

## Project Background

The Town of Westlock is currently undertaking a refresh of its Municipal Development Plan (MDP). The Town of Westlock's Municipal Development Plan (MDP) 2015-03 was adopted on May 25, 2015. The MDP acts as the broad, conceptual framework for all of the Town's statutory and non-statutory planning documents, sets the vision for the future of the community and guides its development over the next 20 years. The MDP provides direction on a number of topics and helps Council make decisions on future projects and investment. It is important that the MDP is updated on a consistent basis to ensure its vision, guiding principles, and policies continue to meet the community's changing needs to maintain a high quality of life for current and future residents.

The project's first phase of Public Engagement was undertaken in July and August 2023. Two (2) modes of participation were offered - message boards and an online survey - which were focused on obtaining broad feedback on ideas for the next 20 years in Westlock. The survey also featured questions regarding the current MDP's vision, guiding principles, and policy topic areas such as housing and the environment. A total of 58 survey responses and 174 message board comments were received.

The feedback received, in addition to prior best practice and policy alignment audit work completed by the Project Team, was used to create a working draft of the revised MDP. This document summarizes the key highlights & major changes of the draft plan for the purpose of further public engagement and revision prior to the final, refreshed MDP being presented for adoption by Council.

More project information and relevant documents can be found at [www.westlock.ca/p/mdp-refresh](http://www.westlock.ca/p/mdp-refresh).

## Objectives of Proposed Changes

The objectives of the proposed changes to the MDP are as follows:

- Align the MDP with changes to provincial legislation, and plans & studies adopted or approved by the Town since the adoption of the MDP.
- Refine and clarify policies within the MDP for ease of use, implementation, and clarity.
- Improve and expand on key policy areas such as housing, the environment, economic development, and emergency management.

## Key Highlights of Draft Plan

### Updated, Streamlined Vision

The vision of the MDP represents the community's aspirations for the future of Westlock for its next 20 years. The vision statement is an updated and streamlined version of the previous vision adopted under the current MDP.

**Westlock is a vibrant, interconnected community where people, businesses, and ideas find fertile ground. Supported by efficient infrastructure, a progressive growing economy, and quality cultural and recreational amenities, the Town provides its residents the best quality of life it can. We are recognized as being a safe, healthy, and vibrant place for every stage of life that honours its past while building its future.**

## Refined Guiding Principles

The guiding principles support the vision by providing overall guidance to ensure the community's priorities are reflected throughout the plan. The draft plan includes six (6) guiding principles that were refined from the principles in the current MDP.



### Support a Strong, Diverse Local Economy

1. Foster local business development, retention, and growth.
2. Attract diverse new commercial and industrial development.
3. Promote Westlock as a central service hub for the region.
4. Enable development through incentives and practical, navigable regulations.



### Develop a Vibrant, Re-Energized Downtown

1. Activate downtown by supporting mixed-use development, vibrant public spaces, storefront improvements, and events.
2. Reinforce the downtown as the heart of the town through urban design initiatives and new business attraction.
3. Continue to foster a pedestrian-friendly retail environment.
4. Encourage additional high-density residential development in and adjacent to downtown.



### Build a Livable, Welcoming Community

1. Develop walkable, safe neighbourhoods that are welcoming and safe for all ages, stages, and wages.
2. Support a mix of housing types and tenures through development in existing and new neighbourhoods.
3. Enhance the quality of life for residents through the provision of educational, health, recreational, and social development opportunities.
4. Promote the development of art, heritage, and cultural resources that contribute to community identity and sense of place.



### Lead in Environmental Sustainability

1. Preserve environmentally significant areas to create and maintain an attractive & pristine open space network.
2. Implement environmental design and building principles into new development and redevelopment.
3. Support programs and initiatives that increase awareness and public involvement in environmental conservation and sustainability.
4. Encourage the efficient re-use and remediation of land to reduce the Town's environmental impact and support resiliency.



### Provide Quality Culture & Recreational Opportunities

1. Develop a robust open space system of linkages to parks, natural areas, and other key destinations in Town to promote active lifestyles.
2. Provide a variety of cultural and recreational opportunities for all abilities, incomes, and lifestyles.
3. Ensure that building and site design is welcoming and accessible to everyone.
4. Encourage year-round use and sharing of recreational amenities among a variety of user groups and activities.



