



THE SUMMER VILLAGES OF ITASKA, SUNDANCE BEACH,
GOLDEN DAYS AND LEDUC COUNTY ICF AND IDP
PREPARATION PROJECT

PHASE 1 - PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

October 2018
In Collaboration with
Nichols Applied Management



1 INTRODUCTION

The following document provides a high-level background to the work that has been completed to date for the Summer Villages of the summer villages of Itaska, Sundance beach, Golden Days and Leduc County ICF and IDP preparation project (Summer Villages and Leduc County ICF and IDP project). It provides councillors and other readers with a snapshot of what we have heard to date from members of administration, stakeholders like land owners, developers and advocacy organizations and local residents.

1.1 Work completed to date

To date, a number of activities have been undertaken to better understand the IDP area and capture public feedback. These include:

- Administration site tour;
- Staff Interviews with members of all four municipalities;
- Stakeholder workshop; and
- Public open house.

1.2 Purpose

The following sections summarize the results heard to date. It is intended that these notes serve as background information to the upcoming Joint Council Workshop planned for November 1st to provide the relevant municipal councils a chance for input on the land use concept ahead of initial drafting of the bylaw.

2 SITE TOUR

The consultant team (GSA Consulting) met with staff from the summer villages and county to tour the site area in early August. During the tour we visited the different communities, key properties of interest in the IDP area and talked with locals who approached the team.

Key properties identified:

- TAG Lands – proposed resort recreation area north of Golden Days.
- Carrington parcel – underdeveloped lands identified for resort recreation accessed through Golden Days.
- Vine Avenue - fire break and emergency access in Sundance Beach.
- Audobon lands – natural area and privately-owned conservation area in Itaska Beach.
- Mission Beach Community Park – nearest publicly owned lake access in the IDP area.
- Camp Bar-V-Nok – youth camp and retreat located in Golden Days which leases the largest undeveloped parcel in Golden Days.

3 EMERGING THEMES

As part of our background analysis we interviewed a number of municipal staff on various project aspects related to both the IDP and ICF. They included: CAOs of summer villages, development, regional, and long-range planners, and engineering staff. In addition, we held a stakeholder workshop and public open house to gather feedback in a group setting. The following are some of the key themes that were identified by the public and administration:

1. Preserving and allowing agricultural and related uses to remain within the IDP area.
2. Maintaining and protecting environmentally sensitive areas while balancing development rights of landowners.
3. Managing impacts of future country residential developments on the lake; natural areas, amenities and existing communities.
4. Managing impacts of future resort residential developments on the lake; natural areas, amenities and existing communities.
5. Identifying key environmental management areas including wildfire management, riparian area setbacks, limiting nutrient and pollutant inputs into Pigeon Lake.
6. Managing access to the lake for boat launches and launch storage for visitors and backlot residents.
7. Providing non-vehicular trail access between the summer villages and residential subdivisions.
8. Limiting public vehicular access through the communities to stop shortcutting and speeding traffic.
9. Providing opportunities for secondary emergency vehicle access during emergencies.
10. Limited desire to expand municipal water services into the IDP area.
11. Mixed feedback on whether existing and future communities should connect to the Northeast Pigeon Lake Regional Wastewater Line to the Mulhurst Lagoon.
12. Improving stormwater management systems in existing communities and mandating rigorous stormwater management plans in new developments.
13. There was mixed feedback about the success of the North Pigeon Lake ASP regarding the amount of development it allows and its environmental management policies.

The following are some of the themes related to plan administration including:

1. The plan boundary has roughly been aligned with the Pigeon Lake watershed boundary to the north to better manage environmental impacts on the lake.
2. The west plan boundary is limited to Highway 771.
3. The summer villages felt that they were adequately notified of major developments on County lands. Generally, there was little notification from summer village to county because of the small scale of development in the summer villages.
4. The summer villages were clear that plan administration mechanisms (including review, dispute resolution and referrals should respect their smaller administrative capacity.

