

**TOWN OF  
PONOKA**  
*2013 Municipal Development Plan*



Background Information and Analysis Report

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# SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Enabling Legislation

The Municipal Government Act requires all municipalities with a population of 3,500 or more to adopt a Municipal Development Plan. This section outlines the mandatory contents as well as additional content for a MDP. Specific attention must be paid to Section 636(1) of the Municipal Government Act which governs statutory plan preparation and the requirement of Council to notify the public of details of the plan preparation and provide them with the opportunity to make suggestions, be represented and offer input. Notification was also given to school and other local authorities with jurisdiction in the area and adjacent municipalities.

The 2013 MDP replaces the 1997 Town of Ponoka Municipal Development Plan adopted by bylaw on February 25, 1997.

## 1.2 Introduction

Nestled in the picturesque and lush Battle River Valley, the Town of Ponoka is a mid-sized community located in central Alberta, with a population of 6,773 residents (2011 census). Ideally located along the thriving Calgary – Edmonton Corridor, the town's central location is an important factor to historical growth and its future prosperity. The Town has affordable housing, essential amenities including schools, hospitals, retail services, cultural and recreational facilities and benefits from a stable and diversified economy. Large employers in the region include oil and gas exploration and servicing, healthcare services, manufacturing, transportation services, agricultural production, as well as agricultural services.

Business and industry benefit from outstanding access to three major transportation corridors, including the Queen Elizabeth II Highway which is the major route connecting Alberta's two major cities and the international route leading from the United States to Alberta. Calgary is 2 hours south, Red Deer is just 30 minutes to the south and Edmonton is 1 hour north. Ponoka is well situated at the crossroads of Highways 2A and 53 with Highway 53 being the service link to agricultural areas and to surrounding oil fields. As a result of annexation in 2011 the Town's boundaries are now directly adjacent to the Queen E II Highway.

Ponoka's Industrial Airport (Labrie Field – registered as Aerodrome CEH3) is the local industrial airport located immediately south of Ponoka on Highway 2A. It is served by a newly implemented GPS Instrument Approach system, maintenance facilities and a 941 meter (3,088 feet) paved runway. An added advantage to Ponoka's airport is that it is the only airport in central Alberta with CANPASS service which allows aircraft to quickly clear customs between Canada and the United States locally rather than at Edmonton or Calgary. The Edmonton International Airport is just 45 minutes away. (*Map 1: Regional Location*)

The Town was officially named "Ponoka" in 1891 when the first train owned by the Calgary and Edmonton Railway Company passed through town. Although the station house is no

longer present on site, the rail line still exists today with a Town owned spur line operating in the North East Industrial Park.

The Town is home to a state of the art centre for treatment of psychiatric disorders and those who have suffered brain injuries, the MacEwan University School of Registered Psychiatric Nursing Program, an internationally recognized agricultural auction facility, known as the “cattle capital of Canada”, one of western Canada’s largest professional 7 day annual rodeos, and a newly constructed agricultural event centre. Overall, the community has experienced steady growth over the last decade and continues to thrive.

### 1.3 Purpose, Duration and Scope

The Municipal Development Plan (MDP) is the Town of Ponoka’s primary land use policy statement that will be used to guide future growth and development. The purpose of the MDP is to state the community’s vision, goals, objectives and high-level policies to guide and coordinate future urban growth decisions. It sets forth a set of land use concepts and policies to achieve appropriate development of both public and private lands and directs the Town’s future physical, social, and economic development for the next decade. The Municipal Government Act of Alberta (Section 632(3) states:

(3) A municipal development plan:

(a) must address

- (i) the future land use within the municipality,
- (ii) the manner of and proposals for future development in the municipality,
- (iii) the coordination of land use, future growth patterns and other infrastructure with adjacent municipalities if there is no inter-municipal development with respect to those matters in those municipalities,
- (iv) the provision of required transportation systems either generally or specifically within the municipality and in relation to adjacent municipalities, and
- (v) the provision of municipal services and facilities either generally or specifically,

The scope of the MDP includes a discussion of current conditions; a community vision; projected future requirements; and the goals, objectives, and policies, which affect the environmental, economic, and social health of the community. Included in the 2013 MDP update are the lands resulting from the successful annexation of 396 hectares (978 acres) from Ponoka County into the Town of Ponoka in 2011. These lands require preplanning for municipal servicing and to identify appropriate future land uses.

An important aspect and requirement of the Municipal Government Act is active involvement by the public to provide opportunities for them to make suggestions and representations during preparation of the MDP. At this period in time, January 2013, a public engagement process has not yet been undertaken.

The MDP is based on population projections using a base year of 2011 and will guide development activity and municipal investments in community infrastructure and

provide both short term and long term directions from the date of adoption and for 10 years into the future. The Plan makes provisions for monitoring and evaluation on an annual basis and recommends a major review every three years.

The Steering Committee was responsible for the following.

- Ensuring that the terms of reference for the development of the MDP are approved by Council and are met;
- Identifying issues and opportunities that needed to be addressed as part of the MDP;
- Facilitating meaningful public participation
- Participating in the formulation of goals, objectives and policies contained in the MDP;
- Recommending a final Municipal Development Plan for approval by Council; and
- Managing and addressing any other issues that arise during the planning process

#### 1.4 The Planning Process

The 2013 Municipal Development Plan has three components.

The first component is this document, the background information and analysis. It is not legally part of the MDP, but provides a factual and statistical background, and discusses existing and possible future land use policies.

The second component will contain the goals, objectives and policies that contribute to the provision of a wide range of economic development opportunities, thereby enhancing local employment and promoting a healthy and stable economy with specific attention to business retention and expansion and rejuvenation of the downtown. The Plan will consider the overall public interest while respecting the rights of individual citizens and property owners by ensuring undeveloped lands are designed to consider the long-term needs of the Town for physical, social, health and well-being, protective and recreational purposes. The plan will promote growth that takes advantage of previous public investments in the community such as roads, schools and infrastructure while ensuring development is sustainable and environmentally responsible.

The third component sets out how these goals, plans, and policies will be implemented. It will describe what mechanisms and instruments are available to Council to implement policies contained in the Plan. It will provide a framework for decision-making when establishing budget priorities, and set out how the Plan can be monitored and evaluated over time to allow for an orderly evaluation and amendment process.

The second and third components, policies and implementation, will be adopted by bylaw.

## SECTION 2: POPULATION TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS

This section provides a detailed examination of population trends and growth characteristics. Growth planning is the process of directing or guiding development to achieve predetermined goals. It involves the setting of goals for growth and the establishment of policies to achieve the goals. Population characteristics have also been analyzed to help understand their impact on planning considerations with regard to demand for housing, parks, community facilities and programming, and labour force demands.

Information regarding population trends, characteristics and comparables was obtained from a number of sources including Statistics Canada 2011 Census; 2010 Town of Ponoka Growth Study 2009 – 2059; 2012 Community Profile prepared by SMT Consulting; 2012 Master Servicing Study prepared by Tagish Engineering Ltd. and the 1997 Municipal Development Plan.

### 2.1 Historical Development

The word Ponoka is taken from the Blackfoot word meaning Elk. The first definite record of a native settlement is of Shoshoni or Snake Indians living in the area in the 1730's. The first white man known to visit the area was the famous explorer and cartographer David Thompson. On April 3, 1800 on his way to search for trade routes through the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean, he stood on the banks of the Battle River, about one mile west of modern day Ponoka. The Hudson's Bay Company established a fur trading post and store to provide supplies to settlers in the area. The post was temporarily fortified and named "Fort Ostell" during the tense days of the Riel Rebellion in 1883. The Company's stakes in the region were so great at the turn of the century that it actually owned the Ponoka town site.

In 1890 the Calgary and Edmonton Railway Company was formed. The right of way through this area was completed in the spring of 1891 and named Siding 14 and was where the 2<sup>nd</sup> station north of Red Deer would be placed. The Town was officially named "Ponoka" in 1891 when the first train operated by the Calgary and Edmonton Railway Company passed through the Town. Ponoka soon became home to a stream of settlers from Eastern Canada, the American Midwest and Europe. The settlers made their livelihood on the area's fine agricultural land and the settlement grew along the railway and Battle River into an important service centre. Since its incorporation in 1904, the Town of Ponoka has maintained its position as a service centre for the surrounding agricultural community. As one of the region's agricultural service centres, the Town of Ponoka is home to Canada's largest single day livestock auction and is home to the world famous annual Ponoka Stampede, featuring professional rodeo, chuck wagon races and other related activities.

On September 1, 1905 the Province of Alberta was formed. At this time then Premier Rutherford was considering establishing a hospital for the province's mentally ill citizens. In 1911, after the efforts of local citizens and the Premier's inspection of the area, an area just south of the Town of Ponoka was chosen as the hospital site and exists today as the Centennial Centre for Mental Health and Brain Injury. This facility is one of Canada's major psychiatric hospitals, recognized for its leading edge research in the area of brain injury and

rehabilitation treatment. Presently the Centennial Centre Ponoka continues to be a major employer in the Town of Ponoka.

## 2.2 Population Characteristics

### 2.2.1 Population Growth

Ponoka saw its greatest growth occur during the late 1940's and throughout the 1950's where the population grew from 1,468 in 1946 to 3,938 in 1961. This growth along with continued population expansion through the 1960's provided an increased need for more housing, services and recreation facilities. The 1970's brought stabilization but little growth was experienced between 1966 (4,421) and 1976 (4,642). The onset of the 1980's saw moderate growth. The population increase was sustained.

As part of undertaking annexation in 2009, the Town retained Armin A. Preiksaitis & Associates Ltd. to prepare a growth study to support the request to annex additional lands from Ponoka County. The following information and tables is representative of the 2009 – 2059 Growth Study.

The Town of Ponoka's historical population growth averages approximately 6.3% for every five (5) years based on the municipal census since 1976. Table 1 illustrates the historical population growth in Ponoka over the last 35 years.

**Table 1: Town of Ponoka, 35 year Population History 1976 - 2011**

Year	1976	1981	1986	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011
Population	4,442	5,221	5,473	5,861	6,149	6,335	6,576	6,773
Change		779	252	388	288	186	241	197
% Change		17.5 %	4.8%	7.1%	4.9%	3.0%	3.8%	3.0%

*Source: 2010 Town of Ponoka Growth Study 2009 – 2059 (page 13)*

The 2006 Canada census indicated a population of 6,576 with an average growth rate of 3.8% (1996 – 2006) for every five years or just less than 1% annually. The Town also observed significant growth in development activity during 2006 and 2007. According to the Growth Study, the census was conducted prior to the boom period during 2006 and 2007 and the resultant growth was therefore not captured by the 2006 census. In the most recent census (2011) the Town's population increased by 3% between 2006 and 2011 reaching 6,773.

### 2.2.2 Age – Sex Structure

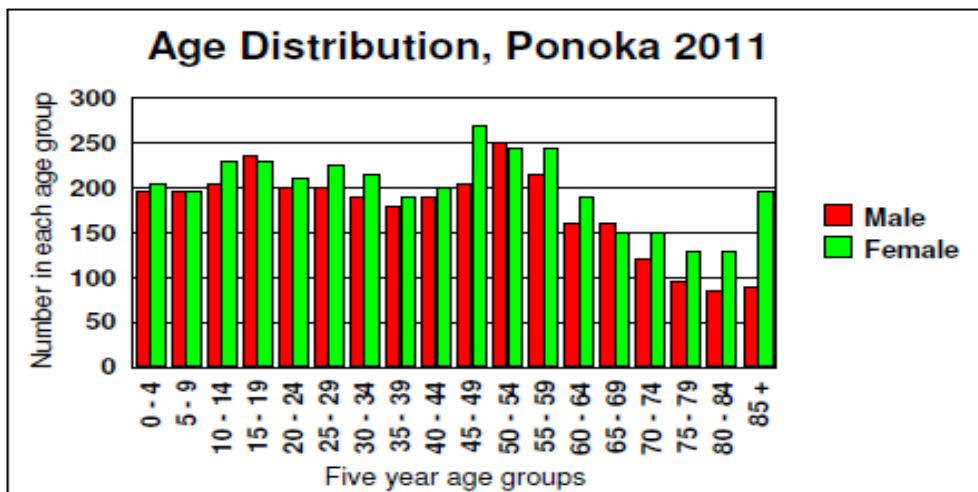
The following tables show population by five-year age groups for the Town of Ponoka as well as information relating to male / female populations.

**Table 2: 2011 Population by Age and Sex**

Age characteristics	Ponoka, T		
	Total	Male	Female
Total population by age groups <sup>4</sup>	6,775	3,175	3,600
0 to 4 years	400	195	205
5 to 9 years	390	195	195
10 to 14 years	435	205	230
15 to 19 years	460	235	230
15 years	100	40	55
16 years	85	45	40
17 years	110	55	55
18 years	85	40	40
19 years	80	45	40
20 to 24 years	410	200	210
25 to 29 years	425	200	225
30 to 34 years	400	190	215
35 to 39 years	375	180	190
40 to 44 years	390	190	200
45 to 49 years	475	205	270
50 to 54 years	495	250	245
55 to 59 years	460	215	245
60 to 64 years	350	160	190
65 to 69 years	310	160	150
70 to 74 years	270	120	150
75 to 79 years	225	95	130
80 to 84 years	210	85	130
85 years and over	290	90	195
Median age of the population <sup>5</sup>	41.1	39.6	42.6
% of the population aged 15 and over	81.9	81.2	82.5

Source: 2011 Statistics Canada

**Table 3: Age Distribution, Ponoka 2011**



\*2012 Statistics Canada

**Table 4: Population Percentage by Age, Ponoka and surrounding area**

Age	Town of Ponoka			Ponoka County			Central Alberta Region		
	2001	2006	2011	2001	2006	2011	2001	2006	2011
0-14	20%	18%	18%	23%	20%	19%	21%	19%	19%
15-24	13%	14%	13%	13%	14%	12%	15%	15%	14%
25-34	12%	12%	12%	9%	8%	9%	46%	14%	15%
35-54	28%	28%	25%	33%	33%	30%		31%	30%
55-64	8%	9%	13%	10%	13%	16%	6%	10%	11%
65+	19%	19%	19%	12%	12%	14%	12%	11%	11%

Source: 2012 Data Development Project Town of Ponoka

The most recent census figures for the Town of Ponoka show the largest demographic age group as being the “baby boomers” (40-64) at 32% who are closely followed by the youth component (0-19) at 31.7%. Young singles / professionals (20-39) are at 23.7% while the seniors’ component is at 19.2% (65+) of our current population. The aging population is expected to increase starting in 2011 as baby boomers begin to turn 65 and this growth is expected to continue into 2031, when all baby boomers will be over age 65.

The terms “age-friendly and aging in place” are terms now commonly used to address the changing populations. An age-friendly community is one where all individuals can be full and meaningful participants in their community regardless of their age or circumstances. “Aging in place” refers to the opportunity for people to remain in their homes or neighborhoods for as long as possible. The term “community for all ages” defines those communities that promote the well-being of children, youth and older adults, strengthen families, and provide opportunities for ongoing, mutually beneficial interaction among age groups.

## ***Planning Considerations: Age Friendly - A Community for all Ages***

- ***Land Use and Development Planning:***
  - *Promote mixed use development and diversified housing for all ages and physical capabilities allowing residents to “age in place”*
  - *Promote mixed land use to allow proximity to amenities*
  - *Encourage infill development and zoning to permit urban housing, such as live-work residences, and small units for seniors and bachelors including residences above commercial businesses*
  - *Promote walkability of community - address trail development and improvements, connectivity from the downtown to the Battle River Valley trail system and other neighborhoods, accompanying way finding signage, frequent inclusion of benches and rest areas and street lighting*
  - *Design age friendly infrastructure such as level sidewalks and curb design to accommodate all ages (strollers, wheelchairs, walkers)*
  - *Landscaping to create micro climates (wind, noise berms, frequency of benches)*
  - *Create micro climate environments – landscaping and tree planting that addresses low temperatures and blowing winds in winter and provide shade in the summer. These environments also soften the urban image and act as a noise buffers*
  - *Use crime prevention strategies through environmental design to enhance community safety for all ages*

As we go forward research and planning should be dedicated towards identifying the universal planning principles and practices that support the development and redevelopment of communities that are livable, sustainable, complete and inter-generational. Case studies can be utilized from other communities who have already realized the importance and priority of these planning principles and practices.

The Government of Alberta has found the benefits of age-friendly communities to be:

- Stronger community connections – residents are able and encouraged to actively participate in the community. This includes participation in the workforce, recreational opportunities, social activities and volunteer opportunities for people of all ages, backgrounds and circumstances
- More optimal use of public resources – designing and delivering public services in age-friendly ways can lead to improved use of tax dollars. Age-friendly public facilities and infrastructure (buildings, parks, sidewalks) can be used by more citizens and this helps the community get more value from public resources
- Greater opportunities for business - having an age-friendly business creates additional business opportunities for owners and provides more attractive employment opportunities for mature or disabled workers. (addresses aging population and labour shortages to come)
- Enhanced citizenship – pursuing age-friendliness leads to a community that recognizes, appreciates and values the contributions made by different members of the community and engages them in all aspects of community life at all ages and stages of life

## 2.2.3 Household Income

### Income Characteristics

#### *Observations related to 2006 statistics:*

- average earnings for individuals increased about 20% across the Town and County
- less than 20% of households across the Ponoka Region have a household income of under \$40,000 per year, and 22% of households earn more than \$60,000 per year
- government transfers account for 10% of income earned across the Ponoka Region
- other income which includes a range of retirement sources increased by 4.1% in the Town and 7.4% in the County

**Table 5: Income of Individuals, 2010**

	Ponoka	Alberta
Number of people aged 15+	5,215	2888735
With income	5,020	2750335
Average income	\$41,050	\$41,962
Worked full time all year	1,590	1133280
Average employment income	\$59,044	\$69,438

*Source: National Household Survey, 2011*

**Table 6: Income of Households, 2010**

	Ponoka		Alberta	
Number of private households	2,785	100%	1,390,280	
Average pre-tax household income	\$73,948		\$100,819	
Pre-tax household income groups:				
Under \$20,000	320	11%	131,010	9%
\$20,000 to \$29,999	250	9%	87,985	6%
\$30,000 to \$39,999	375	13%	122,290	9%
\$40,000 to \$49,999	155	6%	100,165	7%
\$50,000 to \$59,999	200	7%	100,965	7%
\$60,000 to \$79,999	415	15%	184,540	13%
\$80,000 to \$99,999	355	13%	166,110	12%
\$100,000 to \$124,999	285	10%	158,540	11%
\$125,000 to \$149,999	200	7%	113,010	8%
\$150,000 and over	220	8%	245,665	18%

*Source: National Household Survey 2011*

Table 7: Incidence of Low Income

Note: the definition of Low Income has changed from the 2006 census, and is not the same as the Low Income Cut-off (LICO). This is a new measure.

