



County of Wetaskiwin MDP Review 2022 PLWA Public Feedback

The Pigeon Lake Watershed Association (PLWA) is a charitable, not-for-profit environmental advocacy group made up of people who live, work and play in Pigeon Lake and its watershed. Our mission is to enhance, preserve and protect Pigeon Lake and its watershed as a healthy and environmentally sustainable ecosystem for current and future generations.

The County of Wetaskiwin is currently conducting a review of their Municipal Development Plan (MDP). An MDP is an important planning document that will set out the County's priorities for land use and development over the next 10 to 20 years. The County is currently welcoming public feedback on their draft [Municipal Development Plan](#). PLWA encourages all residents of the County of Wetaskiwin to read the draft MDP and to submit their comments at one of the County's open houses or through their online survey. More information about the review process and where to submit comments can be found [on the County's website](#).

The Pigeon Lake Watershed Association has prepared the following comments about the draft MDP that could serve as a guide for residents wanting to advocate for increased watershed planning and environmental protection. Again, we encourage everyone to read the draft MDP and to comment on what is important to you.

General Comments:

Include a narrative to recognize the importance and interconnected nature of water bodies and water courses in the County. Battle Lake is the headwaters of the Battle River, Coal lake is the primary water source for the City of Wetaskiwin, and Pigeon Lake, Wizard Lake, and Buck lake are among the most popular recreational and tourist areas in the County. Many of the lakes in the County are popular with anglers and also offer sustenance for the First Nations and Métis people of Alberta. There are an abundance of smaller water bodies including intermittent streams and creeks that are critical for farmers and producers.

Use consistent terminology and policy to support environmental protections across policy areas for clarity of intent and to avoid omissions. Currently, terms vary throughout the document and the intention may be lost if terminology is not consistent. It would be preferable to have a catchall for environmental features, environmental sensitive areas, waterbodies, water courses, wetlands, natural areas, etc.

Clearly state the goal of protecting environmental features in each of the policy areas

e.g. 15. Acreage policy area – 15. 1. GENERAL POLICIES

Encourage multi-lot country residential development within the Acreage Policy Area to provide opportunities for rural living while protecting agricultural lands and environmental features.

Section 6: Agriculture

- Protect traditional farming practices and good quality soil.
- Encourage agricultural operators to implement best management practices for environmental protection and to reduce contamination in soil, groundwater, and surface water.
- Clarify the definitions of “extensive” and “intensive” agriculture, including the quality of the soil required and the environmental effects of those types of agriculture. Use these definitions to determine where the different types of agriculture are appropriate in the County.

Section 7: Robust Economy

- Emphasize how a healthy environment is required for a strong, diverse, and sustainable economy, such as by supporting agriculture, tourism and recreation, and the well-being of the community.

Section 8: Environmental Policies

- Recognize and collaborate with the different groups that contribute to environmental protections in the County, including Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils, watershed stewardship groups, and other stewardship organizations.
- Retain tree cover and natural vegetation where possible, especially on environmental reserve and municipal reserve lands.
- Ensure new development adheres to the provincial guidelines for surface water quality and does not impact groundwater users.

Section 10: Infrastructure and Servicing

- Require new developments, if they are going to be serviced by municipal wastewater services, to confirm that the system has the capacity for additional inputs.
- Require emergency preparedness and response plans for environmental emergencies.

Section 11: Agriculture and Rural Development

- Require all Confined Feeding Operation applications to complete an environmental impact assessment and demonstrate the operation will not result in environmental impacts.
- Prohibit Confined Feeding Operations in the Battle Lake and Coal Lake watersheds, in addition to the Pigeon Lake and Wizard Lake watersheds already named in the Plan.
- Restrict Intensive Livestock Operations in a similar manner to Confined Feeding Operations.

Sections 12 and 13: Commercial, Industrial, Natural Resources, and Energy Development

- Require development proponents to complete an environmental impact assessment and demonstrate the operation will not result in environmental impacts.
- Require setbacks and buffers between development and any water bodies or environmentally sensitive areas.
- Create policy to establish greater standards for monitoring and assessing cumulative non-point source pollution.

Section 16: Lake Policy Area

- Recognize and collaborate with the different groups that contribute to water protections in the County, including Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils, watershed stewardship groups, and other stewardship organizations.
- Manage stormwater practices, complying with the Alberta Clean Runoff Action Guide, so that sediment and phosphorus entering water bodies does not contravene the Environmental Quality Guidelines for Alberta Surface Waters
- Avoid development in or near permanent wetlands and peatlands that would impact the integrity or functionality of the wetlands for biodiversity and as nutrient and carbon sinks.
- Require all new developments and redevelopment to institute a construction erosion and sediment control plan.

Section 17: Regional Cooperation

- Cooperate with surrounding municipalities for any statutory or non-statutory plan preparation concerning the lakes and rivers in the County that border on other municipalities to ensure consistent and enhanced environmental measures.
- Reference and consider the recommendations of watershed management plans in the development of statutory and non-statutory plans.