

SCHEDULE 'A'



Municipal Development Plan

Bylaw# 08-2025



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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Municipal Development Plan

The Municipal Development Plan provides a framework for decision-making regarding land use in Thorhild County (the County). It establishes the overall vision, objectives, and goals for future land use and development within the County and is closely aligned with the community's economic development goals and aspirations.

1.2 Interpretation

In the Municipal Development Plan, certain terms are used to convey the level of obligation or discretion associated with policy directives. The meaning of these terms is essential for correctly implementing policies and ensuring adherence.

Council - Thorhild County Council.

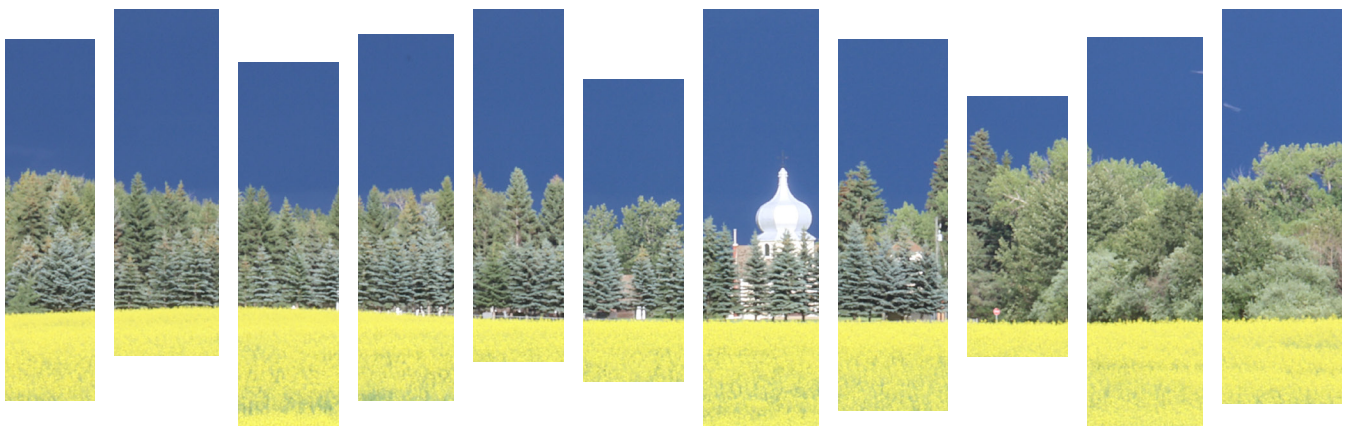
Thorhild County or the County - A municipal corporation.

Shall, Must or Will - Directive terms that indicate the actions outlined are mandatory and apply to all situations.

Should or May - A directive term that indicates a preferred outcome or course of action but one that is not mandatory.

Prime Agricultural Lands are identified as Classes 1, 2 and 3 and are considered those on Appendix B showing no significant limitations, moderate limitations, or moderately severe limitations.

Each term is carefully chosen to ensure clarity and precision in policy language, supporting effective governance and development outcomes aligned with the Municipal Development Plan's objectives.



1.3 The County's Vision

The County's Vision serves as a guiding principle for the development and implementation of this Plan:

"To achieve excellence in leadership, growth, communication, and services to the ratepayers and residents of Thorhild County in a fair, prudent, and equitable manner."

1.4 Plan Area

Thorhild County, a rural municipality in north-central Alberta, is known for its strong agricultural roots, scenic landscapes, and welcoming communities.

Covering approximately 2,000 square kilometers, the County supports diverse land uses, including agricultural, energy development, and small-scale industrial operations. Its strategic location along important transportation routes foster economic opportunities while preserving the rural charm that defines the region.

The population of Thorhild County resides in various hamlets, farms, and rural residential areas, with the Hamlet of Thorhild serving as the primary service centre. Other notable communities, such as Abee, Egremont, Long Lake, Newbrook, Opal, and Radway, contribute to the County's distinct character. Proximity to major urban centers like Edmonton and Fort McMurray enhances its appeal to those seeking a rural lifestyle within reach of city amenities.

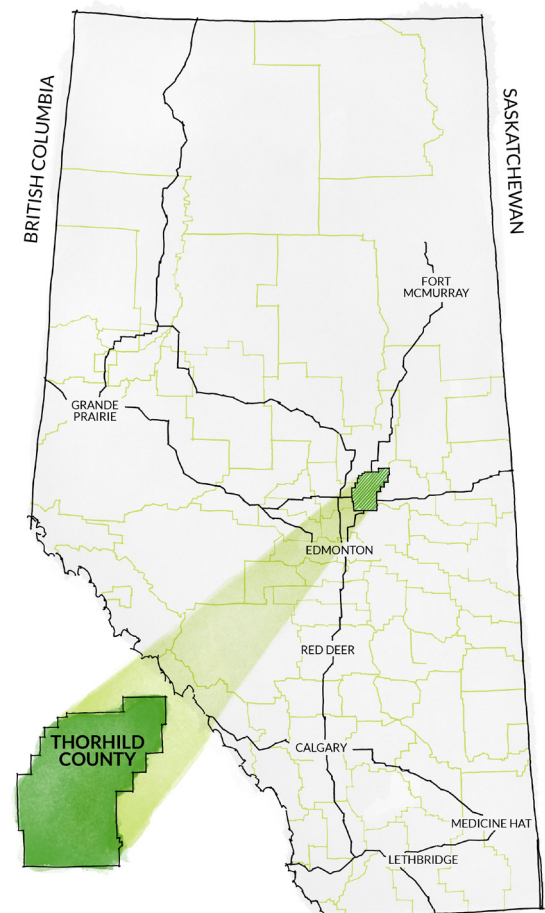
Thorhild County is bordered by several municipalities enhancing its regional significance and fostering strong relationships in agriculture, transportation, and natural resource industries.

Adjacent municipalities include:

- Sturgeon County to the south
- Athabasca County to the north
- Smoky Lake County to the east
- Lamont County to the southeast
- Westlock County to the west

Appendix B: Supplementary Maps includes a Regional Location Map identifying the locations of neighboring municipalities.

Additionally, the County's proximity to Alberta's Industrial Heartland—one of Canada's largest petrochemical processing regions—offers significant economic potential through industry partnerships, employment opportunities, and economic diversification.



Thorhild County is well-connected by key transportation routes that support local and regional movement. Major highways include:

- Highway 63, a vital north-south corridor linking Edmonton to Fort McMurray and the oil sands, passing through the County and supporting both local and industrial traffic.
- Highway 18, an important east-west route connecting many centres in central Alberta west of the County.
- Highway 28, a key transportation link running east to west across the County, extending to the Saskatchewan border, and serving as a major route for both residents and industries.

These routes facilitate the movement of agricultural products, industrial goods, and residents, driving economic activity across the region.

Agriculture is the foundation of Thorhild County's economy, characterized by extensive grain farming, livestock operations, and diversified agricultural enterprises. The County's natural resources, including those for oil and gas production and sand and gravel extraction, support key industry sectors. Thorhild County's natural beauty, highlighted by parks and recreational areas such as Long Lake Provincial Park and the County-operated Halfmoon Lake Park, offers abundant outdoor activities, fostering a strong connection to the environment for both residents and visitors.

Thorhild County's Municipal Development Plan emphasizes sustainable growth while preserving the rural lifestyle cherished by its residents. Key priorities include infrastructure development, sustainable land use, and environmental stewardship. By balancing growth with the protection of its rural character, the County aims to ensure a high quality of life for current and future generations. Continued public engagement and collaboration with regional partners remain integral to achieving these goals.

1.5 Municipal Development Plan Review Process & Timeline

The horizon for this Plan spans 25 years, serving as a flexible guide for growth and development rather than a rigid blueprint. While the Municipal Development Plan is designed to adapt to emerging trends and changing conditions, it should be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect the community's evolution. Any amendments must align with the Plan's overarching vision and direction.

To prepare this Plan, all existing statutory plans and non-statutory documents were reviewed to ensure alignment with current policies and regulations. Stakeholder consultation was a principal component in shaping the vision and direction of the project. This process provided the public and key stakeholders with opportunities to identify challenges, explore opportunities, and define future development goals for the area. Input was gathered from five key stakeholder groups:

- Members of the Public
- Adjacent Municipalities
- Utility/Pipeline Companies
- Thorhild County Council
- Municipal Staff of Thorhild County

1.6 Legislative Requirements

The Municipal Development Plan is a statutory plan prepared and adopted by bylaw in accordance with Section 632 of the Municipal Government Act. As outlined in the Municipal Government Act, a Municipal Development Plan

1.6.1 must address:

- a. the future land use within the municipality,
- b. the manner of and the proposals for future development in the municipality,
- c. 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,
- d. the provision of the required transportation systems either generally or specifically within the municipality and in relation to adjacent municipalities,
- e. the provision of municipal services and facilities either generally or specifically,
- f. 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,
- g. 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, and
- h. contain policies respecting the protection of agricultural operations.

1.6.2 may address:

- a. proposals for the financing and programming of municipal infrastructure,
- b. the co-ordination of municipal programs relating to the physical, social and economic development of the municipality,
- c. environmental matters within the municipality,
- d. the financial resources of the municipality,
- e. the economic development of the municipality,
- f. any other matter relating to the physical, social or
- g. economic development of the municipality, 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, and
- h. may contain policies respecting the provision of conservation reserve.

The Municipal Development Plan is designed to align with other relevant legislation from the Province of Alberta. It is intended that the County will adhere to the policies set out in this Plan.

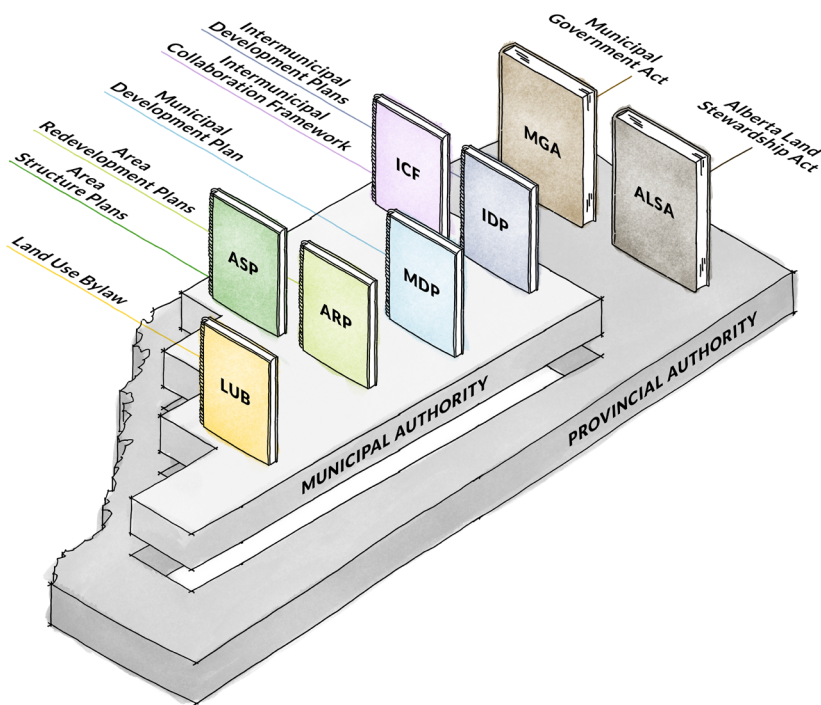


FIGURE 1.

1.7 Planning Context

Under the Municipal Government Act, a Municipal Development Plan is classified as a statutory document. Part 17 of the Municipal Government Act establishes the overarching planning and development framework for the Province of Alberta, defining the roles and responsibilities of municipal planning authorities. Thorhild County has a range of strategic and planning documents that provide guidance at varying levels of detail. The Municipal Development Plan aligns with these documents and operates within the broader planning framework to achieve its goals and objectives while supporting the County’s overall Vision.