	Ponoka		Alberta
Population in private households	6,435		376,820
Number with low income	845	13%	13%

Source: National Household Survey 2011

## 2.2.4 Education Levels

The 2011 National Household Survey counted 3,335 people in Ponoka aged 25 to 64, which takes in most of the working population. Their level of education was as follows:

**Table 8 - Highest Level of Education, Population Aged 25-64, Ponoka and Alberta, 2011**

Qualification	Ponoka		Alberta '000	
	n	%	n	%
Total population 25 to 64	3,335	100	2,035	100
No certificate, diploma or degree	375	11.2	250	12.3
High school diploma	845	25.3	485	23.8
Post-secondary qualification	2,120	63.6	1,300	64.0
of which:				
apprenticeship or equivalent	640	19.2	249	12.2
non-university certificate or diploma	790	23.7	435	21.4
university qualification below degree	190	5.7	95	4.7
bachelor's degree	505	15.1	521	25.6
higher university qualification	120	3.6	359	17.6

Source: National Household Survey 2011

This table shows that education levels in Ponoka are broadly similar to those in Alberta as a whole, except at the university level. Ponoka's strength is in the number of people with practical rather than academic qualifications.

**Table 9 - Post-Secondary Field of Study, Population 15 & Over, Ponoka and Alberta, 2011**

Field of Study	Ponoka		Alberta '000	
	n	%	n	%
Total population 15 and over	5,210	100	2,889	100
No specialization	2,435	46.7	1,315	45.5
Education	280	5.4	121	4.2
Visual and performing arts etc.	50	1.0	45	1.6
Humanities	60	1.2	65	2.2
Social & behavioural science & law	170	3.3	131	4.5
Business, management, and public admin	400	7.7	323	11.2
Physical and life sciences	0	0.0	63	2.2
Math, computer, and information sciences	35	0.7	54	1.9
Architecture, engineering, and related	755	15.0	421	14.6
Agriculture, nat resources, and conservation	75	1.4	41	1.4
Health and related	800	<u>15.3</u>	229	7.9
Personal, protective, and transportation	150	2.9	82	2.8
Other	0	0.0	0	0.0

Source: National Household Survey 2011

Note: the National Household Survey is a sample of 1/3 of all households, so some small groups may not be accurately measured.

#### **Additional Observations:**

- Wolf Creek Public Schools school division provides a range of K-12 education options in addition to attending schools including traditional home education, a blended program and distance learning
- Five of Alberta's 25 accredited colleges, universities and technical schools are located in the Central Alberta Region including six colleges, three universities, NAIT and East Parkland Business Development Centre.
- Distance and e-learning options provide opportunities for post-secondary education without setting foot in a classroom

### **2.2.5 Labour Force**

Statistics Canada 2011 reports that for the first time there were more people between the ages of 55 – 64 in the work force; an age when people typically prepare to leave the work force, than those between the ages of 15 – 24, when people are typically about to enter the labour market.

As Ponoka's population has increased between 2001 and 2006, so has its labour participation rate. In 2001, the total labour force 15 and over was 3,010 but by 2006 it had grown to 3,510. This translates to a 3.3% increase from 2001 (65.4%) to 2006 (68.7%). The categories used

by Statistics Canada to record statistics between 2001 and 2006/2011 are incompatible and therefore some of the following statistics may not be exact.

The 2001 statistics show “*Total – Experienced labour force*” participation rate of males as being **1,620** and females as being **1,570**. In 2006 the statistics reported show “*Total population 15 years and over*” participation rate of males at **1,785 (73.8%)** and females as being **2,685 (64.4%)**. Among females, the participation rate rose from 61% in 2001 to 64.4% in 2006. The unemployment rate, however, has dropped amongst both males and females between 2001 and 2006. For males, the rate dropped from 4.9% to 4.8% and for females the rate dropped from 7.5% to 2.0%. Ponoka’s unemployment rate overall dropped significantly during the period from 6.2% in 2001 to 3.4% in 2006.

**Table 10: Labour Force**

	Town of Ponoka			Ponoka County			Central Alberta Region		
	2001	2006	2011	2001	2006	2011	2001	2006	2011
<b>Participation Rate</b>	65.4	68.7	69%	78.8	80.2	80%	77.3	73.8	76.1%
<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	6.2	3.4	4.1%	2.5	2.8	2.9%	5.9	4.2	5.3%

*\*2012 Data Development Project Town of Ponoka*

## 2.2.6 Labour Force by Industry

The 2011 National Household Survey reported that 3,610 Ponoka residents were employed in May 2011. The industry breakdown was as follows:

**Table 11: Labour Force by Industry, Population 15 and Over, Ponoka and Alberta, 2011**

Industry	Ponoka		Alberta '000	
	n	%	n	%
Total labour force	3,605		2,116	
Unclassified	45		27	
All classified industries	3,560	100.0	2,088	100.0
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting	45	1.3	61	2.9
Mining, quarrying, oil & gas extraction	185	5.2	137	6.6
Utilities	0	0.0	22	1.1
Construction	345	9.7	196	9.4
Manufacturing	115	3.2	123	5.9
Wholesale trade	65	1.8	89	4.3
Retail trade	475	13.3	229	11.0
Transport and warehousing	155	4.4	105	5.0
Information and cultural industries	45	1.3	35	1.7
Finance and insurance	55	1.5	69	3.3
Real estate	60	1.7	40	1.9
Professional, scientific, and tech services	90	2.5	162	7.8
Management of companies and enterprises	0	0.0	3	0.1
Admin etc.	20	0.6	73	3.5
Education	265	7.4	142	6.8
Health care and social assistance	930	<u>26.1</u>	207	<u>9.9</u>
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	50	1.4	38	1.8
Accommodation and food services	235	6.6	126	6.0
Other, except public administration	230	6.5	101	4.8
Public administration	195	5.5	129	6.2

Source: National Household Survey 2011

Again, attention is drawn to the fact that these results are based on a 1/3 sample of the population and are not accurate for small numbers

Ponoka's "total experienced labour force census statistics" in 2001 was reported as 3,190 persons by industry definition with the highest number of persons being employed in the Health and Education Industry. Leading by occupation (highest three) **first** - sales and service; **second** – trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations; **third** – health occupations.

The 2006 "labour force activity and occupation census statistics" (15+) reported 3,505 persons by industry with the highest number of persons being employed in the Health Care and Social Services Industry. Leading by occupation (highest three) **first** - sales and service;

**second** – trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations; **third** – health occupations.

It is reasonable to assume, even without the 2011 census information (due for release in June 2013) that most of the health occupation jobs are with the Centennial Centre for Mental Health and Brain Injury.

**Table 12: Employers by Industry and Number of Employees - Central Alberta Region**

Industry	All Companies 1+ Employees		All Companies <49 Employees	
	2005	2010	2005	2010
<i>Total All Industries</i>	12,582	13,201	12,091	12,787
Agriculture & Forestry	1,104	1,061	1,098	1,055
Mining, Oil and Gas Extraction	748	851	705	807
Utilities and Construction	1,707	1,991	1,638	1,937
Manufacturing	449	431	402	393
<b><i>Total Goods Industries</i></b>	<b>4,008</b>	<b>4,334</b>	<b>3,843</b>	<b>4,192</b>
Wholesale Trade	518	549	497	536
Retail Trade	1,317	1,401	1,246	1,334
Transportation and Warehousing	688	679	673	670
Information, Culture, Recreation and Arts	262	293	246	278
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate and Leasing	814	756	771	745
Professional, Scientific and Technical	1,528	1,511	1,512	1,501
Administrative and Waste Management Services and Management of Companies	607	670	591	660
Education	101	102	87	88
Health Care and Social Assistance	749	839	703	793
Accommodation and Food	668	664	630	631
Other Services Excluding Private Household Services	1,256	1,336	1,246	1,317
Public Administration	66	67	46	42
<b><i>Total Service Industries</i></b>	<b>8,574</b>	<b>8,867</b>	<b>8,248</b>	<b>8,595</b>

\*2012 Data Development Project Town of Ponoka

## 2.2.7 Household Size

The 2011 census found that 6,300 people lived in 2,670 private households in Ponoka, for an average household size of 2.36 people. This is slightly smaller than the Alberta average of 2.57 people per household.

## 2.3 Population Projections

Two sets of population projections have been made in recent years.

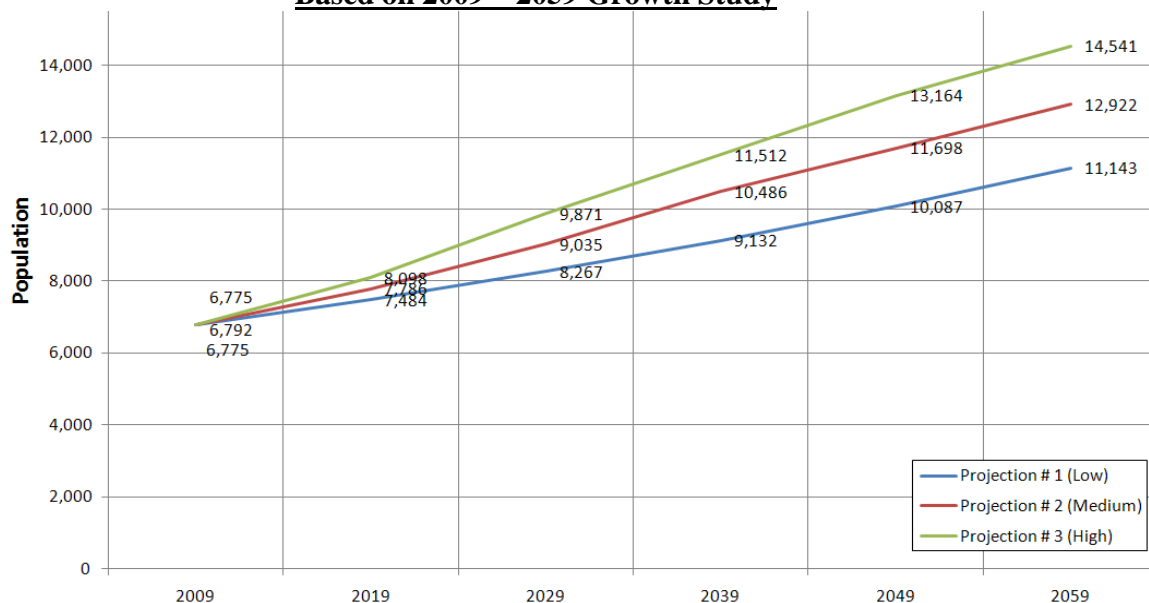
*The 2010 Growth Study* gave three projections at various rates of growth:

**Table 13: Town of Ponoka: Long-Term Population Projection**

Projection	2009	2019	2029	2039	2049	2059
#1 – Low	6,775	7,484	8,267	9,132	10,087	11,143
Annual Growth Rate	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
#2 – Medium	6,792	7,786	9,035	10,486	11,698	12,922
Annual Growth Rate	.75%	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%	1%	1%
#3 – High	6,775	8,098	9,871	11,512	13,164	14,541
Annual Growth Rate	1%	2%	2%	1.5%	1.5% – 1%	1%

Source: Town of Ponoka Growth Strategy (2010)

**Graph 14: Town of Ponoka, Population Projection  
Based on 2009 – 2059 Growth Study**



***The 2012 Master Servicing Study Update*** projected population based on the last 25 census years and two population horizon limits. The census population in 2011 was 6,773 up from the 2006 Census of 6,576. Typical practise would consider planning and infrastructure to meet two significant horizon levels. These are the 35-year growth rate and double the current population. This is supported by examining the growth capability derived from servicing all the undeveloped land within the Town boundaries as of 2011 and ensuring it can be adequately serviced whenever it develops.

Projected population in 35 years or 2046 at:

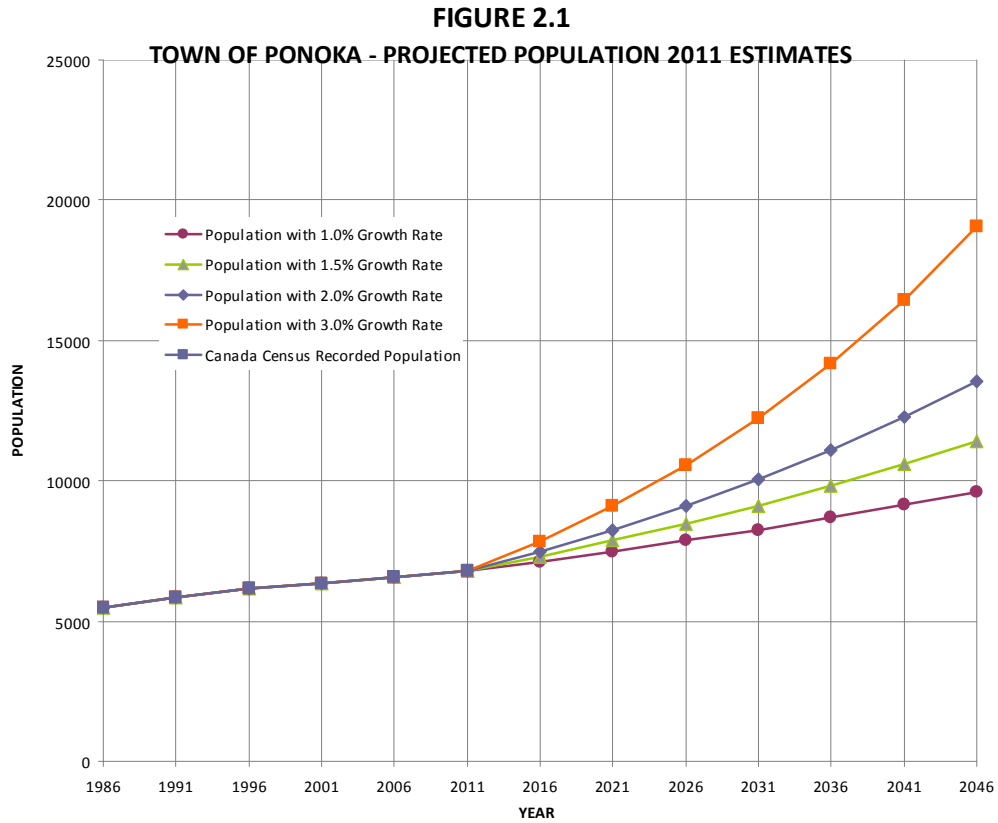
- 1.0% = 9,595;
  - 1.5% = 11,405;
  - 2.0% = 13,545 and
  - 3.0% = 19,058
- Double the current population of 6,773 at 13,500 would be reached at the following growth rates:
  - 1.0% - 2081
  - 1.5% - 2056
  - 2.0% - 2046
  - 3.0% - 2035

The following tables and figures provide scenario comparisons for projected population growth estimates between 2011 and 2081 at various growth rates and population levels. They are not forecasts; they simply show what could happen at various rates of growth.

**Table 15: Population Projection**  
**Based on Master Servicing Study**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Canada Census Recorded Population</b>	<b>Population with 1.0% Growth Rate</b>	<b>Population with 1.5% Growth Rate</b>	<b>Population with 2.0% Growth Rate</b>	<b>Population with 3.0% Growth Rate</b>
1986	5473	-	-	-	-
1991	5861	-	-	-	-
1996	6149	-	-	-	-
2001	6355	-	-	-	-
2006	6576	-	-	-	-
2011	6773	-	-	-	-
2016	-	7118	7296	7478	7852
2021	-	7482	7860	8256	9102
2026	-	7863	8468	9116	10552
2031	-	8264	9122	10064	12233
2036	-	8686	9827	11112	14181
2041	-	9129	10587	12268	16440
2046	-	9595	11405	13545	19058
2051	-	10084	12286	14955	22094
2056	-	10598	13236	16512	26513
2061	-	11139	14259	18230	29692
2066	-	11707	15361	20128	34421
2071	-	12304	16548	22222	39904
2076	-	12932	17827	24535	46259
2081	-	13592	19205	27089	53627
<i>*2012 Master Servicing Study</i>					

**Graph 16: Town Of Ponoka-Projected Population**  
**Based on Master Servicing Study**



\* 2012 Master Servicing Study

## SECTION 3: ECONOMIC BASE

A major consideration in planning for the Town of Ponoka is to ensure sustainable growth of the local economy. An identified goal of the 2011 – 2013 Town of Ponoka Strategic Plan is to increase the diversity and number of businesses in the community by producing and implementing an economic development strategy with a focus on business retention, expansion and development along with downtown revitalization.

Council of the Town of Ponoka, in 1995, passed bylaw No. 7-95 to establish an Economic Development Committee to “promote, expand and enhance the economic development and tourism of the Town”. In 2011, the Economic Development Board participated in a strategic planning workshop, identified themselves as a working Board and undertook specific committee obligations based on priority areas.

The Town already has a diverse economic base that includes agriculture, health care, oil and gas, retail, government services, tourism and other amenities. Additionally, retirees (20% of the population) bring in steady, dependable pension income. The purpose of this section of the report is to present brief profiles on the economic sectors in Ponoka and the surrounding region; identify some potential directions for growth; and establish baseline data as a benchmark for measuring growth over time.

Ponoka’s economic base is built on the following core areas:

- agriculture – beef, equine, grain, dairy, poultry, etc.
- industry - manufacturing, oil & gas, agricultural service, construction, technology
- business - professional services, retail, hospitality
- health care
- retirees

### 3.1 Agriculture

The importance of agriculture to the continued sustainable development of Ponoka’s regional economy cannot be overstated. Of the top five employer groups in the area, approximately 24 – 25% of the labour force is found in agriculture and agricultural-related operations. Agricultural consumption of fuel, fertilizer, equipment, livestock, veterinary services and associated goods and services contribute millions of dollars per year to the Ponoka economy.

Located in Ponoka, Vold Jones Vold Livestock Auction (VJV) has established an international reputation as being one of North America’s leading markets and is headquarters for the Canadian Satellite Auction.

VJV is recognized as being the largest livestock auction market in Canada, selling more than 222,000 head of cattle through its system of three sales rings and its state-of-the-art sales technology. The efforts and success of VJV have served to establish Ponoka as the “Cattle Capital of Canada.”

### *What makes Ponoka attractive in this sector?*

- Ponoka sits at the centre of two distinct soil zones. The rich, black soils to the east consistently yield **above-average** grain crops, while the grey wood soils to the west are ideal for producing barley, forage crops and for grazing cattle.
- Current estimates place **farming capital in the Ponoka area at a market value in excess of \$1 billion annually** with the greatest percentage of the amount being attributed to the livestock industry
- An estimated 300,000 hectares from the 1,600 agricultural properties in Ponoka's primary market area are maintained for **cattle production for regional and international export markets**.
- The livestock sector is reflected in crop production trends, with **barley and hybrid corn** being produced mainly for feed purposes. Close to 570,000 hectares are being seeded to barley in the direct market area on an annual basis. Other crops grown in the Ponoka area include **canola, wheat, oats, field peas and rye**.
- Recent years have seen dramatic increases and expansion of dairy, sheep, poultry, horses and honeybees reflecting the wide, **modern-day diversification in agriculture**.
- Another aspect of agricultural diversification is the existence of **market gardens, nurseries and greenhouses** that exist throughout Ponoka County as well as specialized operations including the Meyer Seed Potato Farm operation located just north of Ponoka.

