

---

# Summer Village of Ghost Lake Municipal Development Plan

---



---

# Contents

Introduction .....	1
<i>Figure 1: Location Plan</i> .....	2
Purpose of this Municipal Development Plan .....	1
Demographic Information .....	4
Development Constraints .....	4
<i>Figure 2: Development Constraints</i> .....	6
Sustainability Plan .....	7
Community Input .....	7
Vision .....	8
Goals .....	9
Municipal Growth and Land Development.....	9
<i>Figure 3: Future Land Use</i> .....	11
Residential Development and Land Use .....	10
Commercial Development and Land Use .....	12
Recreation and Open Space .....	13
<i>Figure 4: Recreation &amp; Open Spaces</i> .....	15
Education and Culture .....	16
Roads .....	17
<i>Figure 5: Transportation</i> .....	18
Surface Water Drainage .....	19
Potable Water and Sanitary Sewage .....	20
Waste Management and Recycling .....	20
Agricultural Land Use .....	21
Other Infrastructure and Services .....	21
Community Development .....	23
Coordination with Other Jurisdictions .....	24
Implementation and Review .....	26
References .....	27
Acknowledgments .....	28

---

## Introduction

In summer 2018, Council of the Summer Village of Ghost Lake (SVGL) engaged Birch Consulting to prepare a Municipal Development Plan for the community. Municipal Development Plans are a type of statutory plan under Alberta's Municipal Government Act and the content they must contain is established by legislation. The general intent is that a Municipal Development Plan (MDP) establish a direction for the community's future, and contain policy direction to guide future land use and development decisions consistent with that desired future.

To help oversee the process and provide direction to the consultant, Council appointed a steering committee comprised of community members and SVGL's Chief Administrative Officer. A survey of landowners was undertaken in fall 2018 to assess community opinion on a variety of issues. Other parties, such as the Municipal District of Bighorn and the Stoney Nakoda First Nation were also contacted in this period to gather input. A draft MDP was then prepared by the consultant, and reviewed and revised by the steering committee. When the steering committee was satisfied with it, the draft document was posted on SVGL's website and in summer 2019 an open house was held to obtain community feedback on the draft MDP. That input was used to again refine the MDP, which was then forwarded by the steering committee to Council. It was then formally circulated to other parties in accordance with the requirements of the Municipal Government Act. Following a public hearing and further review, the Summer Village of Ghost Lake Municipal Development Plan was approved by Council bylaw in April 2020.

The Summer Village of Ghost Lake and the area surrounding it are shown in Figure 1.

## Purpose of this Municipal Development Plan

The requirements for Municipal Development Plans are prescribed in the Municipal Government Act, Revised Statutes of Alberta 2000, Chapter M-26 as amended (the MGA), and are as follows:

*“ 632 (3) A municipal development plan*

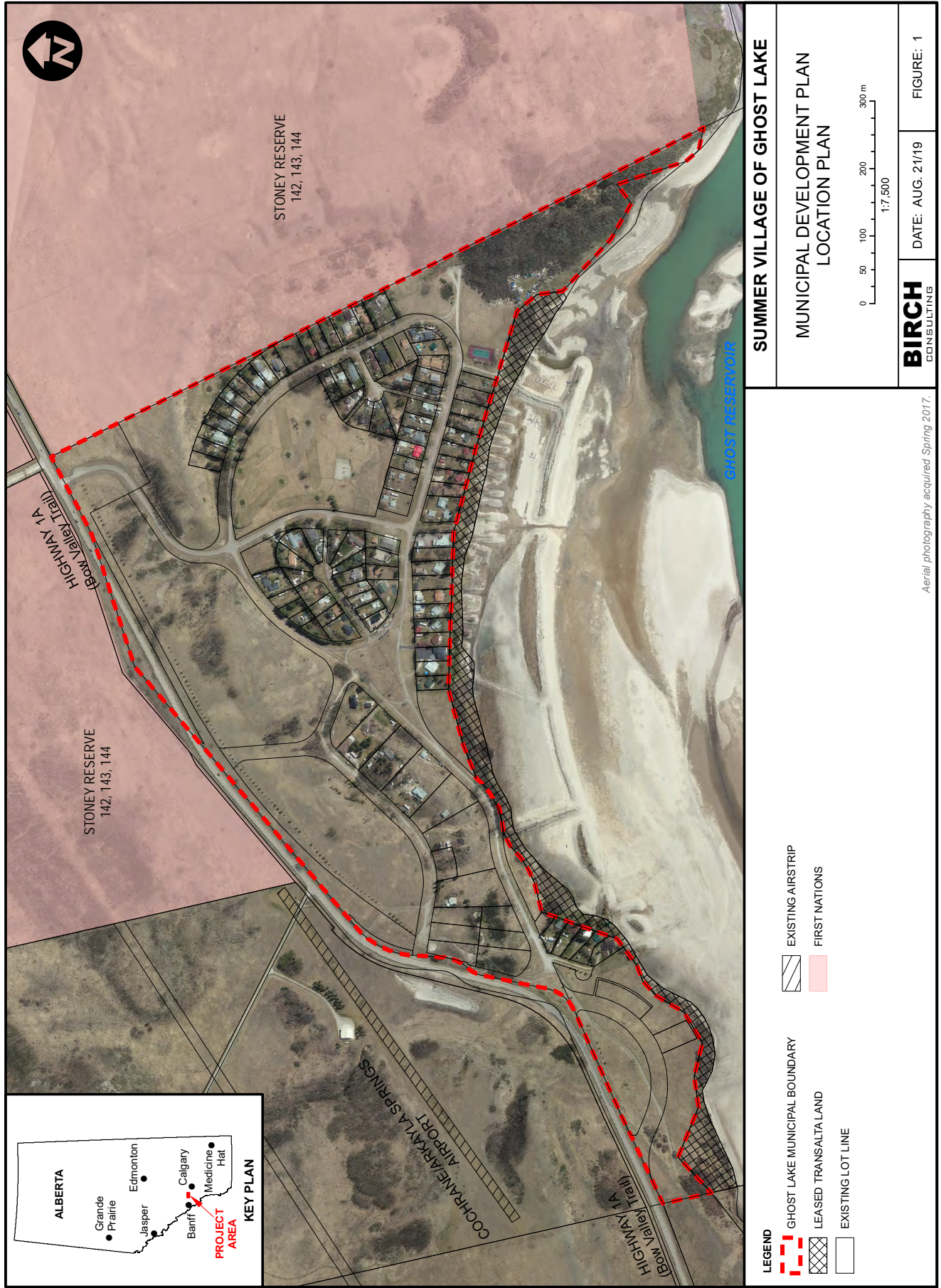
*(a) must address*

*(i) the future land use within the municipality,*

*(ii) the manner of and the proposals for future development in the municipality,*