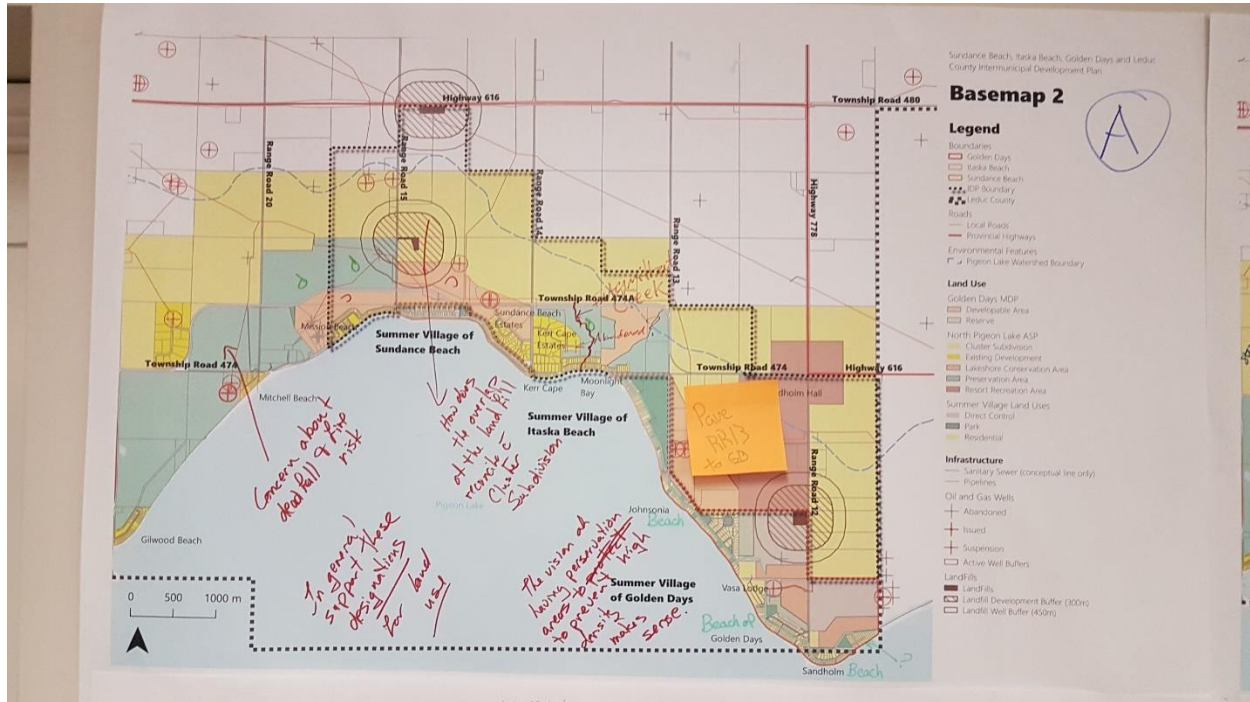
4 KEY ASPIRATIONS

Several aspirations were identified from interviews with municipal staff and discussions with members of each community. The aspirations identified are summarized below for each municipality. Please note that these are the aspirations as identified by staff and consultants and may not necessarily represent the official aspirations of the municipalities.

- Golden Days
 - Maintained Autonomy
 - Managing development around the lake (pressure on residents and lake)
 - Improved communication between administrations
 - Understand future development to enable infrastructure planning
 - Managing local trouble spots for drainage and speeding
- Sundance Village and Itaska Beach
 - Limited desire to connect to the regional wastewater line (Sundance Beach).
 - Ensuring enforcement on land use compliance issues on properties neighbouring the summer village.
 - Maintaining an adequate buffer between the summer villages and future development.
- Leduc County
 - Identify development policies for lands designated as agricultural within the North Pigeon Lake ASP.
 - Allow development in an environmentally sensitive way.
 - Identify future road maintenance planning in the IDP area.
 - Identify opportunities for trails connections throughout the IDP area.

