

County of Paintearth

MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

BYLAW 701-21

APPROVED AND EXECUTED THIS 17th AUGUST 2021



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County of Paintearth
No. 18

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1.0 INTRODUCTION AND OPENING DIRECTIONS

1.1 WHY WE HAVE MDPs

The Municipal Development Plan (MDP) is a statutory document identifying the long-term goals and policy objectives for the purpose of guiding the physical, social, and cultural growth in the County of Paintearth. It is a statement of intent for the future of the community and will serve as a document to guide Council, the public, developers, and others in making future land use decisions. Further, the Plan identifies desired goals against which all current subdivision and development proposals may be evaluated. It is the community’s intent to evolve in a manner which is logical, environmentally responsible, and economically feasible for the long-term benefit of its residents and investors and most importantly, for future generations who will inherit the results of the decisions made today.

Section 632(1) of the Municipal Government Act (R.S.A., 2000, Ch M-26) provides that every council of a municipality must by bylaw adopt a municipal development plan.

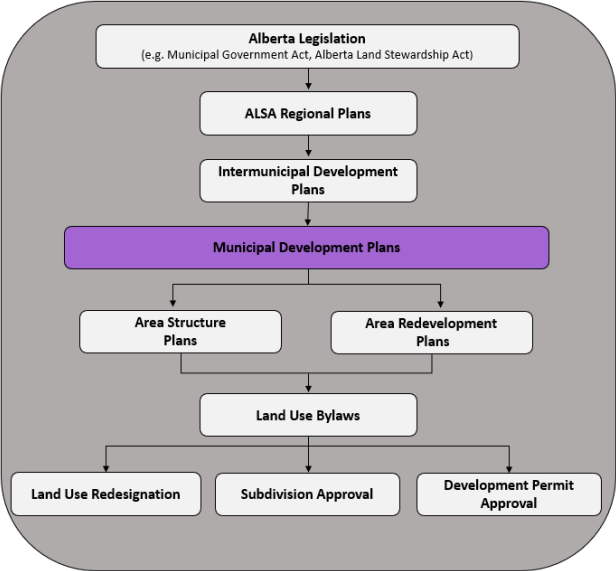


Figure 1. Hierarchy of Plans

- A) THE MDP 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.
 - iv. The provision of required transportation systems.
 - v. The provision of municipal services and facilities.
 - vi. The provision of municipal and/or school reserves.
 - vii. The protection of agricultural operations, and.
 - viii. Must contain policies compatible with the subdivision and development regulations to provide guidance on the type and location of land uses adjacent to sour gas facilities.

B) THE MDP MAY ADDRESS:

- ix. Proposals for the financing and programming of municipal infrastructure.
- x. The co-ordination of municipal programs relating to the physical, social and economic development within the municipality.
- xi. The economic development of the municipality, and
- xii. Any other matters relating to the physical, social or economic development of the municipality.

C) THE MDP MUST CONTAIN:

- i. Policies compatible with the subdivision and development regulations.
- ii. Policies respecting the provision of municipal, school or municipal and school reserves, including but not limited to the need for, amount of land allocation of those reserves and the identification of school requirements in consultation with affected school boards.
- iii. Policies respecting the protection of agricultural operations.

D) THE MDP MAY CONTAIN:

- iv. Statements regarding the municipality's development studies and impact analysis, and goals, objectives, targets, planning policies.
- v. Policies respecting the protection, of conservation reserve in accordance with section 664.2(q)(a) to (d).

1.2 FOR THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE - THIS PLAN MATTERS

This plan is an important framework which captures the intent of the people of Paintearth. With lively engagement and workshop sessions conducted by the County, the MDP writing process takes into consideration every comment, concern and broader themes made by the participating public members. There were a few broad themes that were synthesized from the sessions, one in particular is the desire to see development spread throughout the entire County rather than only being concentrated within densely populated areas. An emphasis was given to landowners/developers using their land how they see fit, especially for economically productive uses, provided they are following all other regulations. There has been agreement in terms of progressing forward with environmentally friendly practices, in areas such as renewable resource extraction, while also using traditional resources like coal for more ecofriendly and productive uses. The County is in favour of all of the ideas expressed above.

1.3 LOOKING AHEAD

In order to accommodate development demands efficiently, the focus of this MDP is on the aspirations of the community and its development for the next 10 years. A set of general objectives have been established in pursuing community goals and act as a guide for planning and managing possible growth in an efficient, economic, and orderly manner. These overarching general objectives were developed from the extensive community public engagement sessions and are used as the foundation to build specific goals within each section of the MDP. After the goals are identified, policies are then written to tangibly carry out the goals.

The following objectives are also in conjunction with the County's Land Use Bylaw and other statutory plans, which serve as the framework for land use planning in the community.

OBJECTIVES

- Encourage landowners to use their land as they see fit while encouraging consideration for your neighbour.
- Encourage development throughout rural areas of the County as much as the urban areas.
- Provide appropriate servicing requirements for anticipated development, and upgrading infrastructure when needed.
- Ensure that community services reflect the needs of the community at large, acknowledging not only physical and economic factors, but social needs within a community.
- Maintain an attractive living and working environment, and preserve those features in a community which may have important environmental, social, or cultural significance.
- Minimise adverse environmental impacts and encourage new alternative energy developments.
- Develop the County for appropriate long-term economic growth and sustainability.
- Minimize conflict between differing types of land uses and associated users.
- To be able to respond to changing circumstances and emerging challenges.

2.0 THE PAINTEARTH COMMUNITY

2.1 Geographical Area and Location

Paintearth County is located in east central Alberta, generally east of major cities such as Edmonton, Calgary and Drumheller. It is approximately 70km north of Hanna and 75 km east of Stettler, as seen on Figure 2, and encompasses 3,283.36 km² (1,267.71 square miles) of mostly flat landmass. There are a few large waterbodies within the County borders, namely Sullivan Lake (which greatly fluctuates in water level), Battle River, Paintearth Creek, Castor Creek, and Ribstone Creek.

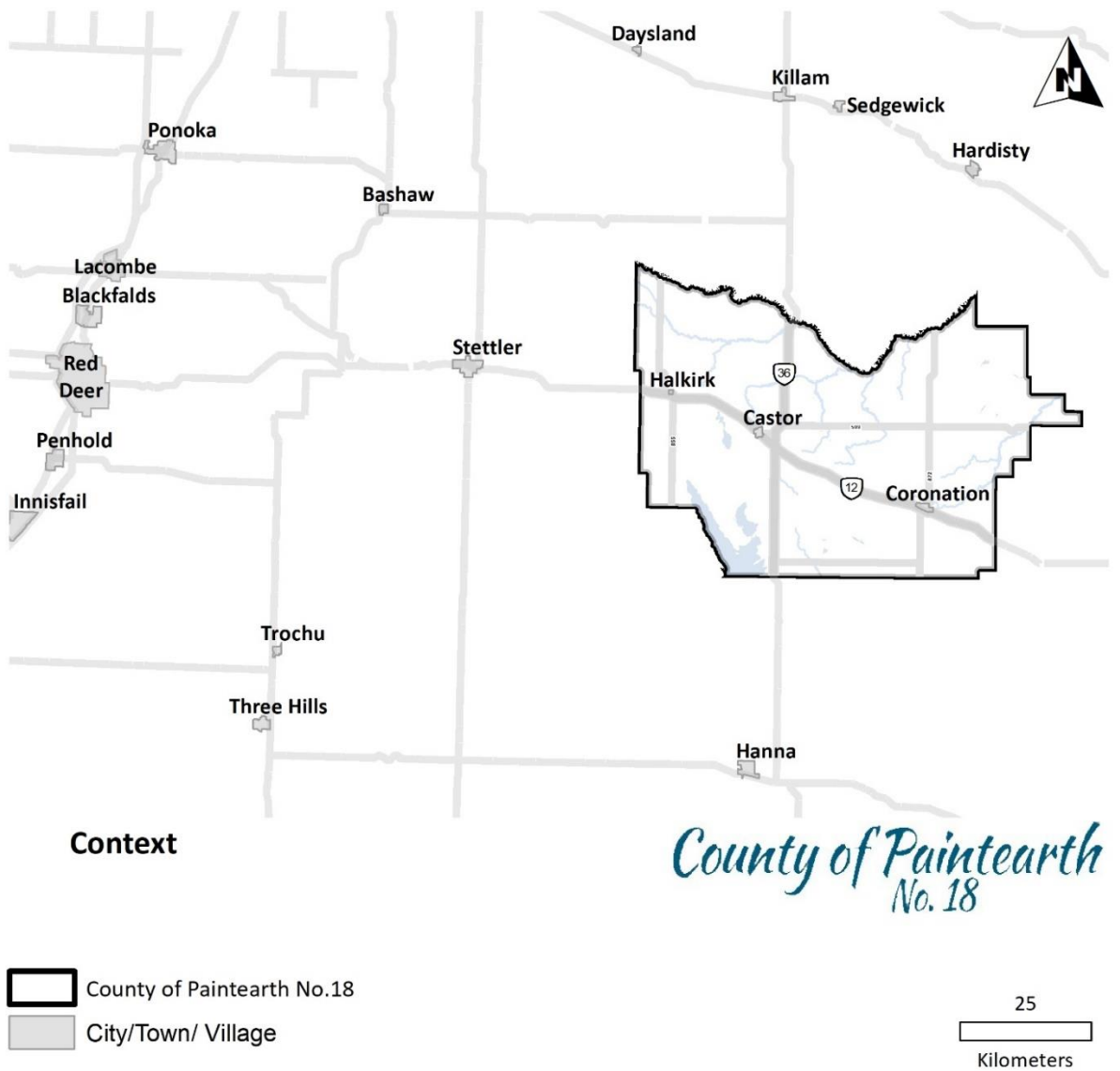


Figure 2. Context Map

2.2 Snapshot of where we are currently:

The County of Paintearth is situated in the east central part of the Province of Alberta, bound by the Battle River to the north. Agriculture is the mainstay of the local economy with a history of oil, gas and coal related activity in the past twenty years. These primary sectors have provided needed employment opportunities and a supplementary income source for many County residents. The larger urban centers (such as the Towns of Castor and Coronation) tend to have a stronger economy regarding employment opportunities & population retention. However, there are considerable opportunities for developing the local economy within the County. The County contains a wealth of natural resources and environmental assets upon which future growth can be based. In recent years, there has been a push to explore renewable resources, such as wind energy development. The workforce is reliable and capable with a strong tradition of self-employment and rural small business development.

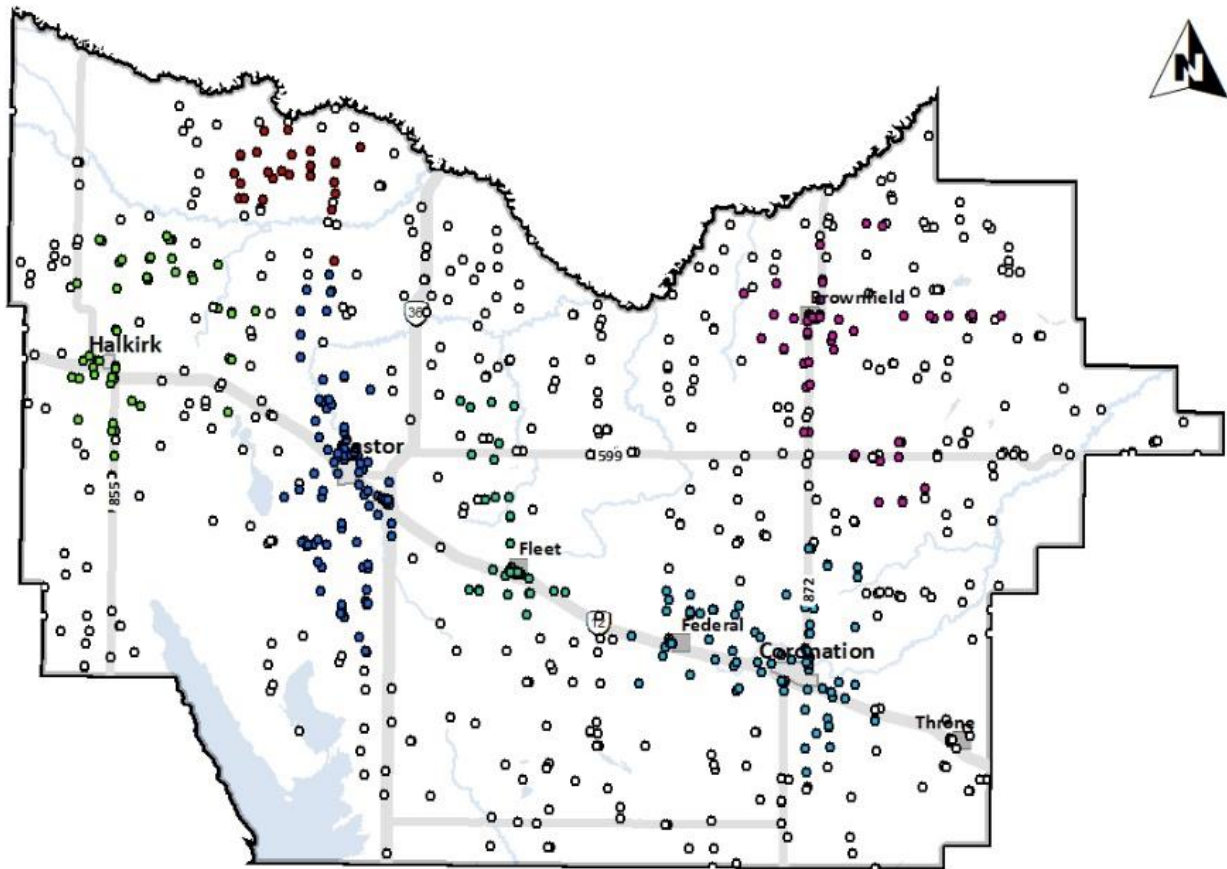
The County's intention is to stimulate local initiatives in the creation and expansion of business and to attract inward investment throughout the rural areas. Along with generating a more prosperous economy, creating new jobs, and fostering population retention. The goal is to do it in a way that recognizes the environmental and social character of a predominately rural area, while allowing existing landowners to endeavor on their capital-boosting ideas for their prospective lands.