*(iii) the co-ordination of land use, future growth patterns and other infrastructure with adjacent municipalities if there is no intermunicipal development plan with respect to those matters in those municipalities,*





- 
- (iv) the provision of the required transportation systems either generally or specifically within the municipality and in relation to adjacent municipalities, and*
  - (v) the provision of municipal services and facilities either generally or specifically,*

*(b) may address*

- (i) proposals for the financing and programming of municipal infrastructure,*
  - (ii) the co-ordination of municipal programs relating to the physical, social and economic development of the municipality,*
  - (iii) environmental matters within the municipality,*
  - (iv) the financial resources of the municipality,*
  - (v) the economic development of the municipality, and*
  - (vi) any other matter relating to the physical, social or economic development of the municipality,*
- (c) may contain statements regarding the municipality's development constraints, including the results of any development studies and impact analysis, and goals, objectives, targets, planning policies and corporate strategies,*
- (d) must contain policies compatible with the subdivision and development regulations to provide guidance on the type and location of land uses adjacent to sour gas facilities,*
- (e) must contain policies respecting the provision of municipal, school or municipal and school reserves, including but not limited to the need for, amount of and allocation of those reserves and the identification of school requirements in consultation with affected school boards,*
- (f) must contain policies respecting the protection of agricultural operations, and*
- (g) may contain policies respecting the provision of conservation reserve in accordance with section 664.2(1)(a) to (d)."*

Summer Village of Ghost Lake Council, its various boards and committees, and its administration will use the Municipal Development Plan in making decisions on the matters described above, when making decisions on subdivision and development permit applications, when making amendments to the Land Use Bylaw, and when dealing with other government jurisdictions. They will also use the MDP when working on municipal budgets, and when determining infrastructure and other municipal service needs and priorities. Similarly, they will use it when evaluating requests from the SVGL community for facility and service provision, and associated funding.

Landowners, developers, residents and business owners will find the SVGL Municipal Development Plan useful in that it lays out a vision for the community's future. The Plan then establishes goals and policies to help the community move towards that vision. While there may be other documents that are referenced in this regard, such as the Summer Village of Ghost Lake Sustainability Plan, the Municipal Development Plan sets on the broad direction for the future community, its land use and municipal infrastructure.



---

The SVGL Municipal Development Plan is a long term planning tool but should not be considered a static document. As the world in which we live continues to change, the larger regional environment evolves, and SVGL's landowners and residents transition, the MDP should be amended so that it continues to be relevant for community decision-making.

## Demographic Information

Based on Statistics Canada's census data (source: [www12.statcan.gc.ca](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca)), SVGL had a permanent population of 82 people in 2016, about the same as the 81 people living there in 2011. The 2016 census also indicates that the majority of households in SVGL consisted of two people and that there were 87 dwellings.

Categorization of SVGL's population by age shows the community to be older than that of Alberta as a whole:

<u>AGE</u>	<u>SVGL</u>	<u>ALBERTA</u>
0 - 14 Years	11.8%	19.2%
15 - 64 Years	58.8%	68.5%
65 + Years	23.5%	12.3%

This age profile will have an effect on infrastructure and service demands. For example, one would expect demand for facilities and services to lean towards those best suited to an older population. However, the community should recognize that there are also a significant number of children living full-time in SVGL. Moreover, there are likely to be younger people among the families of the seasonal landowners not counted in the census, as well as younger family members who visit the full-time residents. Similarly, even though the majority of properties are used only part of the year, there is a significant full-time resident component to SVGL. Hence despite the higher proportion of older people living in SVGL and the large number of people who visit their properties only periodically, facilities and services need to meet a broad range of age and user characteristics. This is more than just a retirement or seasonal community.

## Development Constraints

When considering future land use and development options, the physical and legislative environment must be recognized. These constrain development choices. In SVGL, there are five elements that have an impact on planning decisions.

---

## Highway 1A

The northern boundary of SVGL roughly follows the Highway 1A right-of-way. This proximity imposes development constraints for land along the municipality's northern edge in several ways. First, the Province has a plan to realign the highway and this may shift the road further south towards SVGL along some portions (see Figure 2). Second, the Subdivision and Development Regulation (Alberta Regulation 43/2002, as amended) gives Alberta Transportation the ability to prevent subdivision within 1.6 km of a highway centre line. Third, under the Highways Development and Protection Regulation (Alberta Regulation 326/2009) Alberta Transportation may require that persons undertaking development within 300 m of a major provincial highway obtain a development permit from the department.

## Steep Slopes

SVGL's existing practice is to rely on its development officer to determine if slope stability is a concern when development is being contemplated and to require engineering reports as necessary. To assist in this regard, Figure 2 shows lands in and around SVGL that may have slopes greater than 15%.

## TransAlta Lease Area

The Ghost Reservoir was formed by the damming of the Bow River and is not a natural water body. To accommodate the effects of water level variability on the surrounding land, the owner of the dam, TransAlta Corporation, owns most of the land that is under water when the Reservoir is full. This creates a private property boundary along the edge of the Ghost Reservoir that is generally just above the shoreline when the water is at its highest level. The private land area grows as the water level drops. Consequently there is no public land "bed and shore" typical of a natural water body.

TransAlta has leased some of the land it owns along SVGL's southern boundary to SVGL. This lease has been granted for recreational purposes and a lease agreement sets out terms and conditions for use of the leased land. The lease area is illustrated in Figure 2.

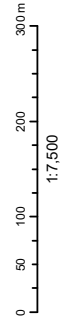
It should also be recognized that the land leased from TransAlta is not within SVGL. It is in the Municipal District of Bighorn. Consequently, development and use of this land is regulated under the Municipal District's planning policies and regulations, not those of SVGL.





# SUMMER VILLAGE OF GHOST LAKE

## MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS



**BIRCH**  
CONSULTING

Aerial photography acquired Spring 2017.

DATE: AUG. 21/19

FIGURE: 2

### LEGEND

- GHOST LAKE MUNICIPAL BOUNDARY
- LEASED TRANSALTA LAND
- EXISTING LOT LINE
- EXISTING AIRSTRIP
- FIRST NATIONS
- HIGHWAY 1A - EXISTING ALIGNMENT
- HIGHWAY 1A - FUTURE ALIGNMENT
- SLOPES GREATER THAN 15%
- NATURAL WATER SPRING
- WETLAND



---

## Wetland

There is a wetland at the west end of SVGL. The wetland's location is shown in Figure 2 and, as can be seen, is partially on land owned by SVGL and partially on land leased from TransAlta. The wetland contains a natural water spring and unique vegetation. It is thought to be fed from the ephemeral watercourse that flows from Arkayla Springs above (north of) the wetland. A walking trail has been built through the wetland area and serves to focus use along its path, thus helping to protect the wetland.