### Foster Collective Community Based Decision Making

1. Provide opportunities for community engagement and input in the decision making process.
2. Ensure consistent, transparent, and reliable communication of Town initiatives to all community stakeholders.
3. Work with regional partners, other levels of government, and other stakeholders to provide programs and services that benefit the region.
4. Develop budgets and business plans in consideration of Town plans, policies, and community input.

## New & Expanded General Policy Themes

The draft plan features expanded Town-wide policies which will guide the work of Town Council and Administration towards achieving the community's vision. These policy themes and their related goals are focused on key areas which reflect the community's concerns, aspirations and priorities.

### Community Livability

1. All residents in Westlock feel safe, welcome and connected to the community.
2. Westlock is a vibrant, diverse community that offers opportunities to residents of all ages and stages of life.
3. Those that call Westlock home have a high quality of life and are supported by programming that supports health, wellness, and life-long learning.

### Housing

1. Increase the variety of housing options throughout the community that meet residents' diverse needs.
2. Provide support and incentives for both market and non-market affordable housing options.
3. Encourage reinvestment into and increased upkeep of aging housing stock.

### Transportation & Mobility

1. Create a safe, viable and connected transportation network.
2. Improve access and increase options for alternative transportation modes.
3. Cooperate with the provincial government to maintain and improve the functional integrity and design of provincial highways in Westlock.

### Infrastructure & Utilities

1. Develop and maintain an efficient, effective, and economic infrastructure and utility system that can accommodate future growth at minimal cost to taxpayers.
2. Ensure that Westlock's growth allows for the orderly and economical extension of infrastructure and utility systems.
3. Maintenance and upgrading of our infrastructure is planned with consideration for life-cycle and environmental impacts.

### Environmental Sustainability

1. Environmentally significant land, air, and water resources are protected and maintained.
2. Neighbourhoods and developments are planned to support and sustain the environment around them.
3. Westlock has a community culture of environmental sustainability and stewardship.

### Economic Development

1. Continue to diversify the tax base by attracting unique and complementary commercial, industrial and other business uses.
2. Maintain a range of local employment opportunities that enable residents to stay and work in Westlock.
3. Create and support an environment of innovation, entrepreneurship, and growth in the local business community.

### Recreation, Arts and Culture

1. Provide an infrastructure of parks, open space, recreational and cultural facilities to meet the needs of the residents of Westlock and visitors.
2. Recreational and cultural infrastructure are vital assets and integrated into the Town's asset management process to plan for their maintenance, operation, and use.
3. Westlock's recreational, cultural, and arts amenities are safe, welcoming and accessible.

### Emergency Management

1. Westlock mitigates and prepares for emergencies through its planning, design, Emergency Management Plan, and preparedness efforts.
2. The Town and its residents are prepared for and resilient in response to emergency events.
3. Through coordination with local, regional, and provincial partners, the planning and delivery of emergency management is effective and efficient.

### Re-imagined Community Concept

The re-imagined community concept illustrates the general intent and land use framework for the Town. This concept takes into consideration the Town's regional context, development constraints, existing development and infrastructure, and planned infrastructure.

Each policy area represents a specific character area within the Town and outlines specific objectives & policies that are intended to guide the unique development of each area. Most policy areas remain unchanged from the current MDP but have been updated to reflect new development since its adoption.