2.3 Regional Outlook:

The County works with many regional organizations to provide a multitude of services for the County's rural and urban residents. Some examples are the Palliser Regional Municipal Services, which provides planning services to the County and the Shirley McClellan Regional Water Services Commission (SMRWSC) which provides clean potable water to rural residents via a variety of methods. Further, The County prioritizes working cooperatively with the urban communities within the Counties boundaries to ensure mutual economic prosperity and sustainability. Urban centers within the County of Paintearth provide an important regional hub with services that the County residents benefit from and depend on.

2.4 Hamlet & Denser Populated Areas

The residents of the County live in rural areas and have a wide and varied amount of occupancies throughout the County. Hamlets and denser population areas are located within County borders, as shown on Figure 3.



Address Clusters

- Address Point Clusters (Coloured)
- Address Point Not Clustered
- County Boundary
- Town/ Village
- Village
- Hamlet

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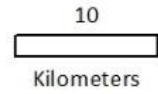


Figure 3. Address Clusters

2.5 HAMLETS

The settlements of Brownfield, Federal, Fleet, and Throne provide a focal point for the surrounding community. In Brownfield, there is a public school, Baptist church, and recreation centre. As well, Fleet contains a community hall and a Baptist church, and Throne recently held a store/service station and oilfield maintenance services. The dominant use of the hamlets, however, remains residential.

2.6 URBAN MUNICIPALITIES

There are three urban municipalities within the boundaries of the County of Paintearth. The Towns of Castor and Coronation and the Village of Halkirk. The County currently cooperates with these municipalities in a number of key areas, including firefighting, recreation, ambulance service, waste transfer, and economic development. The County also has agreements with adjacent rural municipalities for mutual aid (peacetime emergencies) and ambulance service. Many partnerships exist between the urban municipalities, the County, and external agencies assisting to increase the quality of life indicators for all County residents, and to provide greater economies of scale to increase the efficiencies of service delivery. The County and Urban municipalities have agreements to share emergency equipment and facilities. The Paintearth Economic Partnership Society (PEPS) is an example of a cooperative initiative between the County, Village of Halkirk, and the Towns of Castor and Coronation. Through PEPS, all the participating municipalities were able to collaborate together with a focus to attract and retain population, businesses, seniors, and families through the development of infrastructure projects and services such as High-speed internet to rural areas.



2.7 Relationship with Surrounding Communities

In addition to cooperative initiatives between the County and urban municipalities, there are statutory documents which regulate the peripheral high-level land use planning of the adjoining borders, these are called Intermunicipal Development Plans (IDPs). As shown on Figure 4,

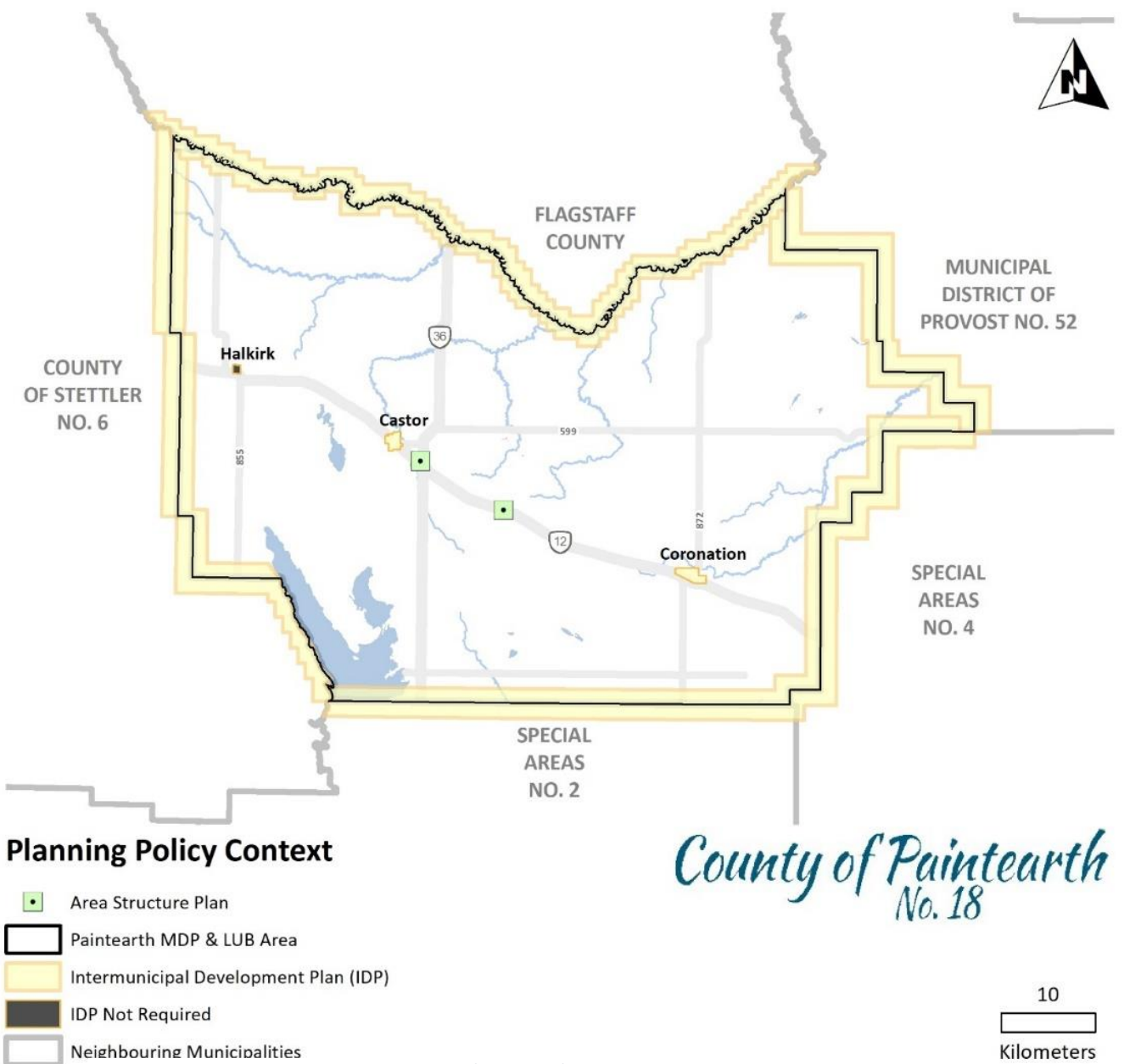


Figure 4. Planning Policy Context

Paintearth County has an IDP with Castor, Coronation, M.D. of Provost, Special Areas, County of Stettler, and Flagstaff County.

On the other hand, Intermunicipal Collaboration Frameworks (ICFs), are a tool used to facilitate and encourage cooperation and cost-sharing between neighbouring municipalities in order to ensure municipal services are provided to residents efficiently. The County currently maintains ICFs with all municipal neighbours as well.

2.8 COMMUNITY SERVICES

The County engages in and provides a multitude of community services including recreation, education, seniors, health and emergency services through established bylaws and agreements. These documents are accessible through the County Office and the website. The following goals and policies are intended to direct community services in the County:

GOALS

- To support the County and surrounding communities for a range of community services.

GENERAL COMMUNITY SERVICE POLICIES

Reserve Policies:

- 1) The county shall support the development of schools in the urban municipalities, therefore negating reserve dedication from rural developments.
- 2) The County shall refer to the corresponding Area Structure Plans (ASPs) when considering reserves and future municipal services being taken from multi-lot subdivisions.

Recreation Policies:

- 3) The County should support recreational facility use and development in conjunction with the area municipalities as determined by the needs of the residents, and the economic feasibility of same.
- 4) The County supports rural areas and residents with their recreational facilities, parks and programs through their community grant policy.
- 5) The County supports the public rural camping opportunities through continued operation of municipal campgrounds and parks, as found on the Recreation Map (Figure 5)

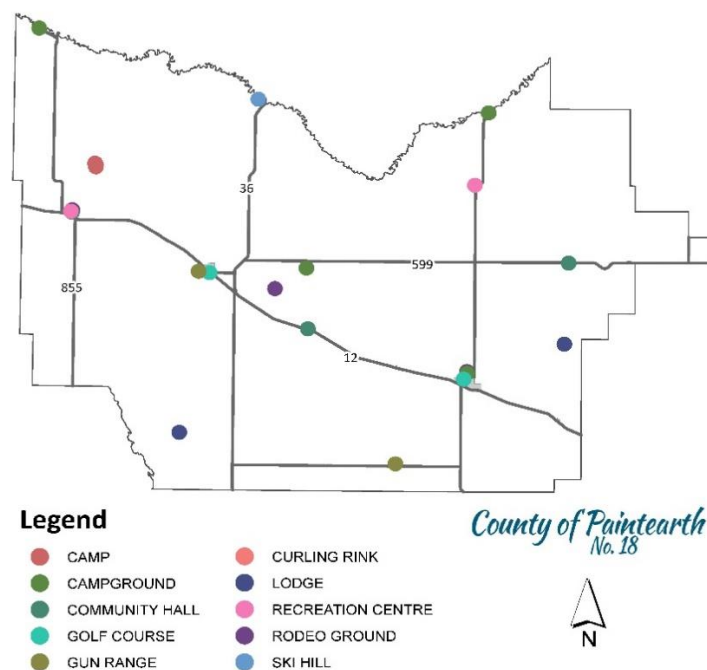


Figure 5. Recreation Map

Other Community Services:

- 6) County supports and cooperates with Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) and other Non-profit Organization (NPO) programs designed to deliver family and volunteer support services in our communities.
- 7) County supports the enhancement and coordination of economic development and tourism activities through the regional PEPS organization.
- 8) County supports the enhancement and offering of adult, post-secondary, further and community educational activities and programs for all its residents through the regional NPO organizations and provincial education programs.
- 9) County supports the preservation and recognition of historical sites and facilities within its region. This may be in conjunction with other levels of government to ensure protection where available, and access to any assistance programs to aid in sustaining such sites or facilities.

3.0 RURAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The County encourages economic development and diversification of the economy as it builds and benefits the citizens of Paintearth. Figure 6 displays the County’s priority areas for growth and infrastructure investment. These corridors and nodes do not preclude development from occurring elsewhere, but rather assists the County with where to focus economic development, infrastructure, and servicing investment to encompass a vision for a return on investment of taxpayer dollars. The Towns, Villages, Hamlets, and surrounding land are identified as growth nodes. Between the more populated areas there are underground servicing, such as waterlines and potable water service that are a magnet for future development. These existing services make it easier and more attractive for potential development to increase in these areas, which are described as “growth corridors” in Figure 6. The County therefore encourages new development to take place within the growth nodes and corridors, where the County has already made significant infrastructure investment and where transportation networks are strong. The County encourages economic investment and will look to expand the growth nodes and corridors as development and infrastructure investment grows.