## Natural Water Springs

In addition to the water spring mentioned in the Wetland description above, there are at least two other known spring outflows in SVGL. All three are shown in Figure 2. Because these springs indicate underground water flows coming to the surface, it is possible that this groundwater may also directly support private (household) wells in SVGL. An effort should be made to encourage protection of the springs and their recharge areas both within and beyond the municipality.

## Sustainability Plan

In 2012, SVGL completed a Sustainability Plan that was prepared after an extensive consultation process. The survey undertaken for preparation of this Municipal Development Plan inquired about the current relevance of the Sustainability Plan and there was strong support for it. The Sustainability Plan can be seen as a precursor to this MDP even though it covered a range of topics that go well beyond the normal coverage of a MDP. To take advantage of the still-valid policy direction suggested by the Sustainability Plan, several of its policy suggestions have been incorporated into this MDP. The Sustainability Plan will continue to provide context and advice to Council members, who will also be informed by broader community consultation and discussion when making decisions on municipal operations.

## Community Input

Community input was obtained at the start of the planning process in order to prepare a plan that reflects the objectives and interests of residents. This was done through a workshop-style discussion with the MDP Steering Committee members and through a community survey. Later, after the draft MDP was finalized with the Steering Committee and made public, an open house was held.

---

## Survey

In fall 2018, a public input survey was undertaken to determine the community's position on a variety of issues. The survey was prepared by the MDP consultant based on input received at the initial Steering Committee workshop. It was subsequently vetted by the Steering Committee, incorporated into Survey Monkey software by administration and hosted on SVGL's website. The survey results were compiled and made available on-line as part of the MDP preparation process. With 115 respondents, the survey was deemed a success.

The responses to the thirteen survey questions helped shape the vision statement, goals and policies contained in this Municipal Development Plan. For instance, people responding to the survey indicated that the three things they liked most about SVGL were water access, the small community feel and the natural areas, and this input helped shape the Vision and Goals listed below. Topic-specific survey results were also obtained and are summarized in the sections that follow. Those results were used to develop the MDP's policies.

## Open House

On July 21, 2019, the MDP Steering Committee hosted an open house at the SVGL Community Building to discuss the draft MDP and seek comment. The draft MDP had been posted earlier on SVGL's website and printed copies were also available at the open house. Approximately 32 people attended the open house. Their questions were addressed by Steering Committee members and the planning consultant, and informal notes were taken about the major issues that were raised. Additionally, the community was asked to provide input on the draft MDP through use of a feedback form that was available at the open house and on the SVGL website. Thirteen written responses regarding the draft MDP were received following the open house.

The input received at the open house and through the feedback forms was used by the Steering Committee to refine the draft MDP before it was finalized for Council review and consideration. That input was summarized in a separate document and made available for viewing on SVGL's website.

## Vision

When planning for the future it is helpful to have a vision of what that future might be like. A vision provides a target to strive for and allows the establishment of some of the goals that need to be accomplished in order to get there. The vision for SVGL is based on the input received from the Steering Committee and through the MDP survey. It is:

---

*In 10 to 15 years, the Summer Village of Ghost Lake will remain a small, cohesive and self-reliant municipality where commitment to the community is readily apparent, and where people take advantage of retained open spaces and direct access to the Ghost Reservoir for recreation and relaxation.*

## Goals

Based on the input obtained through public engagement, a set of goals has been developed to help the community achieve its future vision. Those goals are:

- To enhance cohesiveness and volunteerism in order to build a strong, self supporting community with relatively low taxes.
- To limit future growth, in terms of subdivision and development, to the privately owned properties that currently exist.
- To preserve the undeveloped, municipally owned land in a natural state while being cognizant of the need for occasional fire hazard risk reduction activities.
- To maintain direct access to the Ghost Reservoir from SVGL through the TransAlta Corporation lease and improve upon the recreational opportunities this access allows.
- To limit commercial development to activities that are undertaken in private residences, are not readily apparent and do not adversely impact neighbouring property owners, and do not attract tourists or the travelling public to the community.
- To maintain the current rural characteristics of SVGL, namely: reliance on private water and sewer systems; low density development and lot coverage; narrow, multi-purpose road surfaces; and self-reliance rather than extensive government service levels.

Following from these goals, the following sections of this Municipal Development Plan establish policies to be followed by SVGL Council and other decision-makers when addressing land use planning and other development issues in SVGL. Policies are more topic-specific and action-directed than goals but align with the goals in pursuit of the larger vision.

## Municipal Growth and Land Development

### Background

The boundaries of SVGL - being Highway 1A to the north, the Stoney Nakoda Reserve to the east, the Ghost Reservoir to the south, and a narrow strip of private agricultural land to the west - restrict the municipality's natural growth. This meets the desires of existing landowners, the majority of whom want SVGL to remain as a small, recreational community. Nearly 80% of MDP survey respondents said they do not want more development. This is expressed in the vision and goals above.



---

There is a small amount of private land in SVGL that could be further subdivided and developed but the majority of vacant land is owned by the municipality. The community wants to preserve that land in its natural state rather than develop it.

## Policies

- Figure 3 shows the future land use concept for SVGL and will be relied upon by the municipality when decisions are made regarding Land Use Bylaw amendments, and subdivision and development applications.
- Privately owned land may be subdivided and developed in accordance with the Land Use Bylaw.
- There shall be no further subdivision or development of the existing, undeveloped properties owned by the municipality without an amendment to this Municipal Development Plan. There shall be no structures or similar development within 20 m of the wetland area shown on Figure 2.