More than just farming and ranching, the agriculture sector has diversified to include ventures like the production of exotic stock such as emus, bison, ostrich and elk as well as organic operations. Ponoka has a strong Ag service and value-added Ag industry. There are many truck and implement dealerships, as well as a fertilizer companies, a new feed mill constructed in 2011, feed and agri-supply businesses, a seed cleaning plant and two veterinarian clinics. Yet another example of how this industry is being redefined is the emerging trend of agri-tourism. For instance, topics of interest include food production / processing and livestock genetics (i.e. Morsan Farms – million-dollar cow) and specific sites such as VJV to personally witness a live /satellite auction.

### 3.2 Oil, Gas and Manufacturing

The oil and gas sectors provide the Town of Ponoka and surrounding region with economic benefits resulting from the continued development of oil and gas fields. Its central location and proximity to the Queen Elizabeth II highway makes Ponoka an ideal community to establish regional oil, gas and manufacturing offices as well as offering a variety of employment opportunities. Local companies provide employment for licensed trades as well as skilled labourers enabling the business sector to provide administration, maintenance, manufacturing and production management for oil, gas and manufacturing facilities throughout much of central Alberta. Access to oil fields has also provided opportunity to large trucking companies such as Calnash Trucking South Ltd.

Statistics Canada's June 2012 Alberta Industry Profiles Report on the mining and oil and gas extraction industry provides:

- These industries accounted for 7.2% of total employment in Alberta in 2011
- Employment in the Mining and Oil and Gas Extraction industry is expected to grow at an average rate of 2.2% from 2011 to 2015
- This industry is expected to account for 6.9% of total employment in Alberta in 2015.
- These industries accounted for 19.2% of Alberta's Gross Domestic Product in 2011, down from 22.8% in 2001.
- The industry's share of total employment increased from 5.9% in 2001 to 7.2% in 2011
- Employment in 2011 was 7.8% higher than its level in 2010. Over the last ten years, employment has increased from 96,100 people in 2001 to 151,100 people in 2011.

### **3.2.1 Impact of Nova Project at Joffre and the Keyera Expansion at the Rimbey Gas Plant**

In March of 2012, one of Central Alberta's largest employers, Nova Chemical's Joffre location announced plans to spend upward of \$900 million to increase their Joffre chemical plant production by as much as 40%. Estimates of employment are 500 construction jobs as well as an estimated 150 – 250 additional full-time skilled trades people needed to operate the production facility once construction is completed. Construction is slated to begin in 2013 and be completed and in operation by 2016.

Keyera Corporation operates one of the largest natural gas midstream businesses in Canada and its gas processing plants and associated facilities are strategically located in the west central, foothills and deep basin natural gas productions areas of the Western Canada Sedimentary Basin. Its business consists of natural gas gathering and processing as well as the processing, transportation, storage and marketing of natural gas liquids. In October 2012, Keyera announced a \$210 million dollar investment to the turbo expander at the Rimbey Gas Plant. Subject to regulatory approvals, the construction phase of the plant expansion is anticipated to begin in the fourth quarter of 2012, with start-up expected in late 2014.

Given the Town of Ponoka's proximity to both the Nova / Joffre and Keyera / Rimbey expansions, there is potential for the Town to receive economic spinoffs in the form of benefits to local contractors and suppliers, employment, housing purchases and rental accommodations as well as new residents who live within commuting distance.

### **3.3 Health and Social Services**

According to the 2006 Census Community Profiles information released by Statistics Canada, 875 people living in the Town of Ponoka were employed in the health care and social assistance sector (*industry by gender*). The ratio of females working in this field at 665 workers varies significantly from the number of males at 210 working in this field according to *industry by gender* statistics. 2011 figures will be released in June 2013.

A cornerstone of the local economy for over 100 years is the renowned Centennial Centre for Mental Health and Brain Injury (formerly Alberta Hospital Ponoka), which currently employs over 800 people. One of Canada's major psychiatric hospitals, the Centennial Centre is recognized as a world leader in the area of brain injury research and rehabilitation treatment. Its on-site nursing school works closely with the Grant MacEwan University School of Psychiatric Nursing program. The centre has a close relationship with the community, which provides opportunities for their patients to be reintegrated into the work force via a job placement vocational program.

Health care professionals are also employed by:

- Ponoka Hospital and Care Centre
- private clinic
- medical laboratory and X-Ray imaging
- physiotherapy clinic
- alternative health care providers such as chiropractors and massage therapists
- housing facilities for seniors and disabled adults such as
  - privately owned publicly funded (Northcott Care Centre)
  - publicly funded supportive housing (Golden Leisure Lodge, Reid Manor, Legion Arms, Slater Place)
  - privately owned and operated supportive housing (Legacy Place)
  - home care
  - supportive living level #3 housing (Sunrise Village)

Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) provide supportive and preventative programs to Ponoka and surrounding communities. These services include:

- children and youth programs (Youth Centre and Big Brothers/Big Sisters)
- family services (counselling, parent support groups, resource library, tools for schools)
- adult support (home support, lifeline, meals on wheels)
- seniors support (home support, lifeline, meals on wheels, socialization activities, resource centre, fall yard clean up)
- community development (information and referral, public awareness and education, volunteer advocate training, community volunteer week event, snow shovelling referral program, grass cutting referral program)
- other services such as volunteer driver referral program, volunteer income tax returns, friendly visitor program, FCSS Board development and Coats for the Cold

### 3.4 Education Services

Education services are an integral part of Ponoka's economy in addition to the aforementioned health and social services Ponoka also offers a variety of schooling options. Ponoka is home to Diamond Willow Middle School, Ponoka Christian School, Ponoka Composite High School, Ponoka Elementary School and St. Augustine Catholic School as well as the Ponoka Outreach School. According to 2006 Census 195 Ponoka residents, plus many who reside in the County, were employed in the educational services industry.

**Table 17: School Enrolment Statistics**

CURRENT SCHOOL	CURRENT ENROLMENT	FUTURE PLANS & CAPACITY
Ponoka Composite High School (9-12)	590	900 (includes Phase 3 currently being renovated)
Ponoka Elementary School (K-5)(Pink & Brick buildings)	428 (between the 2 buildings) (85% factor is considered full)	580 (2 buildings: pink building 351; brick building,229) <i>The pink school is slated to be phased out</i>
Diamond Willow Middle School (K-6)	211	500+ *Renovations are taking place in 2013. For the upcoming school year, Gr. 7&8 will be moving over to the High School
St. Augustine Catholic School (K-12)	580	366 (primary grades) 635 (4-12)
Ponoka Christian School (K-9)	88 (with play school students) 78 (without)	160
Ponoka Outreach School	187	80 seats (due to flexible student schedule, not all 187 students are in school at once)

Sources: *Wolf Creek School District 2012; Ponoka Christian School; St. Augustine Catholic School*

### 3.5 Economic Development and Tourism

The Town of Ponoka is a member of the Central Alberta Economic Partnership (CAEP) a regional economic development alliance that is comprised of 42 municipalities and two First Nations bands. Ponoka is also involved with Central Alberta Access Prosperity (CAAP) which is an economic development partnership focused on attracting foreign direct investment to the central Alberta region.

Web page: [www.accessprosperity.ca](http://www.accessprosperity.ca)

#### 3.5.1 Annual Ponoka Stampede

The Ponoka Stampede & Exhibition Association is a recognized leader in our community and attracts attention across North America. One of the most notable and predominant tourism events held annually it is Canada's largest outdoor 7-day professional rodeo and also one of the largest in all of North America. Celebrating its 76<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2012, the Stampede reached ticket sales of approximately 72,000 for the various events. More than just a rodeo, the event also features chuck wagon races, entertainment gardens, dances, concerts, a parade, art show, and a midway. Although, the Stampede has a significant tourism and **economic impact** on the Town surveys have not been conducted to determine per capita spending for attendance during the event. Campground registrations of trailers and RVs have exceeded 2,500 occupants in both 2011 and 2012.

With the addition of the Ponoka Stampede Association Stagecoach Saloon in 2008, an additional smaller venue has been created for hosting a variety of smaller events, which increase the seasonal usage of the Stampede grounds. The annual Ponoka Stampede is very significant in terms of contributing to a visible presence for the Town.

Web page: [www.ponokastampede.com](http://www.ponokastampede.com)

### 3.5.2 Annual Summer Send-off Music Festival

The 2012 second annual Summer Send-off Music Festival was held Labour Day weekend in September and featured a three-day line-up of country music artists and entertainment. The festival committee reported tickets sales exceeded the 2011 event by 30%. As the event grows in future years, it will continue to contribute significantly to the local economy and presence of the Town of Ponoka.

Web page: [www.summersendoff.ca](http://www.summersendoff.ca)

### 3.5.3 Calnash Ag Event Centre

Another tourism draw for the community, opened in 2012, is the Calnash Agriculture Events Centre. The facility is the result of a new and unique partnership comprised of the Ponoka Agricultural Society, Ponoka Stampede Association, Ponoka County and the Town of Ponoka. The Calnash Ag Event Centre will be an 'anchor attraction' and tourism and economic driver for Ponoka. The advantages of this multipurpose agricultural recreation facility will be to provide various forms of recreational, entertainment and educational activities for the community, region and province. In its first year of operation the Ag Event Centre has sold out almost every available weekend and space is selling out quickly for 2013.

During a gathering of the Rodeo Alumni at the Canadian Finals Rodeo in 1979, a proposal was made to organize a Canadian Pro Rodeo Hall of Fame. Today the Canadian Pro Rodeo Hall of Fame is located on the upper floor of the Calnash Ag Event Centre. It showcases pictures and memorabilia of cowboy legends as well as recently welcoming bus tours from the Edmonton Canadian Professional Rodeo held in November 2012.

Web page: [www.canadianprorodeohalloffame.com](http://www.canadianprorodeohalloffame.com)

Web page: [www.ponokaageventcentre.com](http://www.ponokaageventcentre.com)

### 3.5.4 Golf Clubs and Resorts

The world-class 18 hole Black Elk Run (formerly Ponoka Community Golf Club) which celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2011 is a true hidden gem conveniently located in the Town of Ponoka. Recommended by *Golf Digest* as a Place to Play, the Ponoka golf course will challenge the best players

Developed over 25 years ago, Wolf Creek Golf Resort has been named one of the premier golf resorts in Alberta and Canada. Located an hour south of Edmonton in the heart of Central Alberta, Wolf Creek has expanded their golf course to 36 holes. The new Rod Whitman-designed addition includes The Village at Wolf Creek, a carefully crafted community of 130 home sites with architectural controls and design principles to ensure homeowners receive an exceptionally high standard of quality. Full city services including water and sewer are included. On site restaurant and lounge with catering and banquet facilities are available and provide tourism event hosting opportunities.

Web page: [www.ponokagolf.com](http://www.ponokagolf.com)

Web page: [www.wolfcreekgolf.com](http://www.wolfcreekgolf.com)

## 3.6 Service and Retail Trade



Statistics Canada 2006 Community Profile Census found that 625 or 17.8% of Ponoka's labour force worked in retail, accommodation, food services. Occupation by gender statistics reported 920, or 26.3% of Ponoka's labour force worked in sales and service occupations. Figures for 2011 will be released in June 2013.

Construction began in 2012 on the Western Budget Motel offering 85 suites for the traveling public along with 16 2-bedroom long stay suites for oil and gas crews or for those requiring the convenience of longer use accommodations.

With close to 500 licensed businesses, Ponoka is an excellent retail location with a great variety of grocery, pharmacy, hardware, fast food, restaurants, clothing, giftware and specialty storefronts. Ponoka also has an excellent cross section of small and family owned businesses as well as brand name retail outlets. In addition to an array of professional service offerings, Ponoka can provide local contractors for most construction, renovation and home/building projects.

The majority of retail services are located in the central commercial core downtown while the automotive and industrial service sector is located in the highway commercial area along Hwy 53 & 2A. Recently a group of businesses have organized themselves to address revitalizing the downtown core and have taken an active part in seminars presented to assist them with this endeavour.

To continue to be successful today's small businesses will need to identify and leverage their strategic advantages such as cost competitiveness, service excellence and quality or uniqueness of products offered as well as utilizing available retail and business spaces. The Town of Ponoka's Economic Development Office can assist with additional information for business start-up planning, community and market information and local networks.

### ***Planning Considerations***

A plan to rejuvenate the downtown core through promotion and development of sustainable niche and retail businesses should be executed. The Avi Friedman Report *Retooling Downtown Ponoka* 2007 along with the *Ponoka Main Street Demonstration Project* 2001 are valuable assets in the continuing planning process. The development and implementation of streetscaping standards, consistent aesthetic protocol for store front facades and preserving the historic elements and value of our heritage buildings will be an integral part of this process. Partnerships already in place such as CAEP, CAPP and the Ponoka Economic Development Board will serve as available and invaluable resource to be utilized for the benefit of rejuvenation.

Web page: [www.centralalberta.ab.ca](http://www.centralalberta.ab.ca)

Ponoka Economic Development Board – [www.ponoka.ca](http://www.ponoka.ca)

Central Alberta Access Prosperity – [www.accessprosperity.ca](http://www.accessprosperity.ca)

### **3.6.1 Home Businesses and Occupations**

Technological changes and the desire to become an entrepreneur (self-employment) along with the convenience of working from home have prompted more and more people to operate

a home business. Town of Ponoka Business License Bylaw 282-10 identifies a **home business** as “any business, occupation, trade or craft carried on from a residence or accessory residential building”. This bylaw also identifies a **home office** as “the use of part of a residential dwelling used to establish a business office”.

These types of low risk business ventures offer people the opportunity to test the water with a fledgling business. Home businesses serve as business incubators, and once established, might move out of the residential environment in favour of relocating to a commercial or industrial area of Town. Other avenues for growing the capacity of a home business into a candidate for a commercial retail location include pop-up retail permitting, seasonal business licensing and participation in various markets.

### ***Planning Considerations:***

*These types of businesses should be supported provided the business venture does not negatively impact the neighbourhood or generate excessive amounts of traffic in the area in which it is located. The business venture must meet the requirements of the Land Use Bylaw and Business License Bylaw.*

## **3.6.2 Bed and Breakfast Accommodation**

An opportunity exists within the Town of Ponoka for Bed and Breakfast establishments. In addition to tourist accommodation, these types of operations could offer services to outpatients and their families as they attend treatment and offer support to loved ones at the Centennial Centre for Mental Health and Brain Injury.

Bed and Breakfast establishments have been addressed in Land Use Bylaw 013-97 in that they are defined as “a business operated in a private home in which up to three rooms are made available to short-term paying guests” and are allowed in the R2, R3 and R4 Residential Districts as discretionary uses.

### 3.7 Economic Growth

The Town of Ponoka continues to support economic growth and a healthy lifestyle thru means such as:

- business retention / expansion / development
- business / investment attraction
- health and well being
- tourism development
- lifestyle interests and attitude

Economic growth is monitored and used as a measure to track progress. The following table provides a comparison of historical changes in some of the leading economic indicators between the years 2006 and 2011.

**Table 18: Economic Indicators**

	<b><u>2006</u></b>	<b><u>2011</u></b>
Total Population	6,576	6,773
Private Households	2,771	2,785
Average Value of Dwellings (\$)	194,333	246,936
Employed Labour Force (15 + years)	3,390	3,450
Unemployment Rate (male /female)	3.4%	4.1%
Participation Rate (male/female)	68.7%	69%

Another valuable economic indicator of growth within the community is the value of building permits and housing starts. The Town of Ponoka, not unlike many municipalities, has experienced a decline in Building Permits and housing starts since the “2008 construction boom” ended. However, from 2006 to 2011 building permits have averaged \$16,999,421 annually and in the last five years since the “end of the boom” permits values have attained an average of \$12,039,016. It is worthy to note construction values have remained comparable to those of 2002 and are slightly ahead of the ten-year period, despite the “boom and bust” scenario (2006-2007). This provides a fairly stable comparison for interested developers to continue to consider the Town as a viable community for both residential and commercial development.

**Table 19: Town Of Ponoka Building Permit Summary 2006 -2011**  
**(\$ In Thousands)**

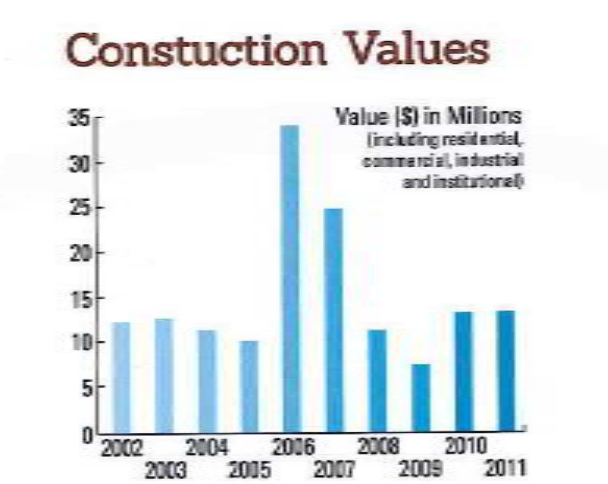
YEAR	NUMBER OF DWELLINGS	TOTAL RESIDENTIAL	TOTAL INDUSTRIAL	TOTAL COMMERCIAL	TOTAL INSTITUTIONAL	OTHER	TOTAL
2006	116	\$16,542,837	\$922,197	\$16,477,250	\$24,000	\$80,000	\$34,046,284
2007	147	\$20,669,585	\$223,000	\$2,908,000	\$755,000	\$192,000	\$24,747,585
2008	32	\$6,719,517	\$2,767,894	\$568,930	\$340,000	\$710,000	\$11,106,341
2009	11	\$1,910,607	\$310,300	\$3,619,800	\$342,000	\$1,050,000	\$7,232,707
2010	23	\$4,979,235	\$0	\$157,690	\$9,862,733	\$25,000	\$13,024,658
2011	16	\$6,429,394	\$3,494,000	\$3,059,637	\$64,964	\$41,000	\$13,088,996
2012	18	\$4,831,580	\$1,190,000	\$9,509,900	\$170,000	\$40,900	\$15,742,380

Source: Town of Ponoka statistics and records

#### Residential Housing Starts



#### Construction Values



Notes: Value (\$) in Millions including residential, commercial, industrial and institutional.  
A start is a single dwelling, so a duplex counts as two starts.

#### Planning Considerations

**Industry Clusters** – Labour and low cost real estate are no longer a key advantage in attracting business and industry. Focus should be shifted to unique local conditions, which create areas of specialization and provide competitive advantages in the market. This means the Town should continue business recruitment targeting industry clusters such as the medical sector, oil and gas, value added agriculture and food processing, transportation and logistics.

