (d)** The Town shall consider the use of dedicated lands, such as environmental and municipal reserve, to protect and conserve culture and heritage features, where possible.

- Policy (e)** Insofar as practical, the Town shall use the provisions set out in the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places* to guide protection and conservation efforts of heritage places.

Objective 3.11.2.2: Cultural and Heritage Resource Promotion

To encourage the conservation of intangible cultural resources including historically and culturally significant landscapes, cultural facilities and events, heritage languages, community traditions and customs, locally important arts, crafts and trading skills.

- Policy (a)** The Town may consider the development of a Municipal Cultural Plan that identifies and maps local culture and heritage resources while creating an awareness of the benefits of preserving and promoting culture and heritage resources for community development purposes.
- Policy (b)** The Town shall continue to support heritage and cultural events.
- Policy (c)** The Town shall continue to work with community and culture groups, service clubs, sports and recreation clubs, to promote and celebrate the existing programs available to residents and visitors, alike.
- Policy (d)** The Town will build upon its listing of heritage resources, with collaboration from local residents.
- Policy (e)** The Town will endeavour to create new partnerships with community groups with the intention of fostering support and promoting interest in culture and heritage.

4 IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 ZONING BYLAW

The Zoning Bylaw will be the principal method of implementing the objectives and policies contained in this Official Community Plan, and will be adopted in conjunction herewith.

4.1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Town's Zoning Bylaw is to control the use of land providing for the amenity of the area within Council's jurisdiction and for the health, safety, and general welfare of the inhabitants of the Town of Birch Hills.

4.1.2 Content and Objectives

The Zoning Bylaw will implement the land use policies contained in this Official Community Plan by prescribing and establishing zoning districts for residential uses, commercial uses, industrial uses, community service and institutional uses, and other municipal uses. Regulations within each district will govern the range of uses, site sizes, setbacks, building locations, off-street parking, landscaping, and so forth.

4.1.3 Amending the Zoning Bylaw

When considering applications to amend zoning regulations or standards, or requests for the rezoning of land, Council shall consider such proposals within the context of:

- (1) The nature of the proposal and its conformance with all relevant provisions of this Official Community Plan.
- (2) The need to foster a rational pattern of relationships among all forms of land use and to protect all forms of land use from harmful encroachments by incompatible uses.
- (3) The need for the form of land use proposed and the supply of land currently available in the general area capable of meeting that need.
- (4) The capability of the existing road system to service the proposed use and the adequacy of the proposed supply of off-street parking.
- (5) The capability of existing community infrastructure to service the proposal, including water and sewer services, parks, schools and other utilities and community services.

4.1.4 Zoning by Agreement

- (1) Where an application is made to Council to rezone land to permit the carrying out of a specified proposal, Council may, for the purpose of accommodating the request, enter into an Agreement with the Applicant pursuant to Section 69 of *The Act*.
- (2) Contract Zoning permits a municipality to manage the use of a site and layout of a specific proposed development that requires rezoning. Council may use a Contract Zone to rezone a site to allow a

proposed development, but may also restrict uses normally allowed in the zoning district through a contract.

- (3) Section 4.1.3 of this Official Community Plan shall apply in the review of applications for rezoning by agreement.
- (4) Council may enter into an agreement with the applicant setting out a description of the proposal and reasonable terms and conditions with respect to:
 - (a) the uses of the land and buildings and the forms of development;
 - (b) the site layout and external design, including parking areas, landscaping and entry- and exit-ways;
 - (c) any other development standards considered necessary to implement the proposal, provided that the development standards shall be no less stringent than those set out in the requested underlying zoning district.
- (5) Council may limit the use of the land and buildings to one or more of the uses permitted in the requested zoning district.
- (6) Council may consider rezoning by agreement to accommodate development or subdivision proposals when:
 - (a) limiting the uses within a zoning district will avoid land use conflict;
 - (b) it is necessary to ensure that appropriate services and infrastructure are provided.

4.1.5 Use of the Holding Symbol "H"

- (1) Pursuant to Section 71 of *The Act*, Council may use the Holding Symbol "H" in conjunction with any zoning district designation, to specify the use to which lands or buildings may be put at any time that the holding symbol is removed by amendment to the Zoning Bylaw.
- (2) Council may use the Holding Symbol "H" to accommodate multiple phase subdivisions and developments.
- (3) In making a decision as to whether to remove the Holding Symbol "H" by amendment to the Zoning Bylaw, Council shall consider whether development has progressed to a point where extension of municipal services is appropriate.