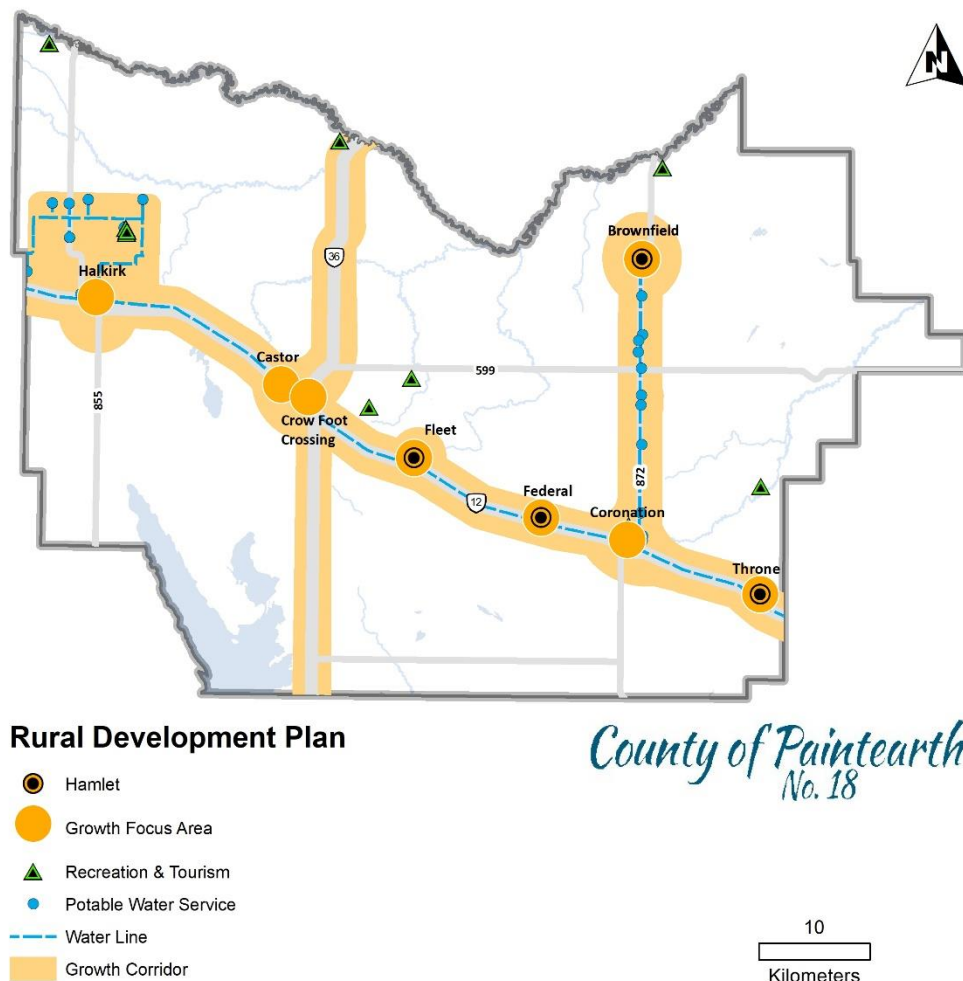


Figure 6. Rural Development Plan

4.0 AGRICULTURE

Agriculture is the cornerstone of the area's economy, and the most dominant use of land in the County. Conserving the agricultural land base is very important to the County's way of life, economy and environment. The long-term viability of agriculture depends on the land base, with a combination of commercial opportunities. As of 2016, there is an estimated 323,000+ acres of cropland. The top five crops in this area are wheat, barley, oats, canola, and alfalfa. Other crops include tame hay, mixed grains, dry field peas, and rye. There are approximately 70,000+ cattle which are raised on 385 of the 402 farms in the County. Other livestock include 21,000+ pigs, sheep, as well as goats, bison, and elk. Other farming operations include bee colonies, greenhouses, and vegetable crops. In addition to extensive agricultural operations, the public consultation process identified that landowners in the County would like to see more flexibility in subdivision and development regulations to pursue additional economic opportunities and uses of agricultural land.

Further, the County recognizes that approvals for intensive agricultural operations, specifically, Confined Feeding Operations (CFOs) falls under the jurisdiction of the Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB). All decisions made by the NRCB regarding CFOs are governed by the *Agricultural Operation Practices Act (AOPA)* including application referrals and appeals, complaints, setbacks from urban areas and rural residences, manure management and various environmental considerations. NRCB approval officers process applications and issue permits, while NRCB inspectors follow up on complaints and compliance related issues. Although the approval process for CFOs is controlled by the NRCB and regulated by the AOPA, the AOPA does provide municipalities the authority to include reasonable requirements for CFOs within Municipal Development Plans. The County's objective is to provide the NRCB with reasonable requirements for consideration when assessing CFOs. County policies regarding CFO development have been thoroughly researched to ensure that CFO locations are determined in accordance with the most appropriate studies and County information available.

Overall, the following goals and policies are intended to benefit the agricultural sector and the environment as well as allowing room for continued diversification in the economy.

GOALS

- Support agricultural activities and the preservation of high-quality agricultural land.
- Support the preservation of native grasslands and biodiversity through agricultural areas.
- Support agricultural diversification through more flexible land use regulations pertaining to subdivision and development.
- Support the rights of landowners to use agricultural land for alternative economic opportunities where appropriate.
- Identify appropriate locations for intensive agricultural operations.

AGRICULTURAL POLICIES

Supporting Agriculture:

- 1) Council shall prioritize the protection of productive agricultural land and endeavour to maintain large contiguous areas of productive agricultural land as a valuable economic resource.
- 2) Council shall encourage development which complements, is compatible with, or has a positive impact on agricultural operations and farming sustainability.
- 3) Council shall prioritize the protection and proper grazing management of native grass as both important agricultural and environmental resources.
- 4) Council supports agricultural operators' diversification of their operations, including but not limited to specialty crops and livestock, irrigation, greenhouses, farm-to-table retail opportunities, value added agriculture and agri-tourism operations.

Economic Diversification of Agricultural Land:

- 5) The County recognizes that many lands in the county may be marginal for production and supports economic diversification and the landowner's rights to use and develop their land while ensuring compatibility with adjacent land use.
- 6) Council supports economic diversification of agricultural land through home occupations, commercial, industrial, recreational and tourism developments while ensuring compatibility with adjacent land uses.
- 7) County should continue to monitor and update the LUB where opportunities to reduce red tape and regulations to allow flexibility pertaining to the use and development of agricultural land while ensuring compatibility with adjacent land uses.

Intensive Agricultural Operations:

- 8) All regulations and polices pertaining to CFOs, including exclusion areas and buffer zones, outlined in the Intermunicipal Development Plans (IDPs) that the County of Paintearth shares with its municipal neighbours shall be followed by CFO developers, operators, and NRCB approval officers.
- 9) CFOs shall not be located within 2 miles of any urban area that is not included in an IDP area, including the Village of Halkirk and all hamlets within the County of Paintearth. This policy is based on a concern for residents' quality of life and the potential future growth of the urban areas.
- 10) CFOs shall not be located within 1 mile of river hills, coulees, and any water bodies, as defined in the *Waters Act*, and includes (but not limited to) rivers, creeks, springs, wetlands, lakes and reservoirs.
- 11) CFOs shall not be located within 1 mile of any recreation area including Provincial Parks and Recreation Areas and other recreational or tourist locations as determined by the County of Paintearth on a site specific basis.

- 12) Applications for CFOs that may potentially impact Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs) (*Figure 8*) should be evaluated on an individual basis. CFOs shall not be allowed within ESAs unless environmental risks have been mitigated in accordance with best practices and scientific methods.
- 13) Due to a high dependence on groundwater for residential, municipal, and agricultural uses, confined feeding operations shall not be located within an area of 'very high risk' of groundwater contamination as determined in the County of Paintearth Regional Groundwater Assessment 1999 or successor thereof.
- 14) CFOs should not be allowed in areas identified as "high risk" of groundwater contamination unless clear scientific evidence can be provided that proving that any groundwater contamination risk has been minimized and the appropriate mitigative measures have been taken to prevent possible groundwater contamination.
- 15) CFOs may be required to enter into a Road Use Agreement at the discretion and request of the County.
- 16) Any existing CFOs which are located within areas which have been restricted by the above criteria may be allowed to continue and minor expansions may be allowed provided the operation does not contravene those values which have been identified as important by the community.
- 17) Extended setbacks from CR parcels, farmsteads, multi lot residential subdivisions would be double the current AOPA standards for residential setbacks.

5.0 SETTLEMENT:

The settlements within the County largely comprises of rural residential including both acreages and farmsteads. Further, the increased mobility of the farm population has reduced the traditional role of hamlets as agricultural service centers. However, the hamlets of Brownfield, Federal, Fleet, and Throne still provide opportunities for further residential development and act as a focal point for the surrounding community where additional services and amenities can be accessed.

For the most part, rural residential development takes the form of one or more farm residences located on an undivided quarter section. However, the County has seen continued interest in subdividing one or more parcels of land from a quarter section to either accommodate an existing farmyard or for the establishment of new acreages. The provision of a range of housing choice remains an important consideration with regard to economic development, attracting people to live in the community and accommodating the needs of the existing community. With majority of settlement occurring as rural residential, providing opportunities for further rural residential development is key to the long-term sustainability and growth of the County providing it occurs sensitively and appropriately.

Whether discussing farmsteads, acreages, multi lot county residential, or hamlets, each of these settlements comes with their own requirements and considerations at time of development including infrastructure and servicing needs, impacts on the community, agricultural land base, and the environment. A number of these themes were outlined during the public consultation.

This section aims to address a number of considerations associated with housing in Paintearth County, including promoting the growth and development of both hamlets and rural areas, while ensuring that growth occurs sensitively and appropriately retaining a strong sense of rural community.

Goals:

- To support new rural housing opportunities through more flexible land use regulations pertaining to subdivision and development where appropriate.
- To recognize the landowners right to utilize their land for economic opportunities where appropriate.
- To ensure that all residential development is appropriately and adequately serviced.
- To ensure that residential development is planned appropriately.
- To encourage growth to utilize pre-serviced and subdivided parcels where possible.



SETTLEMENT POLICIES

Rural Residential Subdivision & Development:

- 1) The Land Use Bylaw should be reviewed to address parcel size standards and the number of subdivisions that can occur on an agricultural parcel (e.g. third parcel out of a quarter section).
- 2) Agricultural district subdivisions for residences shall be sized appropriately and in line with the Land Use Bylaw to ensure compliance with Provincial Private Sewage Disposal Systems (PSDS).
- 3) The County supports housing diversity and innovation and will support a variety of housing types through more flexible development regulations in the Land Use Bylaw.
- 4) The Land Use Bylaw should be reviewed to accommodate more dwelling units to occur on a single parcel (e.g. 3 dwelling units on a parcel) where appropriate. Multiple dwelling units on a single parcel shall meet Private Sewage Codes and Standards (PSDS) requirements.

Multi-lot Rural Subdivisions:

- 1) A multi-lot residential subdivision is a subdivision which will create two or more contiguous country residential or farmstead lots on an agricultural quarter section as illustrated in *Figure 7*.

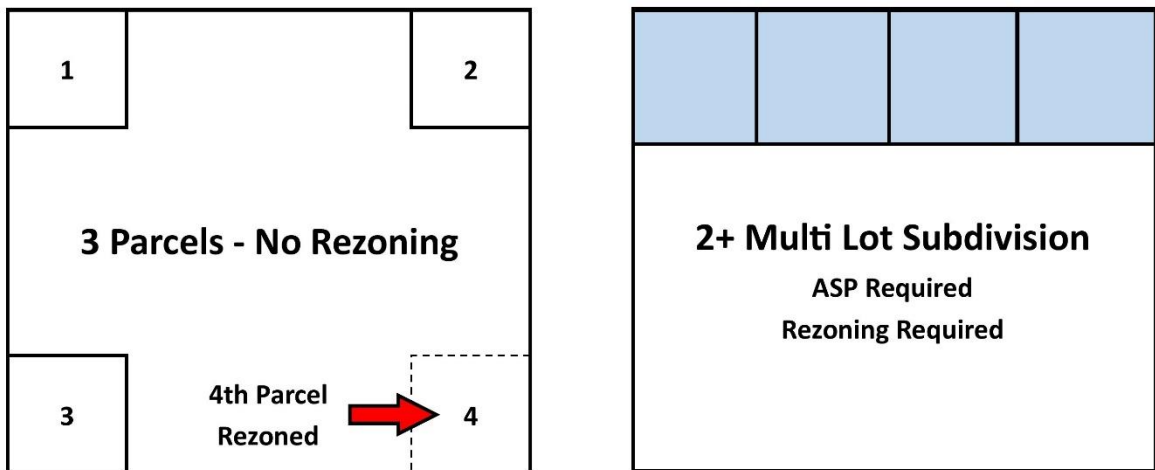


Figure 7. Multi-lot Rural Subdivisions

- 2) All Multi-lot subdivisions (either residential or industrial/commercial) of agricultural parcels shall require a Land Use Bylaw amendment (e.g. rezoning) to an appropriate district (e.g. Country residential) as well as an Area Structure Plan to address planning and development impacts.
- 3) When considering Land Use Amendments (e.g. rezoning) for multi-lot residential subdivisions Council should consider:
 - (a) Compliance with any applicable Statutory Plan, Regional Plan or provincial or federal legislation
 - (b) Site design that considers preservation of key site features such as trees, historic features, viewsheds, or important topographic features.