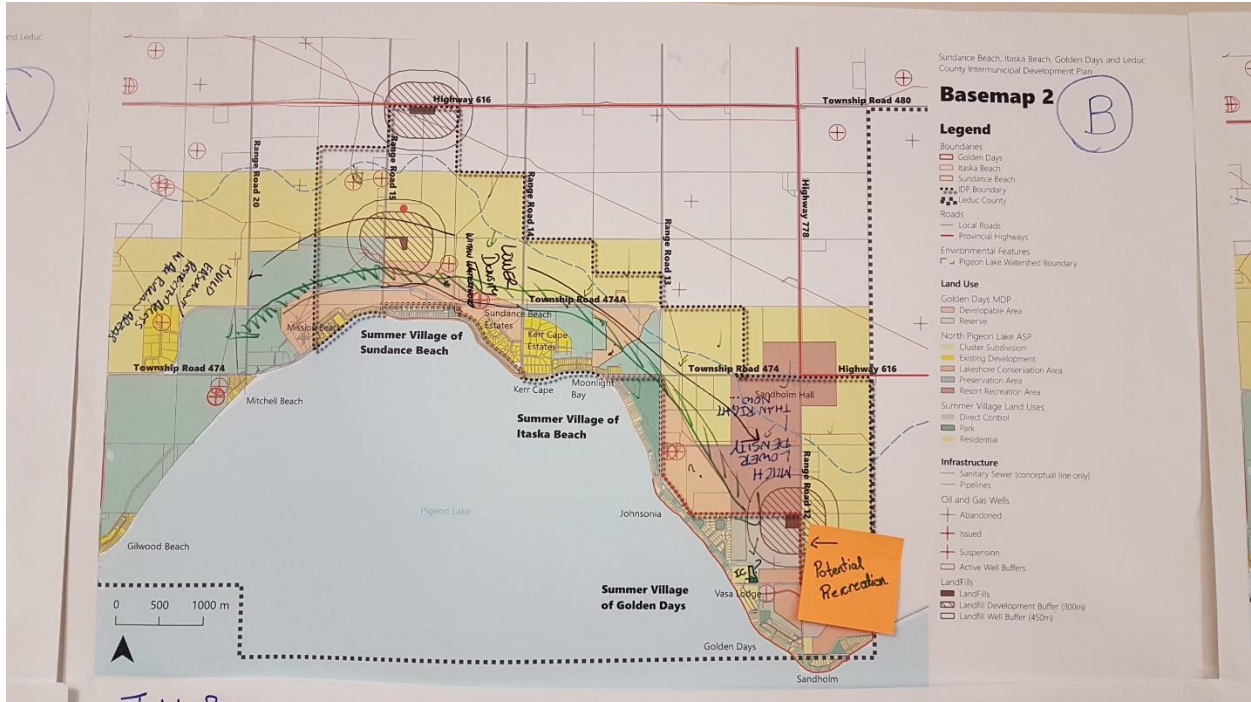
5 STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP SCENARIOS

The following photos are the conceptual draft land use scenarios developed by participants at the workshop session held in August.