4.1.6 Bonus Provisions

To facilitate a degree of flexibility for optimal site utilization as well as encourage certain desirable elements not normally proposed in the development process, the Zoning Bylaw may provide for adjustments to specific development standards in exchange for commensurate facilities, services or matters as specifically set out in the Zoning Bylaw.

In this regard, the Zoning Bylaw may provide for adjustment to density limits, parking standards, building height, number of principal buildings on a site or other similar standards for the provision of supportive housing units, community facilities which are owned by a non-profit corporation or

public authority, the conservation of important natural areas, the provision of enclosed parking, and the designation of designated heritage properties.

4.2 OTHER IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

4.2.1 Subdivision Application Review

In reviewing any application for subdivision, Council shall indicate support for such application only when it has:

- (1) Ensured that all policies and guidelines established regarding occupancy levels, development standards and design of the subdivision, as set out in this Official Community Plan, have been satisfied.
- (2) Ensured that the application is in conformity with the Zoning Bylaw.
- (3) Negotiated the terms of a servicing agreement, if required, with the applicant.
- (4) Determined its wishes with respect to the dedication of lands.

4.2.2 Dedicated Lands

- (1) When reviewing any application for subdivision, Council may indicate to the approving authority, its desire to have *unstable or flood-prone areas* set aside as environmental reserve and/or municipal reserve, as a condition of subdivision approval, pursuant to Section 185 of *The Act*.
- (2) Pursuant to The Act, Council may elect to request that an approving authority require the owner of land that is the subject of a proposed subdivision to provide money in place of all or a portion of land that would otherwise be required to be dedicated as municipal reserve.

4.2.3 Building Bylaw

- (1) Council will use its building bylaw to provide standards for the construction, repair and maintenance of buildings in the community as well as ensuring acceptable physical conditions. Provisions for occupancy permits and inspections can be included in the bylaw.

4.2.4 Development Levies and Servicing Fees

- (1) In accordance with Section 169 of *The Act*, the Council may establish, by separate bylaw, development levies for the purpose of recovering all or a part of the capital cost of providing, altering, expanding or upgrading services and facilities associated with a proposed development within an existing subdivided area. Such bylaw must be based on studies to establish the cost of municipal servicing and recreational needs and on a consideration of future land use and development and the anticipated phasing of associated public works.
- (2) In accordance with Section 172 of *The Act*, Council may require a servicing agreement with the proponent of a subdivision development. In order to provide overall direction and guidance in the negotiation of individual agreements with developers, Council may establish, by resolution, a schedule of development specifications and servicing fees. Such servicing specifications will provide a consistent set of development standards for provision of services and works by developers within a proposed subdivision development. Subdivision servicing fees contribute in whole or in part towards the capital costs of services within or outside the subdivision that directly or indirectly serve the proposed subdivision.

4.3 OTHER

4.3.1 Updating the Official Community Plan

Plans and projections for future development shall be monitored on an ongoing basis. Policies contained in this Official Community Plan, including the Future Land Use Concept, shall be reviewed and updated within five years of adoption.

4.3.2 Further Studies

As necessary, Council will undertake such studies or programs required to facilitate and encourage the growth and development of the Town of Birch Hills.

4.3.3 Community Engagement

In addition to the requirements of *The Act*, provisions for public participation may be initiated which are appropriate to the nature and scope of the planning matter being addressed. Examples of initiatives for which the community engagement process applies includes land use issues, social issues, safety issues, recreation issues and utility services.

For any situation where the community engagement process applies, the Town will consider the following principles:

- Municipal government decisions must be made in a context that is sensitive and responsive to public concerns and values.
- The community engagement process must demonstrate openness, honesty and transparency of purpose, as well as the communication of the results.
- The process must be respectful of decision making protocols.
- The process must demonstrate a commitment to being time-sensitive and cost-effective.

4.3.4 Cooperation and Inter-Jurisdictional Consideration

Council shall cooperate with senior governments, other municipalities and public and private agencies to implement this Official Community Plan.

4.3.5 Programs

Council shall participate in senior government economic development, public utility, resource enhancement, housing, social and environmental protection programs and projects, where such will help in achieving its goals and objectives.