### DRAFT Community Concept

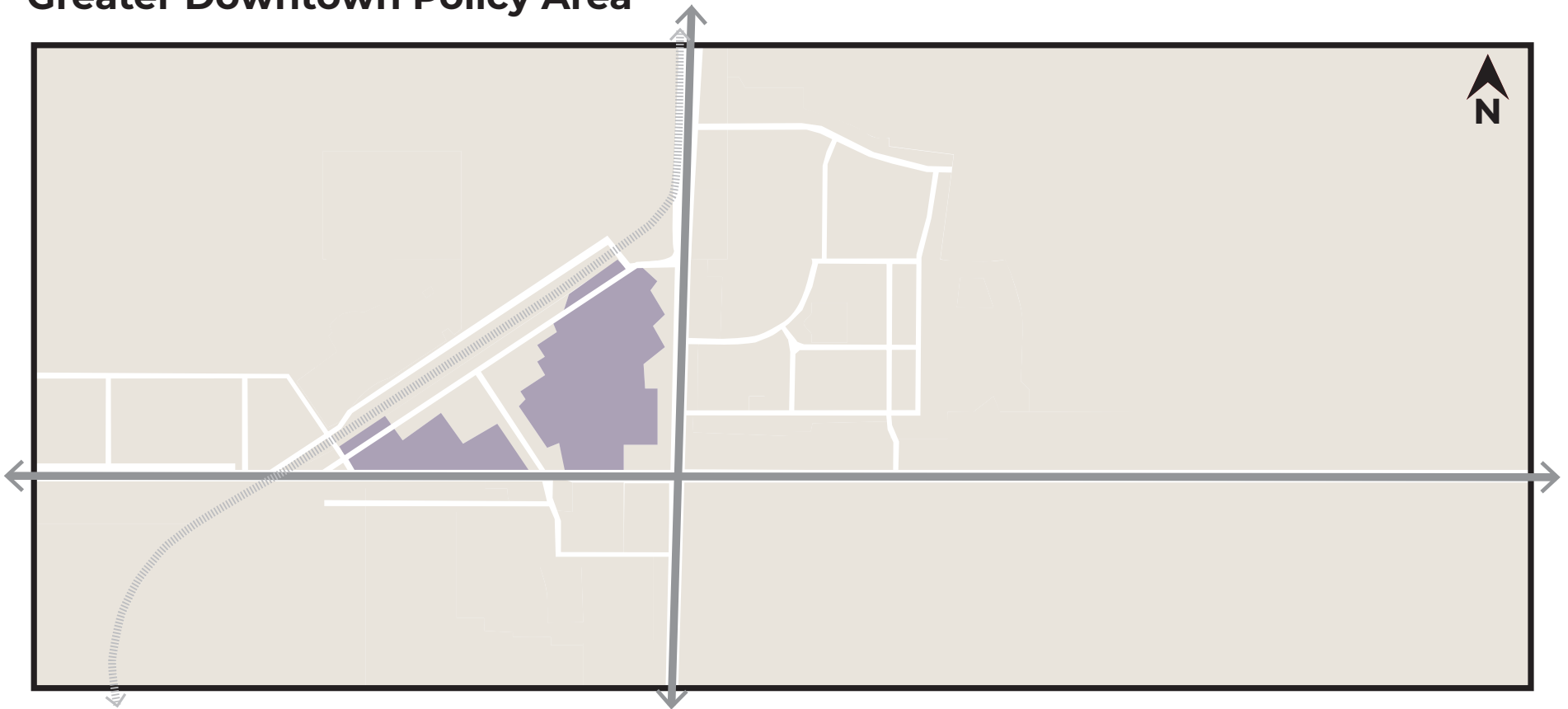


### NEW: Greater Downtown Policy Area

The new Greater Downtown policy area extends from the boundary of the traditional downtown within the Town's original "triangle" formed by the railway, Highway 18 and Highway 44.

The intention of this new policy area is to better support the Downtown Core by targeting and prioritizing redevelopment, growth of complementary uses, upkeep and renewal of older housing stock, and opportunities for intensification towards the immediate adjacent area. Policies under this area will focus on supporting sensitive redevelopment and infill projects that respect the existing residential character of the neighbourhood while introducing the people and activity required for an energized and vibrant Downtown.

### DRAFT Greater Downtown Policy Area



**NEW: Transitional Corridor Policy Area**

The transitional corridor policy area includes land between 96 Avenue and 99A Avenue identified for transitional uses between the highway commercial areas to the east, industrial and recreational areas to the west and residential areas to the north and south.

This new policy area is intended to support the transition area between the Highway 18 corridor and the low-density residential areas directly adjacent. Policies in this area will focus on providing a pedestrian friendly interface while maintaining the primary function of the highway as a traffic corridor. Supported uses in this area would include medium-density residential, mixed-use developments and neighbourhood-scale retail.

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**Transitional Corridor Policy Area**