***Expansion to accommodate industrial development*** – Ponoka maintains an adequate supply of industrial and commercial properties to support future growth. Currently the South West and Froman Business Parks have an available supply of useable commercial and industrial lands available. Focus should be brought to identifying areas for potential industrial and commercial expansion. Preplanning of these areas should become urgent before available lands are built out. The North East Industrial Park benefits from a Town owned railway spur line, which makes it very attractive to companies whose businesses depend on rail access.

***Create a Positive Business Climate and provide entrepreneurial support*** – Ponoka has a positive economic environment and is both open for business and competition friendly. Review and updates of existing statutory plans, fees and policies are all part of creating a healthy economic environment to ensure competitiveness to comparable markets. Ensure the Town web page is updated on a regular basis to provide information and links to those persons wishing to start a business and encourage them to access the Economic Development Officer for additional support and information.

***Centennial Centre for Mental Health and Brain Injury*** – Recognizing the importance of this centre to the local economy the Town should examine opportunities to promote local living to staff that currently commute to work from outside Ponoka. Another accommodation opportunity may be found in the Grant MacEwan Nursing Program operated on site. Temporary and affordable housing will be needed to encourage expansion of the Grant MacEwan Psychiatric Nursing Program.

***Improved Signage and Landscaping*** – First impressions are lasting impressions. Way finding signage is needed at key entrances to the Town as well as for point of interest sites. An inventory of current signage will be undertaken to review size, clarity, content and placement as well as relocating signage to indicate the newly created corporate limits established as a result of the 2011 annexation. The 2011 First Impressions Community Exchange Final Report, 2012 Town of Ponoka Brand Strategy as well as Retooling Downtown Ponoka / Avi Freidman Consultant Reports can be used as resources to undertake this process.

***Coordinated Marketing Strategy*** – Ponoka has developed a co-ordinated marketing strategy and created a marketing package to support the continued promotion of Ponoka as an attractive healthy community dedicated to the well-being of all and an affordable community in which to live. An additional package should be created to promote and leverage CANPASS to businesses and other individuals who would find this service of value.

### 3.8 Trading Area

A long time agricultural hub, Ponoka's trading area is approximately 75,000 people. The Central Alberta Region has Alberta's highest ratio of small businesses: 97% of the total.

**Table 20: Population of Ponoka's Trading Area**

Basic Trading Area		
Bashaw	873	Some assumptions have been made to identify this as Ponoka’s basic trading area
Ponoka	6,773	
Ponoka County	8,856	
Rimbey	2,378	
Ermineskin	1,874	
Samson	3,784	
Louis Bull	1,309	
Montana	653	
Subtotal	26,230	
Extended Rural Trading Area		
Wetaskiwin County	10,866	Ponoka is an agricultural hub so it’s reasonable to include population from Ponoka County, Lacombe County and Wetaskiwin County in the trading area
Lacombe County	10,312	
Subtotal	47,408	
Possible “urban” Trading Area		
Wetaskiwin	12,525	While it’s possible to say some of the more urban population from Wetaskiwin, and Lacombe travel to Ponoka a trading area profile would need to be developed to provide solid evidence
Lacombe	11,707	
Total	71,640	

Source: 2012 Data Development Project Town of Ponoka

## SECTION 4: RESIDENTIAL LAND USE

This section looks at existing housing characteristics and trends to determine future housing supply and demand for the next 10 years and to forecast future land consumption for residential requirements. Sources used to gather this information include records of building permits and housing starts available from the Town; 2011 Census Information; housing forecasts contained in the 1997 Municipal Development Plan, Town of Ponoka Growth Study 2009 – 2059 and the 2012 Master Servicing Study. Further figures will be released by Statistics Canada in August 2013.

### 4.1 Housing Characteristics

Residential land use occupies the largest portion of the built area of the Town of Ponoka as illustrated by *Map 2 Existing Land Use within Town Boundaries*.

With successful annexation in 2011, the Town boundaries now encompass a land area of 17.67 square kilometers with a population density of 383.31 persons per square kilometer.

#### 4.1.1 Dwelling Characteristics

Single family detached houses are the preferred housing choice. This may change over time as the population ages and families become smaller. It can be expected that there will be an increased demand for semi-detached dwellings, row-housing, apartment dwellings, gated communities, income and secondary suites and condo developments. The majority of housing units are owned rather than rented. Housing prices in Ponoka are very affordable with most single family homes currently (2013) selling at between \$200,000 and \$300,000. The following table provides current and historical statistics (2001 – 2011) as to the number and type of occupied dwellings and how those statistics have changed in number over the course of the past 10 years.

**Table 21: Private Dwellings by Ownership**

	Town of Ponoka			Ponoka County			Alberta		
	2001	2006	2011	2001	2006	2011	2001	2006	2011
<b>Owned</b>	1,950	2,080	2,205	2,590	2,725	2,910	736,065	917,095	1,022,645
<b>Average Monthly Payment (1)</b>	\$656	\$788	\$1,019	\$721	\$842	\$1,075	\$875	\$1,016	\$1,314
<b>Rented</b>	660	590	585	320	310	225	316,645	330,275	367,635
<b>Average Monthly Rent (1)</b>	\$555	\$598	\$844	\$449	\$461	\$862	\$674	\$754	\$1,079

Sources: 2001 and 2006: 2012 Data Development Project Town of Ponoka; 2011: National Household Survey

(1) The 2011 figure is not comparable with previous years because it now measures Total Shelter Cost, not just monthly mortgage payments or rent.

Table 22: Dwellings by Type

Type of Dwelling	Town of Ponoka		Ponoka County		Alberta	
	2006	2011	2006	2011	2006	2011
# of Dwellings	2,771	3,047	3,330	3,669	1,256,200	1,390,275
Single-detached	71%	71%	87%	85%	64%	64%
Apartments	14%	14%	-	-	19%	19%
Row/detached duplex	9%	11%	1%	1%	14%	13%
All others	6%	4%	12%	14%	3%	4%

+ 2001 statistics not compatible with 2006/2011 categories

Source: 2006 Census of Canada; 2012 Data Development Project Town of Ponoka

#### 4.1.2 Age and Condition

Most of the Town's residences were built between 1961 and 1980 and more than 80% of housing in both the County and Town is owned with the majority being in good repair, requiring only regular maintenance or minor repairs.

**Table 23: Dwellings by Type, Ponoka, 2006 and 2011**

	2006	2011	Change number	Change percent
Total number of occupied private dwellings	2,670	2,785	115	4%
Single-detached house	1,880	1,945	65	3%
Semi-detached house	105	145	40	28%
Row house	60	65	5	8%
Apartment, detached duplex	100	90	-10	-11%
Apartment building	370	365	-5	-1%
Other single-attached house	5	5	0	0%
Movable dwelling	150	175	25	14%

Source: Census of Canada 2006; National Household Survey 2011

Numbers are rounded to 0 or 5

Data are derived from a 33% sample, so figures are not entirely reliable

Observations:

Home ownership is more widespread in Ponoka than in Alberta as a whole (79% compared with 74%). This may be partly because average house prices are \$150,000 less in Ponoka than the Alberta average.

### 4.1.3 Rents and Vacancies

Municipal Affairs conducts an Apartment Vacancy and Rental Cost Survey (AVS) on an annual basis. The survey identifies building type, building age, unit type, number of units, rental rates, and the number of vacancies in rural communities. The eligibility criteria used in selecting communities to be surveyed are:

- Community population of between 1,000 and 9,999 people
- Community has 30 or more private market rental units, and
- Community is not included in the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) biannual Rental Market Survey

Private market rental units are units that are rented at market rates and are not subsidized containing 4 or more rental units, such as walk-up and high-rise apartment buildings, fourplexes, row/townhouses, and other multiplex rentals as well as store-top rental units. The survey does not include rented single-detached and semi-detached houses; investor owned rental condo units; or secondary units such as basement suites, attic apartments and garage suites.

**Table 24: Rental Units: Number of Vacancies and Vacancy Rates  
by Type of Units, Ponoka, 2012**

		No.	Vacant	%
Suites	Bachelor	10	0	0.0%
	1 Bedroom	62	2	3.2%
	2 Bedroom	169	6	3.6%
	3 Bedroom	36	0	0.0%
	4+ Bedroom	0	0	
	Total	277	8	2.9%

*Source: 2011 Alberta Municipal Affairs Apartment Vacancy & Rental Cost Survey*

**Table 25: Rental Units: Weighted Rents by Bedroom Type  
and Overall Vacancy Rates, Ponoka, 2006 to 2012**

		2006	2009	2010	2011	2012
Monthly rent	1 Bedroom	\$446	\$539	\$563	\$569	\$577
	2 Bedroom	\$513	\$650	\$675	\$686	\$718
	3 Bedroom	\$546	\$808	\$844	\$895	\$923
	Bachelor	\$394	\$447	\$485	\$479	\$498
Overall vacancy rate		1.6%	4.8%	8.2%	7.8%	2.9%

*Source: 2011 Alberta Municipal Affairs Apartment Vacancy & Rental Cost Survey*

**Figure 26: Rental and Vacancy Rates for Selected Municipalities**

**Rentals and Vacancy Rates for Selected Municipalities**

		Camrose	Drayton Valley	Edmonton	Ponoka	Rimbey	Wetaskiwin
Vacancy rates, all apartments	2000	1.7	3.8		1.8	4.7	0.7
	2001	1.4	3.7		2.2	4.3	1.6
	2002	0.7	2.9		2.1	0.0	2.5
	2003	1.6	4.9	3.4	6.7	0.0	1.0
	2004	1.5		5.3			3.0
	2005	2.2	0.3	4.5	5.9	11.4	2.4
	2006	0.9	0.0	1.2	1.6	0.0	0.0
	2007	0.3	0.3	1.5	1.3	0.0	0.3
	2008	0.8	3.4	2.4	0.4	0.0	2.0
	2009	6.3	4.2	4.5	4.9	4.3	4.7
	2010	7.1	1.3	4.3	8.2	14.0	5.5
	2011	7.3	1.0	3.3	7.8	9.7	6.1
	2012	4.8	0.6	1.7	2.9	1.6	4.6
Average monthly rent for a two-bedroom apartment	2000	459	524		437	451	448
	2001	503	544		467	465	488
	2002	531	557		478	473	511
	2003	546	576	722	487	473	526
	2004	560		730			531
	2005	576	620	732	493	471	537
	2006	635	638	808	513	498	572
	2007	753	731	958	556	545	619
	2008	818	765	1,034	605	621	717
	2009	794	798	1,015	650	639	772
	2010	809	829	1,015	675	661	789
	2011	813	856	1,034	686	677	807
	2012	829	915	1,071	718	698	818
Five year rent increase, 2007/2012		10.1%	25.2%	11.8%	29.1%	28.1%	32.1%

CMHC survey counts privately-owned, non-subsidized apartment buildings with three or more suites.

Alberta Housing counts buildings with four or more suites, plus store-top structures with less than four units.

Rent may or may not include utilities.

Blank cell means data not available.

#### 4.1.4 Housing Starts

The tables below provide a comparison of housing starts between 2006 and 2011. Several developers with the largest number of privately owned vacant lots consistently construct new dwellings each year and various one-off contractors develop the remaining lots.

**Table 27: Building Permit Summary, Ponoka, 2006 – 2011**

YEAR	NUMBER OF DWELLINGS	TOTAL RESIDENTIAL
2006	116	\$16,542,837
2007	147	\$20,669,585
2008	32	\$6,719,517
2009	11	\$1,910,607
2010	23	\$4,979,235
2011	16	\$6,429,394
2012	18	\$4,325,000

Source: Town of Ponoka Building Permits Report to December 31, 2012

**Table 28: Housing Starts, Various Dates**

Town of Ponoka		Ponoka County		Alberta	
2006	2012	2008	2011	2006	2011
116 (including 45 units for a seniors complex)	18	63	62	40,882	23,604

Source: Town of Ponoka, Ponoka County, Statistics Canada, 2012 Data Development Project town of Ponoka

#### 4.2 Housing Demand Forecast

The Town's population reached 6,773 in 2011. Using the growth rate of 1.5% (2012 Master Servicing Study) the Town's population will reach 7,296 in the year 2016 and 7,860 in the year 2021. Assuming an average household size of 2.5 persons would result in a demand for 210 additional units by the year 2016 and an additional 226 units by the year 2021. Assuming this demand is 75% for single family units and the remaining 25% for multi-family units, the resultant housing demand is summarized in the following table.

**Table 29: Forecast New Housing Needs**

Year	Population Increase	Single Family Units	Multi-Family Units	Total
2011-2016	523	157	53	210
2017-2021	<u>564</u>	<u>169</u>	<u>57</u>	<u>226</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1087</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>436</b>

## **Income and Secondary Suites**

**Income and secondary suites** are in demand and recognized in today's market as contributing to making homeownership affordable. The income generated by these suites is useable when qualifying for a mortgage. They also serve as a means of increasing housing supply while satisfying the demand for affordable rental accommodations, provide a balanced range of housing opportunities and support the needs and preferences of all household types and income levels within residential areas.

**A secondary suite is** a second self-contained dwelling unit that is located within a primary dwelling unit, where both dwelling units are registered under the same land title. The land use bylaw sets a specific timeframe and use restrictions (granny or nanny suites). Primary dwelling units are identified as townhouses, row houses, single or semi-detached homes and duplexes. With societal changes and an aging population, homeowners may wish to develop these suites to house aging parents or disabled individuals and caregivers. Provision of these types of housing options may enable individuals to be cared for at home rather than at a care facility.

### ***Planning Considerations***

**Residential Districts** - Identify within current and future Land Use Bylaws residential districts in which income and secondary suites will be permitted or discretionary uses. Determine what governing principles will guide development of these suites such as parking requirements, number and size of suites per dwelling unit, specific residential districts for inclusion/exclusion and manage future residential development to minimize any adverse impacts to existing neighbourhoods and the community.

#### **4.2.1 Designated Residential Growth Areas**

In order to facilitate detailed planning of residential expansion areas, priority should be given to areas that are within approved outline and area structure plans. Council has adopted several Area Structure Plans, which help identify the areas planned for this purpose. They are SW 8-43-25-4 (Hudson Green); NE 32-42-25-4 (Country Hills); and SE 32-42-25-4 (Caledera).

**Map 2 – Existing Land Use within Town Boundaries** indicates residential districts as well as areas currently zoned for residential expansion. During the review stage of the 2013 MDP the committee, for ease of analysis, divided the Town into four quadrants with Hwy 53 and Hwy 2A serving as the dividing factors.

**#1 NORTH WEST QUADRANT** encompasses the residential area of Lucas Heights and contains larger neighbourhood residential developments identified as Sommer Bros., Hudson's Green, and Laebon Developments. Within this quadrant, the Hudson's Green Area Structure Plan (SW 8) was adopted by Town Council in August of 2010 and is expected to

create approximately **839** new residential units. The 2008 phase of the Sommer Bros. subdivision has one phase remaining to be subdivided and currently has a number of vacant lots (**30**) remaining. Laebon Developments is progressing consistently but also has vacant lots from previous phases (**20** single family) and a 10-acre lot without a development time frame commitment. This 10-acre parcel is capable of creating additional 30 - 35 residential lots. The existing manufactured housing park known as Poplar Grove has proposed an expansion to the north and east of the existing park on a 25-acre parcel with the capacity to create **80 – 85** manufactured housing lots. This expansion has been previously pre-planned within the 2000 GPEC Outline Plan. Residential expansion to the west and adjacent to the QE 2 in the 2011 annexed area is currently not being considered for residential expansion. This area will be identified for future highway commercial and light industrial expansion including the area directly west and adjacent to the cemetery known as the Froman quarter, which has been previously pre-planned for residential expansion.

**Potential North West quadrant total for residential units (new and current) within identified development areas, area structure and outline plans is 1004.**

**#2 NORTH EAST QUADRANT** encompasses the downtown central commercial district as well as the area (Riverside) east of the river. This quadrant for the most part, in particular the downtown / central commercial area, is currently built out. Potential exists for redevelopment and infill areas should existing housing be demolished in favour of new single and multi-family high density development (apartments). Across the river the east hill / Riverside continues to see residential development. In particular, the area identified within the 2007 Hyink Farms Outline Plan (Chicken Hill) has approximately **30** vacant lots available from current and previous phases. There are several larger parcels of land on the east side of 38 Street, which are zoned for residential expansion but are not currently pre-planned for development. Madsen St. Developments (Panorama Ridge) has **23** vacant lots fully serviced and ready for development

The Battle River Valley traverses this quadrant and is a protected area prone to flooding. Due to the high risk of flooding caution must be taken in planning subdivision or development for any areas identified within the Canada-Alberta Flood Damage Reduction Program (1994) Flood Information Map – Town of Ponoka. The identified areas are protected under the direction of the Minister of the Environment for Canada and the Minister of Alberta Environmental Protection by way of the Canada–Alberta Flood Damage Reduction Agreement (1994). This area will be planned and used as a protected environmental area containing a series of low impact uses and walking trails in addition to specific restricted residential development.

"Retooling Downtown Ponoka, Alberta" prepared by Avi Friedman Consultants Inc. in 2007 identifies the Battle River as one of Ponoka's main assets and stresses the river should serve as a central pillar of any renewal process. The Study also points out that while development may require substantial investment it can be done gradually and suggests the first step to be undertaken should be a feasibility study and cost analysis to develop the area. Any future plans to redevelop the central core and the Battle River Valley should utilize the recommendations and guidance provided within the Friedman report.

**Potential North East quadrant total for residential units (current) within identified development areas, area structure or outline plans, including infill development but excluding the lands east of 38<sup>th</sup> Street : 60 -75**

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**#3 SOUTH EAST QUADRANT** encompasses the lands south of Hwy 53 and east of Hwy 2A and includes the Ponoka Ag Event Centre and the Ponoka Stampede Association lands. Large tracts of land within this quadrant are identified as parks and open space use along with agriculture use on the Ag Event and Stampede Association lands. The remaining residential lands are zoned as direct control (immediately south of the rodeo grounds) and it is unlikely additional residential units in any volume will be approved for this area. Most of the current homes are not connected to town water or sewer and the topography and proximity to an abandoned land fill and the river will constrain residential development. High density residential areas adjacent to Hwy 53 and west of 46 Street are also constrained due to their proximity to the river and potential for flooding. In 1992 Council adopted the Country Hills Estates Area Structure Plan to address the lands adjacent to Hwy 53 and west of McDonald Road. This ASP projected 3.5 people/unit, which is higher than the Town's average of 2.36 people, but if achieved, the **440** dwellings would support a population of 1,542. The Caledera Area Structure Plan was adopted by Council in 2009 on lands lying directly south of the Country Hills ASP. The residential objectives of this ASP are to provide needed accommodation alternatives by creating an attractive residential community capable of accommodating approximately 3,300 persons. A density of approximately 17 units per hectare or 7.3 units per acre will potentially create **1,087** residential units. Some of the calculations may need to be updated to provide a more accurate forecast, in particular the Country Hills Estate ASP, which is 20 years old.