Hierarchy of Planning Documents

Figure 1 illustrates the hierarchy of planning documents guiding development in Thorhild County.

Municipal Government Act

The Municipal Government Act provides the overall purpose and powers of municipalities in Alberta. Part 17 of the Municipal Government Act outlines roles and responsibilities related to planning and development. This document has been prepared in accordance with Section 632 of the Municipal Government Act.

Alberta Land Stewardship Act

The Alberta Land Stewardship Act empowers the Provincial Cabinet to establish planning regions and adopt statutory plans for each region. Alberta is divided into seven planning regions corresponding to natural watersheds. Thorhild County is located within the North Saskatchewan Region as defined by the Alberta Land Stewardship Act. The purpose of Alberta Land Stewardship Act is to implement the Land Use Framework by harmonizing land use policies across the province.

Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework

An Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework is an agreement between neighboring municipalities to collaborate on services and development to promote regional cooperation. They typically outline how municipalities will work together regarding shared services, cost-sharing arrangements, and development planning to ensure coordinated and sustainable growth across boundaries.

Intermunicipal Development Plan

An Intermunicipal Development Plan is a mutually agreed-upon framework between two adjoining municipalities, adopted by both councils. It fosters coordination of land use planning, economic development, servicing, and transportation needs in areas along municipal boundaries.

Municipal Development Plan

The Municipal Development Plan provides broad policy direction for land use planning within the County. The policies in the Municipal Development Plan are intended to work in tandem with the Land Use Bylaw; however, in cases of conflict, the Municipal Development Plan takes precedence.

Area Structure Plan / Area Redevelopment Plan

Area Structure Plans are statutory plans under the Municipal Government Act that guide future land use, transportation, utilities, and the sequence of development in new communities. Area Redevelopment Plans focus on the revitalization and redevelopment of established areas.

Land Use Bylaw

Every municipality must pass a Land Use Bylaw. A Land Use Bylaw may prohibit or regulate and control the use and development of land and buildings in a municipality, (source: Municipal Government Act).

Other planning documents include:

General Municipal Servicing Standards

General Municipal Servicing Standards are non-statutory documents that set minimum standards for municipal improvements, including transportation, water, sanitary systems, stormwater, drainage, park spaces, and utilities.

Matters Related to Subdivision & Development Regulation

Matters Related to Subdivision and Development Regulation means the Regulation enacted under the Municipal Government Act that establishes the baseline process, legislation, and regulations regarding subdivision and development within Alberta.

Outline Plan / Concept Plan

Outline Plans and Concept Plans offer detailed planning frameworks for areas within an Area Structure Plan. They conform to the principles and concepts outlined in the Area Structure Plan.

1.8 Strategic Priorities

a. Promote Sustainable Growth

Balance economic development with environmental protection, rural lifestyle preservation, and efficient land use by encouraging growth near existing infrastructure and compatible land uses.

b. Enhance Economic Development

Strengthening the County's economic capacity by supporting new and existing economic assets, including agriculture, resource-based industries, commercial enterprises, and the industrial sector.

c. Preserving Agricultural Industries

Support and strengthen Thorhild County's agricultural industries by prioritizing the protection of agricultural land through responsible development strategies.

d. Improve Infrastructure & Transportation Options

Invest in high-quality, efficient infrastructure to support the needs of residents and businesses. Prioritize maintaining safe and reliable transportation routes across the County. Facilitate access to essential services, such as utilities and roadways, where feasible.

e. Encourage Innovation & Environmental Responsibility

Support environmental responsibility by innovative infrastructure and responsible land use planning.



2.0 Agricultural Area

2.1 Goal

To prioritize agriculture as the primary land use while supporting a range of complementary uses.

2.2 Objectives

- a. Protect and preserve productive agricultural land by minimizing fragmentation and directing non-agricultural development to less impactful areas.
- b. Encourage complementary uses and responsible development that align with agricultural operations while safeguarding environmental sustainability.

2.3 Policies

2.3.1 All developments in the Agricultural Area should conform to the Municipal Development Plan policy areas as outlined in Appendix A: Future Land Use Map:

- a. Extensive agriculture is recognized as the predominant land use.
- b. Commercial and industrial uses should be concentrated along arterial or collector roadways and provincial highways.
- c. Residential and institutional uses should primarily be directed to the Hamlets of Abee, Egremont, Long Lake, Newbrook, Opal, Radway, and Thorhild, where infrastructure can support growth. In areas where hamlet expansion is limited, subdivisions throughout the County may be considered to address public interest and accommodate development needs.

2.3.2 The County will utilize the Canada Land Inventory - Agricultural Capability Map, found in Appendix B: Supplementary Maps, to evaluate land suitability for agricultural use. This approach ensures that land use decisions prioritize the protection of high-quality agricultural lands and support sustainable practices.

2.3.3 Residential and Farmstead Subdivision Sizes:

- a. Vacant country residential subdivisions and farmstead separations are limited to one parcel and maximum of 4.04 hectares (10.0 acres) per half quarter section.
- b. Larger parcels may be allowed if natural features (e.g., tree stands, creeks) or specific site conditions justify it, as long as they meet Provincial sewage regulations. A Real Property Report or Building Site Certificate is required for parcels over 4.04 hectares (10.0 acres).

2.3.4 Parcel Limits per Quarter Section:

- a. Up to four (4) parcels per quarter section are permitted, including both agricultural and country residential parcels.
- b. A maximum of two (2) country residential parcels (vacant or farmstead separations) is allowed per quarter section.
- c. Further subdivision of a quarter section for the purpose of establishing small agricultural parcel(s) within the agricultural district may be considered subject to the adoption of an outline plan or area structure plan and a Land Use Bylaw amendment.

2.3.5 Subdivision Size Requirements:

- a. Farmstead separations shall be no greater than 4.04 hectares (10 acres) unless otherwise specified by the subdivision authority.
- b. Extensive agriculture subdivisions must be a minimum of 28.33 hectares (70 acres) unless otherwise determined by the subdivision authority.

2.3.6 Additional parcels may be considered if the land is naturally or artificially fragmented (e.g., by roads, rivers, or railroads) or if a Land Use Bylaw amendment is approved.

2.3.7 Non-agricultural uses considered in the area designated as Rural include:

- a. Subdivision of land for residential purposes.
- b. Industrial and commercial development that is secondary or incidental to the primary agricultural operation.
- c. Resource extraction industries, such as oil and gas facilities, sand and gravel operations, and other provincially regulated activities.
- d. Discretionary uses as determined by County bylaws.

2.3.8 Development proposals involving Confined Feeding Operations – means fenced or enclosed land or buildings where livestock are confined for the purpose of growing, sustaining, finishing or breeding by means other than grazing and any other building or structure directly related to that purpose but does not include residences, livestock seasonal feeding and bedding sites, equestrian stables, auction markets, race tracks or exhibition grounds. Confined Feeding Operations must comply with the minimum setback distances mandated by the Natural Resources Conservation Board.

Natural Resources Conservation Board means an established quasi-judicial tribunal responsible for reviewing major non-energy natural resource projects that require environmental impact assessments. The Board mandate is to determine whether such projects are in the public interest considering social, economic, and environmental factors as defined in the Natural Resources Conservation Board Act, to ensure environmental protection and reduce impacts on surrounding land uses.

3.0 Residential Area

3.1 Goal

Provide opportunities for rural residential living that reflect local demand.

3.2 Objectives

- a. Encourage rural residential development in locations that minimize impact on agricultural land and align with environmental protection priorities.
- b. Support residential growth within existing hamlet communities to enhance services, infrastructure efficiency, and community vitality while maintaining the rural character of the County.

3.3 Policies

- 3.3.1 Major multi-parcel residential developments should conform to the Municipal Development Plan policy areas as outlined in Appendix A: Future Land Use Map.
- 3.3.2 When considering an amendment to the Land Use Bylaw to accommodate additional residential development, Council shall consider the following criteria:
 - a. Suitability of the site to accommodate the proposed use.
 - b. Soils, topography, and site characteristics.
 - c. Availability and adequacy of potable water supply.
 - d. Proposed method of sewage disposal.
 - e. Access to the proposed parcels, as deemed satisfactory by the approving authority.
 - f. Adequacy of road networks in the area and the impact of additional traffic volumes on the County.
 - g. Potential for conflicts with adjacent land uses.
 - h. Conformity to the Matters Related to Subdivision and Development Regulation.
- 3.3.3 The County will evaluate proposed residential developments for compatibility with nearby land uses, assess drainage patterns and their potential impacts on adjacent lands.
- 3.3.4 In approving multi-parcel residential acreages on adjacent quarter sections, the County will consider the nature and design of existing acreages to minimize conflicts.
- 3.3.5 The subdivision density will be determined based on the proposed sewage disposal methods and must comply with all applicable provincial regulations.

4.0 Hamlet Area

4.1 Goal

To support sustainable growth in the County's hamlets.

4.2 Objectives

- a. Support infill, redevelopment, and efficient use of land and infrastructure, while preserving their rural character and ensuring compatibility with surrounding land uses.
- b. Encourage diverse housing options, employment opportunities, amenities, and services to meet residents' needs, maintaining a high quality of life and preserving the local identity and character.

4.3 Policies

- 4.3.1 All hamlet development shall occur within the boundaries identified on Appendix A: Future Land Use Map.
- 4.3.2 The County may support the expansion of hamlet boundaries under suitable conditions, provided the proposed expansion aligns with provincial land use policies and includes:
 - a. Proposed or existing developments are adjacent to the hamlet boundary.
 - b. Insufficient infill capacity exists to meet market demands.
 - c. Employment or economic growth necessitates additional lands.
 - d. Expansion provides significant community benefits.
 - e. Orderly and sequential development is ensured.
 - f. Viable infrastructure and servicing solutions are available for the additional lands.
- 4.3.3 The communities of Abee, Egremont, Long Lake, Newbrook, Opal, Radway, and Thorhild are designated as Hamlets, with their Future Land Uses and municipal infrastructure depicted in the Future Land Use maps located in Appendix A: Municipal Development Plan Maps.

- 4.3.4 Development within hamlets is encouraged to support a diverse range of land uses, including:
- Residential uses.
 - Local commercial retail.
 - Institutional and community uses such as schools, community halls, cemeteries, and religious assemblies.
 - Recreational and cultural uses.
 - Light industrial uses compatible with adjacent land uses.
 - Discretionary uses as determined by County bylaws.
- 4.3.5 Further to 4.3.4 above, the Hamlet of Long Lake may be restricted due to its topography; however, provides a unique role as a seasonal and recreational community while supporting its permanent residents. Development should prioritize:
- Environmental Stewardship: All development must protect the integrity of Long Lake’s watershed, ensuring minimal impact on water quality and natural ecosystems.
 - Community-Oriented Services: Development of commercial, institutional services directly serving the needs of residents and visitors without compromising the recreational and residential focus of the Hamlet.
 - Controlled Growth: Development should align with the principles of low-impact design, with careful consideration of water, sewage, and road infrastructure capacities.
- 4.3.6 The County supports the development of public parks and pathways within hamlets and promotes the use of existing land by encouraging infill and redevelopment of vacant or underutilized lots.



5.0 Commercial Area

5.1 Goal

To accommodate commercial facilities in suitable locations.

5.2 Objectives

- a. Strategically locate and design commercial developments to maximize efficiency and minimize costs for municipal infrastructure and services.
- b. Ensure commercial developments are designed to harmonize with adjacent land uses and contribute to a balanced, cohesive community.