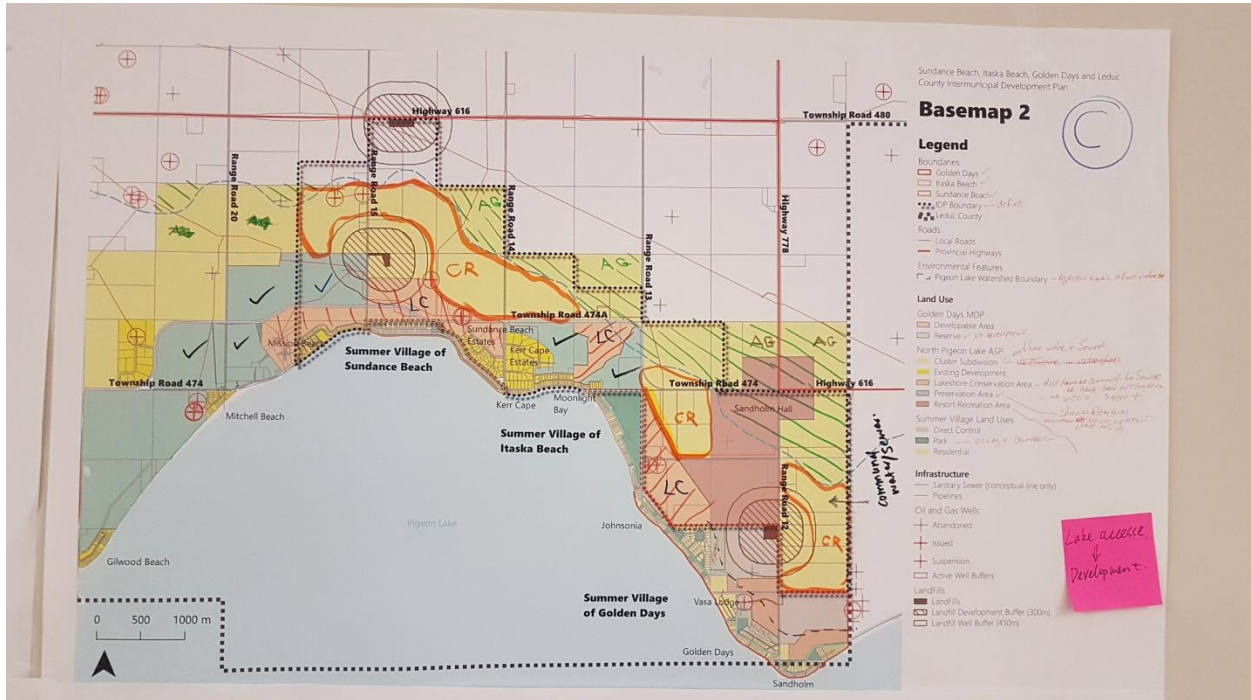
Scenario A – Key Features

- Concern about potential wildfire risk in preservation areas.
- Consider paving range road 13.
- Generally, in agreement that the NPLASP designations are appropriate.



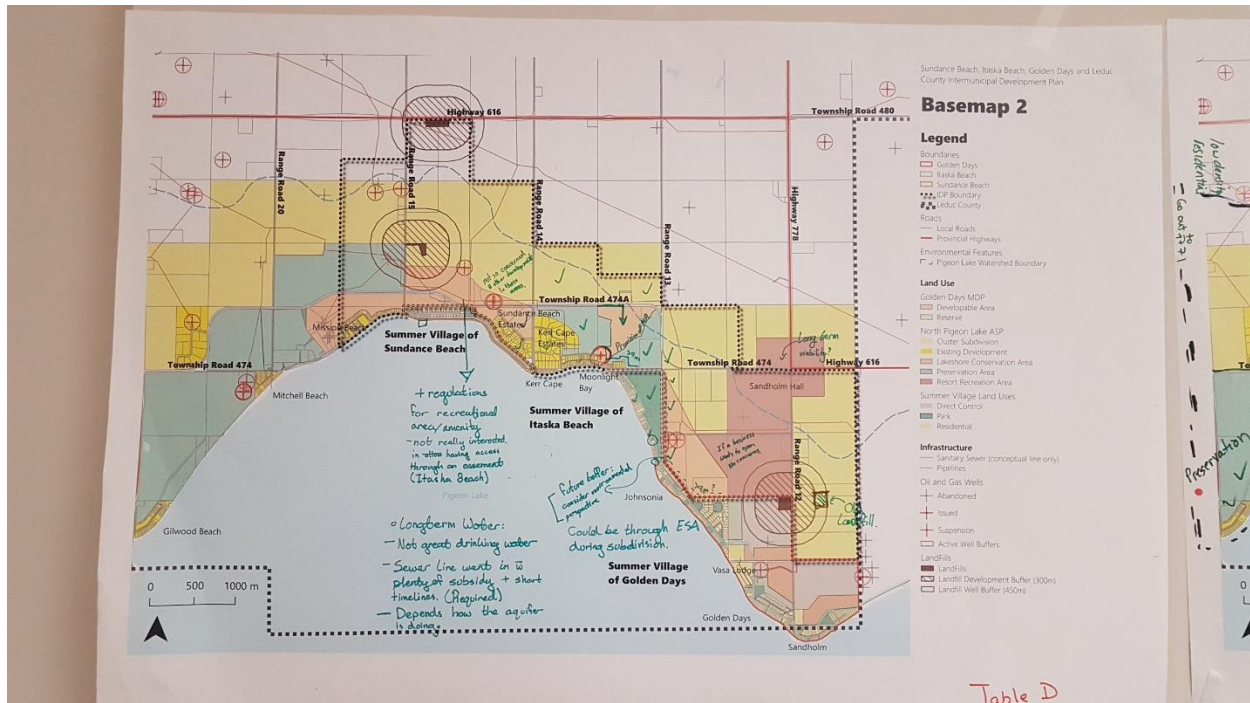
Scenario B - Key Features

- Lower allowed development density in IDP area.
- "Much lower" development density in the resort recreation area
- Establish development and access restrictions for all riparian areas.
- Establish a green-boundary adjacent to all existing communities.