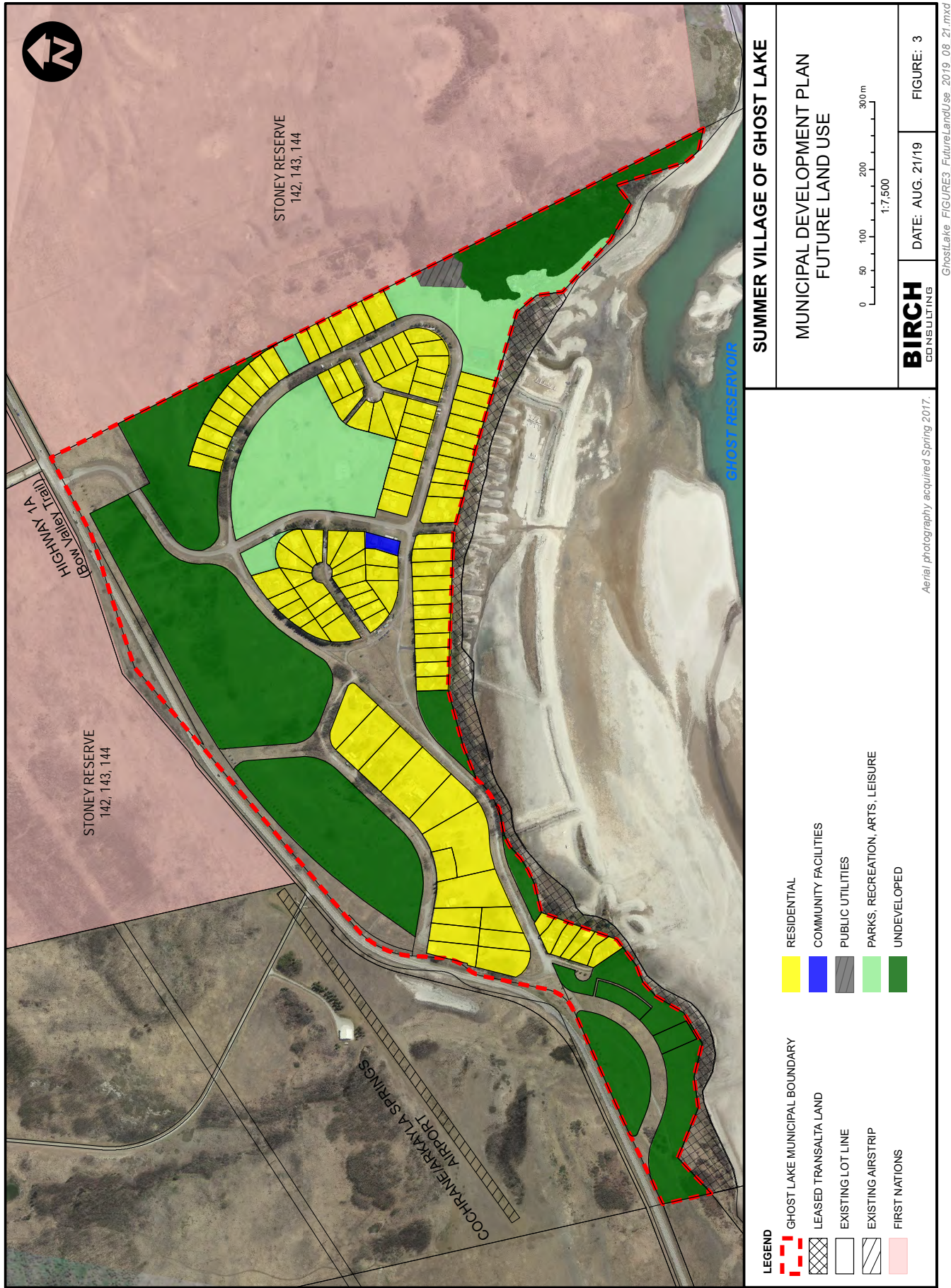
## Residential Development and Land Use

### Background

The majority of developed land in SVGL is residential, with single detached dwellings occupying most lots. Higher density development is not allowed under the current Land Use Bylaw and there is the need to maintain appropriate property sizes to accommodate private water and sewer systems. Because of this and because there are only a few vacant lots currently available for residential development, SVGL's population is not likely to grow in a significant manner in future except through an increase in permanent residency.

The survey undertaken as part of the MDP preparation process explored the potential for changing the existing rules in order to allow secondary suites. Secondary suites are typically thought of as basement suites or suites above detached garages although they can take other forms. Of the responses received, 63.0% were opposed and 37.0% were in favour. Many of those in favour voiced the opinion that secondary suites would be acceptable if they were used to accommodate aging parents, other relatives or caregivers. However, it would be extremely difficult to enforce this. Other people were concerned that secondary suites would increase traffic, parking and storage issues, while others were concerned that the increased density generated by suites would overburden private water and sewer systems.

During later community engagement regarding the draft MDP - an open house held to discuss the draft MDP and an associated written feedback opportunity - the issue of SVGL's current approach to recreational vehicle and holiday trailer use (RV use) arose. It was the



---

dominant focus of the comments received regarding the draft MDP. However, SVGL's existing RV use restrictions are expressed in its Land Use Bylaw and the subject was not addressed in the draft MDP. Given the complexity of the issue and the fact that it arose so late in the process, a policy was added to the MDP deferring the matter for future community discussion and review.

## Policies

- Only one residential dwelling per lot will be allowed, with no secondary suites.
- While there is no intention to introduce architectural controls, the Land Use Bylaw will be written so as to:
  - ensure that maximum lot coverage restrictions provide both the land area and minimum separation distance requirements needed for private water and sewage systems;
  - require adequate space on each lot for parking of vehicles and the recreational equipment typical of a lake-side community;
  - maintain large side yard setbacks for buildings so as to preserve the small-town, rural look of SVGL and to decrease the risk of fire spreading between properties; and
  - limit building heights to respect the more traditional scale of the community's residences.
- The regulation of accessory uses on properties in SVGL will be re-examined by Council within the next three years, with the existing restrictions continuing in the interim.

## Commercial Development and Land Use

### Background

The MDP survey showed that one of the things most valued about SVGL is the lack of visible commercial activity. The survey also clearly demonstrated that most people are satisfied with the existing treatment of home occupations; that is, small commercial uses in a home are fine as long as they are practically invisible. The survey respondents were less aligned when it came to bed and breakfast businesses (48.8% in favour versus 51.2% opposed) and short term vacation rentals such as Airbnb or VRBO (36.1% in favour versus 63.9% opposed). However, for both types of these tourism businesses, those in support had stipulations about how they wanted the businesses to be run. In that those conditions would be difficult for the municipality to enforce and in that tourism attraction is inconsistent with the vision for SVGL, it does not seem worthwhile allowing them.



---

## Policies

- No visible commercial activity will be allowed and there is no need to designate land for commercial purposes in SVGL.
- Home occupations will be allowed provided they are not apparent to neighbours or passersby through: signage; outdoor storage of materials; noise, vibration or odour; hiring of employees for on-site work; or frequent visitation by clients or delivery vehicles.
- Home occupations that are somewhat apparent to passersby but cause no adverse effect on neighbouring property owners may be allowed as discretionary uses and be regulated as such through amendments to the current Land Use Bylaw.
- Neither traditional bed and breakfasts nor short term vacation rentals will be allowed in SVGL.

## Recreation and Open Spaces

### Background

SVGL's recreational opportunities are a major attribute for people owning property in the community, as indicated in the results of the MDP survey. Access to the Ghost Reservoir is the primary draw and this is not just in the summer months as winter use was also noted. People also mentioned the attractiveness of the community for casual recreation, including walking, running and cross country skiing. In this regard they suggested that the road system combines with the trail system to create a variety of recreational travel options and routes.

There are a variety of recreational facilities available in SVGL. There is a beach. There are tennis courts that are also used for other sports requiring a hard surface, such as basketball. And there are horseshoe throwing pits and a modern playground next to a small, practise-style golf course. Of greatest importance, though, is the direct Ghost Reservoir access and the sheltered marina for docking boats. Even though there are numerous docking berths, there is still a shortage given landowner demand and some concern over their assignment and use. People are also concerned about lowering of the water level in the Ghost Reservoir for flood management purposes since this greatly diminishes the ability to take advantage of the Reservoir at the start of summer. As mentioned elsewhere in this MDP, the lakefront area is owned by TransAlta Corporation and is outside SVGL's municipal boundary, so approvals from other bodies are needed prior to undertaking development in this area. Also of note is the fact that the recreation facilities within SVGL proper are public, just like the facilities in other municipalities such as Cochrane and Calgary. In contrast, the facilities on the TransAlta lease area are on private land and public access can be restricted or prohibited.