5.3 Policies

- 5.3.1 All developments in the Commercial Area should conform to the Municipal Development Plan policy areas as indicated in Appendix A: Future Land Use Map and may be located within designated hamlet limits.
- 5.3.2 When considering an amendment to the Land Use Bylaw to accommodate additional commercial development, Council shall consider the following criteria:
 - a. The development is not located on prime agricultural lands, as identified in the Canada Land Inventory Agricultural Capability Map, found in Appendix B: Supplementary Maps.
 - b. The development is situated in a location deemed suitable for commercial use, considering accessibility, infrastructure, and surrounding land uses.
 - c. The site is compatible with adjacent land uses.
 - d. Natural features of the County are not negatively impacted by changes of surface runoff.
 - e. Potable water and private sewage disposal systems are demonstrated to be consistent with Provincial legislation and regulations.
 - f. The development aligns with the County's economic development goals.
 - g. Adequate access to emergency services is available or can be provided.
 - h. Any required traffic impact assessments have been conducted to address additional traffic volumes.

6.0 Industrial Area

6.1 Goal

To support the diversification of the County's economic base by encouraging a variety of industrial developments.

6.2 Objectives

- a. Encourage industrial projects to locate in areas with access to municipal services and near hamlets that can support their operations with local services.
- b. Promote industrial growth in locations that align with operational needs while minimizing impacts on the surrounding environment and communities.

6.3 Policies

- 6.3.1 All developments in the Industrial Area should conform to the Municipal Development Plan policy areas as indicated in Appendix A: Future Land Use Map and may be located within designated hamlet limits.
- 6.3.2 When considering an amendment to the Land Use Bylaw to accommodate additional industrial development, Council shall consider the following criteria:
 - a. The development is not located on prime agricultural lands, as identified in the Canada Land Inventory Agricultural Capability Map, found in Appendix B: Supplementary Maps.
 - b. The development is located along or near a major transportation route or near or abutting a hamlet.
 - c. The site is compatible with adjacent land uses.
 - d. Natural features of the County are not negatively impacted by change of surface runoff.
 - e. Potable water and private sewage disposal systems are demonstrated to be consistent with Provincial legislation and regulations.
 - f. The development aligns with the County's economic development goals.
 - g. Adequate access to emergency services is available or can be provided.
 - h. Any required traffic impact assessments have been conducted to address additional traffic volumes.

7.0 Recreation & Institutional Areas

7.1 Goal

To encourage Recreational and Institutional developments.

7.2 Objectives

- a. To encourage diverse recreational opportunities to enrich community engagement and wellness.
- b. To support the ongoing evolution and improvement of institutional facilities, thereby catering to the broad educational, cultural, and civic needs of the community.

7.3 Recreation & Tourism

7.3.1 Encouraging Recreation and Open Space Development

The County encourages the enjoyment of its environmental assets through resort, tourism, and recreation development that is sensitive to the surrounding environment. Recreational development should benefit residents of all ages and abilities and may be located near transportation networks.

7.3.2 Coordination with Adjacent Provincial Areas

The County will coordinate recreation development planning with adjacent provincial recreation or protected areas to ensure land use compatibility, protect environmental areas, preserve viewpoints, and minimize impacts from traffic, noise, and other nuisances.

7.3.3 Tourism

- a. The County supports agri-tourism and responsible eco-tourism as a means to sustain agricultural operations, promote agricultural products, preserve natural areas, encourage economic diversification, and showcase the rural lifestyle.
- b. The County will encourage the development and utilization of its cultural, historic, and recreational resources to promote tourism. This includes supporting initiatives that highlight local heritage and natural assets to attract visitors.
- c. To enhance awareness and visitation, the County will actively promote existing tourism destinations within its boundaries. This may involve collaboration with tourism groups, neighboring municipalities, and regional tourism zones to create and strengthen tourism linkages with surrounding communities.
- d. The County supports private developers in creating or improving tourism attractions.

7.3.4 Reclaimed Resource Extraction Areas

Reclaimed natural resource extraction areas should be assessed for potential future recreational, tourism, and resort uses. Refer to the Sand and Gravel Deposits Map in Appendix B: Supplementary Maps to view these areas.

7.3.5 Regional Partnerships

The County supports regional partnerships and cost-sharing arrangements to enhance recreational opportunities for its residents.

7.3.6 Parks & Open Space

The County supports the development of low-impact recreational activities, including community playgrounds, interpretive trails, parks, and community gardens, within its hamlets and multi-parcel subdivisions. New parks and open spaces should be designed as multi-use areas that are accessible to people of all abilities whenever possible.

7.3.7 Trail Systems

- a. The County will collaborate with regional stakeholders, neighboring municipalities, and adjacent provincially designated areas to develop an integrated regional trail system, where appropriate.
- b. The County supports the development of trail systems on existing Municipal Reserve and Environmental Reserve parcels to enhance public access to natural and recreational areas. Trails on Environmental Reserve lands shall be limited to protect environmentally sensitive areas and be restricted to non-motorized uses.
- c. Multi-purpose trails should be incorporated into new multi-parcel subdivisions and may be proposed within Municipal Reserve parcels and along subdivision road rights-of-way. They should be designed to provide access for people of all abilities and aim to support connectivity between adjacent subdivisions and hamlets where feasible.



7.4 Municipally Owned Recreation

- a. The County strives to maintain its Municipally Owned Recreation to ensure it remains in a condition that is safe and functional.
- b. The County should carry out periodic assessments of the Municipally Owned Recreation to assess current state and future needs.

7.5 Institutional

7.5.1 Schools

- a. The County will collaborate with the applicable school divisions to determine the locations, sizes, and configurations of future school sites, allocating school reserves during subdivision in accordance with identified needs, mutual agreements and joint use planning agreements as outlined in the Municipal Government Act.
- b. The shared use of school sites is encouraged to support community and recreational programs, continuing and distance education, as well as training and entrepreneurship initiatives.

7.5.2 Municipal Reserve

- a. When Municipal Reserve lands are acquired at subdivision, the County may dedicate land for public use, require cash-in-lieu if the land is not needed, defer the Municipal Reserve by caveat for future use, or request a combination of land and cash-in-lieu.
- b. The acquisition, deferral, and disposition of Municipal Reserve lands, as well as the use of cash-in-lieu, shall comply with the requirements of the Municipal Government Act.
- c. Municipal Reserve shall be identified during the Area Structure Plan, Outline Plan, or subdivision stages.

7.5.3 Cemeteries

New cemetery land requires Subdivision Authority approval before applying to the Province and must comply with the Provincial Cemeteries Act.

7.5.4 Historic Sites

The County will encourage the conservation of historical resources through preservation and restoration.

7.5.5 Seniors Housing

Seniors housing should be encouraged to locate along collector or arterial roadways and in proximity to amenities.

8.0 Environment & Wildlife Areas

8.1 Goal

Protect and preserve the County's significant natural areas and wildlife habitat through informed planning and appropriate safeguards.

8.2 Objectives

- a. To guide land use activities within environmentally sensitive areas, as shown in Appendix B: Environmental Features Map, to minimize impacts on the environment and preserve their unique characteristics.
- b. To promote responsible recreational opportunities that align with the preservation of ecological integrity and the protection of environmental and heritage values, and the support of wildlife corridors in the County's natural areas.

8.3 Policies

- 8.3.1 Environmentally sensitive areas, as indicated in Appendix B: Environmental Features Map, will be referenced and considered during the review of any developments.
- 8.3.2 Planning and development projects requiring municipal approval, whether initiated by the County or private developers, are recommended to include the following technical assessments as required by the County:
 - a. Environmental Assessment: A desktop or comprehensive biophysical assessment conducted by a qualified professional.
 - b. Geotechnical Assessment: To evaluate slope stability in areas with unstable terrain or slopes exceeding a 15% grade.
 - c. Flood Hazard Study: Required if any part of the development site is within a floodplain of a watercourse, waterbody or highwater table.
 - d. An Area Structure Plan shall be required for lands adjacent to Halfmoon Lake, as shown on the Appendix B: Environmental Features Map.
 - e. A Development Concept Plan shall be required for any proposed resource extraction developments located on lands within 800 metres of Long Lake, as shown on the Appendix B: Environmental Features Map. Such proposals must also be redistricted to the Natural Resource Extraction District.
 - f. For all other lands identified as having environmental significance shown on the Appendix B: Environmental Features Map, the County may require an Area Structure Plan, Development Concept Plan, technical assessments, or other supporting documentation at its discretion, based on the scale and nature of the proposed development.

- 8.3.3 The County may require additional reserves or setbacks based on recommendations from technical assessments. In the absence of such assessments, reserve sizes will be determined in accordance with environmental reserve provisions outlined in the Municipal Government Act and other relevant provincial guidelines.
- 8.3.4 All planning and development projects must adhere to applicable Federal and Provincial Acts, standards, and regulations. The County will also collaborate with regional partners, including government, industry, and other organizations, to ensure the protection of environmental features within and surrounding the County.
- 8.3.5 Future Area Structure Plans, Outline Plans, and Subdivisions should consider the integration of wildlife corridors where applicable to support the preservation of natural wildlife movement and habitat.



9.0 Transportation

9.1 Goal

The County will develop, maintain, and support safe and efficient transportation systems.

9.2 Objectives

- a. To collaborate with municipal, provincial and federal governments on transportation systems.
- b. To promote reliable local road systems within the County.

9.3 Policies

- 9.3.1 Road classifications within the County are shown on Appendix A: Future Land Use Map.
- 9.3.2 Developers shall pay their proportionate share of infrastructure costs to facilitate their development.
- 9.3.3 The County supports the coordination and integration of local, regional, intra-provincial, and inter-provincial transportation networks.
- 9.3.4 Partnership agreements with industry will be encouraged where roads can be jointly developed for mutual benefit.
- 9.3.5 Developers may be required to provide a Traffic Impact Assessment as part of an Area Structure Plan, Outline Plan, Concept Plan, subdivision, or development permit application to evaluate the impacts of proposed developments on the transportation network, identify required improvements, assign costs, and establish timelines and responsibilities.
- 9.3.6 Coordination with Alberta Transportation will ensure compatible land uses near Provincial highways.
- 9.3.7 When approving subdivisions and developments, the County will ensure the road network can accommodate increased traffic.
- 9.3.8 Future subdivisions should consider clustering compatible uses to reduce infrastructure requirements and minimize costs for maintaining or upgrading roads.
- 9.3.9 Developers must provide necessary road improvements in accordance with the General Municipal Servicing Standards adopted by the County.

9.3.10 The County supports active transportation networks by:

- a. Encouraging the design, development, and maintenance of multi-use trails and pedestrian connectivity, focusing on natural features and linkages to the existing trail system.
- b. Linking tourism opportunities through active transportation infrastructure where possible.

9.3.11 The County will collaborate with the Canadian National Railway Company concerning existing rail infrastructure and planning future rail developments.



10.0 Municipal Servicing

10.1 Goal

Develop, maintain, and support safe, efficient, and reliable municipal services to meet the needs of the community.

10.2 Objective

Promote and protect the integrity, reliability, and efficiency of the County's utility, waste management, stormwater management, and energy systems in collaboration with the Provincial Government and neighboring municipalities.

10.3 Water Services

- 10.3.1 All proposed subdivisions and developments must prove water supply or connect to water services as a condition of approval when located adjacent to existing water infrastructure.
- 10.3.2 Adequate water quality and quantity must be available to support any proposed development.
- 10.3.3 If a water well is being considered, a Groundwater Availability Report, prepared by a Professional Engineer, is required under the Provincial Water Act for the sixth (6th) or subsequent lot subdivision to assess aquifer security and capacity for the proposed development.
- 10.3.4 The County is a member of the Highway 28/63 Regional Water Services Commission.
 - a. The Regional Water Line services the Hamlets of Egremont, Newbrook, Radway, and Thorhild.
 - b. Bulk water sales are available at Abee, Egremont, Newbrook, Radway, and Thorhild.