**Potential quadrant total for residential units within identified development areas, area structure and outline plans is approximately 1,527**

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**#4 SOUTH WEST QUADRANT** encompasses the lands south of Hwy 53 and west of Hwy 2A including 2011 annexed areas. Within this quadrant lies the Froman Industrial Park (1997 ASP) and the South West Industrial Park. Residential expansion is not identified for this quadrant but rather this is an area to be preserved and planned for future commercial / industrial expansion

**Potential quadrant total for residential units within identified developments areas, area structure and outline plans is 0**

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Approximate total for residential unit expansion in these four quadrants:

NW	1,004
NE	75
SE	1,527
SW	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,606</b>

## Summary:

Future residential development will likely be generated in the North West, North and South East quadrants. With the available number of vacant (developed & undeveloped) lots the Town has sufficient residential areas planned for the next 30 years based on 2011 census population statistics as well as the information presented in the 2012 *Master Servicing Study* and the *Town of Ponoka Growth Study 2009 – 2059*.

## Planning Considerations

- ***Encourage Infill Development*** – Given the large inventory of existing lots available in established areas first priority should be the infill of these areas before proceeding to development of new residential areas. This would be the downtown core and pre-planned areas such as Hudson's Green, Sommer Bros., Laebon, Chicken Hill and Country Hills Estates. This is consistent with sound planning principles of "encouraging orderly and efficient development of land to minimize capital, maintenance, and social costs.
- ***Residential expansion*** should be within approved outline and area structure plans and comply with the *Municipal Development Plan*.

## 4.2.2 Estate Residential Development

The 1997 Municipal Development Plan identified the need to provide Estate Residential Development for persons who work within the Town but live on farms or acreages in the surrounding rural area. Part of the terms of reference for the 1997 MDP was to establish guidelines regarding location, parcel size and type of services that should be provided. To that end and within Town of Ponoka Land Use Bylaw 013-97, Section 4: Residential Estate (RE) District was established with the purpose of allowing high quality residential development on large lots which must be connected to municipal water and sewer. The Caledera, Country Hills Estates and the Hudson's Green Area Structure Plans, with some amendments, could accommodate Residential Estate (RE) development.

## 4.2.3 Specialized Care Facilities

The planned closure of Michener Centre in Red Deer will create a need for specialized care facilities such as group homes. To date, we have been unable to determine the required size and specifications of such group homes or whether it is intended that they be operated by either the private sector or public sector, or both.

### ***Planning Considerations***

- ***Group Homes and Special Care Facilities*** – Council should take a proactive role in working with both private and public parties in promoting and facilitating this type of development as it creates employment opportunities and economic activity. To support this initiative further work is required with Centennial Centre to determine their requirements and how these requirements may best be met. There is potential for adaptive reuse and conversion of existing apartment blocks and upper floors of commercial buildings in the downtown core as well as the “old General Hospital” site located along 50<sup>th</sup> Street.
- Undertake community discussions (private and public) to assess the potential for creation of a facility to serve families who have loved ones undergoing treatment at the Centennial Centre for Brain Injury and Mental Health who wish to remain close to them during recovery.

## SECTION 5: COMMERCIAL LAND USE

Commercial activities in the Town of Ponoka are divided between the downtown core and highway commercial development along Highways 2A and 53 including the 2011 annexed lands adjacent to the QE2. *Refer to Map 2, Generalized Existing Land Use.*

This section describes and examines the existing and future commercial land use requirements for the Town of Ponoka. An analysis has been undertaken relating to each of the four quadrants. Issues addressed were current availability of commercial land, location suitability for commercial expansion, traffic, parking, residential development, and beautification.

Sources used in developing this section of the report included the 2012 Municipal Development Plan Review Committee; Town of Ponoka Growth Study 2009 – 2059; Master Servicing Study 2012; 1997 Municipal Development Plan; Town of Ponoka Land Use Bylaw No. 013-97; the 2007 Retooling Downtown Ponoka Alberta prepared by Avi Friedman Consultant Inc.

### 5.1 Downtown

Ponoka's downtown core is centred on Chipman Avenue (50 Avenue) and Railway Street (50 Street). *Refer to Map 4 – Downtown Land Use.* The Central Commercial (C1) District generally extends from 47 Avenue north to 51 Avenue with smaller sections of C1 lying adjacent to 50 Street between 51 & 53 Avenue. Within and surrounding the Central Commercial (C1) District several areas have been identified by Council as Direct Control (DC) District. This is a district whereby Council or the Development Authority, as authorized, may directly regulate and control the use or development of land and buildings. All development applications are reviewed by Council and are regulated in such a manner as Council considers necessary to control land use, redevelopment or conversion of existing uses to new uses.

The most recent annual surveys conducted to determine commercial valuations, which in turn are used as part of the calculation process for assessment values, show that values in the downtown have generally remained the same and are slightly lower than in recent years. The most telling information used to arrive at these figures is property sales in the commercial area. Research conducted with local real estate agents suggests lease rates for retail space in the downtown corridor average between \$9 - \$13 per square foot with the lowest rent found being \$7.00.

In 2012 the Town of Ponoka undertook a branding strategy with MKM Marketing who conducted a series of interviews with local residents. Persons interviewed expressed concern about the downtown area noting the number of vacant storefronts and lack of retail services for common everyday personal items such as clothing and footwear.

Council's policies and objectives with regard to Downtown Development remain progressive and are to:

- Maintain this area as retail and commercial district;

- Create a mixed use environment by making it an esthetically pleasing place to shop, work, live and play;
- Make it a “people place” through the development of safe, clean, compact and pedestrian friendly environment;
- Encourage the restoration and preservation of historically significant buildings;
- Provide an adequate supply of short term parking for customers;
- Attract new investment and businesses to the downtown, and
- Address downtown management issues such as uniform shopping hours, customer service and promotions in conjunction with downtown merchants.

One of the key principles to keep in mind is that buildings do not revitalize downtown; people do. As people have a diversity of needs and interests, a successful downtown lies in providing a broad range of uses and attractions.

Cyril Paunier (Urban Land, 1988) summed it up best:

*“The essence of downtown revitalization is to bring people downtown more often and keep them longer.”*

Keeping this principle in mind will help create policies and guidelines that bring focus and will be an integral part of developing the 2013 Municipal Development Plan. Following are some planning considerations and policy directions.

### ***Planning Considerations***

1. *Development and revitalization should be encouraged to address infill opportunities on a number of vacant lots. Redevelopment of existing properties should be supported allowing property owners to demolish outdated structures in favour of new construction.*
2. *Encourage commercial ventures requiring larger land areas and requiring storage space to locate in the light industrial park.*
3. *Support and encourage the relocation of any current nonconforming uses into appropriate classed areas as they outgrow current locations.*
4. *Encourage new and infill development to meet the on-site parking requirements of the Land Use Bylaw.*
5. *Promote multiple unit housing opportunities in and near the downtown in order to create pedestrian traffic and help augment a customer base for downtown infill opportunities including residential development above main floor commercial. Refer to Map 4 – Downtown Land Use.*
6. *Relax and simplify parking requirements where possible to create a pedestrian-orientated shopping experience. Strategies should be pursued to encourage suitable new business to locate downtown and to provide adequate short-term parking which compliments the pedestrian environment.*

7. *Clearly identify municipal parking lot locations with signage and landscaping in keeping with the newly developed brand strategy and ensure future parking lots are paved.*
8. *Create a parking strategy to maximize on street and off street parking to increase accessibility to the downtown and ensure a safe pedestrian environment.*
9. *Create functional linkages that are safe, direct, attractive and interesting to improve connections with the river valley parks and trail systems for those wishing to walk or bicycle.*

### 5.1.1 Historic Downtown

Founded in 1987, the Alberta Main Street Program was established by the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation with the objective of helping communities capitalize on their heritage resources as a source of pride, business opportunity and tourism potential. The focus of the program was primarily architectural rehabilitation of commercial heritage buildings and the health of the business district as a contributing factor to downtown revitalization. In 1995, the Town successfully participated in the *Alberta Main Street Program* to capitalize on historic resources and to integrate and reinforce the image of downtown as the regional hub for community activities. Since that time merchants, interested parties and Town administration have attended a number of seminars to inform themselves on how to accomplish the continued revitalization of the downtown core.

### 5.1.2 Historically Significant Buildings

Ponoka's highly successful participation in *Alberta's Main Street Program* from 1995 – 2000, resulted in the rehabilitation of 26 buildings, a walking tour and a series of interpretive plaques, and created enthusiasm and awareness for Ponoka's heritage. Seeking to build on the achievements and pride associated with the Main Street Program, the Town along with the *Ponoka Museum and Heritage Board* drew up a Places of Interest List (POIL), which served as a starting point for the *Municipal Heritage Inventory* project undertaken in 2010. A heritage consultant worked with the Board and selected 18 sites to be documented, researched and evaluated – according to provincial standards, for placement on a *Municipal Heritage Inventory*. The final inventory resulted in 16 sites being chosen for inclusion on the Inventory POIL. The report recommended sites 1-15 for designation as a Municipal Historic resource.

The Inventory serves to:

- Heighten awareness and appreciation of heritage buildings/sites
- Identify the most significant heritage buildings
- Evaluate the buildings to determine why they are significant, and list those physical features or character defining elements that remain to communicate significance
- To indicate what about the building/site should be protected and conserved
- Form the basis for a municipal designation program to protect buildings through a bylaw

- Ensure that those buildings that are considered for municipal designation status are eligible to be placed on the *Alberta Register of Historic places* and would therefore be eligible for conservation funding through the *Alberta Historical Resources Foundation*.

### ***Planning Considerations:***

*The Ponoka Museum and Heritage Board suggested the following steps to pursue the preservation and protection of Ponoka's heritage buildings:*

- *Initiate discussion about municipal designation and its benefits with building/site owners, starting with those who have expressed interest*
- *Set up the administrative framework with appropriate procedures for a municipal designation program in accordance with the **Alberta Historical Resources Act***
- *Integrate the inventory as a management tool in town data bases and planning documents*
- *Make statements of significance for each site*
- *Support initiatives undertaken by the Fort Ostell Museum to build on research and information resulting from the inventory project to foster awareness of heritage buildings*
- *Investigate with the appropriate bodies how the **Main Street Program** would serve to tie into the **Municipal Designation Program** including funding for designated buildings.*
- *Plan the next Phase of the **Inventory Project** to assess residential and other non-commercial properties in Ponoka.*
- *Utilize the **Town of Ponoka Municipal Heritage Inventory – Part 1** as the foundation for “next steps” in the **Municipal Heritage Partnership Program**.*

## **5.2 Highway Commercial**

Commercial development along Highway 2A and 53 has increased since the adoption and planning stages of the 1997 MDP. Particularly, the Calnash Ag Event Centre, Extra Foods, several fast food outlets as well as development in the South West along Hwy 2A and the Froman Industrial Park along Hwy 53. The Western Budget Motel was approved in 2012 creating a variety of lodgings and commercial retail space opportunities. These are uses that would not locate downtown in smaller centres and depend on highway traffic for their customer base.

There are currently 13.3 acres of Highway Commercial property remaining in the South West Industrial Park directly west of the Ponoka Ag Event Centre. In 1997 commercially zoned properties available for development centred around the “Crossroads”, now Word of Life Church at the intersection of Highway 2A and 53. Today these intersection areas have been built out with the exception of a 7.71-acre parcel directly east of the Church. Following the 2011 Annexation increased opportunities for highway commercial development along the north and south sides of Highway 53 between Highway 2 and 2A have been created. These lands however remain in the hands of private property owners. *Refer to 2012 Master Servicing Study Map / Figure 3.1 – Long Term Growth Study Future Area Concept Plan which identifies these potential areas.*

Policy statements governing future Highway Commercial Development are:

- The Town will provide comprehensive guidelines for desirable highway commercial developments for setbacks and access control; and
- Long range highway commercial development locations and opportunities should meet development criteria to promote, not jeopardize existing adjacent land uses.

In 2005 Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation developed the Highway 53 Functional Plan, which governs development, and limits access along Hwy 53 and in 2006 developed the Highway 2A Functional Plan to govern development along Hwy 2A. The Town is obligated to first follow the mandates of both these plans when considering development adjacent to both these highways.

***Planning Considerations:***

*Design Guidelines for Highway Commercial – To ensure attractive and compatible development of Highway Commercial sites, guidelines should be developed to govern setbacks, access control, buffers with other uses, landscaping and signage. This will be accomplished by following the current land use bylaw as well any amendments or updates to Land Use Bylaw 013-97.*

## SECTION 6: INDUSTRIAL LAND USE

The purpose of this section of the report is to evaluate future and existing industrial land use requirements for the Town of Ponoka. Given the Town's desire to expand the future industrial base of the community, special attention will be paid to future expansion of the South West Industrial Park, the Froman Business Park and the North East Industrial Park.

It is anticipated the Town of Ponoka will retain its 1.0% population growth rate and possibly achieve a 1.5% to 2.0% growth rate in the future. **An average growth 1.5% for projected development growth needs for the future is probably a realistic level to forecast future infrastructure needs.** However, a large industrial development could significantly impact the growth rate.

Sources of information for this section of the report include the 1998 Inter-municipal Agreement on Development in the Urban Fringe, the Town of Ponoka Growth Study 2009 – 2059, the 2012 Master Servicing Study, and the 2012 Municipal Development Plan Review Committee. Ongoing communications with businesses and throughout the public consultation process will provide valuable information usable to update the 1997 Municipal Development Plan.

Industrial activity within Ponoka is divided into the three industrial park areas each designed to accommodate a particular type of industrial activity.

### 6.1 North East Industrial Park

This Industrial Park is designed for heavy industry and is serviced by a Town owned railway spur line that connects to the CPR main track. Parcels are zoned M2 for Heavy Industrial uses and range in size from 1-3 acres. There are currently seven lots remaining with several lots that could be combined to create a larger land base for one business. However, the combination of lots may not serve to be large enough to accommodate a large scale production business. For the park to expand in a logical progression to the north annexation of adjacent land areas would need to occur thereby creating the possibilities for further development opportunities.

#### ***Planning Considerations:***

*Previous statutory plans recognized the need to expand this heavy industrial area. Map 3 of the 1998 IDA – Likely Future Land Uses presents how expansion of industrial areas could be achieved as well as Figure 3.1 - Long Term Growth Study Future Area Concept Plan of the 2012 Master Servicing Study. The progression identified within these two maps provides the most effective utilization of existing municipal services. The Town and Ponoka County will continue to work closely, in conjunction with the desires of adjacent landowners, to monitor any proposed development in the lands to the north to ensure expansion could occur, including expansion of the railway spur line. To plan effectively for future expansion of the North East Industrial Park preparation and adoption of an Area Structure Plan should be undertaken in conjunction with Ponoka County and property owners.*

## 6.2 South West Industrial Park

Excellent access and highway exposure to both Highways 53 & 2A has enabled this industrial park to experience steady expansion growth and continued establishment of new businesses. In 1996 the Town purchased 40 acres of agricultural land for the expansion of the South West Industrial Park which now encompasses the lands east of 67<sup>th</sup> Street, south of Highway 53 and west of Highway 2A. The bulk of new development has occurred within the southern most 40 acres. Both light industrial and highway commercial uses have been accommodated throughout the park relating mostly to agricultural service industries, the oil and gas sectors and accommodation for the traveling public. Today 13.3 acres, owned by the Town, remain in the South West Industrial Park in proximity to what is referred to as the “16 acres across from the Ag Event Centre”. There is significant potential for expansion to the south within privately owned located in N.E. 36-42-26-4. Preplanning of municipal services has been accomplished for these lands through the 2012 Master Servicing Study. Preparation and adoption of an Area Structure Plan will provide a clearer pattern for land uses and future development.

## 6.3 Froman Business Park

The Froman Business Park encompasses the lands south of Highway 53 and west of 67<sup>th</sup> street all lying within S.E. 6-43-25-4. This park is also home to light industrial and highway commercial businesses providing services to agricultural industries, oil and gas sector companies and accommodation for the traveling public. The remaining Town owned 32 acres in this park require municipal servicing and have been pre-planned under the 2012 Master Services Study supported by the *North West Storm Water Management Plan* and the 1996 Froman Area Structure Plan for the lands within S.E. 6-43-25-4.

### ***Planning Considerations***

*The 2012 Municipal Development Plan Review Committee identified the importance of maintaining an adequate supply of industrial and commercial properties to accommodate future growth. With the close to built out nature of the South West Industrial Park priority will need to be given to pursuing preplanning of potential industrial and commercial expansion locations.*

*The Froman lands have been pre-planned to some degree but should be revisited to determine continued suitability for expansion and limitations to ongoing servicing and development of these lands. Given the age of the 1996 ASP, some updating to meet current conditions may be required.*

*The committee has identified that first and immediate consideration should be given to the lands within N.E. 6-43-25-4 lying directly west of Forest Home Cemetery and north of Hwy 53. This land has previously been identified under the 1997 MDP for residential expansion. However, given the need to maintain an adequate supply of commercial and industrial lands preparation and adoption of an Area Structure Plan should be undertaken. Subdivision design should be done in such a manner as to allow flexibility for consolidation of smaller parcels thereby allowing for creation of larger parcels to accommodate yard storage and expansion as required.*

## SECTION 7: RECREATION, PARKS, SCHOOLS AND CULTURE

This section describes the recreational, cultural and educational aspects of the 2013 Municipal Development Plan. It analyzes and identifies current and future land requirements for Parks and Recreation purposes and policies regarding municipal and school reserve dedication requirements for new subdivisions.

One of the objectives of the 2013 Municipal Development Plan is to provide recreational opportunities for residents, while protecting the natural environment; provide opportunities for residents to pursue healthy lifestyle choices and to ensure development of parks and open spaces will compliment and be compatible with surrounding land uses.

### 7.1 Park Standards (Canadian Parks and Recreation Association)

Requirement standards for recreation facilities and open spaces have previously been determined based on population by the Canadian Parks/Recreation Association (CPRA) using a mathematical calculation of 2.02 hectares per 1000 population. During 2004 – 2006 the Alberta Recreation and Parks Association (ARPA) undertook a review of their standards and produced a report titled ***Municipal Green Space Allocation; Practice and Protocol in Alberta Communities***. The report was prepared by Randall Conrad and Associates Ltd. who are the same consulting company that prepared the 2007 Town of Ponoka Interim Needs Assessment & Feasibility Study. Both reports addressed:

- **Trends** – in community facilities indicate decreases in structured / organized activities such as team sport and increases in spontaneous activity such as walking, jogging, fitness and wellness activities. These pursuits may be a key factor in planning future recreation facilities.
- **Increased rates** – of participation for arts and culture programming, attending fairs, festivals, events as a spectator, and low impact therapeutic pursuits such as aquatics and hot pools.
- **Demographics** - Changing demographics and societal interests will have an impact on the type, quality and quantity of community facilities desired by residents.
- **Growing focus and reliance** - is being placed on partnerships in development involving the public, private and non-profit sectors to enable capital and operational cost savings and increased service provision.