- (c) Ability to service the development with piped water as shown on *Figure 11 Water Infrastructure (which can be found on page 28)*
 - (d) Results from any detailed analysis of environmental studies, or any completed Biophysical Impact Assessment (BIA), and how proposed environmental impacts will be mitigated.
 - (e) The potential impacts to neighbouring land uses including agricultural operations.
 - (f) The presence of any existing or abandoned oil or gas facilities and pipelines in accordance with provincial regulations and legislation.
 - (g) Suitable road access to individual lots provided by internal roads or service roads developed to standards acceptable to the County of Paintearth and not directly onto provincial roadways or local roads unless otherwise approved.
- 4) Multi-lot residential subdivisions should be located where piped water servicing is currently available or proposed to be available as shown on *Figure 11 Water Infrastructure (which can be found on page 28)*.
 - 5) No multi-lot residential subdivisions will be allowed where:
 - (a) adequate sewage disposal systems cannot be properly installed and maintained, and
 - (b) there is not a sufficient water service to serve the proposed development as determined by reports that meet the requirements of the Water Act.
 - 6) At the discretion of the approving authority, applications for multi-lot residential subdivisions and development may be required to provide a Biophysical Impact Assessment (BIA) completed by a professional biologist where the proposed development may have an impact on a Environmentally Significant Area.
 - 7) Agreements for road access to new or existing development shall be inline with the County's "Road access policy?". Proposals for subdivision and development are encouraged to locate along existing road access.

Hamlets:

- 1) The County of Paintearth encourages growth and development in rural areas and hamlets where appropriate and will support development through investment in local infrastructure and attraction/retention strategies.
- 2) The County Council may, if growth in a hamlet warrants, investigate the feasibility and desirability of providing a water distribution and/or sewage collection system.
- 3) Multi-lot subdivisions in hamlets may require an Area Structure Plans (ASP's), detailing the proposed land uses, servicing of utilities for the proposal, and all other requirements of an ASP as outlined in the Municipal government Act.
- 4) The Land Use Bylaw should be reviewed to provide an opportunity for Country Residential developments to occur in Hamlets and the Land Use Bylaw should consider regulations on for location, size, and uses.

Agricultural Interactions:

- 5) Existing and new residents choosing to locate in agricultural areas need to be aware of and recognize the possible land-based impacts and nuisances associated with various types of agricultural operations. Impacts may include (but not limited to) dust, smell, traffic, noise, and other facets of agriculture. Developments may be required to recognize and accept such impacts as part of their development approval.

- 6) When proposed developments or uses have significant impacts upon neighbouring properties and residents, the County will require consideration be given to those by the landowner as part of the overall process.

6.0 ENVIRONMENT

The landscape of the County of Paintearth No. 18 is mostly underlain by flat-lying rocks which have been modified extensively by glacial action and dissected by major stream valleys and glacial spillways. There are some sections of strongly rolling topography, a few minor headlands, and a sprinkling of badland formations. Elevations range from 620 m (2025 ft) above sea level at the Battle River to 875 m (2875 ft) above sea level on Nose Hill. The vegetation consists of rough fescue grasslands and blocks of aspen poplars. What was once predominately aspen parkland has been cleared to a large extent for agricultural purposes as the soil is very productive.

The Battle River, Paintearth Creek, Castor Creek, Ribstone Creek, and other water bodies support diverse riparian habitats. The only large lake in the County, Sullivan Lake, fluctuates greatly in water level and can sometime dry up completely. The numerous ponds, sloughs, and small lakes are important for waterfowl production and migration and support a variety of marsh birds.

The County of Paintearth No. 18 recognizes many environmentally sensitive and significant areas, some of which are provincially significant. It should be noted that the environmentally sensitive and significant areas vary from degree of weighting factors across the County and some parcels of land may no longer contain the features from previous assessments due to changes in land use or farming practices.

Environmentally Hazardous Lands are also an important consideration for future development in the County of Paintearth. The topography of the landscape including coulees, river valleys and wetlands come with various slope stability and subsidence conditions that need to be considered when developing in proximity to these hazards. Further, development within river valley or creek drainage systems needs to consider the location and use of development in relation to potential flood risks. Provincial flood mapping is not yet established for river and creek systems within the County of Paintearth, and as such, the location subdivision and development proposal that may be within flood hazard areas need to be carefully considered.

The following goals and policies are meant to guide the preservation of natural landscapes, resources, and environment as realistically and as tactfully as possible.

Goals:

- To preserve Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs), wetlands, and unique landscapes through sound planning and legislative tools.
- To support and encourage conservation practices throughout the County.
- To restrict development activities occurring on environmentally hazardous lands that are unsuitable and unsafe for development.

ENVIRONMENT POLICIES



Conservation:

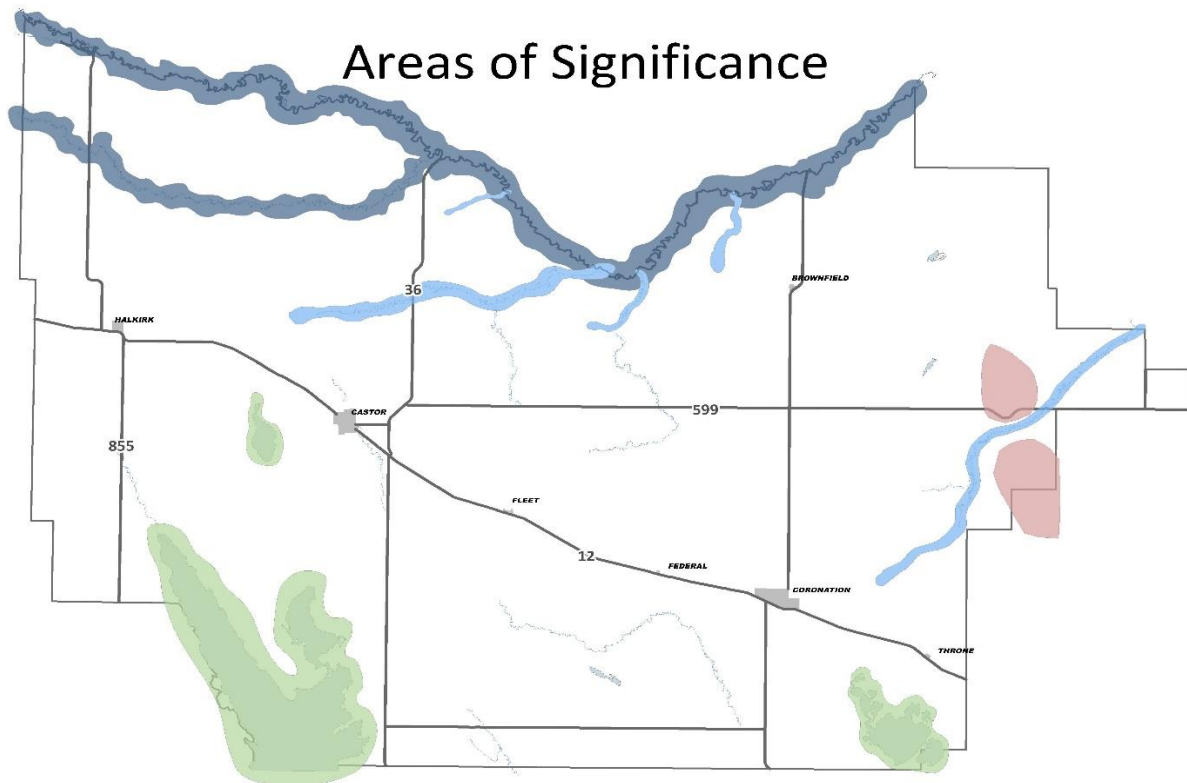
- 1) The County recognizes the stewardship of all resources and encourages their consumption in a responsible manner by all residents.
- 2) The County and landowners should continue to work with and cooperate with conservation groups on the protection of sensitive wildlife habitats and continue efforts in conservation practices amongst the farming community.
- 3) The County supports and encourages the placement and usage of shelterbelts throughout the County.
- 4) The County should consider allocating future resources to explore and study permaculture principles, particularly in relation to water management.

Environmentally Significant Areas, Wetlands & Unique Landscapes



- 1) The Impact of any development on an ESAs must be taken into consideration.
- 2) Proposed subdivision and developments on lands that may include an ESA as identified in Figure 8 may be required to conduct an environmental or biophysical impact assessment (EIA or BIA), completed by a qualified professional, to the satisfaction of the approving authority.
- 3) A development proposal deemed to have an impact on an ESA through an assessment completed in (the policy above), shall not be approved unless appropriate mitigation measures have been put in place to the satisfaction of the approving authority.
- 4) When making land use decisions regarding the stewardship of wetlands and water bodies, the County should consider the provincial Wetland Policy and the Stepping Back from the Water provincial Study that outlines beneficial management practices for development near water bodies.
- 5) The County should protect, maintain and enhance the unique landscape features that contribute to the aesthetic quality of the County by establishing setback zones from river valley, creek and coulee escarpments, and the Neutral and Nose Hill areas.
- 6) The Land Use Bylaw should be reviewed to ensure appropriate development restrictions are in place for sensitive Crown Lands that exist throughout the County of Paintearth.





Legend

- Inaccessible Hill & Terrain
- Migratory Waterfowl Area
- Significant Water Courses
- Tributary Water Courses

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Figure 8. Areas of Significance

Environmental Reserves:

- 1) The County of Paintearth may seek to conserve ESAs identified on ESA Map (Figure 8) and high value wetlands through the use of various legislated tools (e.g. conservation reserves, environmental reserves, municipal reserves) in accordance with the Municipal Government Act.
- 2) Through the subdivision process, the County of Paintearth should require the following lands to be dedicated as environmental reserve or placed under environmental reserve easements in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Government Act:
 - a. Environmentally Significant Areas as identified in Figure 8
 - b. Environmentally Hazardous lands considered unsuitable for development (e.g. unstable slopes or soils and flood hazard areas)
 - c. Other natural areas including coulees, ravines, natural drainage courses, and shore lands

Environmentally Hazardous Lands:

- 1) The County's LUB should be reviewed to ensure updated development standards for topographic features including:
 - a. Slope conditions which render land unsuitable for development;

- b. Slope conditions requiring special engineering or other treatment;
 - c. Setbacks from top of slope, toe of slope, valley or coulee breaks and benches; and
 - d. Standards for earth grading.
- 2) The County shall not support the development of any structure or building within Flood Hazard Areas (including both the Flood Fringe and Flood Way) as determined by the Province and any future provincial mapping.
 - 3) The County's MDP and LUB should be reviewed and updated if future flood hazard studies are established by the Province for river and creek drainage systems within the County of Paintearth.
 - 4) The LUB should be reviewed to include provisions, where appropriate, for low intensive uses within Flood Hazard Areas such as open space, recreation, and agricultural activities.



7.0 ENERGY AND RESOURCE EXTRACTION

More countries, provinces and municipalities are facing a new era of resource extraction, as the health of the environment is becoming more of a priority to the globe. The County is no outlier to this rule, as we are experiencing a changing horizon of energy extraction from pump-jacks to turbines. Even with the changes, the County intends to support the existing industry of coalmines and oil & gas, by using their outputs to other efficient uses. For example, with the help of Ashcor Technologies Ltd, we are able to repurpose the previously stored coal ash into a high-grade pozzolan for use in concrete.