10.4 Wastewater Services

- 10.4.1 All subdivisions and developments must connect to wastewater services as a condition of approval when located adjacent to existing sewage infrastructure.
- 10.4.2 Proposed parcels with existing on-site sewage disposal systems must comply with the current Alberta Private Sewage Systems Standard of Practice. These systems must be permitted through an Alberta Safety Codes Accredited Agency and have a satisfactory inspection report, provided at the developer's expense, confirming compliance with the regulations.
- 10.4.3 The Subdivision Authority may require confirmation from a licensed private sewage contractor in Alberta to ensure that on-site sewage systems for any proposed bare land parcel comply with the Alberta Private Sewage Systems Standard of Practice.
- 10.4.4 The County prioritizes the expansion of existing lagoons over constructing new ones. For developments requiring additional treatment facilities, every effort should be made to expand existing lagoons before considering new lagoon construction.
 - a. The existing lagoons are located at Egremont, Newbrook, Opal, Radway, and Thorhild.
 - b. A lagoon is located west of Long Lake at NW-8-63-19-W4M.
- 10.4.5 The County supports the use of environmentally friendly on-site sewage systems and other mechanisms to minimize environmental impacts while promoting rural sustainability.

10.5 Waste & Recycling Services

- 10.5.1 All new multi-subdivisions or multi-developments should implement an on-site solid waste management and recycling program, which may include the recycling of organic materials for composting.
- 10.5.2 To encourage the safe disposal of solid waste materials, the County will:
 - a. Locate solid waste disposal sites and transfer stations to ensure easy access for the communities they serve.
 - b. Ensure solid waste disposal sites and transfer stations are designed and located to minimize impacts on surrounding lands.

10.6 Stormwater Management

- 10.6.1 All new developments must manage stormwater on-site and maintain predevelopment flow rates outside the site boundary at the maximum rate established in the General Municipal Servicing Standards adopted by the County.
- 10.6.2 A Stormwater Management Plan prepared by a qualified engineer, may be required at the discretion of the development authority.

10.7 Energy Development

- 10.7.1 Subdivision and development applications will comply with Alberta Energy Regulator setback regulations and guidelines related to sour gas, oil and gas facilities, and pipelines.
- 10.7.2 All renewable energy projects within Thorhild County must comply with applicable provincial regulations and secure all necessary governmental approvals prior to commencing development.

10.8 Telecommunications

- 10.8.1 The County recognizes that communication and data transmission play an important role to future developments within the County.
- 10.8.2 Industry Canada has jurisdiction for communication facilities and are the approving authority. Industry Canada must consult with the County and allow for community input.
- 10.8.3 The County recognizes that potential growth requires development and expansion of telecommunications, that are designed to minimize aesthetic and environmental impacts.
- 10.8.4 Telecommunication providers shall adhere to Industry Canada's process of community engagement.
- 10.8.5 The County will continue to develop a strategy to deliver high-speed internet access across the County through telecommunication and fiber-optic expansions.

10.9 Fire Prevention

- 10.9.1 The County encourages proactive measures to reduce wildfire risks and enhance community safety.
- 10.9.2 Developers, landowners, and residents are encouraged to consider strategies that minimize fire hazards, such as maintaining safe distances between structures and managing vegetation.
- 10.9.3 The County supports educational efforts and collaboration with relevant agencies to promote wildfire awareness and prevention throughout the community.

11.0 Authority of the Plan

11.1 Goal

To ensure all future land use, subdivision, development, and redevelopment within Thorhild County aligns with the Municipal Development Plan.

11.2 Objectives

- a. Ensure the Municipal Development Plan remains consistent with other statutory and non-statutory documents while serving as a valid and up-to-date framework.
- b. Align the County's economic development goals with its land use policies to support cohesive and sustainable growth.
- c. To encourage Provincial and Federal governments to consider this Plan when affecting the County.

11.3 Amendments to the Municipal Development Plan

11.3.1 This Plan, along with all attached maps, constitutes the Thorhild County Municipal Development Plan.

11.3.2 Amendments to the Municipal Development Plan may only be made through an application submitted to the Planning & Development Department. An amendment is required in the following cases:

- a. When any major policy intent is to be changed.
- b. When other statutory plans conflict with the policies of this Plan.
- c. In evaluating amendments to this Plan, Council shall consider the provisions of the Municipal Government Act.

11.3.3 The Future Land Use Map, which can be found in Appendix A, is intended as a generalized guide and does not require amendments for minor changes or adjustments, provided they align with the overall intent and policies of the Municipal Development Plan.

11.4 Boundaries

The boundaries of the future land use designations shown on the Future Development Maps are intended to be interpreted as general guidelines. Areas adjacent to a designated land use may be considered for Land Use Bylaw amendments, provided the proposed use aligns with the policies of this Plan.

11.5 Review of the Municipal Development Plan

It is recommended that Thorhild County review the need for updates to the Municipal Development Plan every five years and consider amendments as necessary.

11.6 Land Use Bylaw

- 11.6.1 Council will update the Land Use Bylaw to align with the policies of this Plan.
- 11.6.2 Subdivisions and developments outside the Agriculture district may be required to apply to amend the Land Use Bylaw to the appropriate designation.
- 11.6.3 Council may review development proposals based on the policies of this Plan, incorporating public input received during the public hearing process.
- 11.6.4 In addition to the criteria outlined in this Plan, the County may consider various factors to assess the suitability of a subdivision or development, including the availability of infrastructure, services, and community amenities, as well as potential environmental impacts.

11.7 Area Structure Plans

- 11.7.1 An Area Structure Plan may be required at the discretion of the County.
- 11.7.2 The purpose of an Area Structure Plan is to guide land use and infrastructure development efficiently. At a minimum, an Area Structure Plan should address the following:
 - a. Transportation networks.
 - b. Broad land use categories.
 - c. Population or employment densities.
 - d. Contours and drainage patterns.
 - e. Potable water supply and sewage disposal systems.
 - f. Phasing and sequence of development.
 - g. Adjacent Land Use Compatibility.
 - h. Existing and future land uses.
 - i. Existing and proposed utilities.
 - j. Environmentally sensitive areas, as shown in Appendix B: Environmental Features Map.

11.8 Consultation

- 11.8.1 The County will conduct planning activities fairly and in alignment with its Public Participation Policy, providing opportunities for input from affected parties. For developments that may generate significant public interest, the County may require developers to host open houses or employ other engagement methods before public hearings.
- 11.8.2 Before approving any subdivision, development, or planning amendments within 1.6 km of a neighboring municipality, the County will seek and consider input from the adjacent municipality.

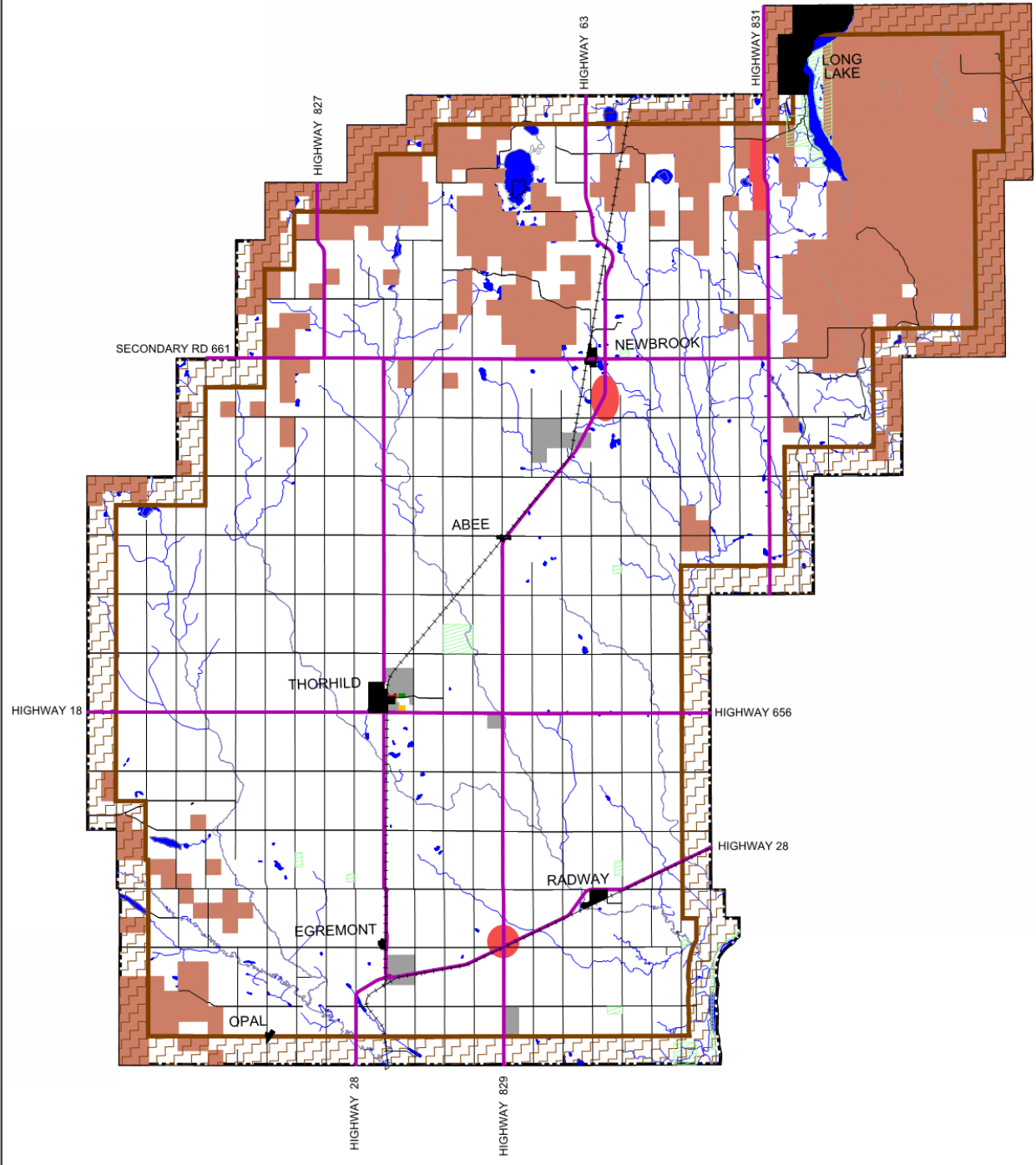
11.9 Development Agreements

The County may require development agreements for subdivisions and developments, including provisions under the Municipal Government Act. It may establish bylaws for offsite levies to recover capital costs for new or expanded facilities. Developers may also be required to oversize improvements, with reimbursement mechanisms available to other developers.