---

People responding to the survey also referenced the importance of SVGL's natural areas. On the western edge is a sensitive wetland with unusual flora, including orchids. The wetland has a short trail bisecting it that has been decorated with fairyland art. On the eastern side of SVGL is a wooded area with informal walking trails that have been cut through it. On the northern edge, next to Highway 1A, is a rolling area used by wildlife, notably deer, with some unique flora such as a hawthorn tree and native rose bushes. Along SVGL's southern boundary is the waterfront, with some areas used by waterfowl for nesting and feeding. There are also open grassland areas within the community, as can be seen on the air photographs used as the base for the MDP's several maps. Some of these open areas have been periodically grazed but they are otherwise in a fairly natural state.

Finally, the Municipal Government Act requires that MDPs contain policies respecting the provision of municipal, school or municipal and school reserves when subdivisions occur. There is little chance of a school being needed in the community (see Education and Culture section below) and there is already an abundance of recreational land in SVGL. However, this recreational land is not formally listed as reserve land on the property titles and is therefore not protected from sale or development.

## Policies

- Figure 4 shows recreation areas and open spaces along with the more developed and recognized trails, and establishes three levels of future land use:
  - Recreation Activity Area - to be used for facility development and more intensive recreational activities;
  - Protected Area - to be used for casual recreation activities such as walking, with an effort made to limit development and land disturbance; and
  - Preservation Area - to be protected from disturbance and use except as prescribed below.  
*[NOTE: Regarding Figure 4, Council recognizes that the leased TransAlta land is outside of the SVLG boundary and in the Municipal District of Bighorn. It also recognizes that the land in the legal road system is owned by the Province and intended for transportation-related functions. Nonetheless, because of the importance of these land areas to the community for long term recreational purposes, SVGL's intentions for their future use has been illustrated.]*
- Further development in the Preservation Area on the western side of SVGL, which includes the area north of the visible wetland area because it is thought to be part of the wetlands' underground water source, is to be avoided.
- The exceptions to the above wetland Preservation Area protection policy are:
  - the land proximate to the existing Fairy Trail, because this is a formal and popular pathway through the wetland that concentrates activity, thereby indirectly protecting the rest of the wetland; and







- 
- the existing road and turnaround / parking area north of the wetland because the continued use of this road will also indirectly protect the land adjacent to it.
  - While the lands shown as Protected Area are generally intended to be kept in a natural state for informal recreational purposes such as walking or cross country skiing, management for weed control or to reduce the risk of wildfire is expected and acceptable.
  - Council will undertake a process in the next five years to determine which publicly owned land should be officially designated as reserve land and will then follow the necessary process with Alberta Land Titles to change the property titles in this regard.
  - Owners of land approved for subdivision will be required to provide an amount equal to 10% of the land area as cash in lieu of municipal reserve (rather than as land) at time of subdivision endorsement, pursuant to the Municipal Government Act.
  - The municipality will periodically assess the need for recreational facilities in SVGL and strive to meet those changing demands while balancing the desire to keep property tax rates at moderate levels.
  - Given limited financial resources, the priority will be on maintenance of existing recreational facilities rather than construction of new facilities.
  - The municipality will explore the potential to create a springtime access to the Ghost Reservoir for boats that is designed to accommodate changing water levels.

## Education and Culture

### Background

SVGL is a small municipality with a correspondingly small population. Consequently, it is not able to sustain educational and cultural facilities in the manner of larger communities. Fortunately, it can rely on its proximity to other centres for these facilities and services. For instance, children living in the community are bussed to schools in Cochrane and area. The community provides a paperback book deposit facility within SVGL in conjunction with the Marigold Library System.

### Policies

- Because of its small size, land will not be set aside within SVGL for a future school site.
- There will be no need to provide land for school reserve purposes when subdivisions are approved.
- SVGL will continue to provide space for a Marigold Library System paperback book deposit site within the community hall.

---

# Roads

## Background

Highway 1A and its future realignment may affect the northern part of SVGL. Figure 5 shows the existing and proposed future alignment of Highway 1A as well as the plans for relocation of SVGL's main access to the highway. It also shows the existing emergency access/egress route, and proposed changes for that access/egress and its intersection on Highway 1A. The highway realignment and associated intersection changes were agreed to by Alberta Transportation and SVGL following many years of discussion in the 2000 to 2010 period. In fall 2019, the Province announced it had signed an agreement with the Stoney Nakoda First Nation for the transfer of lands needed for the Highway 1A upgrade. The Province also announced that the project is now in the design phase and will be completed by 2023.