As prescribed in Section 632(3) (e) of the Municipal Government Act, school authorities are to be consulted with regard to:

- Policies respecting the provision of municipal, school or municipal and school reserves
- The need, amount and allocation of reserves

- Identification of school requirements through a consultative process with affected school boards and authorities.

## 7.2 Ponoka Regional Recreation and Cultural District

The Ponoka recreation and cultural region includes residents of the Town of Ponoka, Ponoka County and the First Nations community of Hobbema. Recreation facilities and programs in the Town are estimated to serve a regional population of approximately 20,000. The changing demographics and expected growth in the region will have a major impact on the type, quality and quantity of community facilities desired by residents and users in the future. Several studies have been conducted over the years that could serve as useful resources.

- 1991 – 1996 Ponoka Recreation and Culture Master Plan
- 1997 Aquaplex & Recreation Culture Complex – Business Plan
- 2007 Interim Needs Assessment & Feasibility Study prepared by Randall Conrad and Associates Ltd.
- 2007 Retooling Downtown Ponoka, Alberta (January 2007) prepared by Avi Friedman Consultant Inc.
- 2012 Town of Ponoka Recreation Advisory Committee (PRAC) Finding Report (2012). The PRAC is a sub-committee of the Ponoka Economic Development Board.
- 2012 Family and Community Support Services Survey Community Needs Assessment

Consideration should be given to consolidating the findings of previous studies to create an updated Recreation and Cultural Strategic Master Plan addressing immediate and long-term plans for the recreation district and to identify recreational, parks and open spaces and arts and cultural opportunities.

There is great potential to partner with community groups from both the County and Town to receive maximum input when developing the Master Plan.

Town of Ponoka 2011 – 2013 Strategic Plan is committed to ensuring the community has modern reliable infrastructure, through continuous upgrading, and new development that meets the needs of the community including recreation facility planning and development. This will remain a focus during the preparation and update of the 2014 – 2016 Strategic Plan.

## 7.3 Parks Planning

Parks, recreation and open space opportunities mean many things to many people. These opportunities may come in a variety of sizes, shapes and types and perform different functions, benefits, and purposes. They range from developed parks and recreation facilities to undeveloped hillsides and ravines; from major regional attractions to small neighbourhood parks and from active recreation areas to passive wooded areas which separate conflicting land uses. The Town of Ponoka has a variety of sizes and locations for parks and recreation

areas including a walking trail system throughout the Battle River Valley, which forms an integral part of the Trans Canada Trail Network.

- **Tot Lots** – These are smaller parks, usually under 0.81 hectares (2 Acres) which are designed to be easily accessible (serve a 1 km radius) and are meant to provide a learning environment for pre-schoolers and families with very young children.

**Current inventory area of “tot lots” = 5.08 hectares (12.5 acres)**

- **Neighbourhood Parks** – Neighbourhood parks is a category that applies to an intermediate size park of 1.2 – 2.8 hectares (3 – 7 Acres) which meets a range of neighbourhood recreation needs.

**Current inventory area of “neighbourhood parks” = 5.85 hectares (14.4 acres)**

**Note: the walking trail system has been included in this total.**

- **Regional Parks** – are large-scale urban parks and open spaces that serve not only the immediate needs of the Town but also the surrounding region and include the Battle River Valley Walking Trail System. (area of walking trail system is not included in total)

**Current inventory area of “regional parks” = 49.41 hectares (95.0 acres)**

**Total combined inventory area for parks and open spaces = 49.41 hectares (122.0 acres)**

Using the CPRA calculation formula previously mentioned, the Town would be required to provide 13.68 hectares (33.80 acres) of recreational parkland. Based on the above inventory of 49.41 hectares, the Town has more than met this requirement. Rather than using a mathematical formula to determine required park space attention to priorities and the uniqueness of the community’s recreational and cultural needs may serve as a better tool to be used when planning and developing these spaces.

### ***Planning Considerations***

*Recreation and parks provide benefits that are essential to quality of life and the health and well-being of individuals, communities, the economy and the environment. Consideration must also be given to providing a range of parks and open spaces that meet the needs of all residents at different stages of life that offer passive and active opportunities. To accomplish this:*

- *Provide non-structured places for informal gatherings and leisure pursuits that will maximize use opportunities and justify associated development and maintenance costs.*
- *Existing small parks should provide(through retrofitting when required)sustainable long term use for:*
  - *Children aged 0-5 years (tot lots)*
  - *Persons with reduced mobility*

- *Picnicking areas*
- *Community garden areas*
- *Ensure that all parks and open spaces are accessible by pedestrian and bicycle traffic, as well as visible and open to roadways.*
- *Locate, at the time of subdivision, smaller parks adjacent to neighbourhood commercial areas and/ or storm water management facilities to maximize the use of protected areas with limited development capacity.*
- *Connect all parks and open spaces where possible with the Town's walkway system.*
- *Create a large multi-purpose joint use public space in the downtown to bring various segments of the community together through sports, arts, environmental, cultural and family activities, and special events.*
- *Explore opportunities for enhancing physical and visual access to the Battle River Valley.*
- *Utilize utility corridors, easements and other rights-of-way, as passive recreational linkages to existing and new open space networks and trails.*

#### 7.4 Municipal and School Reserves

The Municipal Government Act and the Subdivision and Development Regulation allow a municipality to take up to 10% of developable land to be dedicated as different types of reserves. Under the Act, the subdivision approving authority may require the registered owner of a parcel of land that is the subject of a proposed subdivision to provide part of the parcel as municipal reserve **or** part as municipal reserve and part as school reserve **or** jointly as municipal and school reserve. Alternatively, the Act provides if the reserve is not taken as land alone then the reserve may be taken as cash in lieu or a combination of cash and land to satisfy the reserve dedication. The Act further states that when in the opinion of the subdivision authority a proposed subdivision would result in a higher density of dwelling units per hectare of developable land, the authority may require additional municipal reserve, school reserve, or municipal and school reserve in addition to the 10% requirement. The additional reserve land dedication depending on the number of dwellings units stated in the Act may be as low as 3% but may not exceed 5%. Sections 661 – 670 of the MGA give details.

#### ***Planning Considerations***

- ***Municipal Reserve Requirements-*** *It is recommended that a policy statement be included in the 2013 Municipal Development Plan requiring municipal reserve dedication of 10% of the land to be sub-divided and that where higher densities will exist as a result of subdivision an additional 3% - 5% be taken as prescribed in the Alberta Municipal Government Act Division 8: Sections 661 – 670. Policy statements must also be consistent with the Subdivision and Development Regulation.*

- *Re-think the policy of requiring only 5% MR in industrial subdivisions.*
- ***Use and Disposal of Reserve Lands-** It is recommended a policy statement be included in the 2013 Municipal Development Plan regarding the use and disposal of reserve lands as prescribed by the Alberta Municipal Government Act Division 9: Sections 671 – 677. Policy must be consistent with the Subdivision and Development Regulation.*
- ***The 2013 Municipal Development Plan** will form the foundation for providing guidance, consistency and connectivity to other Town studies regarding the planning and development of parks and open spaces, trails and recreation facilities.*
- ***Planning** – planning for parks, schools and recreational activities and identifying appropriate areas should occur early in the land use planning process and be incorporated where applicable in Area Structure and Neighbourhood Plans. The planning and design of these areas should include and recognize the need for a variety of types of parks and the need to match park infrastructure and amenities with the needs of residents.*

## 7.5 Recreation and Cultural Facilities

The Town and County of Ponoka are well served by a number of quality recreation facilities, which are maintained and upgraded on an ongoing basis. The Arena complex has two ice surfaces for hockey, figure skating and recreational skating as well as the Scott Seaman's outdoor rink surface built in 2010. The complex also contains 6 ice sheets used by the local Curling Club and houses two racquet ball courts and meeting rooms available for community use. The Ponoka Aquaplex has a 25 metre swimming pool, wading pool and dive tank. Adjacent to the south of the Aquaplex are the Town's outdoor Tennis Courts. Other public outdoor facilities include a skate board park located in the downtown core and the 2012 Ponoka Splash Park located adjacent to Highway 2A in Centennial Park. The Town currently owns 6 ball diamonds and soccer pitches with several others available for use thorough various schools and clubs.

Situated within the Battle River Valley are a system of trails and picnic areas. The Diamond Willow Trail connects the Buck for Wildlife natural area with the Wolf Track Trail. These trail systems are now an integral part of the Trans Canada Trail Network.

The Jubilee Library is conveniently located next to the Town Hall and the Seniors Drop-In Centre which provides a variety of recreation opportunities for seniors are within a few blocks of the downtown core.

The Wolf Creek Resort is located to the south of Ponoka and features 36 holes. Known as Ponoka's best kept secret the 18 hole Black Elk Run (formerly Ponoka Community Golf Course) is conveniently located within the Town's boundaries.

The Calnash Agriculture Event Centre is a multipurpose agricultural recreation facility that provides recreational, entertainment and educational activities for the community, region and province.

The newly renovated Hudson's Green Nature and Activity Centre as well as the Kinsmen Community Centre are town owned facilities with the capacity to host special events and group functions.

The Town of Ponoka is home to several museums.

- The Cowboy Museum is located within the Stampede Grounds
- Fort Ostell Museum is located adjacent to Centennial Park on Highway 2A. Housed within Fort Ostell is the Alberta Hospital Ponoka Museum Collection.
- Canadian Pro Rodeo Hall of Fame is located on the upper floor of the Calnash Ag Event Centre

### ***Planning Considerations***

- ***Facility Requirements*** - *The 2007 Interim Needs Assessment & Feasibility Study summarized needs and concerns expressed by residents as well as identifying specific needs regarding recreation and sports facilities in the present and foreseeable future. Until subsequent action or planning is undertaken as a result of these findings, priority should remain focused on the maintenance and upgrading of existing facilities.*
- ***Partnerships*** – *The Town of Ponoka, Ponoka County, Ponoka Agricultural Society and the Ponoka Stampede & Exhibition Association are partners in the recently built Calnash Ag Event Centre. Partnerships formed with community services groups are a key asset and integral part of planning recreational facilities and parks.*

## **7.6 Battle River Valley**

The Battle River Watershed is a large area of land covering most of east-central Alberta that drains into the Battle River. The 1991 - 1996 Ponoka Regional Recreation/Cultural Master Plan gave the highest priority rating to the continued development of the river valley. The Plan identified this area as a major regional park offering a variety of opportunities for year-round use and identified the importance of protecting its natural environment. This was reaffirmed by the 2007 Freidman Study. The study hi-lighted the Battle River as being one of Ponoka's main assets and encouraged the development of this area to be utilized as a central pillar of any renewal process.

Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development are currently in the process of preparing an Approved Water Management Plan for the Battle River Basin (Alberta). The Plan provides direction for the management of surface water and groundwater within the Battle River Basin and also provides guidance for the management of riparian areas, voluntary flow restrictions during water storage periods and the development of site specific water quality objectives.

The 2013 Municipal Development Plan recognizes the need for environmental protection of sensitive areas within the river valley and supports development for public recreational purposes and the enhancement of natural areas.

### ***Planning Considerations***

- ***Development in the River Valley*** - continue to develop linear trails and parks systems to conserve natural features and cultural heritage while offering compatible types of year round recreation, education and aesthetic opportunities. Ensure development within the river valley provides connectivity to surrounding developments and is compatible with surrounding land uses. Continue to control and restrict construction and development within the floodway and flood fringe areas as identified by Alberta Environment and the Land Use Bylaw.
- ***Battle River Water Management Plan for the Battle River Basin (Alberta)*** – ensure this plan becomes an integral component in land use planning for development within the river valley.
- ***Environmental protection*** – acquire land for environmental protection and recreational purposes by way of environmental and municipal reserve dedication or opportunities to purchase environmentally sensitive areas in need of protection. With careful planning these areas can serve several useful purposes (community gardens, nature preserves)
- ***Future Plans*** – develop a long range plan which will facilitate the further expansion and integration of the trail system throughout the Town and Ponoka County and will form connections to the Trans Canada Trail Network. It is recognized that a more integrated, easily accessible and safe trail network will result in increased recreational use as well as acting as an alternative avenue of transportation.

## **7.7 Schools**

Schools have been discussed previously in this report. For ease in review the table below demonstrates both public and separate student enrolment levels and provides information regarding upgrading of current facilities.

**Table 30: School Capacity**

SCHOOL	CURRENT ENROLMENT	FUTURE PLANS & CAPACITY
Ponoka Composite High School (7-12)	590	900 (includes Phase 3 currently being renovated)
Ponoka Elementary School (K-5)(Pink & Brick buildings.)	428 (between the 2 buildings.) (85% factor is considered full)	580 (2 buildings.) (pink building. 351; brick building. 229) <i>the pink school is slated to be phased out</i>
Diamond Willow Middle School (K-6)	211	500+ Renovations are taking place in 2013. For the upcoming school year, Grades. 7& 8 will be moving to the High School,
St. Augustine Catholic School (K-12)	580	366 (primary grades) 635 (4-12)
Ponoka Christian School (K-9)	88 (with play school students) 78 (without)	160
Ponoka Outreach School	187	80 seats (due to flexible student schedule, not all 187 students are in school at once)

Sources: *Wolf Creek School District; Ponoka Christian School; St. Augustine Catholic School*

### **7.7.1 Wolf Creek School Division**

The Wolf Creek Public School Division covers 5944 square kilometres and is located on both sides of the Queen Elizabeth II Highway (Highway 2) midway between Calgary and Edmonton. The division employs approximately 475 teachers and 350 support staff and is represented by six trustees on the Board of Trustees. Approximately 7200 students, from Kindergarten to Grade 12, attend Wolf Creek Public Schools. Some 4800 students are transported to and from school on division-owned and contracted buses along 100 rural bus routes and 16 urban routes (Blackfalds, Lacombe, and Ponoka). French Immersion programs are offered in four City of Lacombe schools and Native Education programs are offered in four Town of Ponoka schools. The District also supports home education through programs that provide traditional home education, blended programming and distance learning.

### **7.7.2 St. Augustine**

St. Augustine Catholic Elementary School is administered through the St. Thomas Aquinas Roman Catholic Regional School Division located in Leduc.

### **7.7.3 Christian School**

Enrolment statistics have changed somewhat since 1995/96 as is evidenced in the table above.

#### 7.7.4 Ponoka Outreach School

The Ponoka Outreach School is administered by the Wolf Creek School Division and is an alternative School with a focus on one to one instruction and flexible hours. The Outreach serves students from grade 8 to Grade 12, including full-time and part-time students, and adult students who are looking to upgrade.

School locations are shown in ***Map 2 Existing Land Use within Town Boundaries.***

##### ***Planning Considerations***

- ***Future School Requirements*** - No major school expansions are currently being planned by any of the schools. The Ponoka Composite High School has undergone extensive renovations in several phases since 2010 and is nearing completion of the final phase. When the refurbishment is complete the High School will feature an Arts & Culture Theatre. The Diamond Willow Middle School is scheduled for refurbishing and renovation in 2013.
- ***Co-ordination of Parks Development with Schools*** - Location and design of new neighbourhood parks should whenever possible be co-coordinated with the development of school sites and be contained within Area Structure and Neighbourhood Design Plans whenever relevant.
- ***Subdivision Approving Authority*** - the Town in its role as Subdivision Approving Authority and in consultation with the school districts will ensure future school sites are identified and incorporated into land use planning documents. Reserves will be taken as School Reserve or Municipal and School Reserve at no cost to the school boards. Where no school is required, the Town will take reserves as Municipal Reserves. Where cash in lieu is taken the Town may negotiate with the school boards

## SECTION 8: TRANSPORTATION, UTILITIES, AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

This section of the report reviews plans and policies from existing transportation and servicing studies to assess current capacities and future requirements based upon projected population growth. Resources accessed for this section of the 2013 Municipal Development Plan review are:

- 1997 - Municipal Development Plan;
- 2005 - Highway 53 Functional Planning Study (ISL Engineering & Land Services);
- 2006 - Highway 2A Functional Planning Study (CastleGlenn Consultants Inc)
- 2005 - Master Servicing Study (Tagish Engineering) and
- 2012 - Master Servicing Study update (Tagish Engineering)
- 2012 - North West Storm Water Management Plan (Tagish Engineering)
- 2013 - Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resources - Approved Water Management Plan for the Battle River

### 8.1 Transportation

Highway 53 is a highway of provincial and regional importance. The 2005 Highway 53 Functional Planning Study prepared by ISL Engineering & Land Services provides long range plans for Highway 53 from the QE II east through the Town of Ponoka to secondary Highway 815 and reviews required traffic operations as well as any needed safety improvements. The project Technical Review Committee consisted of members representing Alberta Transportation, Town of Ponoka and Ponoka County.

CastleGlenn Consultants Inc. was retained in late August 2005 to undertake a functional planning study to address the requirements of the Highway 2A corridor which spans from the Battle River Bridge, south of the Town of Ponoka to the north one mile beyond the Town limits ending at Township Road 432. The study involves ways to improve traffic operations including twinning Highway 2A. The primary objective of the study is to reconfirm the vision for the corridor in terms of functionality and desired traffic operations and account for desired land use objectives on lands adjacent to the corridor. Access management will remain a key factor in arriving at the most effective solutions to improve traffic operations until such time as twinning of the corridor occurs.

These two Alberta Transportation related studies have a significant impact on any Town approved developments or those developments requiring access to an internal road system adjacent to Highway 53 or 2A. The Town is required to address and ensure proposed developments will be consistent with the long range objectives of both these plans.

The 2012 Master Servicing Study prepared for the Town by Tagish Engineering Ltd. provides an overall transportation concept plan regarding all Primary Highways, Arterial Roadways, Major Collector and Collector Roadways and the interaction between each to create traffic access within a defined study area. The 2012 Master Servicing Study updates the 2005 study and includes a planning component for the 2011 annexed areas. *Refer to Figure 9.1 – 2012 Master Servicing Study.*

### 8.1.1 Roads

- **Arterial Roads** carry large volumes of all types of traffic moving at medium to high speeds. These roadways serve major flows between the principal areas of traffic generation and connect to collector roadways. Arterial road networks provide wider widths and are stronger structures which carry higher volumes of traffic. They form an integral component of the Truck route system. Direct access to adjacent development from arterial roads is monitored and normally restricted.

**Major Collector and Collector Roads** are used to handle traffic movement and property access within a neighbourhood or specific local area and direct traffic flows to arterial roadways.

- A **collector road** is a low-to-moderate-capacity road which serves to move traffic from local roads to major collector roads. Lane and alley ways are not included in this definition.
- A **major collector road** handles traffic flows from land developments and is fed by collector roads which connect to them. Major collector roads then feed into arterial roadways.

Flow pattern = Collectors to major collectors to arterial roads and primary and secondary highways.