11.10 Overlays for Consideration

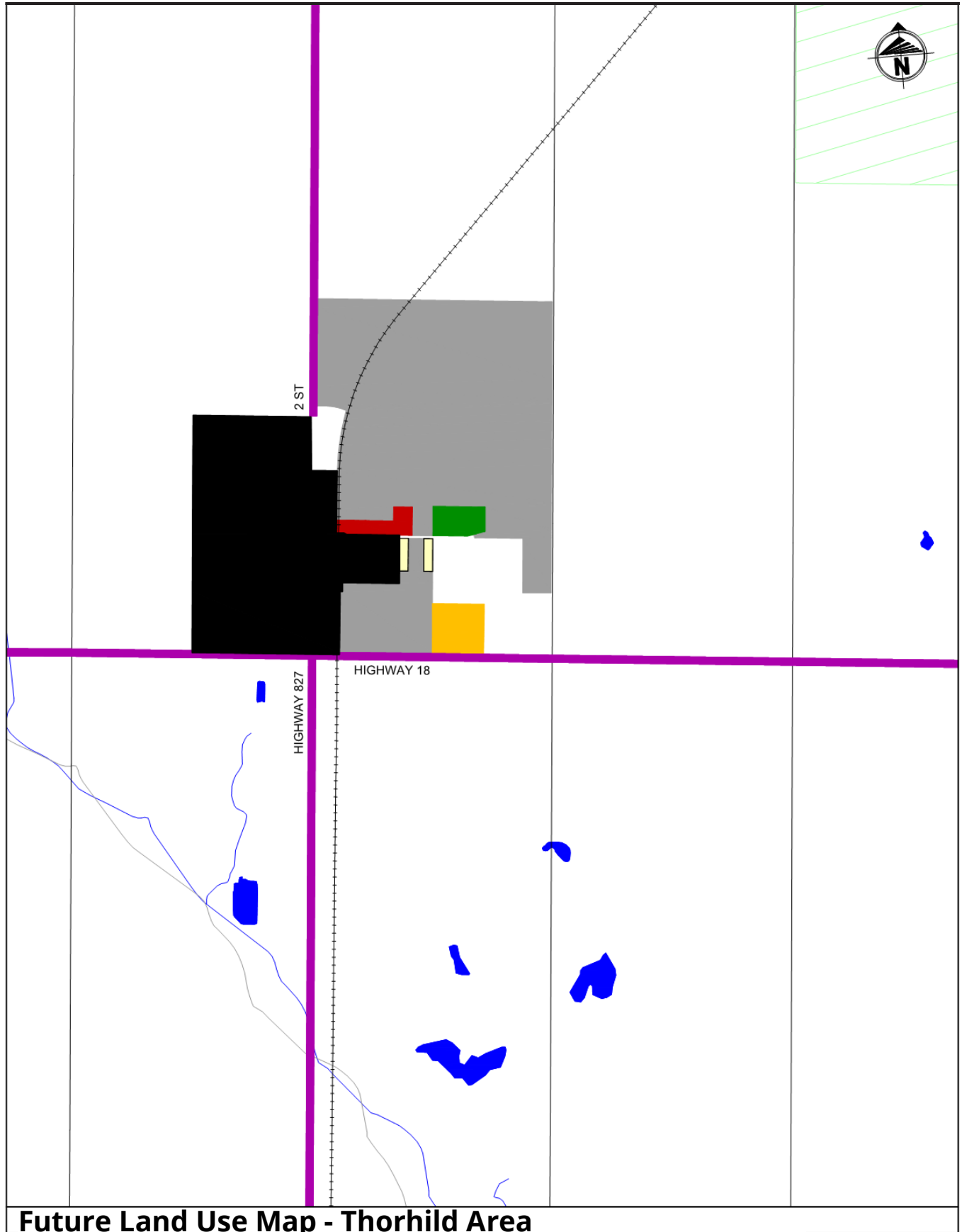
- 11.10.1 The Historic Resources Overlay in Thorhild County highlights areas identified by the Province of Alberta as having known or potential paleontological, archaeological, or historical assets that may require special protection or care when nearby developments are proposed, as outlined in Appendix A: Future Land Use Map.
- 11.10.2 The Environmentally Sensitive Area Overlay in Thorhild County marks areas where development may be challenging or unsuitable due to the land's physical characteristics or significant ecological features, requiring developers to submit additional information to assess site suitability, as outlined in the Appendix B: Environmental Features Map.

Appendix A: Municipal Development Plan Maps



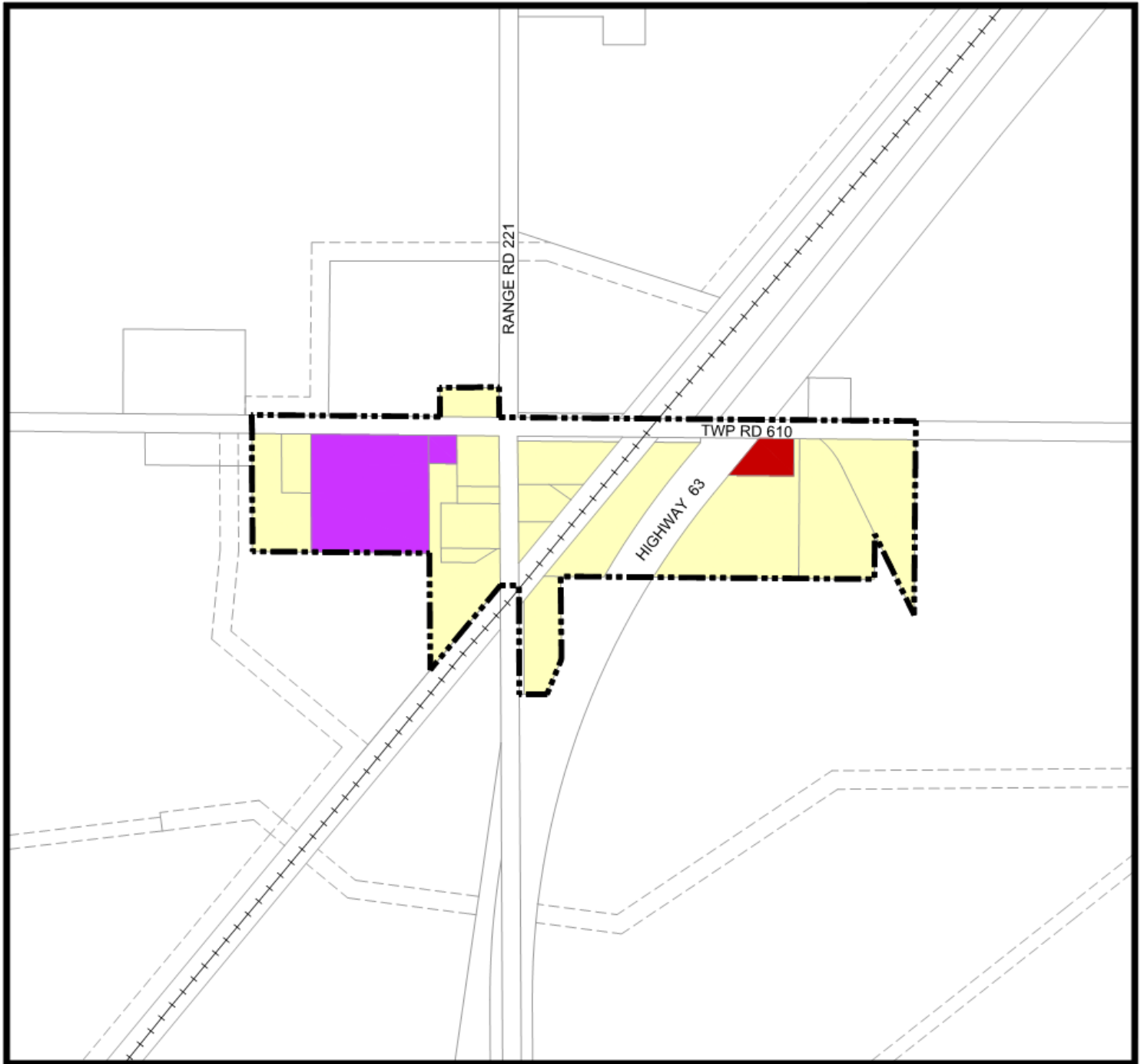
Future Land Use Map

- | | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------|----------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| County Boundary | Hamlets | Industrial | Residential | Municipal Infrastructure |
| 1.6km Referral Area | Agricultural | Crown Land | Institutional | |
| | Commercial | Historic Resources Overlay | Water Body | |

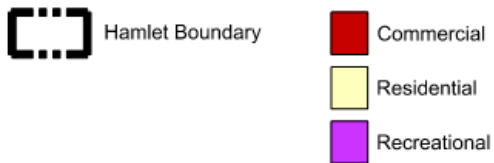


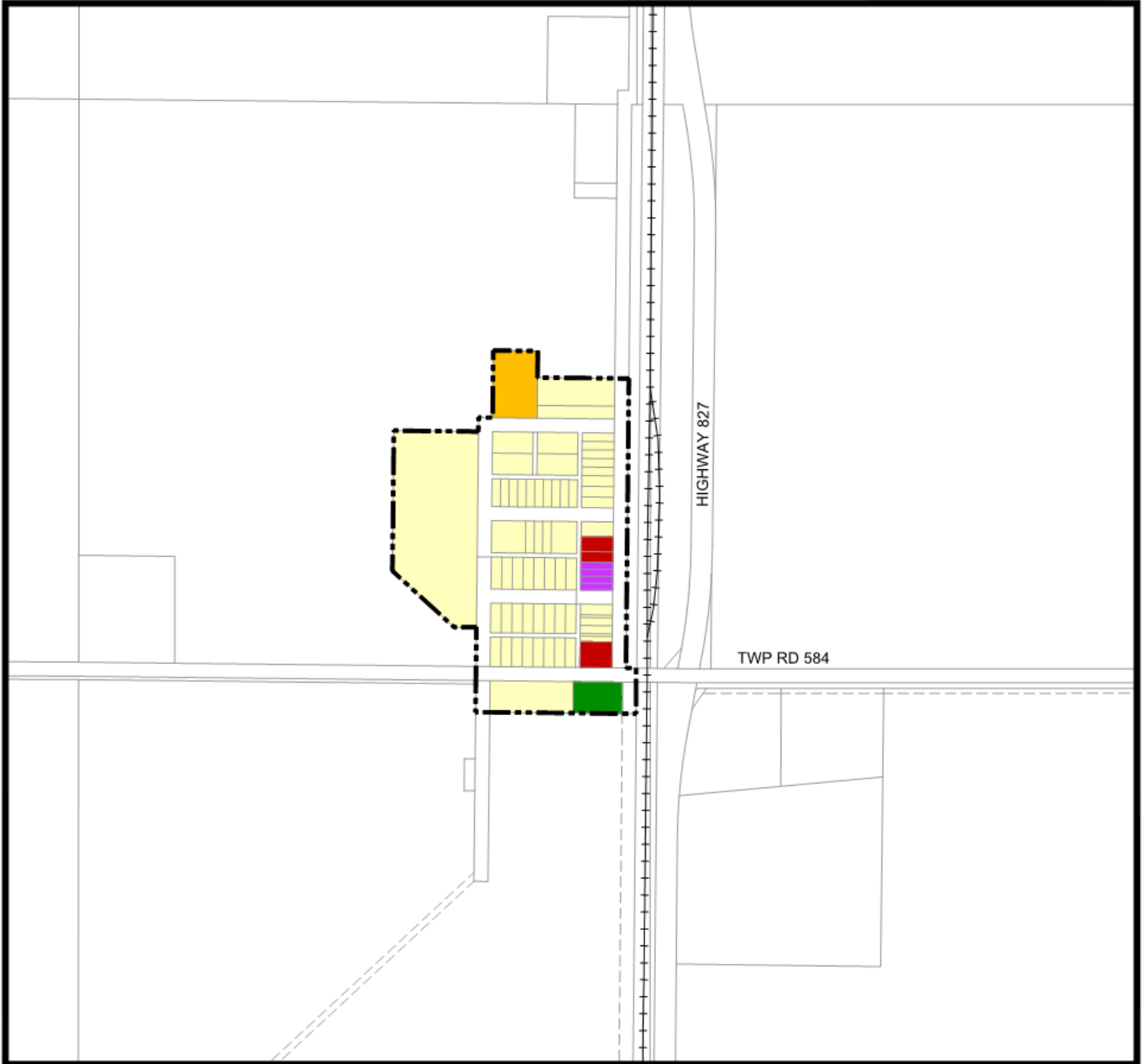
Future Land Use Map - Thorhild Area

- | | | | |
|-----------------|------------|---------------|----------------------------|
| County Boundary | Hamlets | Residential | Historic Resources Overlay |
| Agricultural | Commercial | Institutional | Municipal Infrastructure |
| | Water Body | Industrial | |