To continue the environmentally friendly efforts within the energy extraction industry, the County continues to make strides in waste reclamation and in restoring lands that have been mined to grow willow farms. The County receives standardized guidelines to help with reclamation & developing new resource extractions such as wind farms and refers to organizations such as Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) and Alberta Utility Commission (AUC), who are leaders in regulating energy and utilities on a provincial level.

The following goals and policies outline the priorities of the County regarding industry & energy extraction.

GOALS

- To remain supportive of traditional energy extraction, while also supporting renewable surface-based sources.
- To support provincial and municipal reclamation efforts of old coal mines and oil & gas lands.
- Continue to reclaim and monitor developed pipeline routes to the standard of AER
- To support wind farm development within appropriate areas of the County
- To support landowners to develop their lands as they see fit.

GENERAL INDUSTRY AND ENERGY POLICIES

- 1) With the recent legislation changes facing the industry, the County recognizes the decreased use of coal for power generation at the Battle River Generating Station. The County will, however, be supportive of the coal industry as regulated by the Province.
- 2) The County supports the reclamation efforts of the mine to Alberta Environment Standards and its consideration of alternative uses for its land and ash reserves.
- 3) The County supports the Oil and Gas industry's existence and use of the road network in the County by adhering to the Provincial regulatory system and use of road use agreements.
- 4) The County and its municipal neighbors have in place IDP's that deal with the proximity of Oil and Gas development to the centers.

- 5) The County supports and adheres to the provincial and federal regulations and processes of developing projects and routes, which include detailed public consultations about all lands that are crossed.
- 6) The county supports the reclamation and continuous monitoring of developed pipeline routes that exist within the county to the standards set by the AER.
- 7) While pipelines should seek to avoid crossing lands identified as ESAs within the County, the new technology of long distance directional boring with no surface disruption may be entertained by the landowner whose approval is necessary.

WIND POLICIES

- 1) The County does not advise/encourage wind development in the areas highlighted in Figure 9, due to physical/environmental/natural constraints (e.g. Underground pipelines and oil and gas infrastructure, limited road access, environmental and physical topography of the land).
- 2) The County recognizes the wind resource present in the County and supports landowners in their right to develop their lands as they see fit.

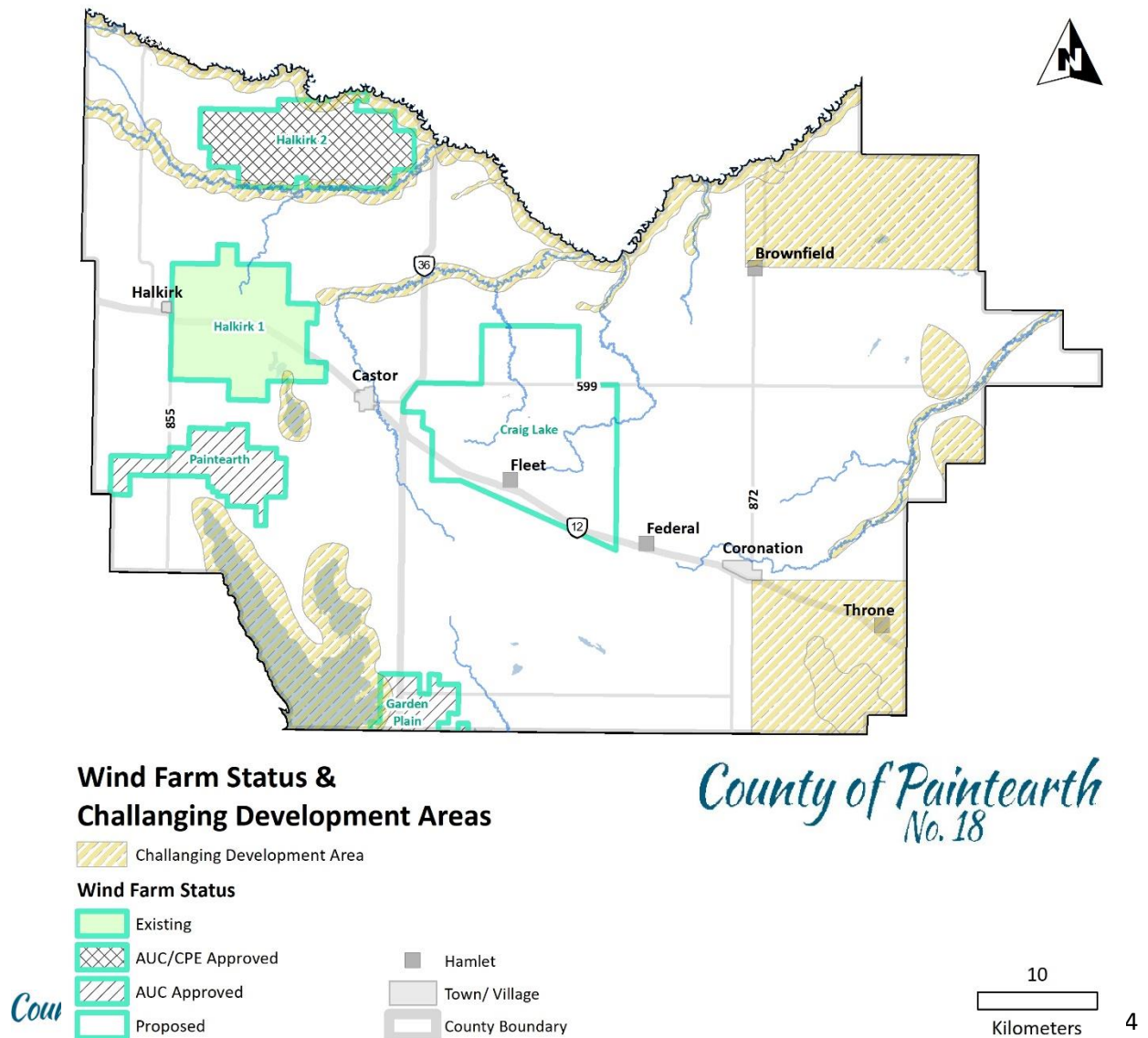


Figure 9. Wind Farm Status & Challenging Development Areas

8.0 INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL SECTION

Industrial and commercial uses within the County can be an important source of capital for the County. These uses allow for the County to explore new types of services that may attract potential residents and business owners. The industrial and commercial district have typically been concentrated in urban and hamlet areas, primarily Towns of Caster and Coronation. Outside of urban areas, examples of rural industrial development in the County consist of TankStore, gas processing plants, seed cleaning plant, CAPE Manufacturing, Luscar Mine, Atco Power Ltd., and various oilfield maintenance services. The County has developed a rural industrial subdivision at Crowfoot Crossing to concentrate rural industrial in a compact and utility serviced manner to reduce impacts to individual rural areas, taking advantage of the location at a busy intersection.

There is interest from the community which encourages allowing industrial and commercial uses within rural areas rather than restricting them in urban areas, so that the County can experience distributed growth (rather than concentrated growth) within its borders. The following section outlines the intentions and strategies from the County to help regulate industrial and commercial uses.

GOALS

- Provide an increased level of commercial and industrial services throughout the County.
- Work with Hamlets towards creating realistic economic strategies/projects to increase commercial and industrial activity within the rural areas.
- Work towards attracting business developments which fill local and visitor needs, provided those proposed development impacts are sensitive to surrounding land uses.
- Retain agricultural uses by having new commercial and industrial developments align with agricultural practices.
- Provide incentives for attraction and retention of businesses within the rural areas of the County.

INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL POLICIES

- 1) The County supports development in the rural areas and landowners who choose to use portions of their land for non-agricultural purposes.
- 2) The County supports and promotes the location of rural commercial and industrial uses to the Crowfoot Crossing Industrial Park located at the intersection of Highways 36 & 12.
- 3) The County will support hamlet opportunities for limited commercial or light industrial ventures, provided there are not adverse impacts to the surrounding area.
- 4) The County Council will consider an economic development strategy that identifies realistic opportunities worth pursuing and sets out direction in collaboration with area municipalities, local business leaders, farmers, public agencies, and senior governments.



- 5) The County will support regional economic development through its partnerships with Non-profit and Non-Governmental organizations.
- 6) Where appropriate, Council may support a rural industrial or commercial lot within a quarter section where there are not adverse impacts to the surrounding area.
- 7) County Council shall control industrial subdivisions and developments through the Subdivision approval and Land Use Bylaw amendment process in accordance with the MGA and County policies.
- 8) The County will support and encourage the development of local value-added facilities.
- 9) The County Council will support commercial and/or industrial development in the hamlets of Brownfield, Fleet, Federal, and Throne provided that such development does not detrimentally affect the character of the community.

LANDOWNER VALUES

In the Community Engagement sessions Landowners and Land Users were asked to participate by sharing their experiences and values as they pertain to how they interact with the land. This is an important guide for the County in determining what the future of land development looks like in the County of Paintearth. Various industries are represented in the attached maps showing favourable or not favourable areas to consider for development of certain projects & industries.



While these maps do not represent any specific zoning or regulatory Land Use provisions, they are simply a reflection of the current landowners' attitudes towards developments and types of industries looked upon as favourable or not. They are simply for reference and use by potential business or industry representatives in consideration of developing in the County.

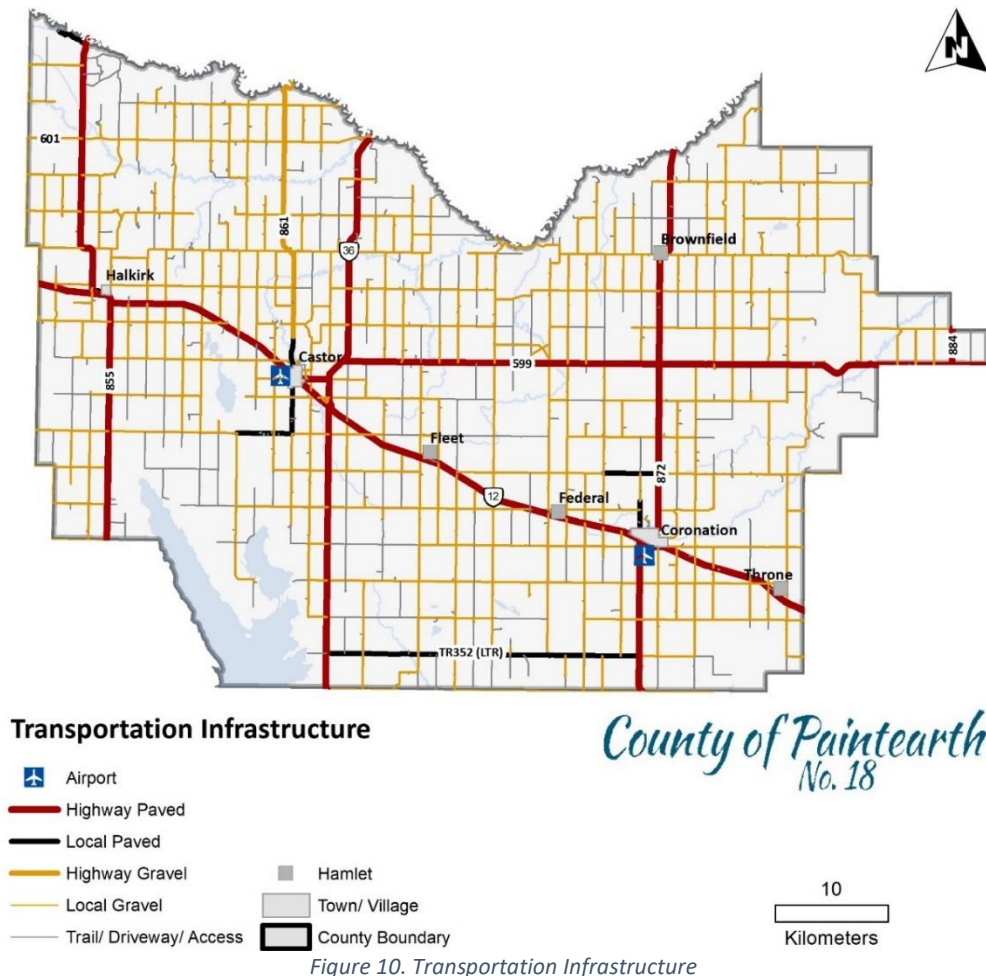
Landowner Value Maps are found in Appendix A at the end of the document.



9.0 TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES

Transportation and Utilities serve as the structural foundations of our community and enable our lives and economy to thrive.

