

7.1 COMMERCIAL GOALS

- To increase the town's emergence as a major regional centre for goods and services by attracting new businesses.
- To ensure that the town's commercial areas are attractive to tourists, and regional and local consumers.
- To provide commercial opportunities that meet the needs of all Whitecourt and area shoppers.
- To recognize the Hilltop and West Whitecourt, as major highway commercial nodes within the Town.

7.2 GENERAL COMMERCIAL POLICIES

- 7.2.1 The Town should actively encourage regional-scale commercial activity in order to increase its position as a regional retail and service centre.
- 7.2.2 The Town may offer support in terms of organization and funding to assist private sector groups, to undertake programs designed to encourage additional local shopping including the establishment of Business Improvement Areas or Area Redevelopment Plans.
- 7.2.3 The Land Use Bylaw should provide districts to accommodate a range of commercial uses, the location of those uses, and site dimensions.
- 7.2.4 Vehicular access, egress and on-site circulation should be designed to permit the efficient flow of traffic on commercial sites with on-site parking. Adequate parking and loading facilities shall be provided for all commercial establishments according to the requirements of the Land Use Bylaw, with the exception of those located in the downtown core area who shall be responsible for determining their own parking requirements and addressing their own off-street parking needs.
- 7.2.5 Whenever a new major commercial development is proposed, the Town may require:
- a. An ASP, Area Redevelopment Plan, or Outline Plan to guide the development or redevelopment of the applicable area;
 - b. Design features to make parking areas more noticeable, driver-friendly and incorporate CPTED principles.
 - c. That the number of vehicle access points to the site be limited to only those necessary to minimize interruptions to the street and conflicts with pedestrians;
 - d. That circulation routes requiring wider widths and turning radii (such as firelanes, service areas) be combined with major drive aisles;
 - e. Continuous circulation throughout the site which avoids dead end driveways and turnaround spaces

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- 7.26 When a new major commercial development is proposed, the Town will encourage shared driveways.
- 7.27 Commercial establishments may be considered in service industrial areas, provided that:
- a. The uses are appropriate and relevant to the service industrial areas;
 - b. They show that they can coexist with surrounding industrial uses; and
 - c. They demonstrate, to the satisfaction of Whitecourt, that there are no viable alternative locations within Whitecourt.

7.3 NEIGHBOURHOOD COMMERCIAL

- 7.31 Future neighbourhood commercial development shall be located in general conformance with Map 3: Future Land Use Concept; however, other sites may also be considered. Preferred locations for neighbourhood commercial sites may include:
- a. Sites located at the periphery of the neighbourhood; Corner site locations;
 - b. Sites designated within proposed ASPs or Outline Plans for new residential areas.
- 7.32 The Town should actively encourage neighbourhood commercial development in new residential areas and may require the designation of future neighbourhood commercial sites within proposed ASPs or Outline Plans for new residential areas.
- 7.33 At the development approval stage, the Town should pay special attention to the scale, design, and colour of neighbourhood commercial uses in an effort to maximize the compatibility of neighbourhood commercial uses with adjacent residential uses, and may require the provision of a visual buffers, such as landscaping, fences, berms, or any combination of these things, between neighbourhood commercial uses and adjacent residential uses.

7.4 HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL

- 7.4.1 To undertake a study to determine the effect of a bypass on the existing highway commercial areas in Whitecourt should it be constructed and to improve the aesthetics along both the existing highway corridor and the future bypass.
- 7.4.2 The primary use for land adjacent to Highway 43 through Whitecourt should continue to be highway commercial uses that cater mainly to highway traffic. The Town may allow the development of a limited number of other uses, as defined in the Land Use Bylaw, that are oriented to serving tourists or the travelling public or restricted to small retail outlets.
- a. While Highway Commercial areas are intended to primarily accommodate highway-oriented and vehicle-dependent commercial uses, Council may support limited complementary uses that represent adaptive reuse of existing development and respond to demonstrated community needs, provided that the overall function of the area is maintained.

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74.3 Businesses located along the Highway 43 corridor shall be subject to a higher aesthetic standard in accordance with the Vitalization Plan and as defined by the Land Use Bylaw.

74.4 The maximum retail space allowed for any one establishment in highway commercial areas shall be as defined by the Land Use Bylaw, and in deciding whether or not to approve any retail development along Highway 43, the Town shall consider whether, in conjunction with other such establishments, the proposed development has the effect of creating a mall-like complex and, if it deems this to be the case, the Town may refuse the development.

74.5 ~~Professional offices and services including health as well as community facilities are not intended to be located in Highway Commercial areas, and should be directed towards the Downtown Core Policy Area.~~

Professional offices, health services, and community-oriented uses are generally intended to be directed toward the Downtown Core Policy Area. Notwithstanding the foregoing, Council may consider site-specific proposals within the Highway Commercial Area where such uses:

- a. are located within an existing developed site and represent
- b. adaptive reuse of existing buildings;
- c. address a demonstrated community need;
- d. do not undermine the primary highway-oriented commercial function of the area;
- e. demonstrate compatibility with surrounding development; and
- f. are regulated through site-specific land use controls, including Direct Control zoning where appropriate.

74.6 All signage along the Highway 43 corridor shall be to the satisfaction of Alberta Transportation and in accordance with the Land Use Bylaw.

74.7 The Town shall continue to limit accesses to Highway 43.

7.4.8 Notwithstanding the general intent of the Highway Commercial Policy Area, the Town may consider limited forms of supportive or assisted living accommodation on a site-specific basis where:

- a. the use is contained within an existing building and does not involve expansion that would alter the commercial character of the site;
- b. the proposal represents adaptive reuse of a previously developed property;
- c. the scale and operation of the use are appropriate to the site;
- d. adequate on-site management and support services are provided;
- e. the development does not create undue land use conflict with adjacent commercial operations; and
- f. the proposal is subject to a site-specific review and approved through a Direct Control District or equivalent regulatory mechanism.

7.5 MIXED USE COMMERCIAL

- 7.5.1 Mixed-use commercial development shall be located in general conformance with Map 3: Future Land Use Concept.
- 7.5.2 The primary purpose of the Mixed-use Commercial district will be to provide a wide variety of retail and service oriented commercial outlets, which require larger tracts of land either to accommodate the scale of retail, or to provide area for storage or display of goods. Commercial development will be catered toward meeting the daily needs of Whitecourt residents and residents from surrounding communities.
- 7.5.3 High density residential development should be permitted provided the development is compatible with adjacent commercial uses.
- 7.5.4 Any buildings with residential uses such as hotels and apartments along the CN Rail Line should provide appropriate setbacks and include noise attenuation solutions to the satisfaction of CN Rail. The Town should refer all development permit applications to CN Rail for their review and comments.
- 7.5.5 Surface parking areas should generally be located behind buildings and screened appropriately from the public roadway using a variety of landscaping methods.
- 7.5.6 Large format commercial developments should be encouraged to include a variety of architectural features, building materials, and incorporate higher quality public realm in their site designs. Blank walls in public view should be minimized.
- 7.5.7 New buildings located adjacent to 51 Street and Dahl Drive should have enhanced architectural and landscaping features to contribute towards these key intersection corridors of the community.
- 7.5.8 All future development should provide consideration for pedestrian access (including pedestrian comfort and safety) in addition to vehicle access and parking. Pedestrian access and connectivity within the district, and in connection to Downtown, will be a priority for all future development within this area.
- 7.5.9 Greater pedestrian accessibility will be required for service commercial zones adjacent to medium to high density residential in order to promote the viability of meeting daily needs without a vehicle.