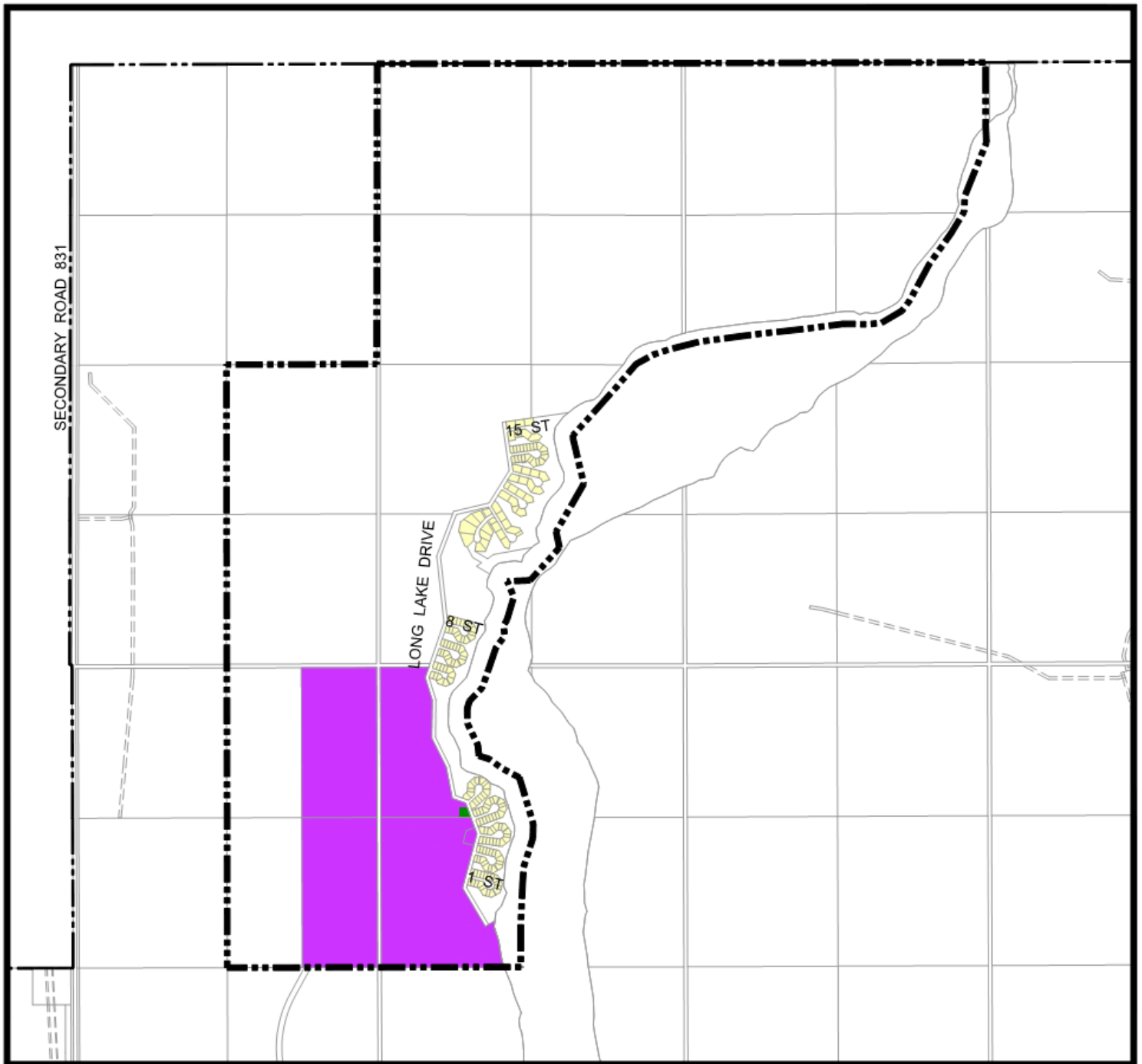
Hamlet of Abee Future Land Use





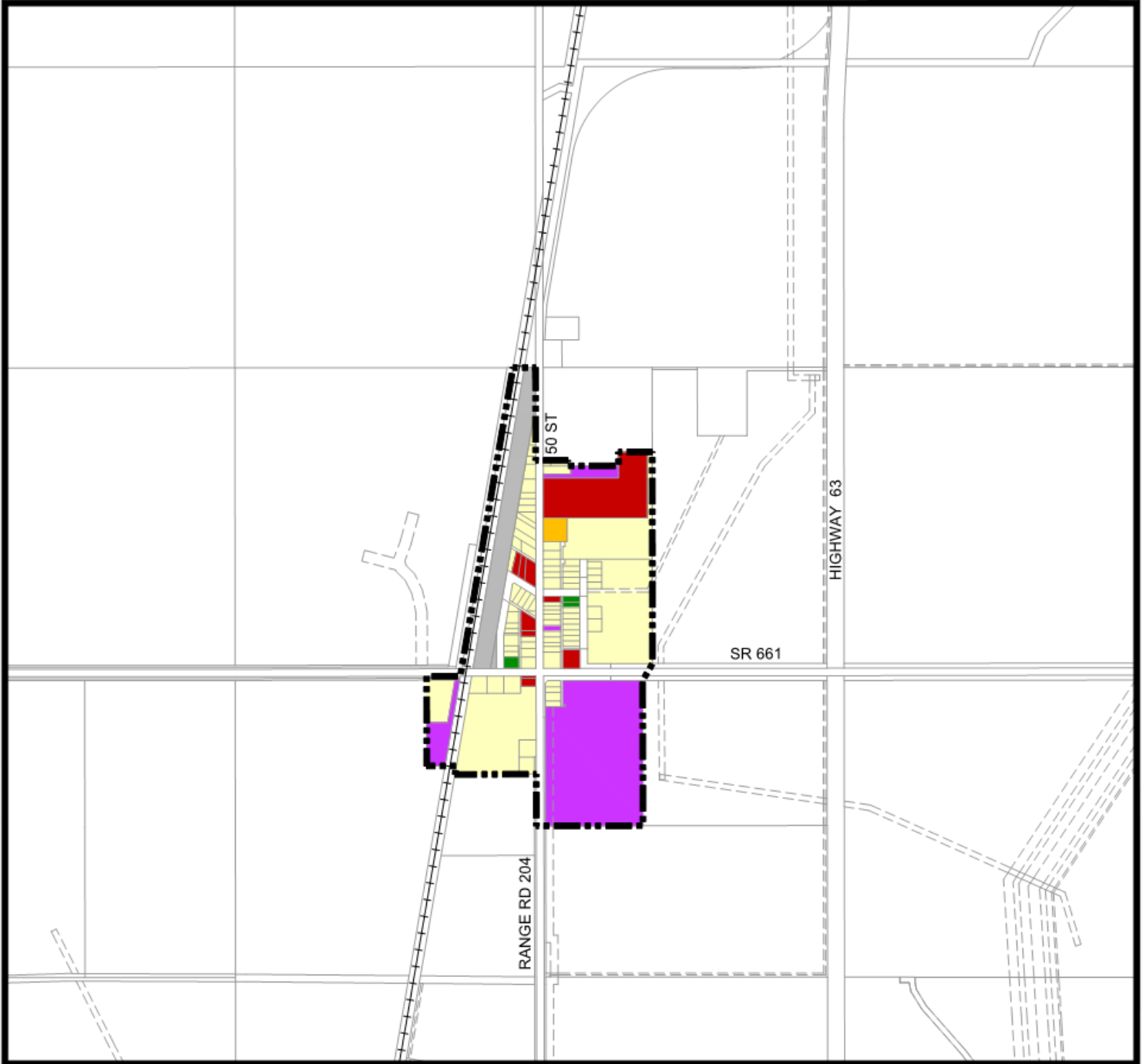
Hamlet of Egremont Future Land Use

-  Hamlet Boundary
-  Commercial
-  Residential
-  Recreational
-  Institutional
-  Municipal Infrastructure