The main modes of transportation are primary and secondary highways, and the County local road network (paved and unpaved). Air travel is also available as a supplemental mode of transportation within the County. Figure 11 displays the existing roads and two airports within the County. The main transportation corridors consist of Highway 12 which runs east-west and Highway 36 which runs north-south. Approximately 309 km of provincial highways are contained within the County and maintained by Alberta Transportation. The County maintains a road network of approximately 2,185 km, including 42 km of paved surfaces. There are approximately 729 km of undeveloped road allowances. The Castor and Coronation Airports are an integral part of the local transportation systems serving private and business travel needs. Both airports have a 915 m (3000 ft) by 23 m (75 ft) paved and lighted runway, taxiway, and apron. Hangar lease lots are available at both locations. The Coronation Airport also provides weather services information, a non-directional beacon, and LL100 fuel for sale. The County also has a small number of private grass airstrips from the northwest corner to the eastern side serving local aviation enthusiasts.



Utilities such as water service, power and gas are fully connected to residential, commercial, and industrial land uses within the County. A high-quality water source with adequate quantities to service the residents of the County and urban municipalities within has been deemed as a necessity for economic and community development to occur. Water quality and quantity is necessary for most industrial and commercial operations. The County is aligned with the Shirley McClellan Regional Water Services Commission to provide potable water to residents by a variety of means. The County operates water utilities north of Halkirk and Coronation to Brownfield, as well as potable truck loaders for cistern-based systems. The County also operates sewage utility systems in Brownfield and Crowfoot Crossing Industrial Park. Figure 11 displays existing waterlines and locations of potable water services.

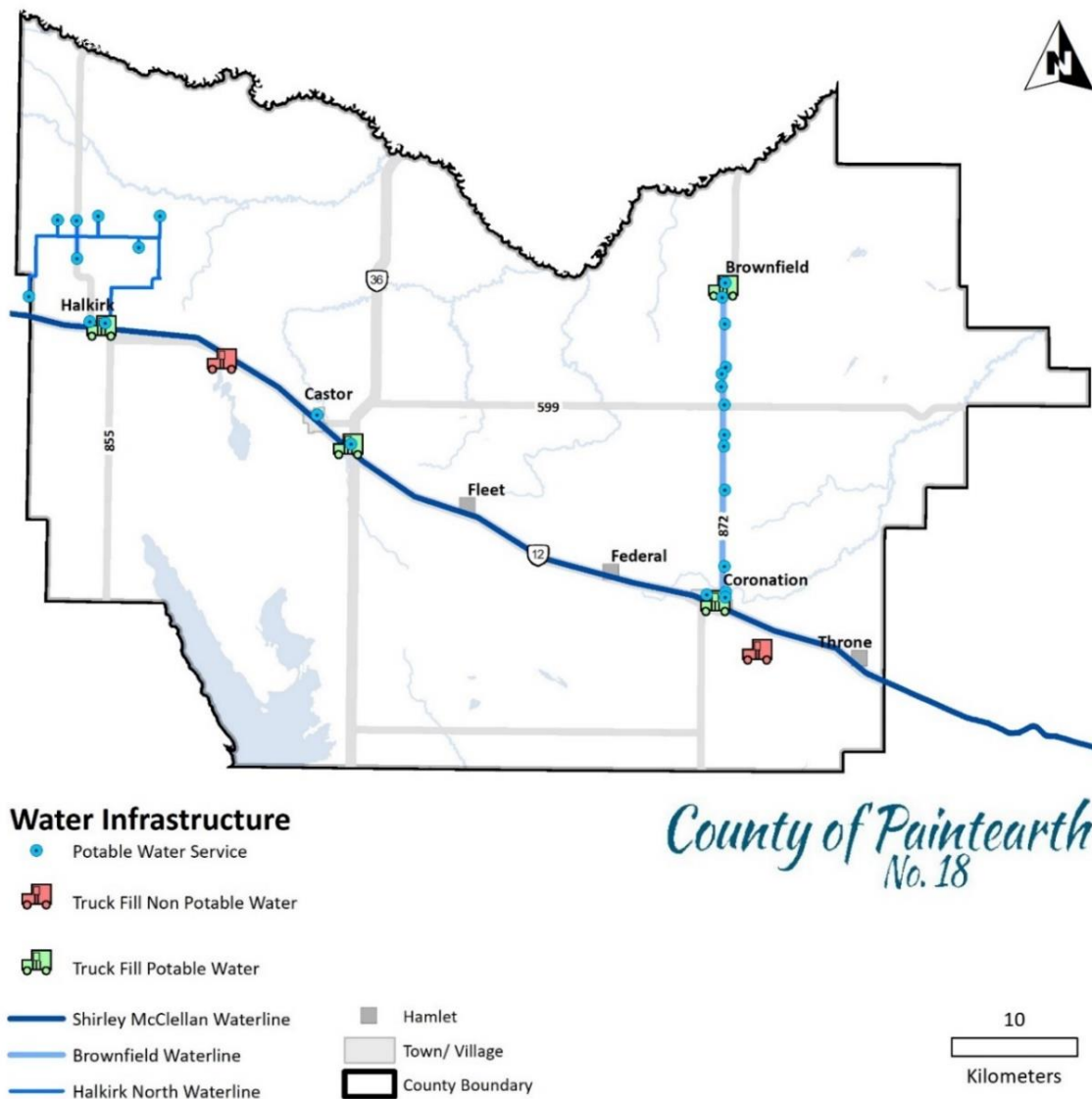


Figure 11. Water Infrastructure

The following goals and policies are intended to maintain and create regulation for transportation and utilities within County borders.



GOALS

- Maintain and create sufficient road access and interconnectivity for residents within the County
- Ensure utilities are available to existing and new developments
- Maintain a municipal infrastructure and utility system that is effective, efficient, and sustainable for the future needs of the County
- Continue work with the regional waterline commission to ensure a County potable water supply
- Create or maintain strategies to regulate water & wastewater
- Align utility services with quarter section property boundaries to avoid fragmentation
- Limit development near Sour Gas Facilities

TRANSPORTATION POLICIES

Local Road Network:

- 1) The County shall review infrastructure priorities and essential upgrades yearly.
- 2) The County shall refer to Policy PW 005 to regulate how undeveloped road allowances should be used or developed.
- 3) The County generally does not make a practice of selling or closing undeveloped road allowances, however requests to purchase any undeveloped road allowances will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- 4) The County shall maintain a long-term gravel procurement process to ensure at minimum of a 10 year or longer perennial supply of gravel and associated aggregates.

Provincial Road Network:

- 5) The County shall refer to Alberta Transportation all applications for development within the vicinity of a provincial highway in accordance with the Municipal Government Act and Subdivision and Development Regulation.
- 6) The County will foster positive relations with Alberta Transportation for the continued development and improvement of the primary and secondary highway network in the County.
- 7) In the event of local emergencies, the County may assist with the clearing of provincial highways for emergency vehicle access.

Air Travel:

- 8) The County supports air travel and its development by following the federal regulations of aerodrome development and the land use surrounding the Castor and Coronation public Airports.



UTILITY POLICIES

Water:

- 1) The County shall adopt and maintain a County-wide water and wastewater strategy to ensure a consistent, viable and economically sustainable water supply for all residents and future developments via a variety of supply means.

Communications:

- 2) The County shall work with wireless communication companies to pursue expansion of wireless/fibre communication network coverage throughout the County.

Waste:

- 3) The County supports responsible waste management and waste stream diversion where possible.

Utility ROW:

- 4) When creating utility rights-of-way, Utility providers and developers should follow quarter section lines, property boundaries, or existing easements to avoid unnecessary fragmentation of land.

Sour Gas Constraints:

- 5) The County shall refer all relevant development and subdivision applications to the Provincial Energy Regulator, in accordance with the Municipal Government Act (MGA).
- 6) The County shall consult with the Provincial Energy Regulator on proposed Sour Gas Facilities to ensure they do not impact existing residential or commercial areas.
- 7) The County shall prohibit any development that does not conform to provincial Sour Gas setbacks, unless given official written Direction from the Province authorizing a setback reduction.

10.0 DEVELOPING IN THE COUNTY

Public Consultation, Engagement & Transparency – The Bar is Set

The County administration takes pride in engaging the residents and values their input to maintain and improve Land Use practices. The Municipal Development Plan can be used as a tool to help, as it is meant to guide future development and reflects the needs and desires of the County citizens. The County conducted multiple public engagement sessions with local residents and also the urban communities. The County administration aims to streamline an effective communication process with the local residents when drafting statutory documents such as the MDP and create a standard which is operative and transparent. The process took form in the following:

Session	Session Summary & Purpose	Output
Community Engagement: Round 1 (January 13th-16th, 2020)	County Administration invited the public to workshops to discuss new contents of the MDP & LUB. This was a chance for administration to see how the public currently understands the older version of the documents, and how they can be tweaked to fit the current goals and needs of the residents. The public also voiced their general concerns about issues they are facing or would like to see improvement on from the County. The public was asked to go through the previous MDP sections to either add policy direction, get rid of outdated policies and mark when they needed clarification on language.	Notes were taken by administration about the workshops, and an official Public input summary was completed and published on June 2 nd , 2020.
Community Engagement Round 2 – Online Survey Launched from December 3, 2020 – January 15, 2021	After the first summary report was published, the County administration released an online survey (due to Covid-19 restrictions) to allow the public to react to the previous summary that was provided. This way, even the initial responses of the engagement process were answered too.	After all results had been compiled and analyzed, a Public Summary Input was published on February 2, 2021. This formed the content of the new draft MDP material.
Drafting Session	The goals and comments received through the public engagement sessions guide the policies that have been drafted for the new version of the MDP.	Completed MDP document, reflecting public expectations.



From the first Public Engagement Session, participants were asked to list what they would expect of developers conducting business in the County. The participants described expectations that developers should be made aware of moving forward. Participants stated they wanted to ensure the people within the County are given regard to impacts, best practice, fair treatment, and transparency by private businesses.

Through these extensive public engagement sessions, the County of Paintearth has developed “thematic mapping” generally outlining community support for various types of development projects through the County, including placement of new wind developments, environmentally sensitive areas, and priority growth areas. These thematic mapping areas are attached at the end of this plan as in Appendix A.

The following goals and policies are designed to ensure open communication with the public and developers to refer to when preparing an application.

GOALS

- For the County and Developers to maintain good communication and transparency with general public about new development.
- To provide developers with a resource on the municipal policy and regulations (i.e. the rules) for them before submitting an application.



COUNTY-PUBLIC COMMUNICATION POLICIES

- 1) The County should consider community values, the natural environment, economic diversification and local job creation when reviewing a development application.
- 2) The County should ensure that all significant development projects with potential impacts to nearby affected landowners are circulated or publicized to the affected landowners prior to consideration for review and approvals.
- 3) The County should ensure that all development approvals are publicized for the public review and that affected landowners have the opportunity to raise concerns and/or appeals if warranted.
- 4) The County should ensure that developers provide sufficient and proper consultation with affected landowners, citizens and the County prior to entering into legally binding agreements that impact County citizens.
- 5) The County shall ensure that developers (and/or in conjunction with the County) hold a minimum of one public engagement session either in-person or online prior to consideration for approval of major land use or development applications.
 - a) Following a public engagement session pertaining to a major land use or development application, the County shall publicly release a summary and/or analysis of the engagement session to the prior to consideration of the application for approval (e.g. prior to a public hearing or other decision-making meeting).

DEVELOPER DO'S & DON'T'S – BEST PRACTICES

- 1) Developers proposing wind energy development (e.g. wind farms) should refer to *Figure 9* before submitting a development permit or subdivision application.
- 2) Developers shall provide Environmental Reserve or Environmental Reserve Easements in accordance with County policy and the Municipal Government Act.
- 3) Developers may be required to enter into a Development Agreement with the County in accordance with Section 650 of the Municipal Government Act.
- 4) At the time of subdivision and/or development, the provision of municipal services shall be at the expense of the developer.
- 5) Developers, through agreements, shall be responsible for the construction and initial maintenance of municipal utilities, including required extensions and oversizing, unless otherwise specified in a Development Agreement with the County.
- 6) The County should require the developer to pay the costs of any upgrades to County roads or provincial highways necessitated to adequately service the development proposal with road infrastructure, either as required by Alberta Transportation, or as specified by a Development Agreement.

11.0 SUMMARY & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This updated MDP is a result of extensive public engagement that took place over the course of an entire year from January 2020 to February of 2021. Community hall input sessions were the start of the process that reviewed the former County MDP as well as the Land Use Bylaw and saw an extensive and comprehensive report developed to take the County in a new and modern direction for planning, development, and increasing economic activity within the Paintearth region. Coupled with extensive survey and online feedback materials (largely due to the pandemic that happened in mid process) the County has completed a thorough review which reflects countless submissions and contributions of the residents to make this plan “the people’s plan”.