4.3.6 Provincial Land Use Policies and Interests

This bylaw shall be administered and implemented in conformity with applicable provincial land use policies and interests, statutes and regulations and in cooperation with provincial agencies. Where a reference is made in this Plan to a provincial statute or regulation and that statute or regulation is amended or repealed and substituted with a replacement statute or regulation, the reference herein to the statute or regulation shall be taken to mean the amended or replacement statute or regulation.

4.3.7 Binding

Subject to Section 40 of *The Act*, the Official Community Plan shall be binding on the Town of Birch Hills, the Crown, and all other persons, associations and other organizations, and no development shall be carried out that is contrary to this Official Community Plan.

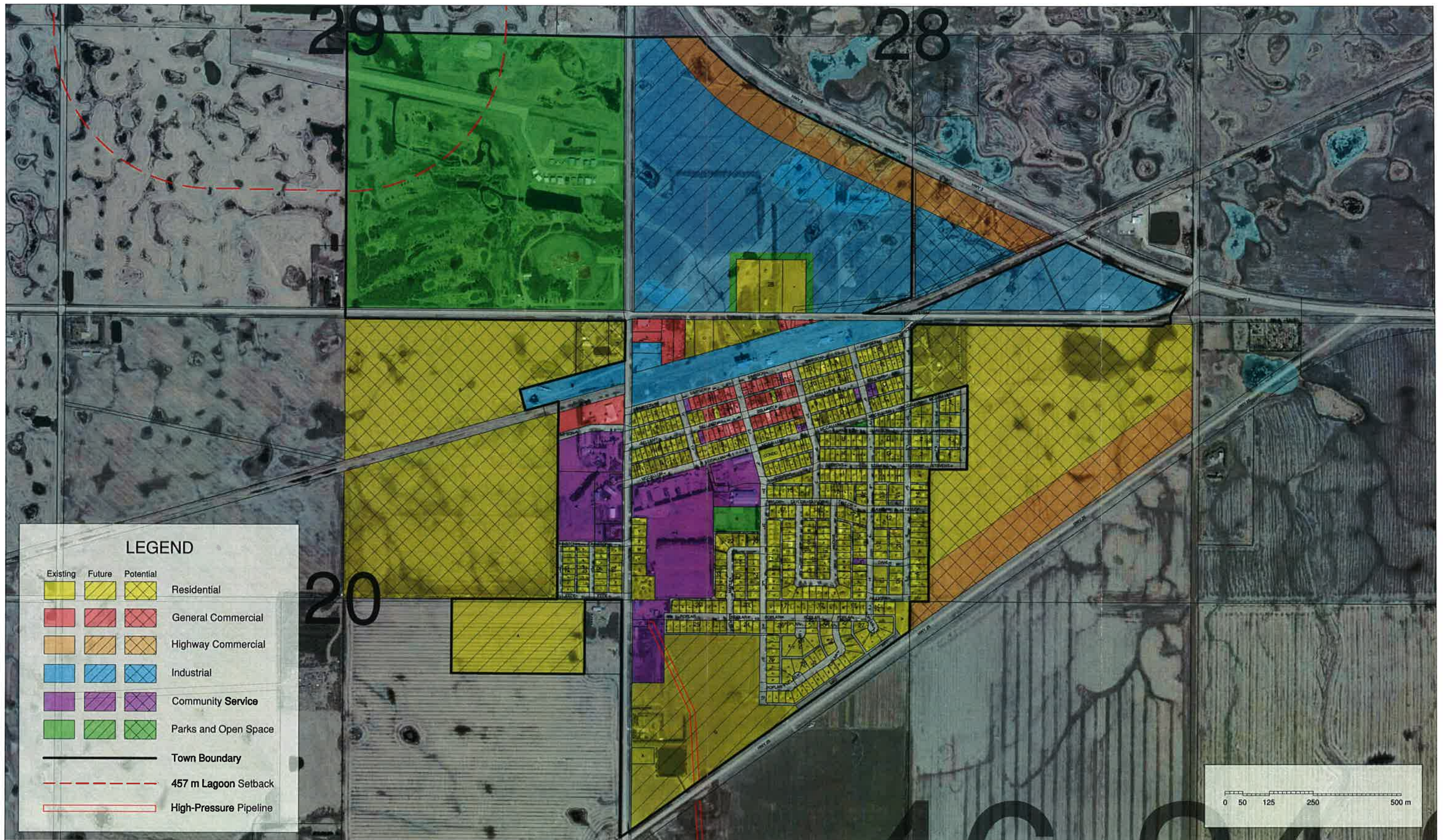
4.3.8 Definitions

The Zoning Bylaw definitions shall apply to this Official Community Plan.

