

## **SECTION 13: COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES**

The Municipal Development Plan establishes the municipality's intent to support complete, healthy, safe, and connected communities through the coordinated planning and delivery of community services and infrastructure. The MD of Willow Creek recognizes that sustainable growth requires proactive investment in public amenities and services that enhance quality of life, support recreation and wellness, strengthen social connections, and ensure public safety and resilience.

### **13.1 MUNICIPAL, ENVIRONMENTAL, SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY RESERVES**

It is the intent of the MD of Willow Creek to create a policy framework for the dedication, acquisition, planning, and use of Municipal Reserve, School Reserve, Municipal and School Reserve, Environmental Reserve, and other community-oriented reserve lands in accordance with the Alberta Government of Alberta Municipal Government Act and all applicable provincial legislation. Recognizing the MD's rural character, dispersed settlement pattern, and agricultural land base, reserve decisions shall be responsive to local context, environmental conditions, and community need. The MD will apply reserve tools in a practical and flexible manner that reflects differences between hamlets, country residential areas, agricultural subdivisions, growth nodes, and other rural development areas.

Through these policies, the MD seeks to balance growth and development with the preservation of natural features, protection of ecological functions, enhancement of quality of life, and the long-term sustainability of public services, community infrastructure, and the natural environment.

#### **Objectives:**

- To provide an equitable distribution of parks, recreation areas, and open spaces for residents.
- To support future educational and community facility needs.
- To ensure all reserve lands are functional, accessible, and strategically located.
- To preserve natural features where appropriate.
- To utilize reserve tools flexibly to reflect rural subdivision patterns and servicing constraints.

#### **Policies:**

13.1.1 The maximum Municipal Reserve (10% of subdivided land) dedication shall be required at the time of subdivision in accordance with the Municipal Government Act and applicable regulations. The MD of Willow Creek shall require reserve land, cash-in-lieu of land, deferred reserve caveats, or a combination thereof, depending on the nature and location of the proposed subdivision.

- 13.1.2 In agricultural areas and low-density rural subdivisions where the dedication of reserve land would be impractical, or where land dedication would result in small, fragmented, or otherwise unusable reserve parcels, the MD of Willow Creek shall prefer or may require cash-in-lieu of reserve dedication. Cash-in-lieu may also be required where a proposed subdivision is minor in scale, remote, or isolated in nature; where existing parks, open spaces, or recreational amenities adequately serve the area; or where the acquisition, development, or enhancement of regional parks, trails, recreation facilities, or other community amenities would provide greater public benefit than on-site land dedication.
- 13.1.3 Municipal Reserve funds may be directed toward the acquisition of parkland, improvements to existing parks and open spaces, development and enhancement of trail systems, provision of recreation facilities, development of community amenities, and the future purchase of reserve lands to meet long-term municipal needs
- 13.1.4 The MD of Willow Creek shall work collaboratively with applicable school authorities to identify present and future school site requirements through Joint Use and Planning Agreements and other interagency planning processes. The MD may also pursue joint planning initiatives with neighbouring municipalities where residents are served by, or rely upon, schools and educational facilities located outside the MD.
- 13.1.5 The Municipality may utilize Municipal and School Reserve (MSR) to accommodate shared public purposes. MSR lands are encouraged where opportunities exist for school and recreation campus development, shared playing fields, or multi-use public facilities.
- 13.1.6 Environmental Reserve and Environmental Reserve Easements shall be required at the time of subdivision, where applicable and in accordance with the Municipal Government Act and where the MD determines it is necessary to protect environmental features, hazard lands, or the public interest.
- 13.1.7 Where lands qualifying as Environmental Reserve are unsuitable for public use, the MD may require an Environmental Reserve Easement instead. This may include lands with steep slopes, unstable soils, erosion hazards, flood risk, contamination risk, sensitive ecosystems, unique natural features, poor access, land use conflicts, restoration needs, or natural resource extraction areas.

## **13.2 EMERGENCY SERVICES**

Emergency services include fire prevention, rescue response, disaster and emergency management, bylaw enforcement, development compliance, and traffic enforcement. The provision of safe, reliable, and accessible emergency services is an essential component of healthy communities and contributes to the safety, confidence, and well-being of residents, businesses, and visitors. The MD recognizes that effective emergency response depends not only on trained personnel and equipment, but also on sound land use

planning, appropriate infrastructure, and coordinated regional partnerships. Development patterns, road design, access routes, addressing systems, water supply, and community design all play an important role in supporting timely and efficient emergency response.