Council and staff at the County of Paintearth would like to thank all those who contributed their time and efforts into formulating the new directions this plan will use to guide future developments in the County. A new era of citizen engagement and participation will help guide future decisions for the betterment of all areas of the County and ensure its continuation towards sustainability and prosperity for all residents.

While the previous MDP had stood for 17 years prior to re-examination and review, this plan is intended to be reviewed in approximately 10 years time. The 10-year window will be a necessary duration to see if any lasting changes or policy directions have their desired effects and the opportunity to stand the test of time. At that time, the question will be “did we get it right?”

We think we did.

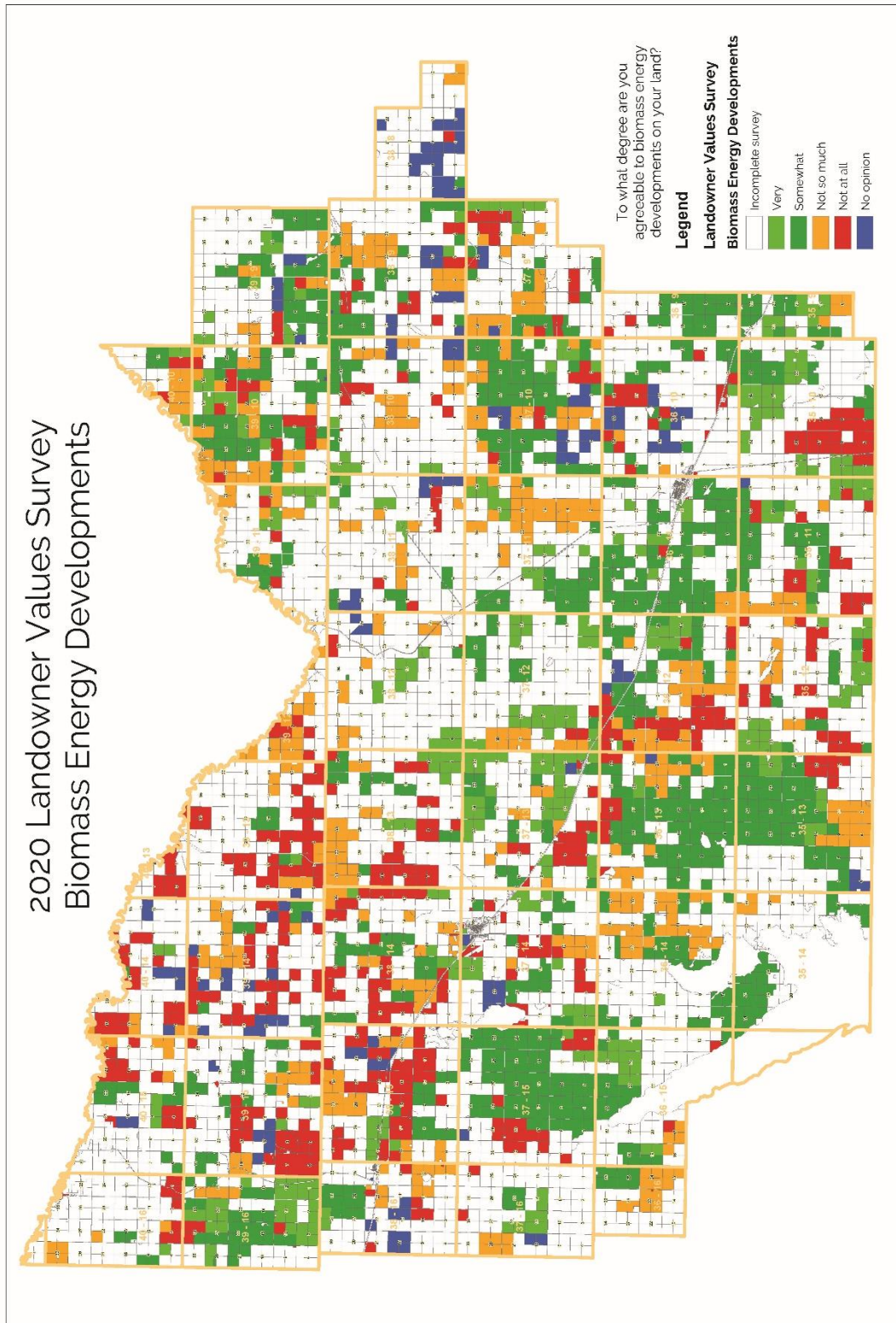
County of Paintearth

Note:

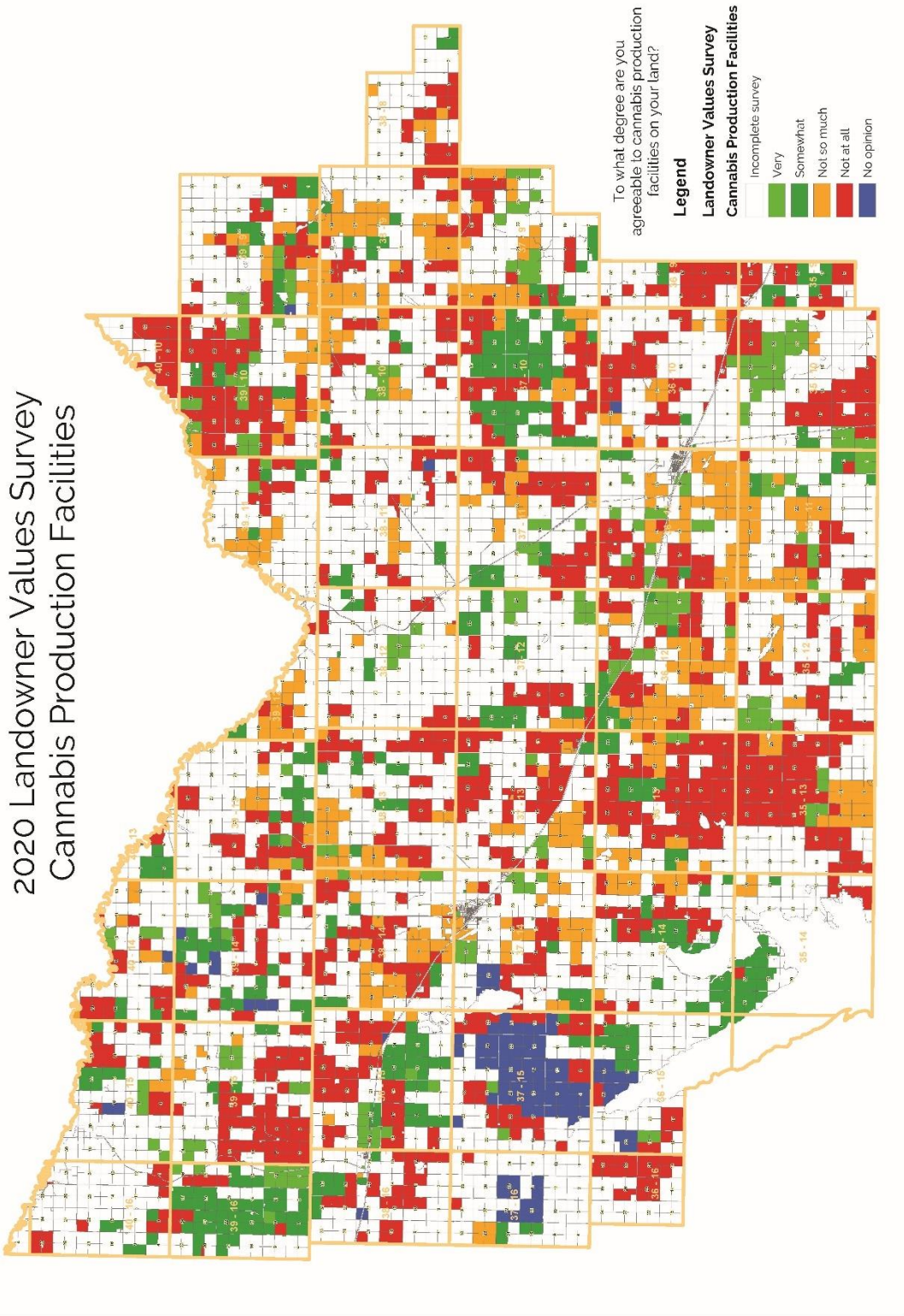
The County would like to thank the staff at Palliser Regional Municipal Services for their planning expertise and composition skills in helping put this plan to paper. Devin, Shahira, and Cody – your efforts are very much appreciated!

The County would also like to acknowledge the staff team of Mike, Todd, Leanne, Fitz, and Trevor for their tireless efforts, facilitation skills, and some long cold nights handling the public engagements. Their dedication to getting the job done is duly noted and appreciated.