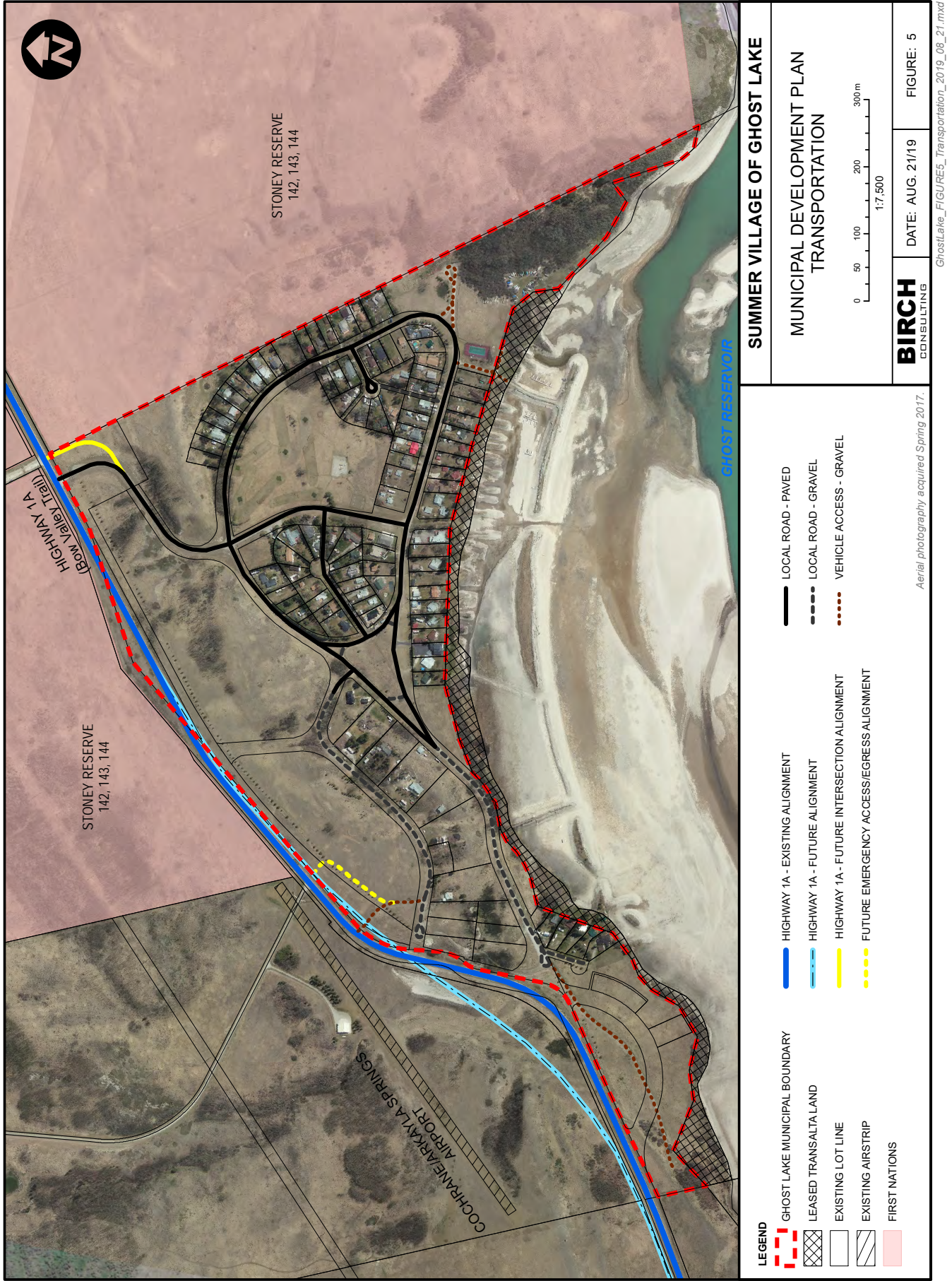
SVGL's internal roads are owned by the province but are under the care and control of the municipality. The roads consist of both paved and gravel components, as well as undeveloped sections visible only on cadastral maps. The existing road system works well for the community and there is no need for significant changes or additions to it. Besides these roads, the community uses gravel roadways that are not in official road plans but instead cross titled land owned by SVGL. These lead to the waste and recycling area, the wetland and water spring at the west end of SVGL, and the boat dock and storage areas. Figure 5 shows the official and unofficial road system in SVGL, along with road surface information.

The carriageway (driving surface) of SVGL's roads are narrow but serve their purpose; no widening is necessary. These are generally low volume roads even with the increased traffic experienced in the summer months. It should be kept in mind, though, that these roads serve a multi-mode transportation function, forming part of the pedestrian and bicycle path system. During the public consultation process undertaken as part of this planning process, this multi-function role was cited as important to residents. It represents a feature one would expect to find in a small, quiet, rural community. Residents also noted the desirability of maintaining slow speed limits, installing speed bumps as necessary; restricting parking on the roads, and improving winter road maintenance.

## Policies

- The straightening and realignment of Highway 1A as proposed by Alberta Transportation and shown conceptually in Figure 5 is supported by SVGL. When Highway 1A is realigned, the municipality takes the position that the new highway intersection serving SVGL should be widened and have acceleration and deceleration lanes added for safety.







- 
- When Highway 1A is realigned, SVGL will work with Alberta Transportation to relocate the emergency access road as shown on Figure 5, and will request replacement of any trees and fencing in this area that are removed for the highway upgrade.
  - The northern boundary of the municipality generally follows the existing Highway 1A right-of-way and if Highway 1A moves northward when it is realigned, SVGL will request that its municipal boundary be moved northward to match the new Highway 1A right-of-way.
  - Correspondingly, if there is an area of vacant land created between Highway 1A and the land currently owned by SVGL when Highway 1A is realigned, SVGL will request that the Alberta Government transfer that land to SVGL for use as undeveloped open space.
  - All roads in SVGL will be considered to be multi-mode transportation routes (sometimes called “complete streets”) and will be designed and managed for safe use by vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles and other non-vehicular traffic.
  - The existing road surfaces will not be upgraded in any significant manner in the foreseeable future (e.g., through additional hard surfacing or widening) but to recognize the investment made in recent road paving they will be well maintained to protect the asphalt’s longevity.
  - Small improvements to the road system will be undertaken as necessary to recognize the “complete street” function, including traffic control measures such as speed bumps or swales, raised crosswalks, road painting, signage, etc.
  - In order to preserve a dark sky environment, no streetlights will be installed in SVGL.

## Surface Water Drainage

### Background

SVGL relies on porous local soils, low development density and a rural road cross-section design (open drainage ditches and culverts) for stormwater management. This has worked well enough that there are no significant surface water drainage problems.

### Policies

- There is no need to undertake a municipal stormwater management plan for SVGL.
- When making decisions on subdivision or development applications, SVGL will follow the principle that surface water runoff should be controlled so that it does not drain onto or adversely affect neighbouring properties.
- Stormwater management related to subdivision and development will need to meet the requirements of the Alberta Government, including preparation of management plans as necessary.

---

# Potable Water and Sanitary Sewage Service

## Background

There is no municipal or common water system in SVGL. Instead, water is obtained from private wells located on individual properties. Some landowners also have water cisterns, with water being trucked in to fill them. Sewage is also handled through private systems. In SVGL these sewage systems tend to be either traditional septic tank and tile field systems or holding (pump-out) tanks. People responding to the survey used to gather information for this Municipal Development Plan were generally satisfied with the water and sewage situation.

## Policies

- SVGL does not see the need for municipal water or sewage systems at this time, and will continue to support the use of private water and sewage systems.
- New water and sewage systems built in the community shall be designed to meet Alberta Government requirements.
- SVGL will undertake efforts to protect the integrity of the groundwater flow and recharge areas that support the community's household wells.

# Waste Management and Recycling

## Background

There is a waste collection site located on the eastern boundary of SVGL, shown on Figure 3 as "Public Utilities". This is where SVGL collects municipal solid waste (garbage) for disposal at a landfill site in Calgary. Paper and cardboard waste materials are also collected for recycling. Both the municipal solid waste and the recyclables are removed by service providers contracted by the municipality. There is also a yard waste collection site in this area where landowners can dump yard waste that is hauled to a regional composting facility.

Waste disposal and recycling were issues that raised concerns in the MDP survey. The main concern was the lack of care used by some people depositing waste, who did so inappropriately or did not use the bins. Also mentioned were the need for more bins, and site improvements such as ground levelling and improved composting. Regarding the latter it should be noted that since the survey was undertaken, SVGL no longer composts yard waste or other organic matter. This change was made in order to comply with Provincial regulations aimed at preventing groundwater contamination.

