

SECTION 14: TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE

The transportation system within the MD of Willow Creek is comprised of municipal roads, provincial highways, airports, railway corridors, bridges, and related transportation infrastructure, all of which play a vital role in supporting the movement of people, goods, services, and agricultural products throughout the municipality and beyond. A safe, efficient, and well-connected transportation network is essential to the continued growth, economic development, emergency response capacity, and overall quality of life within the MD of Willow Creek.

14.1 TRANSPORTATION

Transportation infrastructure also serves as a key link between hamlets, rural residents, agricultural operations, industrial areas, neighbouring municipalities, and regional markets. Reliable transportation routes are critical to supporting farming and ranching activities, tourism, resource development, local businesses, and access to community services such as schools, recreation facilities, and healthcare. It is the intent of the MD of Willow Creek to continue to plan and manage transportation infrastructure in a manner that balances mobility, safety, and economic opportunity.

Objectives:

- To maintain a transportation network that meets the needs of MD of Willow Creek users and provides efficient and effective connections and routes through the Municipality.
- To liaise with Alberta Transportation and Economic Corridors regarding any transportation routes of mutual interest or jurisdiction.
- To coordinate local, provincial and national transportation objectives.
- To prepare and adopt transportation master plans as prescribed by good planning practice.

Policies:

- 14.1.1 Municipal transportation decisions shall consider current and future travel demand, agricultural needs, goods movement, development patterns, and the protection of sensitive lands and natural features.
- 14.1.2 The MD of Willow Creek supports the preparation and ongoing review of a Transportation Master Plan or similar strategic planning documents to establish priorities, identify infrastructure needs, coordinate capital investment, and guide the orderly expansion and improvement of the transportation system.
- 14.1.3 Development adjacent to local roads and provincial highways should occur in a manner which allows for the safe operation and the future up-grading of these routes, and the MD shall ensure that service roads and limited access points are provided as the need arises.

- 14.1.4 The MD of Willow Creek will continue to collaborate with the Government of Alberta, neighbouring municipalities, transportation providers, industry, and other stakeholders to support an integrated, efficient, and sustainable regional transportation network..

14.2 AIRPORT

It is the intent of the MD to support the continued development, protection, and long-term viability of the Claresholm Airport as an important transportation, economic development, and community asset. The airport is recognized as a strategic component of the regional transportation network that supports aviation services, business activity, emergency response, tourism, training opportunities, and access to the municipality and surrounding region. Future airport development should respond to current and future aviation needs while maintaining safe and efficient operations.

Objectives:

- To support the continued operation, maintenance, and long-term viability of aviation facilities as necessary regional transportation assets.
- To promote aviation-related commercial, industrial, training, tourism, and service uses that complement airport operations and strengthen the local economy.
- To ensure airport development aligns with applicable federal, provincial, and municipal regulations, standards, and aviation requirements.
- To support infrastructure improvements related to roads, utilities, drainage, communications, and servicing required for airport growth.

Policies:

- 14.2.1 The MD of Willow Creek shall provide regulations in the Land Use Bylaw to control development in areas within and adjacent to existing airports, airstrips, aerodromes, and other recognized aviation activities to ensure the safe and efficient use of the facilities.
- 14.2.2 The MD shall protect the long-term function of the Claresholm Airport by ensuring that surrounding land uses are compatible with aviation activities and do not create safety hazards, operational constraints, or nuisance conflicts. Consideration shall be given to matters such as noise, building heights, lighting, wildlife attractants, access, and future expansion requirements.
- 14.2.3 The Claresholm Airport shall serve as a catalyst for economic opportunity through the attraction of aviation-related business, industrial activity, tourism services, training facilities, and other complementary development that benefits the local economy and broadens the municipal assessment base.

- 14.2.4 The MD of Willow Creek shall maintain the Claresholm Airport as a safe, efficient, and economically valuable facility.
- 14.2.5 The Municipality shall work collaboratively with regional partners and stakeholders to investigate opportunities for a potential name change to the Claresholm Airport that strengthens the identity and recognition of the facility within southern Alberta.

14.3 MUNICIPAL UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE

The MD recognizes that municipal infrastructure and community assets are essential to supporting safe, healthy, and vibrant communities and to enhancing the quality of life for citizens. Utilities and other municipal assets provide the foundation for economic activity, community well-being, and long-term growth. It is the intent of the MD to plan, protect, and maintain its infrastructure and community assets in a fiscally responsible and sustainable manner. Growth and development shall be aligned with the level of infrastructure and municipal services that can be provided efficiently, reasonably, and economically, having regard for the municipality's operational capacity and lifecycle costs.

Objectives:

- To protect, maintain, renew, and enhance municipal infrastructure and community assets.
- To promote efficient use of existing infrastructure and prioritize development in areas where services are available or can be economically extended.
- To pursue partnerships, grants, and other funding opportunities to improve infrastructure and community amenities.
- To ensure municipal assets continue to meet the evolving needs of residents, businesses, and visitors.

Policies:

- 14.3.1 The MD of Willow Creek may prepare or update infrastructure master plans, asset management plans, capital plans, and servicing strategies to guide future investment and maintenance decisions with the goal of maintaining long-term affordability and service reliability for residents, businesses, and the municipality.
- 14.3.2 The MD shall seek to protect, maintain, renew, and upgrade municipal infrastructure in accordance with Council priorities, asset management practices, available funding, and identified service needs.
- 14.3.3 The MD of Willow Creek recognizes the importance of services delivered by other agencies, utilities, and organizations, and shall work cooperatively with those entities to support coordinated service provision while not assuming responsibility for services outside its jurisdiction.

- 14.3.4 Developers will be required to provide, fund, or contribute to on-site and off-site infrastructure improvements necessary to support proposed development.
- 14.3.5 The MD of Willow Creek shall continue to pursue grants, partnerships, cost-sharing agreements, and collaboration with private, community, regional, and provincial partners to improve infrastructure and community amenities.
- 14.3.6 Community assets shall be managed in a manner that supports accessibility, safety, functionality, and continued public benefit. Priority will be given to the efficient use of existing infrastructure and public investment before extending services to new growth areas where feasible.