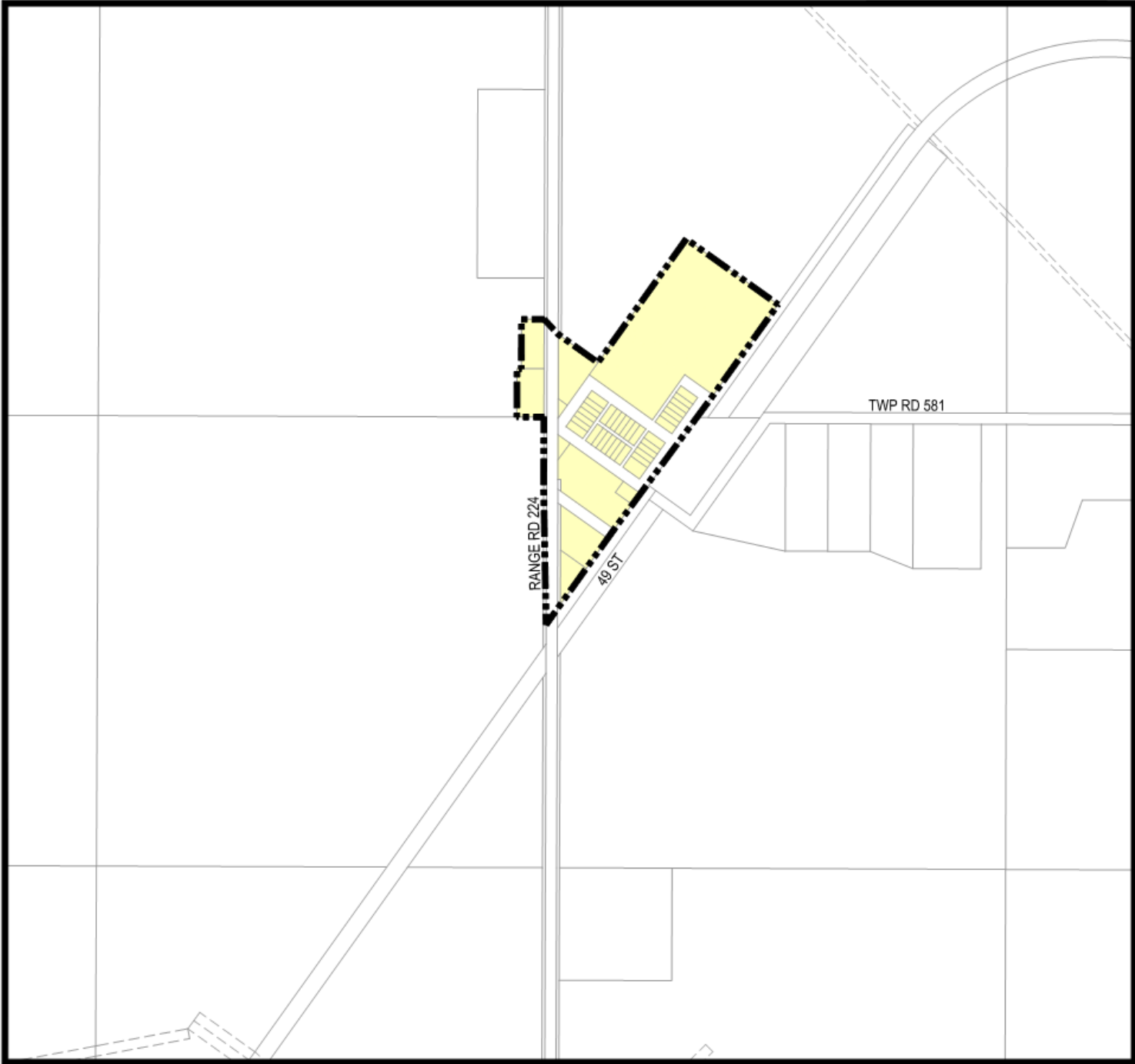
Hamlet of Long Lake Future Land Use







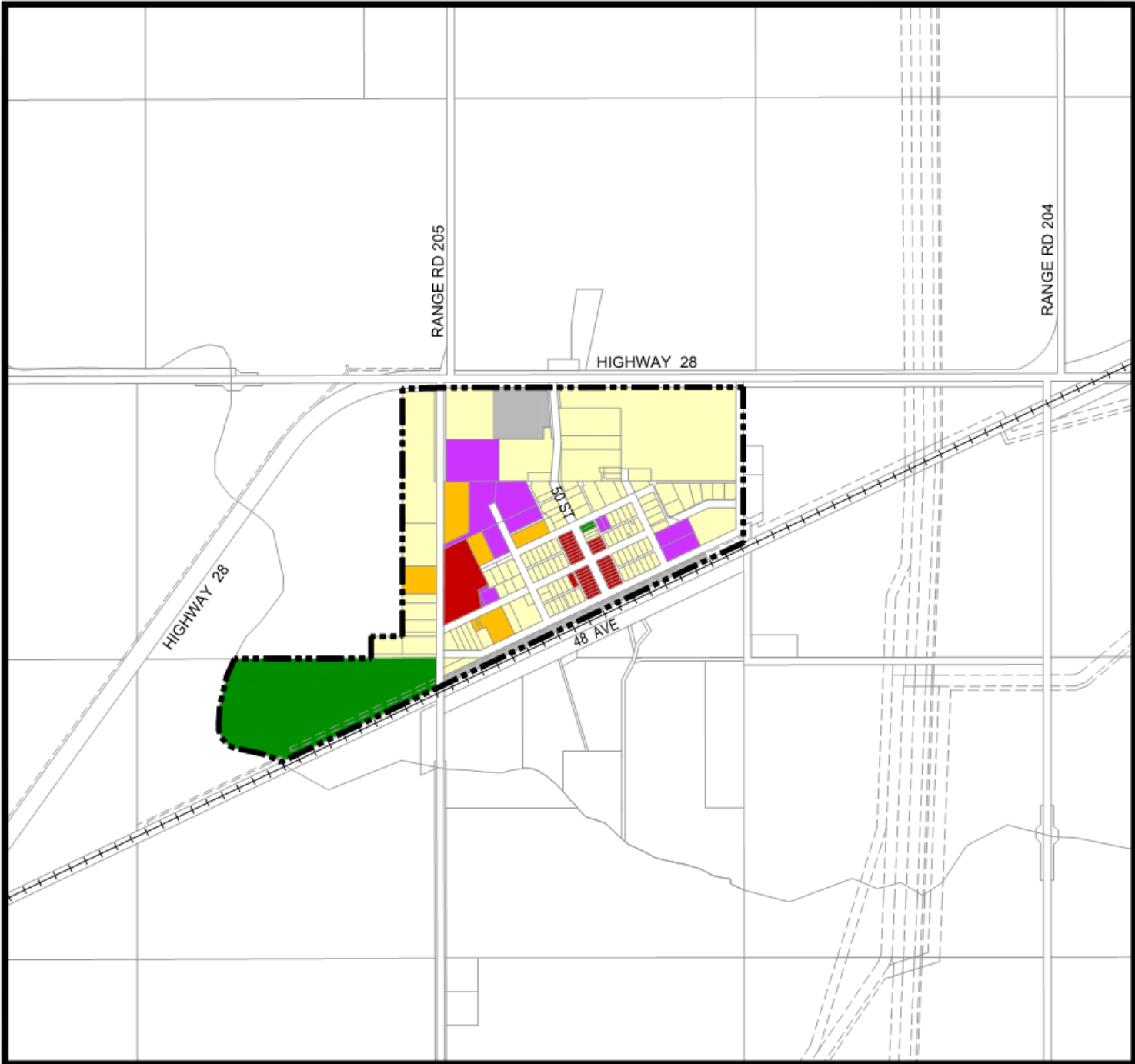
Hamlet of Newbrook Future Land Use



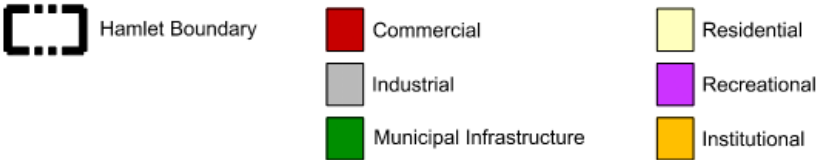


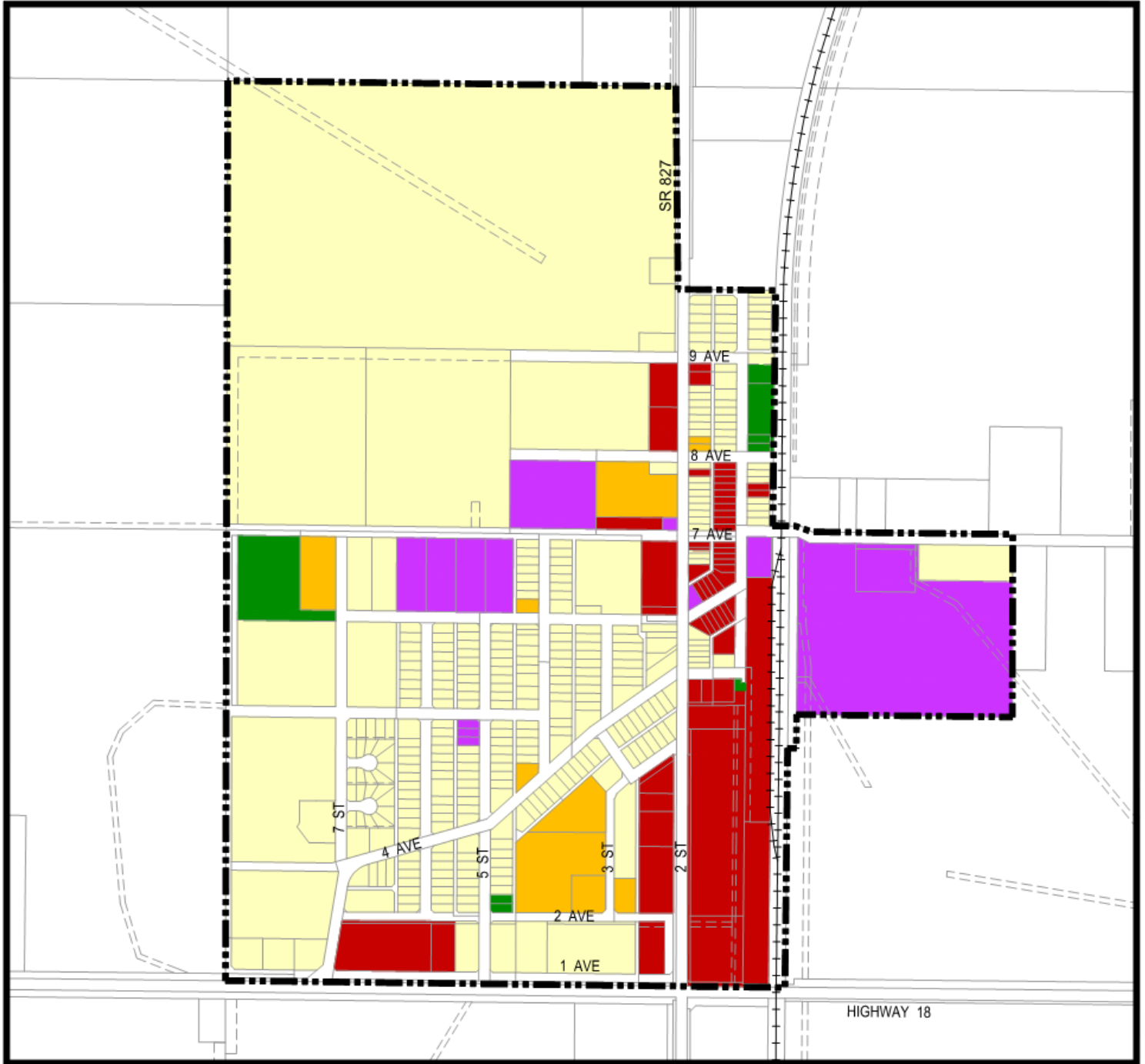
Hamlet of Opal Future Land Use

-  Hamlet Boundary
-  Residential



Hamlet of Radway Future Land Use

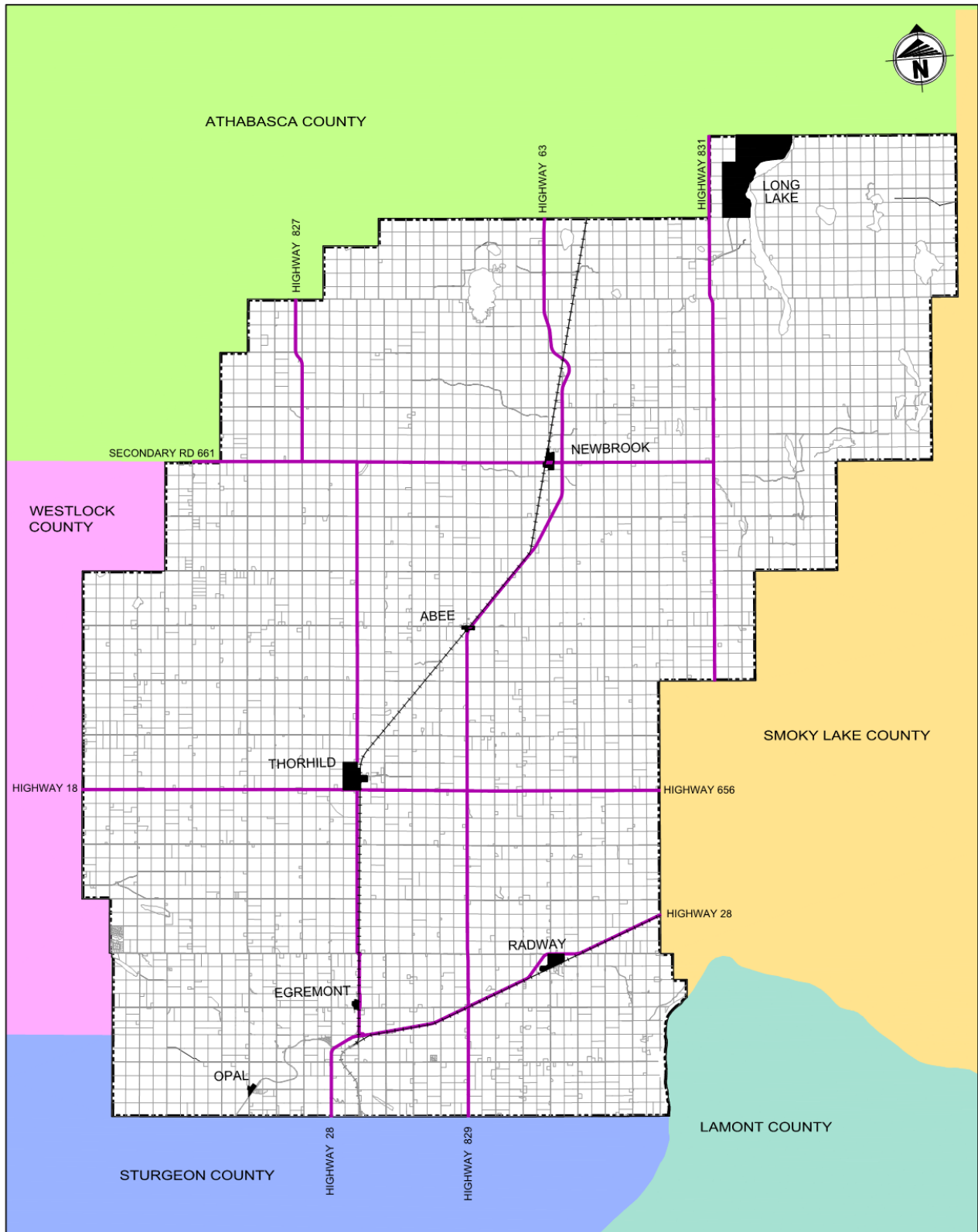




Hamlet of Thorhild Future Land Use

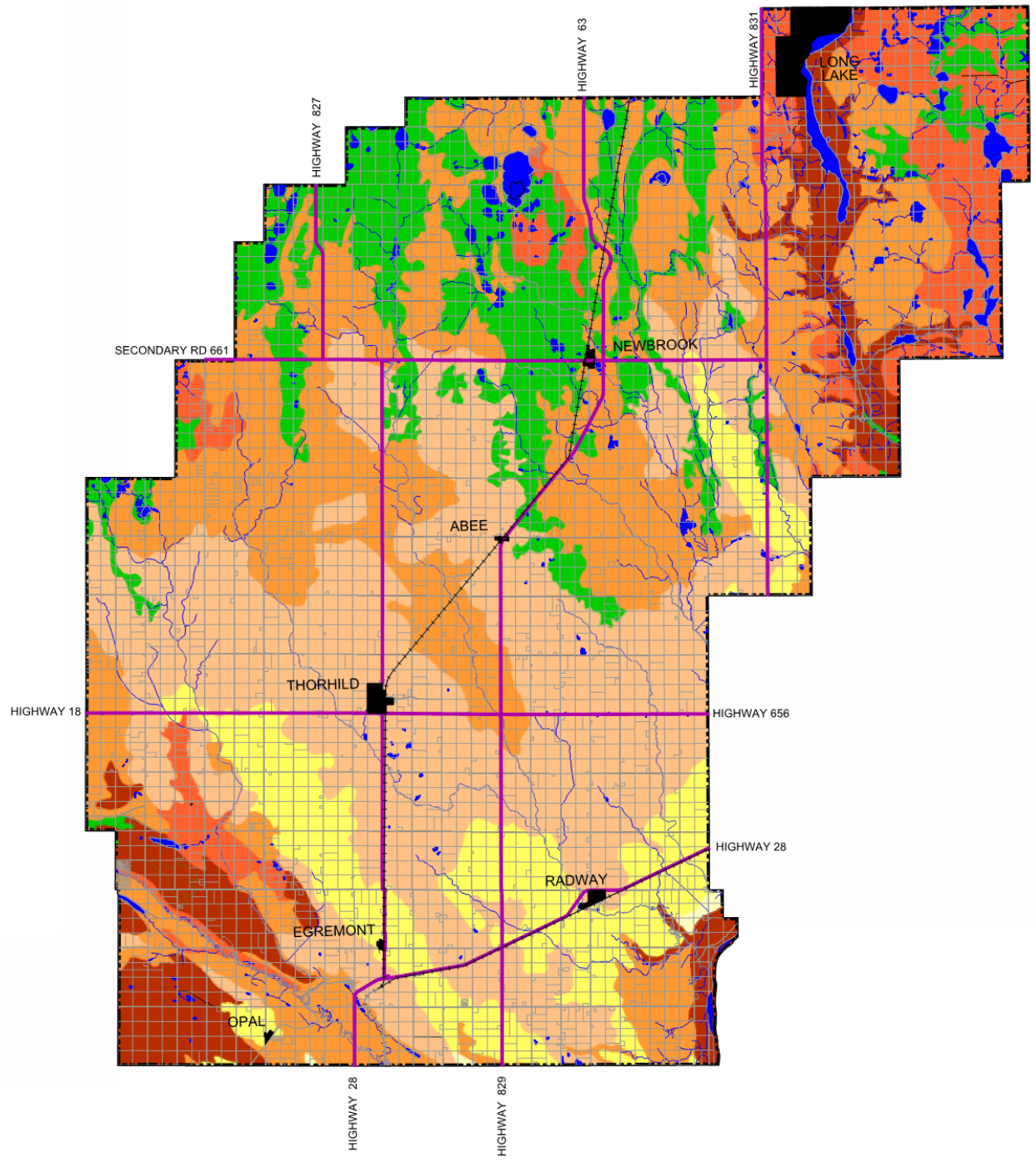


Appendix B: Supplementary Maps



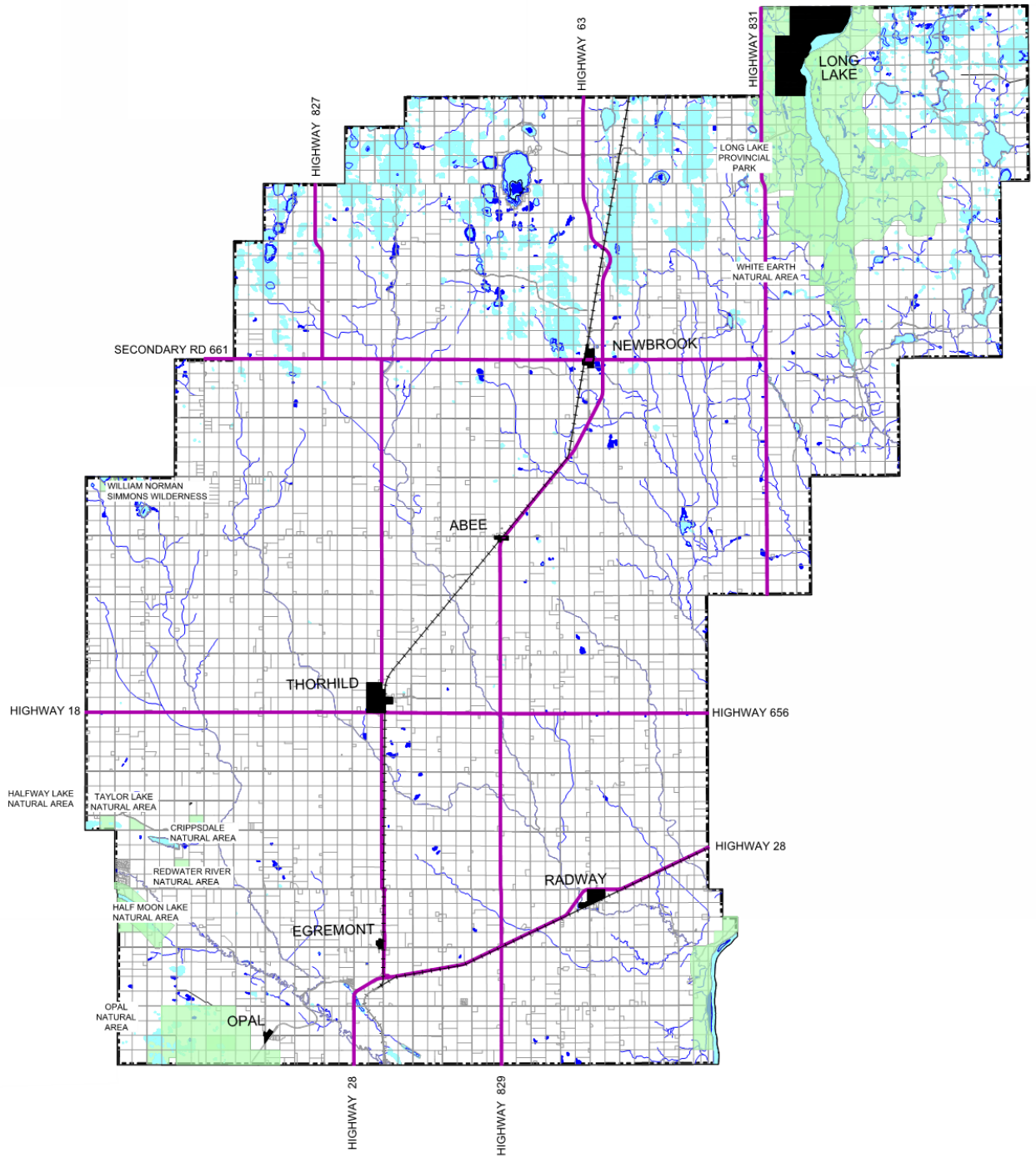
Regional Location Map

 County Boundary







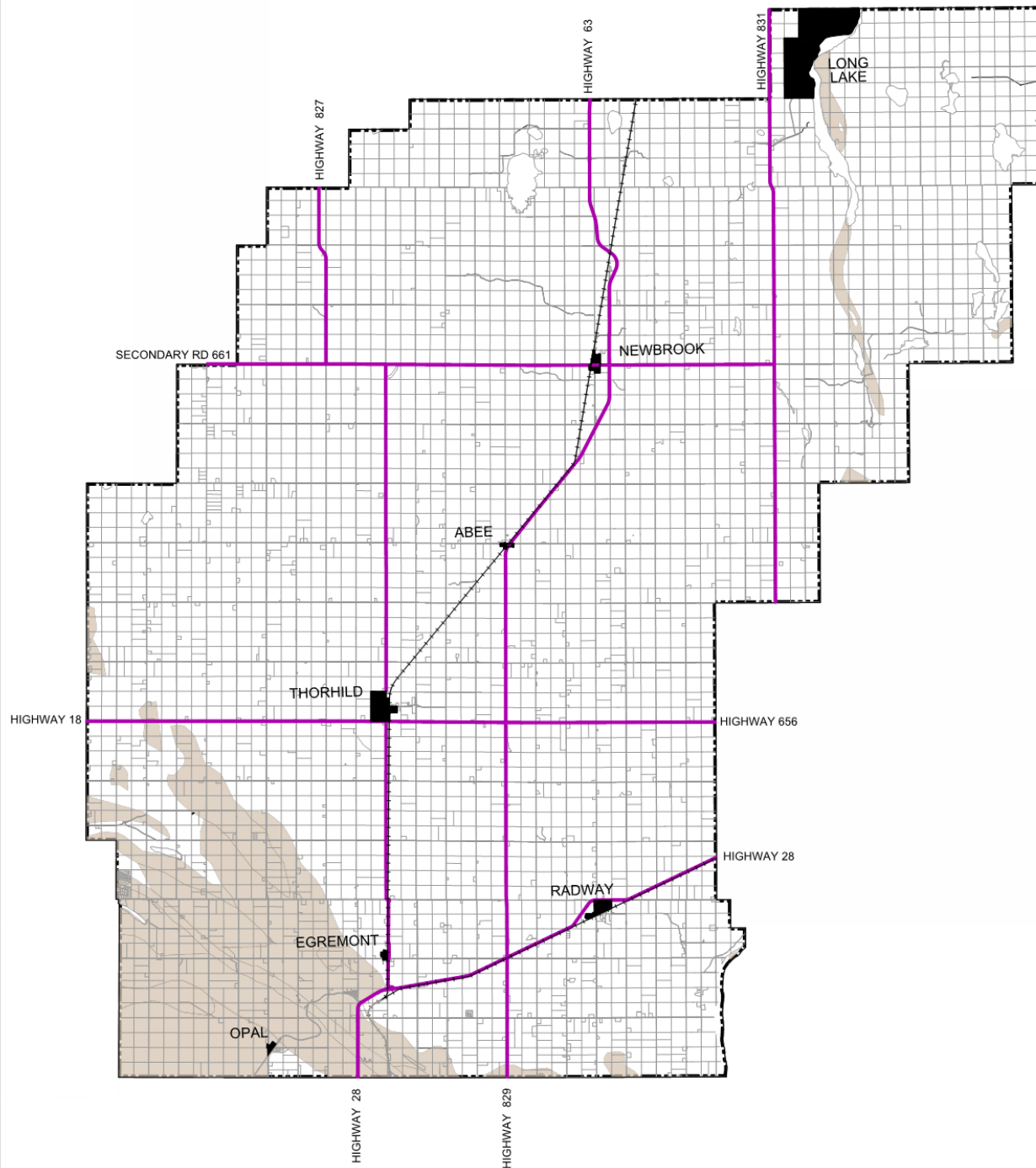
Canada Land Inventory - Agricultural Capability Map

County Boundary	No significant limitations	Severe limitations	No capability for arable culture or permanent pasture
	Moderate limitations, moderate conservation practices required	Forage crops improvement practices feasible	Organic soils
	Moderately severe limitations, range of crops restricted or special conservation practices required	Forage crops improvement practices not feasible	Water Body





Environmental Features Map

-  County Boundary
-  Wetland Inventory
-  Water Body
-  Environmentally Sensitive Area Overlay



Sand and Gravel Deposits Map

 County Boundary  Sand & Gravel