---

## Policies

- SVGL will continue to provide a solid waste, recyclable materials and yard waste collection and transfer site, monitoring it to ensure that it meets evolving demand and changing waste management options.
- An effort will be made to periodically inform and remind the community about how the solid waste, recyclable materials and yard waste disposal site works, and the practices needed to make it successful.

## Agricultural Land Use

### Background

Most of the land outside SVGL is used for agricultural purposes, notably grazing. This is a longstanding activity in the area, which was used by the McDougall family in the late 1800s because the south-facing slopes and chinook winds make it attractive for grazing despite the area's poor soils and low precipitation levels. Agricultural activities are protected under Alberta's Agricultural Operation Practises Act provided normal farm practices are being followed. Additionally, the Municipal Government Act requirements for MDPs state that they must contain policies respecting the protection of agricultural operations.

### Policies

- SVGL supports continuation of the farming activities adjacent to its boundaries as long as those agricultural operations are undertaken in accordance with normal farm practices.

## Other Infrastructure and Services

### Background

The MDP survey indicated that fire service is a concern of some people who are looking for a better firefighting response plan as well as a firefighting water supply. SVGL recognizes these concerns and while it does not provide its own volunteer or professional fire service, it strives to have agreements with other municipalities in order to provide an appropriate level of fire response.

The Municipal Government Act requires MDPs to provide guidance on the type and location of land uses adjacent to sour gas facilities, as set out earlier in this document. SVGL is in an area with proven sour gas reserves and there is an active sour gas well owned by Shell Canada situated approximately 0.9 km to the west. However, SVGL is not within Shell's



---

Emergency Protection Zone for that well and the pipeline connecting the well to Shell's collection system extends west of the well, not towards SVGL. Hence that sour gas well and its supporting infrastructure are not development constraints. Furthermore, there are no abandoned oil or gas wells within SVGL, the closest one being located about 2.0 km to the northwest.

Both in the 2012 Sustainability Plan and in the MDP survey, there was sentiment towards increasing what can be termed 'green' initiatives within the community. Among other possibilities, there is Provincial and Federal government funding available to support such initiatives.

## Policies

- Options for providing appropriate levels of fire response within the community through agreements with other municipalities will be pursued by SVGL rather than establishment of a municipal fire response team.
- SVGL will aim to establish a year-round source of firefighting water supply within the next five years.
- Pursuant to the Municipal Government Act's Subdivision and Development Regulations, applicants for subdivisions and for development permits for permanent dwellings or public facilities must submit information to SVGL, current to the time of the applications, regarding any sour gas well, pipeline or other facility located within 1.5 km of the parcel of land proposed for subdivision or development.
- Similarly, applicants for subdivisions and for development permits for buildings must provide information to SVGL confirming the absence (or presence) of any abandoned oil or gas well on the subject property.
- All applications for subdivision and for development permits for permanent dwellings or public facilities proposed within 1.5 km of a sour gas well, pipeline or other facility will be referred to the Alberta Energy Regulator unless the Alberta Energy Regulator establishes a lesser distance.
- SVGL's subdivision authority and development authority will take the recommendations of the Alberta Energy Regulator into account when making their decision on applications for subdivision and development.
- SVGL will investigate the potential to use solar power to generate electricity for the community hall and other municipal facilities, using programs available through the Municipal Climate Change Action Centre (MCCAC) or other means.

---

# Community Development

## Background

As indicated above, there is no desire to have SVGL expand either its development footprint or its population density. This means that growth and development issues will not be the main focus of Council and its administration. Instead, the day-to-day operation and success of the existing community will be paramount.

In this context, Council and its administration will face different and competing facility and service demands. The survey undertaken as part of the MDP preparation process indicated a wide range of opinion on some topics. The census data illustrated a broad spectrum of age groups that must be served, and permanent and part-time residents are likely to have different expectations for municipal services. Moreover, social media makes it easy for people to group into camps of similar opinion. This suggests that for SVGL to obtain some of its goals, it will need to spend time and energy on community building. The need for this was suggested by some survey respondents who pointed out the desirability of holding more community events and attracting more volunteers. Fortunately, there is a long history of community strength and volunteer participation in SVGL. Additionally, a community association has recently been formed.

## Policies

- Given the diverse nature of the community, SVGL will strive to emphasize common interests and build community.
- In accordance with the above, an on-going process will be undertaken to inform landowners, residents and guests about the community's norms, vision and goals.
- Because the Sustainability Plan is still seen as relevant in providing policy direction for the community, Council and administration will use it as part of the annual strategic planning and budget preparation process.
- Council will assess the feasibility of establishing a committee to help review and report on the progress achieved on the Sustainability Plan.
- A regular survey (taken approximately every four years to fit in with the municipal election cycle) of landowners and residents will be undertaken to discern issues of concern and community sentiment in order to track and reinforce areas of commonality, and to better target service levels.
- SVGL will encourage a variety of community events and activities throughout the year in order to create opportunities for people to come together.
- In this regard, SVGL recognizes the annual regatta as a keystone community event and will continue to support it.

- 
- SVGL will support the efforts of the newly formed community association and similar community-centred organizations in order to build and maintain a strong, cohesive and connected community.
  - SVGL will support volunteerism in the community through its website, social media and other communications, through efforts to show the importance of volunteerism to the community's success, through advertisement of volunteer opportunities, and through increased volunteer recognition.

## Coordination with Other Jurisdictions

### Background

The Summer Village shares its eastern boundary with the Stoney Nakoda First Nation. As can be seen from Figure 1, the local topographic features do not reflect the actual location of that boundary. The Stoney Nakoda First Nation also holds much of the land north of SVGL, across Highway 1A. This is all Reserve land, not freehold land owned by the First Nation, and thus involves the Government of Canada. The First Nation and SVGL also have a common interest in TransAlta's operation of the Ghost Reservoir. The Stoney First Nation was consulted as part of the MDP preparation process.

SVGL shares the rest of its boundary with the Municipal District (MD) of Bighorn but the two municipalities currently share little in the way of services. This is in part to do with SVGL's location next to Highway 1A rather than a MD of Bighorn road, SVGL's small population, its proximity to Cochrane and Calgary, and its desire to keep expenditures at low levels. SVGL has an agreement with MD to provide fire service and has also entered into an Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework. A mutual aid agreement involving many municipalities in the region would provide support in the event of a disaster.

The land leased by SVGL from TransAlta (as shown in Figure 3) is in the Municipal District of Bighorn. This means that the MD of Bighorn is responsible for providing services to this area and regulating development. The MD was contacted during preparation of this Municipal Development Plan and the input received is reflected in the policies below.

While TransAlta Corporation is not a government jurisdiction, it is an important entity for planning in SVGL on two counts. First is the significance of the land leased by TransAlta to SVGL because this provides the community with access to the Ghost Reservoir. Second is the water level of the Ghost Reservoir, which changes substantially during the spring and early summer months due to the role the Reservoir plays in flood and drought management. This role has become more recognized since the flooding that occurred downstream of SVGL in 2013.