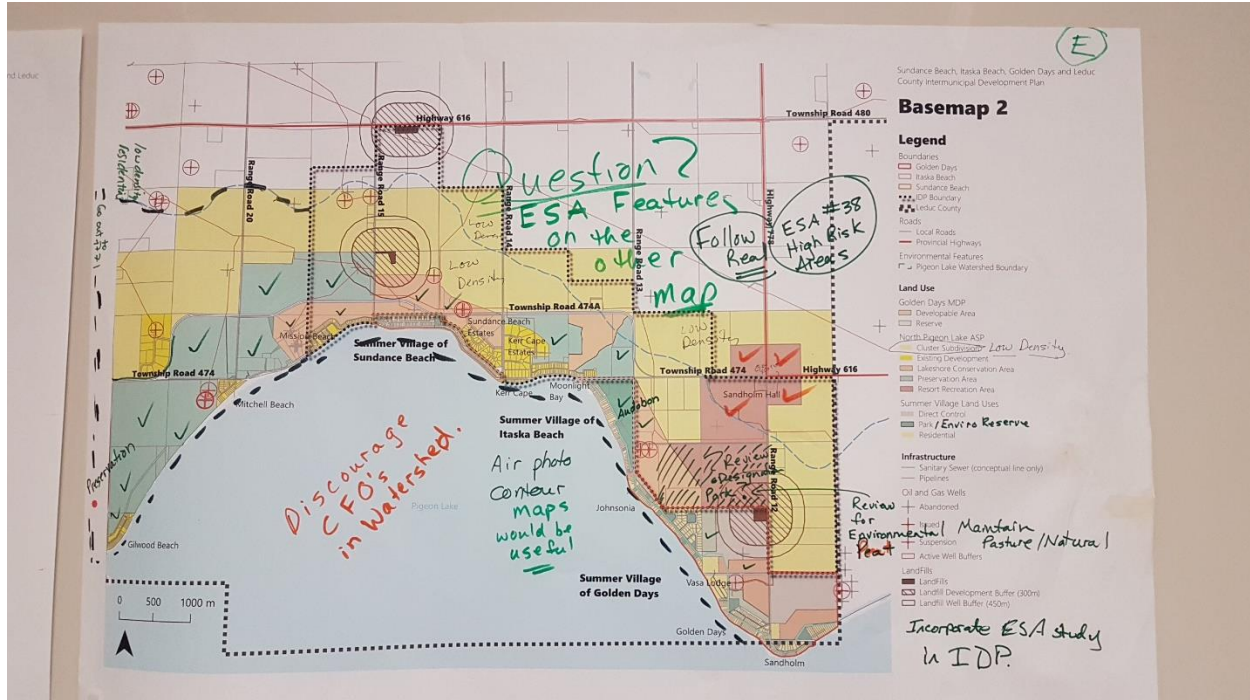
Scenario C – Key Features

- No cluster development outside of the watershed boundary. Designate as agricultural land.
- Agreement with preservation area designation.



Scenario D – Key Features

- Consider natural buffer between existing developments.
- Primarily concerned with what would happen directly adjacent to the existing subdivisions. Outside of those areas are of less interest.
- Consider the long-term implementation of a regional water line.



Scenario E – Key Features

- Discourage CFOs within the watershed.¹
- Extend western boundary to Highway 771.
- Review designation of resort recreation area north of Golden Days.
- Encourage additional environmental research of those areas for peat and development potential.

¹ The final decision regarding CFOs does not lie with the municipalities.

6 SUMMARY OF WHAT WE HEARD

These sections provide a more detailed summary of the different emerging themes.

6.1 Agricultural and Related Uses

- There was some confusion that the lands within the IDP area are designated as future cluster subdivision but are currently agricultural. This can be remedied through continued education and proper display of maps.
- Recognition that there are impacts of agricultural runoff in the watershed area but that there is little appetite or ability to influence the agricultural use of fertilizers or run-off management.
- Stated desire to limit Confined Feeding Operations within the watershed boundary.
- Leduc County staff were interested in ensuring sensible development of agricultural lands.