**Objectives:**

- To protect public safety through the provision of effective, reliable, and accessible emergency services.
- To ensure land use planning and development decisions support safe and efficient emergency response.
- To maintain appropriate emergency access, addressing systems, and transportation connections for residents, businesses, and responders.
- To encourage collaboration with neighbouring municipalities, provincial agencies, emergency responders, and enforcement agencies.
- To promote community awareness, preparedness, and resilience in relation to emergencies and disasters.

**Policies:**

- 13.2.1 The MD of Willow Creek shall support the provision of effective, reliable, and accessible emergency services, including fire protection, rescue response, emergency management, bylaw enforcement, and related protective services, in accordance with available resources, adopted service levels, and Council priorities.
- 13.2.2 The MD shall seek to maintain emergency service capacity that is responsive to current needs and adaptable to future growth, changing risks, and evolving service demands and may review and update emergency service standards, policies, and operational practices from time to time to improve effectiveness, efficiency, and community safety.
- 13.2.3 The MD shall continue to require and manage the rural civic addressing system, wayfinding, and property identification systems that enable emergency responders to locate properties quickly and accurately.
- 13.2.4 New subdivision and development shall provide legal and physical access that is suitable for emergency vehicles and public safety operations. Secondary access, emergency egress routes, or alternate connections may be required where warranted by the scale, location, density, or risk profile of a proposed development.
- 13.2.5 The MD recognizes the importance of collaboration with neighbouring municipalities, fire departments, emergency management agencies, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Alberta Sheriffs, Community Peace Officers and other response partners to strengthen regional emergency capacity and improve coordination during emergencies.

13.2.6 The MD of Willow Creek shall ensure that communities are planned and serviced in a manner that supports effective emergency response, enhances public safety, and maintains the municipality as a safe and resilient place to live, work, and invest.

### **13.3 PARKS, PATHWAYS AND RECREATION**

Parks and recreational amenities contribute significantly to the health, well-being, and quality of life of residents, support social connection and community identity, attract visitors, and enhance the overall desirability of the MD of Willow Creek as a place to live, work, and invest. The MD recognizes that parks, pathways, playgrounds, sports fields, community halls, and other recreation facilities are valuable public assets that serve residents of all ages and abilities. In a rural municipality, recreation opportunities may include both formal facilities and informal access to natural landscapes, river valleys, open spaces, and regional destinations. It is the intent of the MD to support a diverse, accessible, and sustainable system of parks, pathways, and recreation amenities that reflects community needs, growth patterns, and available resources.

#### **Objective:**

- To maintain and enhance existing parks, trails, recreation facilities, and public open spaces.
- To encourage healthy, active lifestyles through accessible recreation opportunities and outdoor spaces.
- To support recreation opportunities that reflect the rural character of the MD, including formal and informal recreation uses.
- To encourage partnerships with community organizations, neighbouring municipalities, schools, volunteer groups, and other agencies to expand recreation opportunities and shared facilities.

#### **Policies:**

13.3.1 The MD of Willow Creek will endeavour to maintain healthy and connected communities, preserve access to outdoor recreation, strengthen community well-being, and ensure that parks, pathways, and recreation amenities continue to serve present and future generations.

36.3.2 The MD will continue to encourage partnerships with community organizations, schools, neighbouring municipalities, volunteer groups, provincial agencies, and private landowners to expand recreation opportunities, improve shared facilities, and maximize the value of public investment.

13.3.3 Municipal Reserve, School Reserve, Municipal and School Reserve, cash-in-lieu funds, or other available tools may be used to acquire, develop, or improve parks and open spaces in accordance with applicable legislation.

- 13.3.4 The MD of Willow Creek shall encourage the development and maintenance of pathways, trails, sidewalks, and multi-use routes that improve connectivity in hamlets between parks, schools, recreation facilities, community hubs, and natural areas where feasible.
- 13.3.5 Multi-use and shared facilities with schools, neighbouring municipalities, community associations, or private organizations are encouraged where feasible and the municipality may support recreation programming, events, and tourism initiatives that enhance community life and economic activity.
- 13.3.6 The MD shall encourage partnerships with community groups, volunteer organizations, provincial agencies, and private landowners to expand recreation opportunities and improve facilities.

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