5 MAPS

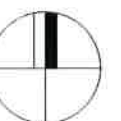
Map 1 - Future Land Use Concept

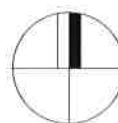
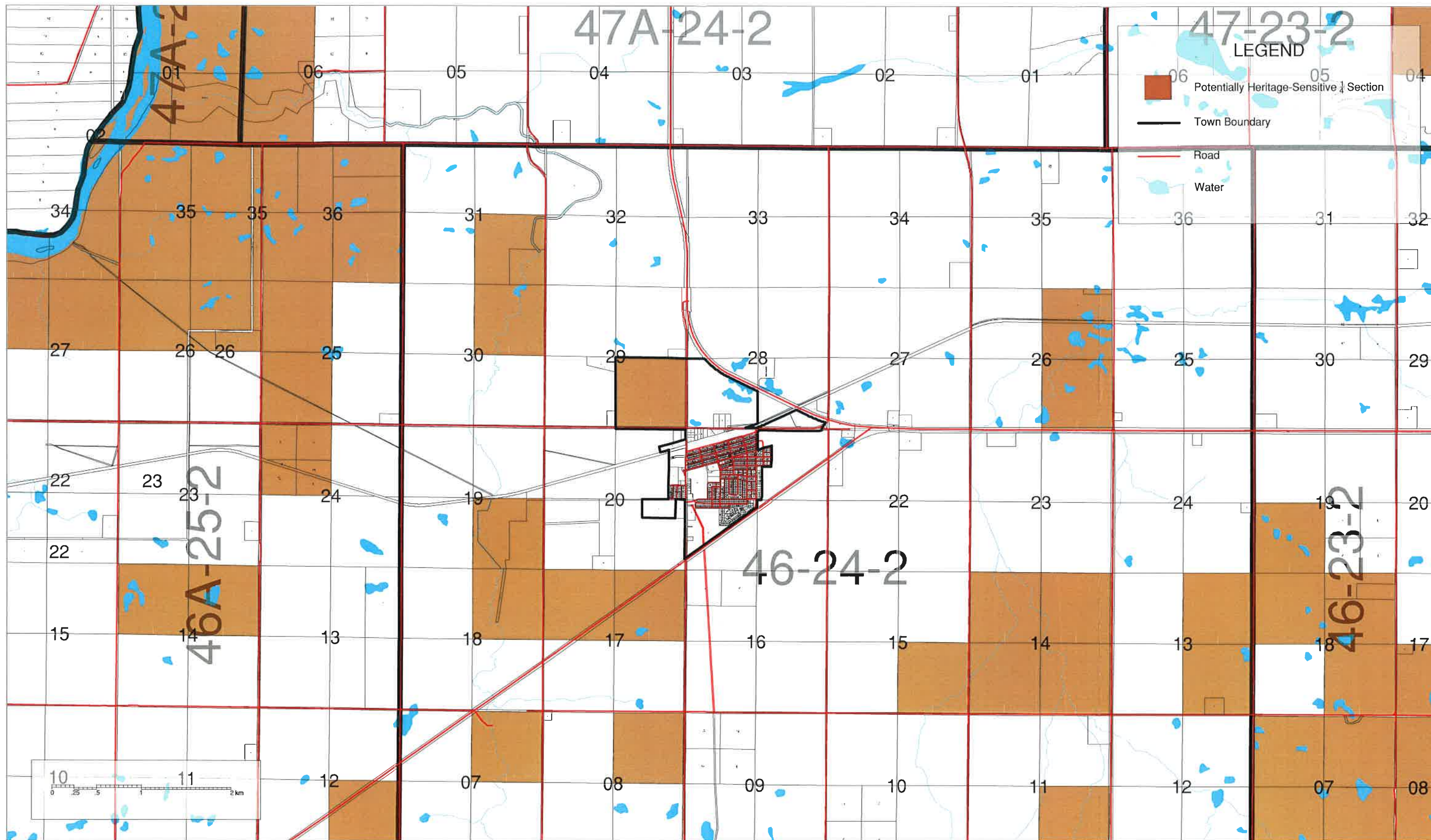
Map 2 – Potential Heritage Sensitivity



Town of Birch Hills Official Community Plan

Map 1 - Future Land Use Concept





6 CONCEPT PLANS