6.2 Environmentally Sensitive Areas

- Environmentally Sensitive Areas
 - The Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA) report completed in 2015 by Leduc County indicates two ESAs within the IDP boundary.
 - The first ESA, known as the Pigeon Lake ESA, is located on county lands to the north of Golden Days. These lands are also designated as the areas with the most development potential in the North Pigeon Lake ASP.
 - There was concern from the public that development of those sensitive lands would negatively impact the lake and local environment.
 - The proposed policies in the Draft Leduc County MDP indicate that for any development on lands within an ESA will require additional geotechnical or environmental planning at the development/subdivision stage.
 - Other participants indicated that there was a desire protect and preserve environmental areas while also allowing development when it made sense.

6.3 Country Residential Developments

- Country residential developments are generally multi-lot residential subdivisions with lots sized large enough to contain on-site services.
- Proposed Developments
 - Not many proposed developments in the last 5-10 years.
 - There was an outline plan submitted to the north of Sundance Beach which has not being pursued at this time.
 - The North Pigeon Lake ASP identifies a need to consider lakeshore access during the design of new residential developments.
- Existing Developments
 - There are several country residential subdivisions in the IDP area.
 - They are serviced by on-site water and wastewater systems.

- Of the existing residential subdivisions, only residents in Sundance Beach Estates have existing agreements with Sundance Beach for access to lakeshore and boat hoist storage.

6.4 Resort Residential Expansion

- Resort residential developments are higher density residential areas with collective wastewater management facilities. The North Pigeon Lake ASP identifies two major areas for additional resort residential developments.
- Proposed Developments
 - Not many in the last 5-10 years.
 - Two major recreation resort developments have been proposed but did not receive approval or have not proceeded.
 - Watermere – Recreation Resort Development located on the west of the IDP area.
 - TAG Group – Recreation Resort Development located north of Golden Days.

6.5 Environmental Management

- Wildfire Risk
 - Wildfire Risk was raised as a potential long-term consideration for this plan.
 - Participants indicated several sites might be potential wildfire risks including the provincial park and Audubon lands in Itaska Beach.
 - Itaska Beach has recently completed a wildfire study that recommended measures to limit wildfire risk in the area.
- Riparian Areas
 - Suggestion is to establish policies to use easements or restrictions to protect riparian areas in the IDP.
 - Standard policy is to use Environmental Reserve to conserve 30m buffers surrounding waterbodies.
 - That land can be used for public access and recreation.
- Health of the lake
 - Participant comments were generally consistent that additional efforts should be taken to improve the health of the lake.
 - Potential goals included protecting existing wetlands to buffer the lake from contaminants and runoff, limiting residential fertilizer use, or through adopting a 'no net new phosphorous' strategy that manages additional nutrient input into the lake.

6.6 Recreation

- Lake Access
 - Lake access was a contentious issue for residents in the summer villages.
 - Residents were generally concerned that additional developments in the vicinity result in people accessing the lake through their communities and using the public utility lots designated for different lots.

- In addition, residents were concerned that additional developments would generally mean more users on the lake putting recreational pressure on the lake.
- The summer villages were clear that they were not interested in offering public access to the lake through their communities.
- There is currently a public access area located in Mission Beach which some residents noted was poorly maintained.
- Trail Connections
 - Vehicle access between the communities has been restricted in the past to stop drivers from cutting through the communities and as such only trail connections exist between the Summer Villages and other communities along Pigeon Lake.
 - There was some desire from the County to encourage the development and maintenance of a trail connection through the IDP area including the summer villages as part of a county-wide recreational trail network.
 - In this area it would connect to the Trans Canada Trail and the Kiskayo Trail which run along the shore of Pigeon Lake.

6.7 Transportation

- Transportation Access
 - Transportation access into the IDP area is generally adequate.
 - Golden Days has requested that Leduc County undertake maintenance work on Range Road 14 into the Summer Village.
 - Golden Days has an agreement with Leduc County to clear snow from RR12 into Golden Days.
 - All three summer villages showed a clear preference to limit vehicle access between the communities to reduce shortcutting and speeding through the communities.
- Emergency access:
 - Sundance has emergency access gates.
 - No emergency access through Itaska or Golden Days
 - Sundance Beach also provides secondary emergency access along a grassy back lot adjacent to the residential areas.
 - There was some concern that additional development in the area would deteriorate the roads in the area.

