

<i>COUNTY OF WETASKIWIN NO. 10</i> Municipal Policy & Procedures Manual	FUNCTION: 6000 PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT
	SECTION: 6600 SUBDIVISION LAND & DEVELOPMENTS

COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE HIGHWAY 2 CORRIDOR POLICY #6612

POLICY STATEMENT

Close to 20,000 vehicles use Highway 2 each day in the County of Wetaskiwin. A business exposed to this volume of traffic could have a great advantage over one on a lesser used road. Industrial activities can also benefit from direct access to a highway with high load limits.

Experience in Leduc, Lacombe, and Red Deer Counties suggests that it will not be long before the County of Wetaskiwin is asked to approve large scale commercial and industrial land uses at the places where there is access to Highway 2. This policy paper sets out some of the considerations which will apply when the Council of the County of Wetaskiwin is asked to approve subdivision or rezoning for such uses.

JURISDICTION

If a landowner wants to subdivide or develop land within 800 metres of a highway, he needs approvals from both the municipality and Alberta Transportation (AT). AT's main concern is safety. They have strict engineering standards for the spacing and treatment of intersections. It can be assumed that AT will not allow any new access to Highway 2 and will be very reluctant to allow new access on to Highways 13, 611, and 616. Access to any new commercial or industrial site will have to be on to a local road, thence to the two lane highway, thence to Highway 2.

The only exception to this might be if the local road intersection is in an unsafe location and a new direct access to the two lane highway would improve traffic safety. This will be determined by AT.

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SUITABLE LAND USES

Industrial and commercial development along Highway 2 has the potential to spark disputes between the County and its urban neighbours, the City of Wetaskiwin and the Town of Millet, if an urban place believes the County is taking development and taxes which belong in the urban place.

The City, County, and Millet are partners in a Joint Economic Development Initiative (JEDI) which recognizes that economic growth by one of the partners will benefit all three. The JEDI agreement contemplates certain types of commercial and industrial land uses being located outside the two urban centres. However, this is not open ended. Retail activity is still seen as belonging mainly in the urban places.

Because there are so few locations where local roads meet Highway 2, and not all of these may be suitable for development, it is important to limit development to those land uses which most benefit from exposure to highway traffic. This will be done through a list of approved and discretionary uses in the land use bylaw.

The County's present Industrial zoning can accommodate industrial uses. Commercial uses will be accommodated by a new land use district entitled *Highway Interchange Commercial District*, with the allowable uses strictly defined so that the interchanges are not used for big box stores, retail malls, auto sales, or other uses which should remain in urban areas. Regulations for this new land use district will be provided for in a bylaw amendment to Land Use Bylaw 95/54, which will be approved by Council. The urban municipalities and AT will be given every opportunity to comment and suggest changes before the district is established in the County's land use bylaw.

LOCATIONS

There are four locations within the County of Wetaskiwin where traffic from other roads can join Highway 2, and which could be considered for development. They are shown on the attached map, labelled Appendix A.

Highway 616 intersection: This site is only fifteen minutes south of the International Airport and it could attract overspill development from the Nisku industrial park. Highway 616 is also used as access to the north side of Pigeon Lake (about 1,250 vehicles a day, rising to 1,460 a day in the summer), so it might be attractive to businesses providing goods and services to recreationists.

Because of its proximity to Edmonton, Nisku, and the International Airport, the entire length of Highway 616 from Highway 2 east to Millet will be considered for Nisku-type industrial and commercial development. Ultimately the area might be served by water and sewer from Millet.

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Correction line road intersection: The correction line road is not paved and traffic volumes are low. The existence of a major power line along the north side of the county road might be useful to some types of industrial development, for example metal fabrication using arc welding.

Highway 13 intersection: Most of the traffic going to the south side of Pigeon Lake uses this intersection. Traffic on Highway 13 here averages 2,840 vehicles a day, rising to 3,350 in the summer. A recreation oriented development might find this a good site. The north-west quadrant (SW 13-46-26-4) is high, level, and open; the other quarters have problems with drainage.

Highway 611 intersection: Land south of this intersection is in Ponoka County and outside the scope of this study. Land on the north side of Highway 611 appears to be very suitable for development. Traffic along 611 into Hobbema is only about 1,350 vehicles a day, but this could rise significantly if the Samson Band achieves its goal of building a casino between Hobbema and Highway 2.

The Bearhills Service Station has direct access to Highway 2, but only to and from the northbound lane. Access to the local road system is also poor. This site has therefore been excluded from this study.

AREA STRUCTURE PLANS REQUIRED

It is important that development be comprehensively planned, and not just proceed one lot at a time.

As noted above, some sites have drainage problems, and there are also potential conflicts between different land uses.

For these reasons the County will not approve any subdivision for commercial or industrial use at a Highway 2 interchange until the developer has prepared an area structure plan (ASP) and this has been approved by AT and adopted by bylaw.

ASPs should address the four quarter sections which surround the interchange and discuss which of them are suitable for development and which should remain in agricultural or other use. At least two quarters should normally be considered for development in order to avoid a seller's monopoly, although the realities of the market (absorption rates etc) may dictate that only one is initially developed.

ASPs should deal with the following issues:

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Type of development: List the proposed land uses and show why they need to locate at a highway interchange instead of in town.

Separation of commercial and industrial uses: Show separate areas for commercial and industrial activities.

Traffic: Include a highway traffic impact study conducted by a traffic engineer; propose access points on to the existing road system; list required improvements to the existing road system; discuss standards for new (internal) roads

Existing subdivisions: Show how existing lots are to be accommodated in the design, and if existing direct highway accesses are to be removed

Water: Demonstrate the sources and quality of potable water; discuss the supply of water for fire fighting.

Sewage treatment: Propose treatment/disposal methods.

Storm drainage: Show how storm water is to be managed.

Effect on existing land uses: Show existing land uses within half a mile and discuss how the proposed development will affect them for better or worse. Pay special attention to the effects on agricultural operations.

Soil type: Note the soil type, and try to concentrate development on poorer land.

Sequence of development: Show the sequence of development within the quarter and how it ties in to adjacent land.

Aesthetic considerations: Discuss any proposed aesthetic controls (landscaping, buffering, building standards, etc) and how these will be set and enforced.

CONCLUSION

There is a good case for allowing suitable commercial and industrial development at Highway 2 interchanges, but because of the precedent this would set, the importance of maintaining good relations with the JEDI partners, and the absolute priority of traffic safety, the County will ensure that each site is properly planned before any development commences.

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