*Refer to Figure 9.1 – 2012 Master Servicing Study for identification of Primary Highways, arterial roads, collector roads and major collector roads and Section 4.5 for additional information.*

### Dangerous Goods Routes

Dangerous goods legislation was introduced in Canada in 1985 to improve public and environmental safety when transporting dangerous goods and to assist emergency response personnel reduce the impact of an accident on the general public. By selecting appropriate routes, the Town will be able to direct the movement of dangerous goods onto those highways and roads which are best suited for this purpose. Choosing an appropriate route serves several purposes:

- may allow heavily populated areas to be avoided
- improves emergency response planning by knowing where these types of accidents are likely to occur
- route selection when planned purposefully addresses emergency response capabilities in terms of anticipated response times and available resources.

The primary Highways (2A and 53) are the base of the dangerous goods route network.

- 67<sup>th</sup> Street proceeds south from Hwy 53 through the Froman and South West Industrial Parks to link with proposed 36 Avenue east bound and continues in a easterly and north route to connect with 50 Street creating a loop back to Highway 2A

- 49<sup>th</sup> Street proceeds southbound from the Ponoka County boundary and connects to the rail crossing at 57<sup>th</sup> Avenue. This portion of the dangerous goods route directs traffic from the North East Industrial Park and connects with 50<sup>th</sup> Street and ultimately Highway 2A and Highway 53 creating another loop if needed for dangerous goods.

*Refer to Figure 9.2 – 2012 Master Servicing Study for identification of the Dangerous Goods Routes.*

### ***Planning Considerations:***

- ***The Dangerous Goods Transportation and Handling Act of Alberta: Section 14 (17)*** (1) states a local authority within the meaning of the Municipal Government Act may make bylaws with respect to highways under its direction, control and management. Bylaws do not come into force until they have been approved by the Minister and bylaws cease to have force 5 years after their commencement date or the effective date of renewal. In Alberta, the Dangerous Goods and Rail Safety Branch of Alberta Transportation is responsible for the official approval process.
- *Dangerous routes goods must be established within Town boundaries for the safety of the community. Any existing routes can be reviewed in consultation with Emergency and Protective Services and any needed revisions may be made to existing routes to achieve the intended goal.*
- *For consistency with the 2013 Municipal Development Plan, the Town of Ponoka Traffic Bylaw 200-06 requires amendment of Schedule A and should be amended to include and identify dangerous goods routing.*

### ***Highway 53 and Highway 2A***

*To maintain the integrity of Highway 2A and Highway 53 as major transportation corridors new development such as subdivisions and highway commercial or industrial uses must adhere to Alberta Transportation Functional Planning Studies, the 2012 Master Servicing Study and other relevant Town plans and policies. Existing businesses and any infill development should be restricted to one access per business or share joint access where possible.*

*The Town of Ponoka has a good road network system. As development occurs developers must contribute financially to the extension of the road network. The road network must be designed to adequately handle future traffic volumes.*

*The 2012 Master Servicing Study identifies proposed upgrades and separates them into three levels.*

*(Figures 9.1 & 9.2 pages 74-80)*

- *“Short Term” means upgrades that are recommended for the Transportation System in the next 5 years*

- *“Intermediate” means upgrades recommended meeting development servicing needs in the next 5 to 10 years. These infrastructure improvements are development driven and would be paid for from collected offsite levies or by agreement with developers.*
- *“Long Term” means upgrades recommended in the next 10 – 20 years to meet maximum infrastructure needs to service all undeveloped areas. These areas would mostly include the land annexed but undeveloped in 2011.*

*Town of Ponoka Strategic Plan 2011 – 2013 recognizes it is important to ensure the community has modern and reliable infrastructure and that this be accomplished through continuous upgrading and new development to meet the community’s needs. One specific objective of the Plan is to enhance road infrastructure and development guidelines to avoid potential issues with future development.*

### **8.1.2 Downtown Parking**

The issue of parking availability in the Downtown core is a subject that has long been debated and is the subject of several town studies. Parking is an important factor to ensure the viability of the Downtown as the primary commercial area and to encourage new businesses to locate there.

The 2000 Ponoka Main Street Project Final Report and the Ponoka Downtown Design Guidelines state that while an excess of traffic and parked cars creates visual chaos and erodes the ambiance of the downtown, too little vehicular movement drains the town centre of life. It goes on to suggest:

- Design solutions for incorporating parking into the downtown pedestrian environment are needed to strike a balance by combining convenient stalls at the front of buildings and space in off-street lots.
- Parking lots and vacant lots can be softened visually with esthetically pleasing fencing and the use of trees and shrubs

The 2007 Retooling Downtown Ponoka Alberta report prepared by Avi Friedman states that both private and public parking lots provide ample parking in the downtown core and recognized:

- Parking lots were located within a short walking distance of major destinations which made the core pedestrian friendly
- In addition to parking on designated lots, parking was also available in land behind or next to buildings and was free of charge
- New development should be encouraged to construct underground parking where feasible,
- There was ample parking available to accommodate both local and visitor parking

### ***Planning Considerations***

- *A parking stall survey of the downtown core in 2013 provided information reflecting parking availability and capacities.*
- *The esthetic value of both public and private parking lots should be documented with further evaluation and suggestions for beautification and improvement.*
- *Any proposed land use bylaw amendments should be consistent with the Municipal Development Plan and provide consistency with any relevant town policies and design guidelines to enhance and revitalize the Downtown Core.*

### **8.1.3 Pedestrian/Bicycle Paths**

Transportation helps build, shape and connect communities and affects the way they look, feel and function. Increasingly, people see the benefits of walking or bicycling both at a personal and community level. These activities are a form of travel with direct health benefits and serve to reduce traffic congestion, are environmentally friendly, economical and encourage people to spend time in public spaces, making them safer, healthier and more vibrant.

The 2007 Town of Ponoka Recreation Facility Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study prepared by Randall Conrad and Associates Ltd. listed multi-use trails as the highest priority by those surveyed (27%) and among the top ten priorities for outdoor recreational spaces development.

The Town currently has an excellent river valley trail system with at least 75% connectivity through established designated pathways and sidewalks. This enables the trails to function as multi-use making them easily accessible to everyone regardless of personal limitations.

**Pedestrians' needs** differ from other street users. They are interested in the most direct and safe route to their destination. In particular they may want to know where the best crossings are, links to public transportation, local attractions and public facilities such as toilets.

**Cyclists' needs** differ from pedestrians. Cyclists travel at faster speeds, prefer not to stop and frequent different space than pedestrians. They are interested in distance to travel, time it may take to reach their destination and clearly identified routes with easily read visible trail signage.

### ***Planning Consideration***

- *Pedestrian/Bicycle Path System – Continue to develop and enhance the network of pedestrian/bicycle paths through the use of environmental reserves, parks, utility right-of-ways and designated roads and sidewalks.*

- *Develop a way finding sign system to improve access for pedestrians and cyclists living in or visiting the community. The system should be designed to logically link areas thereby increasing the ability to travel easily and safely between locations.*
- *Establish signage of appropriate size and location as to safe and courteous use of the trail system by everyone.*
- *2013 Capital Budget has provided project funding to develop future connection of the trail system on the west side of Highway 2A and further to the south.*

#### **8.1.4 Rail Service**

The Town of Ponoka is situated on the main Canadian Pacific Railway line between Edmonton and Calgary. The North East Industrial Park benefits from a town owned and operated rail spur line making this a value added service attractive to companies who depend on rail access as a functioning part of their operations.

#### **8.1.5 Air Service**

Ponoka's Industrial Airport (Labrie Field – registered as Aerodrome CEH3) is the local industrial airport located to the south of Ponoka on Highway 2A. It is served by a newly implemented GPS Instrument Approach system, maintenance facilities and a 941 meter (3,088 feet) paved runway. An added advantage to Ponoka's airport is that it is the only airport in central Alberta with CANPASS service which allows aircraft to quickly clear customs between Canada and the United States locally rather than at Edmonton or Calgary. The Edmonton International Airport is just 45 minutes away. *Refer to Map 1: Regional Location*

### **8.2 Utilities**

#### **8.2.1 Water Supply**

Water supply is an important component for the future development of the Town of Ponoka. Having an adequate water supply is critical to sustain current development and to support future growth. Alberta Environment requires the Town of Ponoka to demonstrate the capability of supplying adequate water to the Town and to sustain any proposed development.

As of May 2006, the Town of Ponoka's main water source is the Red Deer River. Water is purchased from the City of Red Deer and delivered to the Town through a regional water line via the North Red Deer Water Services Commission. The Regional Water Line provides a high quality, stable supply of water enabling the Town to meet future growth. With sufficient allocation from the Red Deer Water Service Commission the Town will be able to support populations far exceeding those reported in the 2012 Master Servicing Study.

#### **Groundwater System**



With the connection to the Regional Water Line in 2006, the groundwater well system established by the Town has been abandoned. In 2012 the abandoned groundwater wells were decommissioned by the Town.

*Refer to Figure 5.1 and 5.2 of the 2012 Master Servicing Study for detail mapping reflecting water supply, storage and distribution plans.*

### **Planning Considerations**

*Maintaining Adequate Supply of Water is an essential component and investment the Town of Ponoka has to make to ensure future growth in population and attract new development.*

- To lessen demand for essential water supply (household etc) on the regional water line the Town should promote water conservation initiatives such as low-flow fixtures, use of grey water and uses for captured and retained storm water for onsite irrigation such as lawns and gardens.*
- The Town should consider exploring methods and partnerships relating to education programs promoting water conservation. This would be similar to educating the population about recycling initiatives.*
- A Drinking Water Safety Plan as mandated by Alberta Environment has been prepared for the Town of Ponoka in 2013.*

## **8.2.2 Electrical Power**

The Town of Ponoka owns and operates its own electrical distribution system, installations, and supply network. Power is purchased from Enmax Corporation who is the main retailer and resold to customers within the Town of Ponoka. Trained certified professional staff employed by the Town enables expansion of the electrical system in a timely manner to supply new industrial and residential development. The Town of Ponoka has a good solid long term working relationship with Fortis Alberta and other electrical utility contractors who could provide assistance for emergency situations.

## **8.2.3 Communications**

The Town of Ponoka and surrounding area is well serviced with a variety of communications providers who supply phone, cellular, cable and internet services.

## **8.2.4 Natural Gas**

The Town of Ponoka is within the ATCO Gas service area.

## 8.3 Environmental Services

### 8.3.1 Waste Water Treatment Facility

The Town of Ponoka's Waste Water Treatment Facility is located north east of the Town on quarter sections NW 10-43-25-W5, NE 10-43-25-W4 and SE 15-43-25-W4 and covers approximately 70 hectares (175 acres) of land. The Town owns most of NE 10 and portions of the adjoining quarters to the north and west (SE 15 & NW 10).

The existing waste water treatment facility is classified as an Extended Aeration System with Annual Storage and consists of four (4) Anaerobic Cells, three (3) Aerated Secondary Treatment Cells and three (3) Storage Cells. *Refer to Figure 7.1 and 7.2 of the 2012 Master Servicing Study*

Upgrades have been done to the Waste Water Treatment Facility (WWTF) from 2005 to 2012 including flood proofing, diversion of flows, upgrading to inlet structures and construction of berms to facilitate storage and increased operating levels.

Proposed upgrades to the system have been broken into three levels:

- Short term – next 5 years
- Intermediate term – 5 – 10 years
- Long term – 10 – 20 years

These upgrades are described in detail in Section 7 of the 2012 Master Servicing Study.

2013 Capital Budget provides funding for the installation and testing of solar aerators for the storage cells at the lagoon. This process will promote a more efficient method of dispersing ammonia levels and allow for earlier release of storage cells in the spring. 2014 Capital Budget will provide funding to continue to improve waste water treatment at the Town's treatment facility.

### 8.3.2 Storm Water Management

The Battle River is the primary dominant physical feature that controls topography and provides the drainage outlet for storm water runoff in the Town of Ponoka. Runoff from the Town site flows towards the Battle River from both sides, mostly overland with some underground piping and drainage ditches.

Since the 1997 Municipal Development Plan was adopted several studies have been commissioned by the Town of Ponoka to address storm water management.

- In 2004 the Town participated in the Battle River Watershed Management planning process through a series of stakeholder advisory group meetings. In 2006 Alberta Environment selected the Battle River Watershed Alliance as the designated

Watershed Planning and Advisory Council for the Battle River and Sounding Creek watersheds within Alberta. The Town of Ponoka is located within this watershed.

- The 2005 Master Servicing Study prepared by Tagish Engineering Ltd. further addressed environmental requirements for storm water management and was updated in 2012 to ensure continuity and consistency with provincial regulations and other relevant Town plans and policies. *Refer to 2012 Master Servicing Study for additional information*
- The 2012 Town of Ponoka North West Storm Water Management Plan includes revisions, final rulings and recommendations from the Environmental Appeal Board. The objective of the plan is to assess existing conditions and flow rates, prepare a water management plan to accommodate residential development and outline Storm Water Guidelines for future development in the North West Drainage Basin. The North West Drainage Basin overlays an area contained within the Battle River and Sounding Creek Basin. The guidelines will be applicable to future large or individual subdivision applications within the drainage basin. The North West Storm Management Plan will not require any further approvals as long as proposed development is in compliance with the recommendations and guidelines of the plan. *Refer to North West Storm Management Plan – January 2012 for additional information. Figure 7.1.1 outlines the boundaries of the basin.*
- In 2013 Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development presented a draft Approved Water Management Plan for the Battle River Basin (Alberta) and have begun the process of public consultation. This plan will be the senior plan as it applies to the management of water within the Battle River Basin. All other Town water management and watershed management plans must be consistent with it.

### ***Planning Considerations***

- *2012 Master Servicing Study requires review and adoption by Town Council. 2013 Budgetary considerations have been given to accomplish this thereby allowing implementation to accommodate proposed recommendations and upgrades. (Short term, intermediate and long range)*
- *2013 Capital Budget provides funding for continued investigation of potential cross connections of storm water runoff into sanitary systems currently causing sudden inflows at the lagoon. The Town should proceed with this process to discover the causes which could result in eliminating the need to construct a new lagoon storage cell.*

### **8.3.3 Solid Waste Disposal**

The Town of Ponoka operated its own landfill site until the end of December of 1993 when it was closed. A waste transfer station was established by the Town and became operational in March 1994. Effective January 1, 2012 solid waste is hauled from the Town transfer station to the West Dried Meat Lake Regional Landfill site located in Camrose County.

In an effort to reduce the amount of solid waste needing to be hauled to the regional landfill the Town operates a recycling depot free of charge and partners with Ponoka County to supply a location for electronics recycling. In addition a local non-profit group operates and provides a blue box program to residents at a nominal fee and the Town provides seasonal pickup and recycling of residential yard waste such as leaves, grass and other compostable items.

User fees have been instituted to cover increased costs for waste disposal and recycling. Composting programs are in place to encourage reduction of the amount of solid waste being hauled to the regional landfill.

*Planning consideration: development is restricted within 300 metres (1,000 feet) of operating waste transfer stations, and existing and closed landfills. The affected areas are shown on Map 7.*

## **SECTION 9: INSTITUTIONAL AND PUBLIC USES**

The purpose of this section is to provide an inventory of existing institutional uses and facilities and assess their future requirements. Institutional uses include health, welfare, educational and government activities. Much of this assessment has already been done in other parts of the Analysis Report. Existing and future school requirements have been discussed in Section 7. Health, police, and ambulance services are discussed in Section 10: Health, Safety and Protective Services. The remaining areas to be discussed are institutional uses within the context of public buildings owned and occupied by either municipal, county or provincial governments or churches.

### **9.1 Government Buildings**

The Ponoka Town Office is located at 5102-48 Avenue. Built in 1962 and renovated in 1993 it houses general administration and council chambers. Although there is adequate room on site to accommodate further expansion and upgrading of the Town Office Council and administration has explored alternatives. The considered alternatives centre around relocating to an existing facility and refurbishing that facility versus construction of a new build.

Ponoka Jubilee Library is located at 5110-48 Avenue next to the Town Offices. Built in 1966 and renovated in 1983 the Library faces similar concerns as the Town Office. Alternative facilities could be renovated to relocate and include the Library in the same facility as Administration and Council Chambers. The possibility of expansion at its current location does exist but may need to be explored for viability as a stand alone function versus being incorporated under “one roof”.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Detachment is located at 5120-50 Avenue and provides services to the Town and surrounding area. Both municipal (urban) and rural patrols are based in Ponoka. The local detachment has 14 RCMP positions and access to 5 Sheriffs from the Provincial Integrated Traffic unit located in the same building. Built in 1972 and renovated in 1995 the needs of the detachment and the adequacy of the current building are currently under review. Options have been explored to either construct a new building or remain in the current location and refurbish that facility. Expansion on the current site may be difficult unless there is the capacity to add additional floors to the existing structure.

Town of Ponoka Fire Hall is located at 5401- 48 Avenue and serves both the Town and part of Ponoka County. The Fire Hall was built in 1981 and there are no current plans for expansion or upgrading of this facility.

The Town of Ponoka Public Works Shop was built in 1987 and is located at 5614 – 49 Street in the North East Industrial Park. This is a large site and future expansion or upgrading could be accommodated on site.

#### **9.1.2 Ponoka County**

The Ponoka County Administration Offices are located at 4205 Highway 2A and housed in the Encana Corporation Building. The County Public Works Shop is located to the east of the administration offices. Any future expansion can likely be accommodated on site.

### 9.1.3 Province of Alberta

The Provincial Building designed by internationally renowned architect Douglas Cardinal and built in 1974 is located downtown at 5110- 49 Avenue. This centrally located in the downtown core this building houses a number of organizations who provide various services:

- Ponoka Mental Health
- Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation
- Alberta Sustainable Resource Development – Fish and Wildlife
- Ponoka Adult Learning Society
- Alberta Health Services – Human Resources
- Ponoka Literacy Project
- Gemini – Harnessing Energy
- Ponoka Neighbourhood Place
- Alberta Farm Services Corporation (AFSC)

#### *Planning Consideration*

- *Maintain Government Uses Downtown – Consistent with the goal of the revitalization of the Downtown area major government offices and institutional uses should be encouraged to stay and when possible expand in the Downtown area. Not only does this provide a central location for their clients and employees but also provide a customer base for downtown retail and service businesses and generate much needed pedestrian traffic.*

## 9.2 Churches

Churches located within the Town of Ponoka include the following:

St. Augustine Roman Catholic Church  
St. Mary's Anglican Church  
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Seventh-Day Adventist Church  
Church of the Open Bible  
Ponoka United Church  
First Baptist Church  
New Covenant Baptist Reformed Church  
Ponoka Alliance Church  
Word of Life Centre  
Jehovah's Witness Kingdom Hall

There are also a number of churches located in Ponoka County in close proximity to the Town. These include:

Zion Christian Fellowship  
Parkland Worship Centre  
Son Rise Christian Reform  
Parkland Independent Reform Church

The Town and area is well served by a large number of churches which not only serve as places of worship but are also used for public assembly and community events.