6.8 Utilities and Services

- Future infrastructure services
 - Broadly, it was felt that the extension of municipal water services into the IDP area is outside of the aspirations of the municipalities and residents at this time.
 - There appears to be little appetite for expanding sewer connections into the subdivisions on County lands or into Sundance Beach.

- Current policies in the North Pigeon Lake ASP indicate that all cluster subdivisions must be developed to be *able* to connect to municipal/regional water services in the future.
- Wastewater Management
 - Policies for wastewater management are different in the different municipalities with regard to wastewater management.
 - Golden Days and Itaska are connected to the Mulhurst Lagoon in Westaskiwin County as part of the Northeast Pigeon Lake Regional Wastewater Line
 - Lots in Sundance and the existing residential communities on County land are individually serviced through septic tanks.
 - Sundance Beach has recently undertaken a program to check its resident’s septic tanks for leaks and begun to address issues.
- Stormwater Management
 - Generally, there was agreement that more could be done to manage and clean stormwater before it reached Pigeon Lake
 - The Summer Villages have graded swales and culverts that drain surface water into the lake.
 - It is important to protect the quality of the lake by slowing runoff into the surrounding riparian areas There are also a number of streams and riparian areas in the IDP area.

6.9 Social and Economic Development

- Some residents indicated a concern about the long-term viability of the commercial spaces in the area.
- Participants at the open houses indicated that they would usually go into ‘town’ ie. Thorsby or Mulhurst if they needed to purchase something while at the lake.

6.10 Planning Tools

- Plan Hierarchy:
 - According to the MGA, all land use plans must clearly state their hierarchy in relation to other plans.
 - The IDP will be an overarching policy document to the MDPs in the area, the North Pigeon Lake ASP and other Local Area Structure Plans.
 - As such, if the North Pigeon Lake ASP is not consistent with the IDP then it would have to be amended.
- North Pigeon Lake ASP
 - Feelings were mixed about the success of the North Pigeon Lake ASP.
 - The NPLASP was seen as having received significant engagement when it was created.
 - Feelings were mixed about whether the land uses proposed in the ASP were appropriate to protect the health of the lake.

- Some participants felt that the density allowed in the Resort Recreation Policy areas should be lowered given their proximity to sensitive areas and the lake.
- Landowners of those parcels indicated that the IDP should provide sufficient flexibility in terms of density and use to allow them to meet market demands.

7 PLAN ADMINISTRATION MECHANISMS

7.1 IDP Boundary:

- Initial Boundary
 - North boundary aligned with the Pigeon Lake watershed.
 - Initial border lines were aligned with existing property lines.
 - The west boundary of the IDP was limited to the extent of Mission Beach.
- Proposed Boundary
 - The initial boundary was expanded after the open house to include lands east of Highway 771 and not split lands under the same ownership.
 - Although it was suggested that the entire watershed boundary be considered this was not pursued because the watershed extends farther into Leduc County than would be reasonable and because development in those areas is expected to be less intensive than closer to the lake.

7.2 Review and Referral Process for Development Applications and Plans

- Current notification: There was consistency that the summer villages felt that the County was good at notifying the summer villages. when development permits were applied for within the Intermunicipal Fringe Area.
 - Consistently, the summer villages didn't notify the County of development permit application because most of their applications are for small, lot by lot changes.
 - Summer Villages noted that usually the notifications received from the County were simply brought to Councils attention and filed.
 - In the past there have been controversial developments that have received pushback from citizens in adjacent municipalities. To date, these developments have not gone through but engagement included letter writing from Councils and residents and attendance at open houses.
- Future Notification:
 - Consistency that the groups would like to notify through the normal process (21-day referral period)
 - Summer Villages and County were interested in receiving applications that were either larger, or outside of what is envisioned in the plan.

7.3 Intermunicipal Dispute Resolution

- The summer villages were clear that they preferred a process which respected their internal administrative capacity.
- There was some concern on behalf of the summer villages that if too much decision-making authority was transferred as part of the IDP, that their autonomy would be challenged.

7.4 Monitoring and Review

- Review/Plan Period:
 - Generally, all staff interviewed felt that a 20-year plan horizon was acceptable.
 - Review periods varied somewhat between three (to give each council an opportunity to make changes) and five years (standard).
 - The summer villages clearly indicated a preference in general for longer times between review periods to acknowledge their administrative capacity.