---

Of further interest regarding the Ghost Reservoir is a study that was recently undertaken to assess the best ways to use the existing dam to decrease the impact of downstream Bow River flooding (Bow River Working Group, 2017). One of the options put forward would effectively raise the dam height to increase the size of the Ghost Reservoir and could flood portions of SVGL and other low lying land adjacent to the Reservoir. Obviously, this is not an option that would be supported by SVGL.

## Policies

- Council of the Summer Village of Ghost Lake will make an effort to meet at least annually with the Chiefs or other representatives of the Stoney Nakoda First Nation in order to maintain an on-going relationship and to discuss issues of mutual concern, providing SVGL does not incur any significant costs when undertaking such engagement.
- In accordance with the recently revised Municipal Government Act, SVGL and the Municipal District of Bighorn will prepare an Intermunicipal Development Plan and an Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework in the near term future.
- Amongst other issues, the Intermunicipal Development Plan and the Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework will explore possibilities for sharing services and regulation of development on the lands SVGL leases from TransAlta.
- In the interim, before the Intermunicipal Development Plan and the Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework are prepared, the two municipalities do not see any issues of immediate concern because neither municipality has as interest in growth or development in this shared planning area.
- SVGL will refer all applications for subdivision it receives, as well as any amendments being contemplated to statutory planning documents or to the Summer Village of Ghost Lake's Land Use Bylaw, to the Municipal District of Bighorn and the Stoney Nakoda First Nation for comment prior to making a decision.
- SVGL expects the same referral courtesy set out in the above policy from the MD of Bighorn regarding subdivision applications and for statutory plan or land use bylaw amendments if such applications or amendments apply to land in the MD of Bighorn that is within 1.6 km of the SVGL municipal boundary.
- SVGL will refer any development permit applications for commercial or other non-residential developments proposed within SVGL to the MD for comment, and expects to receive referrals from the MD of Bighorn on non-residential development permit applications if they are proposed within 1.6 km of the SVGL municipal boundary.
- SVGL will not refer any development permit applications for residential, home occupation or similar uses proposed within SVGL to the MD of Bighorn, and does not expect to receive referrals for such development permit applications from the MD.

- 
- The northern boundary of SVGL generally follows the existing Highway 1A right-of-way and if Highway 1A is moved northward when it is realigned, SVGL will request that the Province adjust this municipal boundary to match the new Highway 1A right-of-way.
  - SVGL will work to preserve an on-going, mutually beneficial relationship with TransAlta Corporation.
  - SVGL will seek to renew the lease with TransAlta Generation Partnership for land along the Ghost Reservoir on a continuing basis, and will abide by the conditions of that lease.
  - Because of the importance of the water level in the Ghost Reservoir to the community, SVGL will continue to advocate to be closely involved with the Alberta Government when discussions are underway to manage that water level for flood and drought risk reduction purposes.
  - In regard to studies and proposals that may result in an effective heightening of the Ghost Dam and its ability to hold back water at a higher level in the Ghost Reservoir, SVGL will take the position that it is opposed to any actions that would adversely impact SVGL or its access to the Reservoir through the TransAlta leased lands.

## Implementation and Review

Implementation of the SVLG Municipal Development Plan will typically occur in five ways:

- through amendments of the Land Use Bylaw as necessary to bring the Land Use Bylaw into conformity with the MDP (the Land Use Bylaw is the day-to-day regulatory tool used by SVGL to make subdivision and development decisions);
- through use of the MDP as a policy guide when SVGL's various committees and boards make decisions on subdivision and development permit applications;
- through utilization of the MDP's policy direction when SVGL Council and administration are making capital and operating decisions as part of the annual budgetary process;
- through use of the MDP's policy direction when dealing with requests for action or support by community members, groups and associations; and
- when making decisions on matters involving adjacent jurisdictions.

Of course, the policies established in this document to help guide the community into the future will gradually become outdated. SVGL will continue to evolve and the interests of its community members will change. The MDP will also become outdated as the policies are implemented and some of them are no longer needed. Consequently, SVGL Council will review this document on a regular basis to evaluate its on-going applicability. Small changes can easily be made through the bylaw amendment process as necessary. Periodically, every five to ten years, SVGL will undertake a larger, more comprehensive review of the Summer Village of Ghost Lake Municipal Development Plan to formally update the entire document.

---

## References

Alberta Energy Regulator. (2019). *OneStop Public Map Viewer*. Retrieved from <https://extmapviewer.aer.ca/Onestop/Public/index.html>

Birch Consulting. (2018). *Public Input - MDP Survey Results, Summer Village of Ghost Lake - August/September 2018*. Canmore, AB: Birch Consulting.

Bow River Working Group. (2017). *Bow River Watershed Management Project: Advice to Government on Water Management in the Bow River*. Edmonton, AB: Alberta Environment and Parks.

Government of Alberta. (As amended to December 17, 2014). *Agricultural Operation Practises Act, Revised Statutes of Alberta 2000, Chapter A-7*. Edmonton, AB: Alberta's Queen's Printer.

Government of Alberta. (As amended to Alberta Regulation 179/2016). *Highways Development and Protection Act, Highways Development and Protection Regulation, Alberta Regulation 326/2009*. Edmonton, AB: Alberta's Queen's Printer.

Government of Alberta. (As amended to January 1, 2020). *Municipal Government Act, Revised Statutes of Alberta 2000, Chapter M-26*. Edmonton, AB: Alberta's Queen's Printer.

Government of Alberta. (As amended to Alberta Regulation 188/2017). *Municipal Government Act, Subdivision and Development Regulation, Alberta Regulation 43/2002*. Edmonton, AB: Alberta's Queen's Printer.

Statistics Canada. (2019). *Data Products, Census Profile, 2016 Census Ghost Lake, Summer village [Census subdivision], Alberta and Alberta [Province]*. Retrieved from <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CSD&Code1=4815027&Geo2=PR&Code2=48&Data=Count&SearchText=alberta&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=All&TABID=1>

Summer Village of Ghost Lake. (2012). *Summer Village of Ghost Lake Sustainability Plan*. Ghost Lake, AB: Summer Village of Ghost Lake.

Summer Village of Ghost Lake and TransAlta Generation Partnership. (June, 2014). *Recreational Lease*. Calgary, AB: TransAlta Corporation.



---

# Acknowledgements

## Steering Committee

Peter Attalla, Chairperson  
Debby Brotzell  
Ed Gnenz  
Karen Laustsen  
Bob Miller  
John Walsh, Mayor

## Administration

Sherri Bureyko, Chief Administrative Officer

## Planning Consultant

Birch Consulting - Greg Birch, RPP, MCIP

## Graphics

Rick Roberge