### ***Planning Consideration***

- *Church Locations – Churches are discretionary uses in almost every Residential Districts within current Land Use Bylaw 013-97. Regular single family lots because of their depth and locations do not always provide the best sites for development of churches and associated parking. If they must locate within residential neighbourhoods they should be encouraged to seek out corner sites along collector or arterial roadways. When adopting Area Structure Plans sites suitable in location and compatible with surrounding uses should be pre-planned and identified for churches.*

## SECTION 10: HEALTH, SAFETY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES

One of the purposes of the Municipal Development Plan is to ensure policies and programs are implemented that provide protection of the public health, safety and welfare of citizens of the Town of Ponoka. The goal is to build a safe, healthy and inclusive community through provision of a variety of protective and community services.

The objective of the plan is to ensure opportunities are available for all residents to enjoy a high quality of life, facilitate the planning and delivery of social programs that support and enhance individuals, families, neighbourhoods and the community and to provide residents with a safe living environment through the effective provision of protective and emergency services.

### 10.1 Health Care

Effective 2008 Alberta Health Services became Canada's first province-wide fully integrated health system. The Town of Ponoka is within the Central Zone which is headquartered in Red Deer. The local office for Alberta Health Services is located in the Town of Ponoka at 5900 Highway 2A.

A cornerstone of the local economy for over 100 years is the renowned Centennial Centre for Mental Health and Brain Injury which employs over 800 people. One of Canada's major psychiatric hospitals, the Centennial Centre is recognized as a world leader in the area of brain injury research and rehabilitation treatment. Its on-site nursing school works closely with the Grant MacEwan University School of Psychiatric Nursing program.

The Ponoka Hospital and Care Centre serves the health care needs of the Town and surrounding region. There are currently 29 acute beds and 28 long term care beds in the Hospital. The Hospital is fully equipped for general medicine, obstetrics, surgery, pediatrics and emergency use. In addition to the services provided through the Ponoka General Hospital, there is one private clinic, a medical laboratory, and 2 physiotherapy clinics (one private and one public). Alberta Health Services provides less intensive patient care such as home care, immunization, speech, pre-natal and community health services to name just a few.

### 10.2 Senior and Community Services

Effective 2008 the Town of Ponoka was designated by the Alberta Council on Aging as Alberta's first "Senior Friendly Community". The program involved individual businesses and organizations taking part in "Senior Friendly" seminars and facility check-ups. To fulfill the Town's desire to retain its Senior Friendly designation the program is being restructured in 2013 for ease of implementation. To further extend this commitment the Town strives to utilize age friendly principles in all of its municipal initiatives.

The Town offers a variety of care facilities for various needs and stages of senior life as well as housing facilities for seniors and disabled adults such as:

- Privately owned publicly funded continuing care (Northcott Care Centre)
- publicly funded supportive housing (Golden Leisure Lodge, Reid Manor, Legion Arms, Slater Place)
- privately owned and operated supportive housing (Legacy Place)
- home care
- supportive living level #3 housing (Sunrise Village)

Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) provide supportive and preventative programs to Ponoka and surrounding communities. These services include:

- children and youth programs (Youth Centre and Big Brothers Big Sisters)
- family services (counselling, parent support groups, resource library, tools for schools)
- adult support (home support, lifeline, meals on wheels)
- seniors support (home support, lifeline, meals on wheels, socialization activities, resource centre, fall yard clean up)
- community development (information and referral, public awareness and education, volunteer advocate training, community volunteer week event, snow shovelling referral program, grass cutting referral program)
- other services such as volunteer driver referral program, volunteer income tax returns, friendly visitor program, FCSS Board development and Coats for the Cold

Additional services include a Seniors' Drop In Centre, an “adult daycare service” and the Ponoka Wheelchair Van Transport Society.

### 10.3 Fire Protection

The Ponoka Fire Department is located at *5401 – 48 Avenue* in a 10 bay modern building complete with offices, classroom and an upper lounging area. The department consists of 25 volunteers, full time Fire Chief (Director of Protective Services) and full time Fire Prevention Coordinator. The Ponoka Fire Department covers an area of approximately 500 square miles as a result of an agreement for fire services with Ponoka County.

The fire hall is relatively new and well equipped and there is currently no demand for expansion of facilities or to acquire land for future expansion purposes.

### 10.4 Protective Services

The Town contracts police services with the RCMP. The Ponoka Detachment has 10 municipal members and 4 rural members in addition to 5 freeway and Integrated Traffic Services members (Sheriffs). The Ponoka Detachment is responsible for a geographical area that includes Highway 611 on the north, Milton road on the south, east to Highway 821, and west to 5<sup>th</sup> Meridian Road. The Ponoka detachment building has been under review for the past year to determine the feasibility of remaining where the detachment is and refurbishing

the current facility or to purchase land in an appropriate location to construct a new detachment building.

## 10.5 Ambulance Service

**Ambulance services** are provided by Alberta Health Services through contracted companies within the Town of Ponoka. The Town is an ALS (Advanced Life Support) community with paramedical service provided on all four ambulances.

**Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs)** can be effective at improving survival from sudden cardiac arrest. Research by the Heart & Stroke Foundation shows that AEDs are an effective intervention where there is a high likelihood of cardiac arrest in places where large numbers of people gather. Town of Ponoka proactively supports this concept. There are AEDs strategically located throughout the community both in public and private sector high probability use areas.

**Air Ambulance:** The Provincial Health Authority contracts 12 fixed-wing aircraft to provide 24-hour air ambulance services throughout the province. Alberta Health Services has an affiliation agreement with Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society (STARS) to ensure rotary air ambulance service from 3 bases throughout the province. The Town of Ponoka has a helicopter landing pad for emergency medical evacuation at the Ponoka Hospital and Care Centre and the capability to accept fixed wing medevacs at the local airport – Labrie Field.

## **SECTION 11: REGIONAL PLANNING AND CO-OPERATION**

The purpose of this section is to describe and evaluate the existing structure and policies for regional planning particularly relating to development within the Ponoka Urban Fringe Area and to identify opportunities for partnerships with surrounding rural and urban municipalities.

With the elimination of the Provincial Regional Planning Commissions in 1995 a joint municipally owned planning agency, West Central Planning Agency, was formed and located in Wetaskiwin, Alberta. The Town of Ponoka was a member owner until December 2010 when planning services were converted from the Agency to be managed in house.

### **11.1 Inter-municipal Agreement on Development in the Urban Fringe**

An Inter-municipal Agreement on Development in the Urban Fringe was adopted by resolution of Ponoka County and Town of Ponoka Councils September 22, 1998.

The Agreement was struck with the belief by both Councils that disputes could be kept to a minimum if both groups agreed on a pattern of future land use within a two mile radius of Town boundaries. The goal of the Agreement is to ease the transition from agricultural to urban land uses and to ensure development in the County does not unreasonably interfere with the long term growth plans for the Town of Ponoka.

#### **11.1.1 Constraints to Urban Expansion**

The Inter-municipal Development Agreement (IDA) adopted in 1998 identified a number of factors which could limit the development of lands in the Agreement area including:

- Limits on gravity sewer service
- Height, use and development restrictions to protect the airport
- Provincially mandated setbacks from sewer lagoons and landfills
- Areas subject to flooding
- Lands underlain by gravel
- Intensive animal operations (regulated by NRCB)
- Locations of operating and abandoned oil and gas wells and pipelines

Other restrictions limiting land use are:

- Ponoka County's Municipal Development Plan's focus to keep good farm land in agricultural production and not convert those uses to urban use
- Provincially mandated requirements (ERCB)
- Alberta Transportation access restrictions to provincial highways
- Safe access points along the Canadian Pacific Railway line

## ***Planning Considerations***

*The logical progression for future urban expansion would be as follows:*

- *The North West Quadrant would expand **residential** subdivision to fall within the Hudson's Green Area Structure Plan located in the S.W. 8-43-25-4 and support and encourage infill development on lands within the quadrant. **Industrial and commercial** expansion would mostly occur and be supported on the lands in the 2011 annexed area*
- *The North East Quadrant for the most part is built out and limited by the positioning of the Battle River and the flood prone areas along its banks. Logical **residential** expansion areas are along east side of 38 Street. There is little opportunity **for industrial or commercial** expansion in this quadrant. The flood prone areas of the Battle River offer potential expansion for recreation uses.*
- *The South East Quadrant holds the greatest potential for **residential** expansion within the Country Hills Estates and Caledera Area Structure Plans. There is potential for recreation expansion opportunities within the flood prone areas of the Battle River. The north west side of the river is constrained severely for future development by an abandoned land fill as well as limited by lack of municipal services. A large portion of lands within this quadrant are owned and used for recreation purposes by the Stampede Association and the Agricultural Society.*
- *The South West Quadrant holds great potential for commercial and light industrial expansion. However, low lying land in proximity to the river and overland drainage patterns will limit the amount of useable land.*

### **11.1.2 Fringe Area Policies**

***Ponoka County's Municipal Development Plan 6-08-MDP with amendments to September 2012 states:***

#### **6. Urban Expansion**

*The County will co-operate with urban municipalities to make their expansion as easy as possible.*

**Policy 6.1** *Before approving any subdivision or development within two miles of Ponoka or Rimbey, or within half a mile of Parkland Beach, the County will request the comments of the urban place to ensure that the subdivision or development will not interfere with future roads, utilities, drainage schemes, or land use patterns.*

**Policy 6.2** *Subdivision at urban densities will not be permitted close to urban areas unless the land is to be annexed immediately.*

- Policy 6.3 Land close to town which is unserviceable (for example, because of slope or elevation) might be developed for unserved lots which will remain under County jurisdiction, but this will not be done without the agreement of the town council.*
- Policy 6.4 The County will use its authority to keep development away from existing and proposed sewer lagoons and waste handling facilities operated by towns in order to protect the public investment in these facilities.*
- Policy 6.5 The County will not allow new intensive animal operations in locations that may prevent the orderly and economic growth of towns.*
- Policy 6.6 Unless the town councils request otherwise, municipal reserves due as a result of subdivision close to town will be deferred so that they can be taken later, at the time of re-subdivision into urban size lots. Decisions on environmental reserves will be made in consultation with the town.*
- Policy 6.7 Council will not object to the annexation of land:*
- which is needed for immediate development by the towns, or*
  - where the towns demonstrate a need for planning control over land which may be annexed in the future.*
  - where an inter-municipal development plan supports annexation.*
- Policy 6.8 Council requests that it be involved in planning the areas referred to in policy 6.7 above.*
- Policy 6.10 Where annexation has been agreed by all parties, but the order-in-council has not yet been issued, Council may use sections 623 and 624 of the Municipal Government Act to delegate subdivision and development authority to the town in order to simplify the approval process.*

## 11.2 Partnership Opportunities

There is a good history of co-operation between Ponoka County and the Town of Ponoka with regard to planning and development. Both municipalities would like to continue to address ways of providing services to rate payers in the most cost effective and efficient manner. The following is a brief discussion of where there may be some opportunities for partnership.

### 11.2.1 Land Use Planning

During the 2012 Municipal Development Plan Review process a representative of Ponoka County has contributed time and input. Continued ongoing interaction and communication between the Town, County and Provincial representatives to coordinate planning development and municipal operating strategies will continue to be mutually beneficial. By resolution of both Councils of the Town and Ponoka County, an Inter-Municipal Development Agreement was approved in 1998. This Agreement is a plan between the two

municipalities to ensure the smooth transition from agricultural to urban land uses and to accommodate the Town's long term growth. The Agreement affects lands in the County within a two mile radius of Town boundaries.

### ***Planning Considerations***

*In light of the 2011 annexation and changes to planning and development since the 1998 Inter-Municipal Development Agreement was approved by Council, the Review Committee recognizes the need to update the Agreement to an Inter-Municipal Development Plan following final adoption of 2013 Municipal Development Plan. All efforts will make to work cooperatively with Ponoka County to do so.*

## **11.1.2 Economic Development**

In 2004 the Town established an Economic Development Board to promote, expand and enhance economic development. Agriculture has been identified as an important and sustainable sector of the local economy. The Town and County should continue to work together with agricultural producers to promote the development of value added agricultural and food processing industries within the region. The Town is also included within the boundaries of the East Parkland Community Futures Program which provides an excellent forum for continued co-operation amongst various municipalities to focus on their economic development efforts.

## **11.1.3 Provision of Municipal Services and Infrastructure**

Partnerships with surrounding Rural and Urban Municipalities – The Town of Ponoka will promote and support mutually beneficial partnerships with the County and other neighbouring municipalities with regard to land use planning, economic development and tourism, recreation, transportation, municipal services and infrastructure.

## SECTION 12: IMPLEMENTATION AND FINANCE

This section describes how the 2013 Municipal Development Plan will be implemented to direct the future physical and social economic development for the Town of Ponoka over the next ten years, using the powers given to municipalities by the Municipal Government Act and other appropriate statutes. Although the primary responsibility ensuring this plan is implemented rests with Town Council, to be fully effective the plan requires the co-operation of other boards, agencies, and community groups. Another purpose of this section is to review and assess the town's financial capabilities as well as provide a priority framework for the preparation of a ten year Capital Plan.

This approach is consistent with the **Town of Ponoka's Mission Statement** contained within the 2011 - 2013 Strategic Plan.

***“Integrity, Enterprise and Progress”***  
***“We will provide our community accessible government and quality services in a responsible manner within a healthy environment.”***

The **Town of Ponoka's Value Statements** are the fundamental values which guide the Town of Ponoka Organization.

<b>Integrity:</b>	We will be honest, responsible and trustworthy.
<b>Service:</b>	We have a strong commitment to serving our community.
<b>Excellence:</b>	We will strive for the highest quality in all that we do.
<b>Respect:</b>	We will treat others the way we would want them to treat us.
<b>Communication:</b>	We will maintain transparency and open communication between the community and the Town's government.

### 12.1 Purpose

The overall purpose of the 2013 Municipal Development Plan is to guide future growth and development and to ensure that it is sustainable, orderly, appropriate, complementary and efficient and that it enhances the quality of life for the citizens of the Town of Ponoka. The Plan is primarily a policy document that can be utilized as a framework for the physical development of the community within which both public and private sector decision making can occur. The Plan helps Council evaluate immediate situations or proposals in the context of a long range plan and helps achieve a balance between sustained growth and quality development reflected in the 'mission statement'.

### **12.1.1 Land Use Bylaw**

The Land Use Bylaw regulates and controls land use on a site specific basis. Town of Ponoka Land Use Bylaw 013-97 will be need updating to ensure agreement between it and the 2013 Municipal Development Plan.

### **12.1.2 Area Structure Plans**

Policies contained in the 2013 Municipal Development Plan need to be implemented through preparation and adoption of area structure plans in accordance to Section 633(1) of the Municipal Government Act. Area structure plans will need to be prepared for the orderly and effective expansion of the areas acquired during the 2011 annexation process. An Area Structure Plan will need to be prepared for the Froman lands immediately west of the cemetery. During the updating of the 1997 Municipal Development Plan this area was identified as needing to be converted from residential expansion to highway commercial and light industrial expansion areas.

### **12.1.3 Area Redevelopment Plans**

It is recommended that an area redevelopment plan be prepared and adopted to be consistent with the rejuvenation plans of the Downtown area as described in Section 5.1.2 and 5.1.3 of this report and consistent with Sectors 634 and 635 of the Municipal Government Act.

### **12.1.4 Other Plans and Studies Required**

To provide more detailed direction and provide cost estimates for capital budgeting purposes the following studies are required:

- A concept plan and feasibility study for consolidating the existing museums into one location including the Fort Ostell Museum, The Cowboy Museum and the Glen Crandall Antique Museum.
- A new Recreation and Culture Strategic Master Plan;
- Adoption of the 2012 Master Servicing Study
- Adoption of the 2012 North West Storm Management Plan

## **12.2 Implementation**

The Municipal Development Plan will be used by Council to direct Town actions regarding land use planning and development and to deal with other agencies, groups and individuals on these matters. It serves as a tool indicating what the Town's position on subdivision and development proposals should be. The objectives of the Plan are to:

- Implement the Municipal Development Plan through other statutory and non-statutory plans and ensure consistency between these plans and the MDP.

- Provide guidance on interpreting and applying the Plan policies and directions
- Foster awareness of land use planning policies and participation in planning processes by stakeholders and the general public.
- Provide periodic review and amendment of the Municipal Development Plan and monitoring of effort to achieve the goals set out in the Plan.

### 12.2.2 Capital Budget

One of Ponoka's strengths is its sound financial position. In order to maintain lower tax rates the Town of Ponoka is committed to maintaining sound infrastructure and an attractive community through good long range planning and sound financial management.

To effectively implement the 2013 Municipal Development Plan, spending decisions made by Town Council must be tied to Plan priorities. The following is a priority framework presented for discussion purposes to guide in the development of a 10 year Capital Budget within established debt guidelines.

**Priority 1** – Projects that ensure the health and safety of its citizens. These are actions that maintain basic level of services, essential to the health and safety of residents and meet environmental standards (e.g. upgrading of the sewage lagoon, maintaining an adequate water supply, etc.)

**Priority 2** – Projects that maintain Ponoka's infrastructure provide access to municipal services and protect the natural environment. These are actions the Town of Ponoka must take to prevent irreparable damage to the Town's natural resources or infrastructure, and not making these improvements would be unacceptable to its citizens (e.g. maintenance of roadways).

**Priority 3** – Projects that are strategic investments that foster economic development, tourism and local job creation (e.g. Rejuvenation of Downtown, expansion of commercial, residential and industrial areas, extension of railway spur line etc.).

**Priority 4** – Projects that protect and enhance the attractiveness of the Town for residents and businesses. These include actions that enhance parks and recreation facilities, visual environment, arts and cultural facilities (examples of these include continued development of the trail system and recreation opportunities in the river valley, upgrading the recreation facilities, upgrading existing parks spaces and developing new ones).

Other considerations determining budget priorities within this framework are identifying opportunities for leveraging funds from other government source (e.g. transportation grants, Federal Infrastructure Program) or structuring public/private partnerships.

### 12.3 Monitoring and Updating the Plan

The 2013 Town of Ponoka Municipal Development Plan is not meant to be a static plan but rather a management tool to guide short and long term decisions by Town Council and Administration. It is recognized conditions change and new opportunities arise so it is important that certain benchmarks be established, and these be monitored on an annual basis and appropriate amendments be made to the Plan when required.

#### ***Planning Considerations:***

***Establish a System of Benchmarking*** – Council and Administration need to establish a series of ‘benchmarks’. These are indicators (e.g. population growth, assessment, new business starts, building permits, usage of recreation facilities, etc.) that can be measured. “Benchmarking partners’ can be established; usually other municipalities of similar size and economic base can be utilized to compare performance. Administration should prepare an annual report to Council based on this information and evaluate how over the past year proposed developments have been fitting in with the approved MDP to determine if there are any amendment needs for Plan.

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