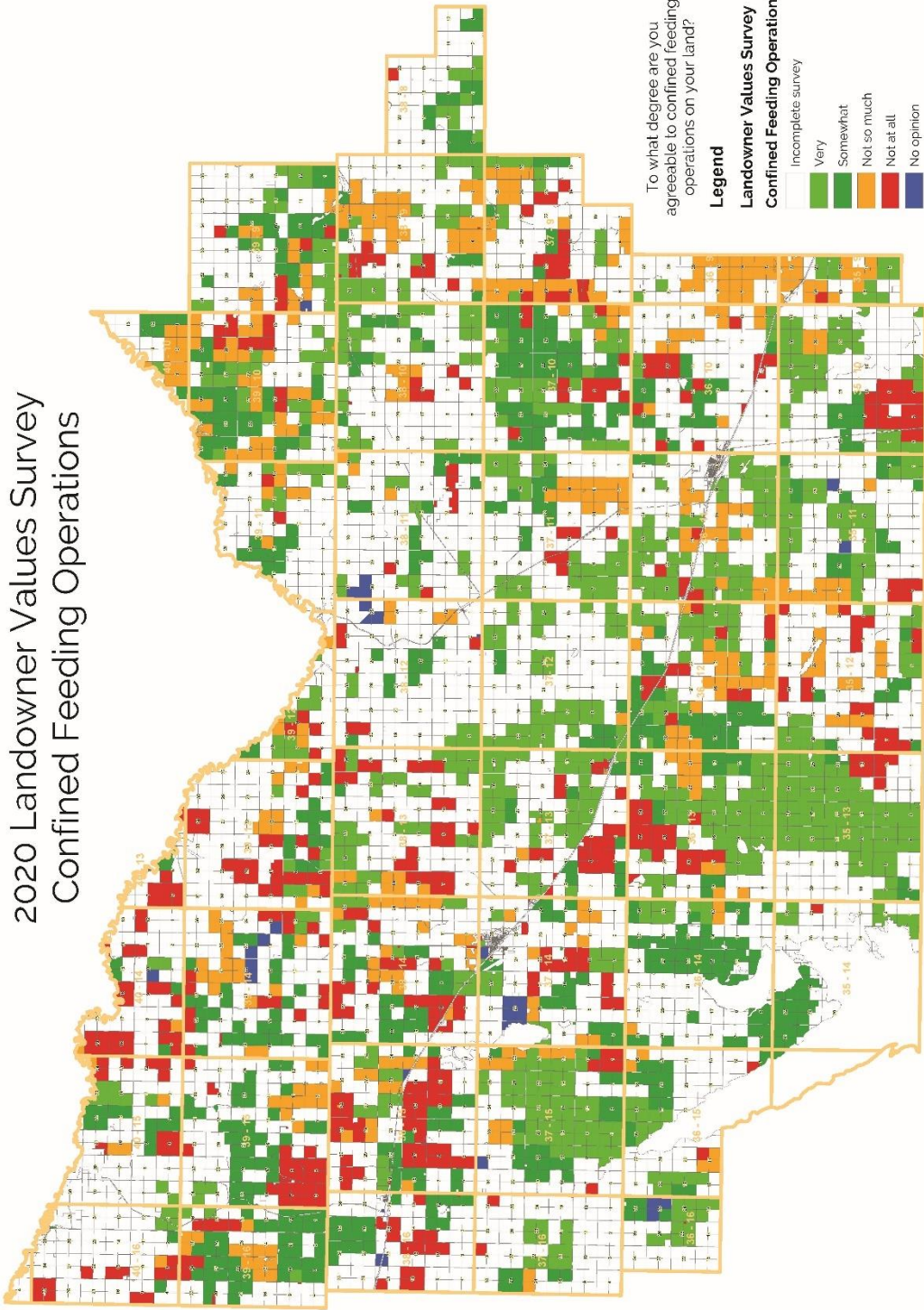
12.0 APPENDIX – LANDOWNER VALUES MAPS



2020 Landowner Values Survey Cannabis Production Facilities



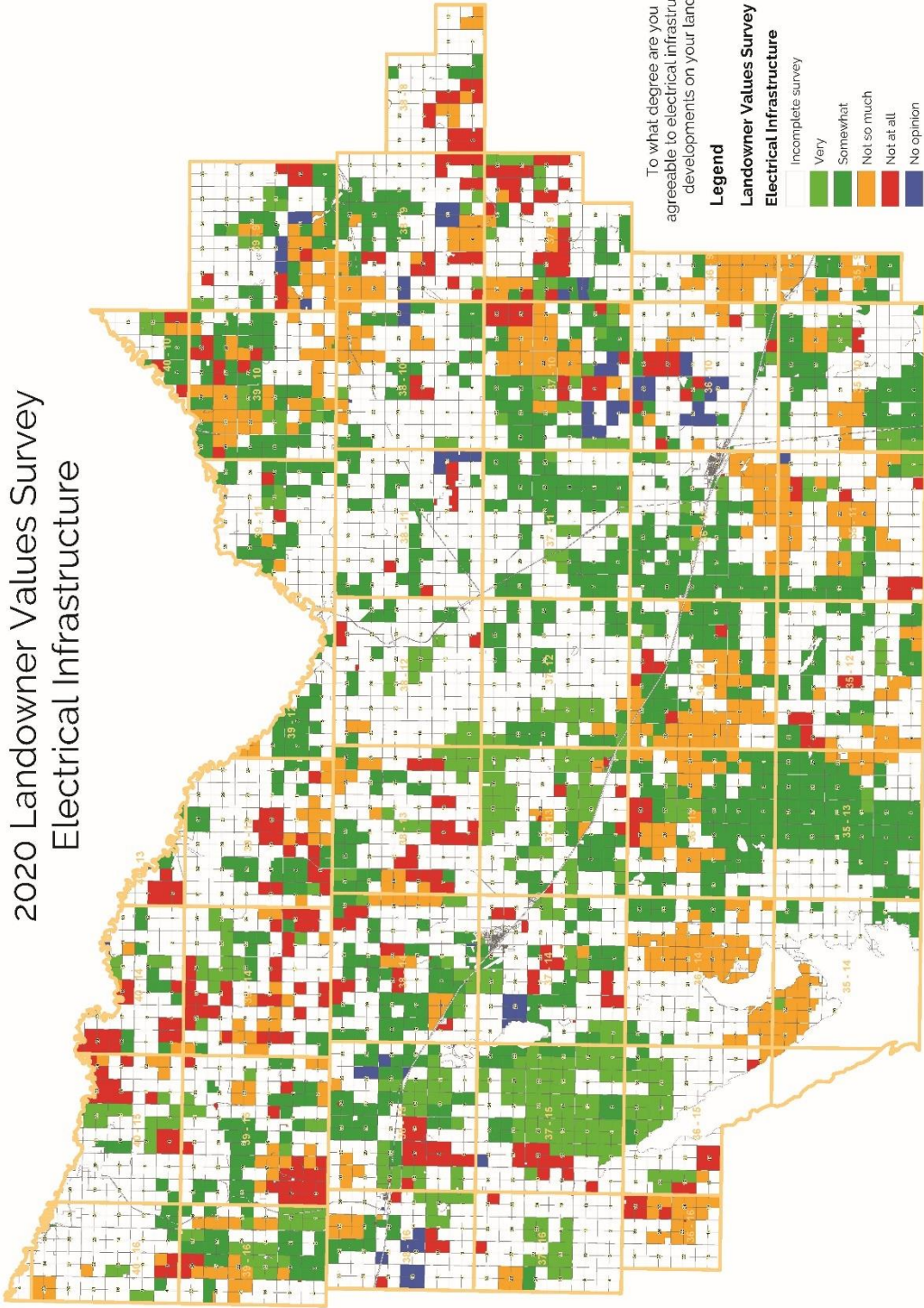
2020 Landowner Values Survey Confined Feeding Operations



To what degree are you agreeable to confined feeding operations on your land?

- Legend**
- Landowner Values Survey**
- Incomplete survey
 - Very
 - Somewhat
 - Not so much
 - Not at all
 - No opinion

2020 Landowner Values Survey Electrical Infrastructure



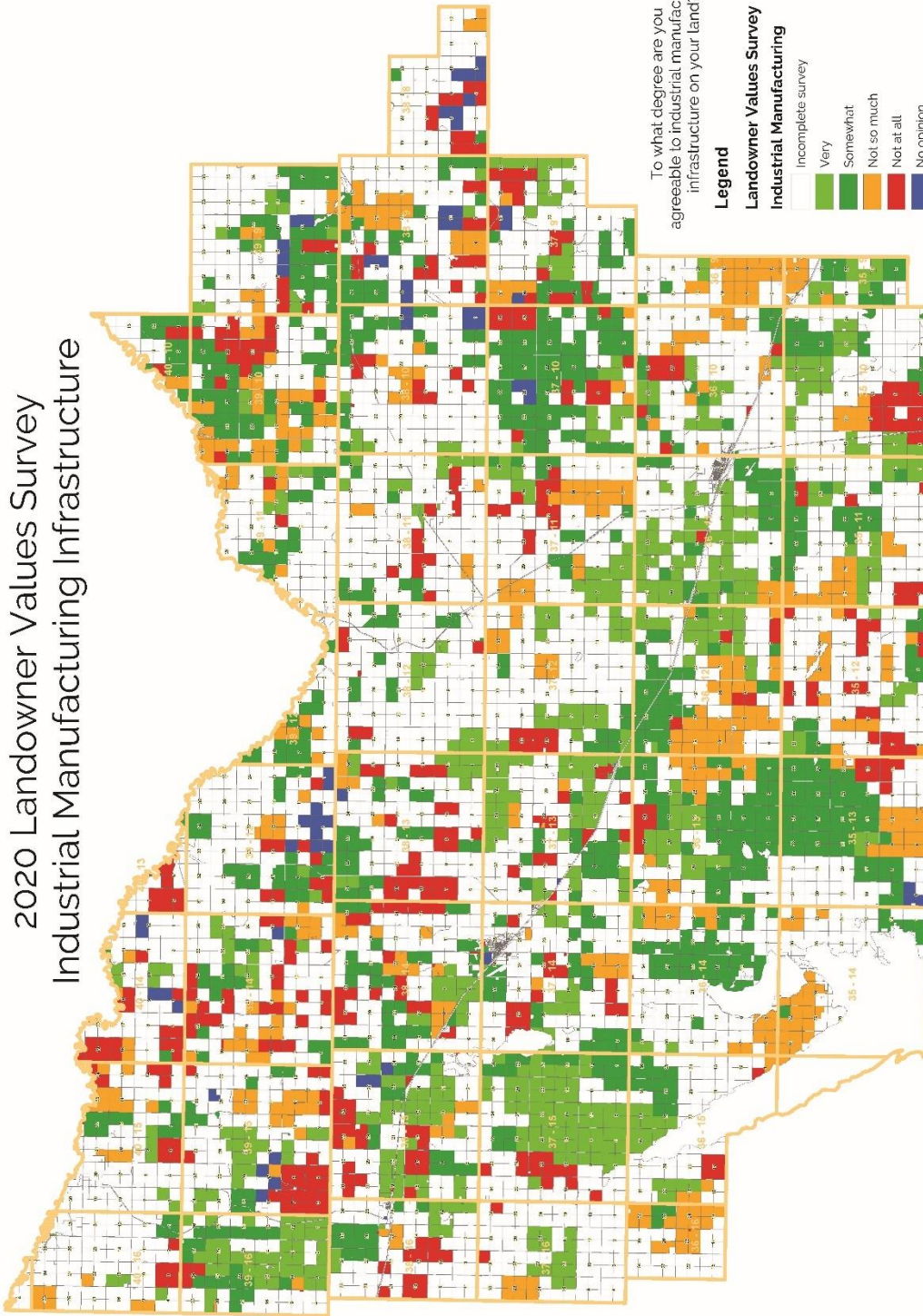
To what degree are you agreeable to electrical infrastructure developments on your land?

Legend

	Incomplete survey
	Very
	Somewhat
	Not so much
	Not at all
	No opinion

Landowner Values Survey
Electrical Infrastructure

2020 Landowner Values Survey Industrial Manufacturing Infrastructure



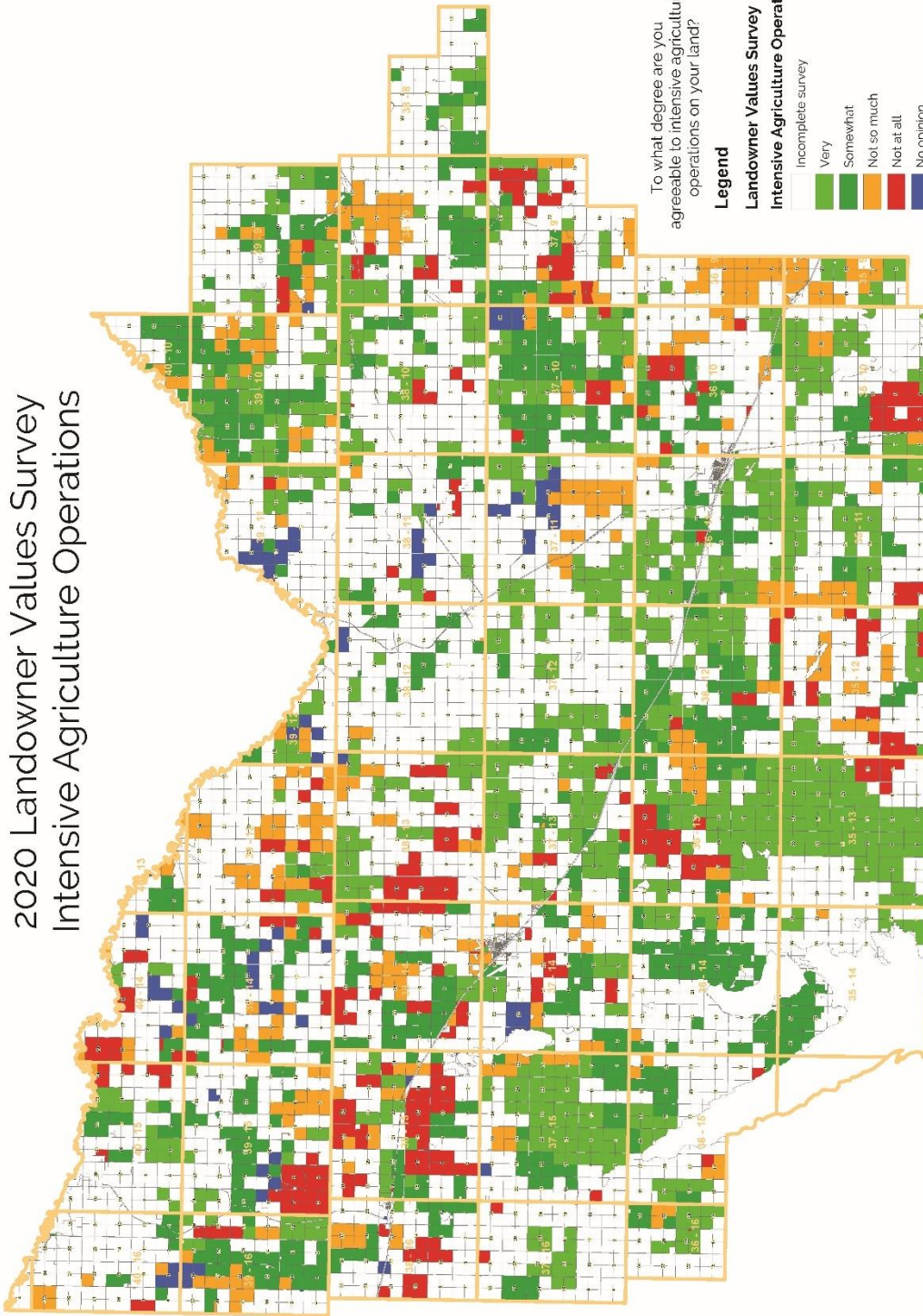
To what degree are you agreeable to industrial manufacturing infrastructure on your land?

Legend

**Landowner Values Survey
Industrial Manufacturing**

- Incomplete survey
- Very
- Somewhat
- Not so much
- Not at all
- No opinion

2020 Landowner Values Survey Intensive Agriculture Operations

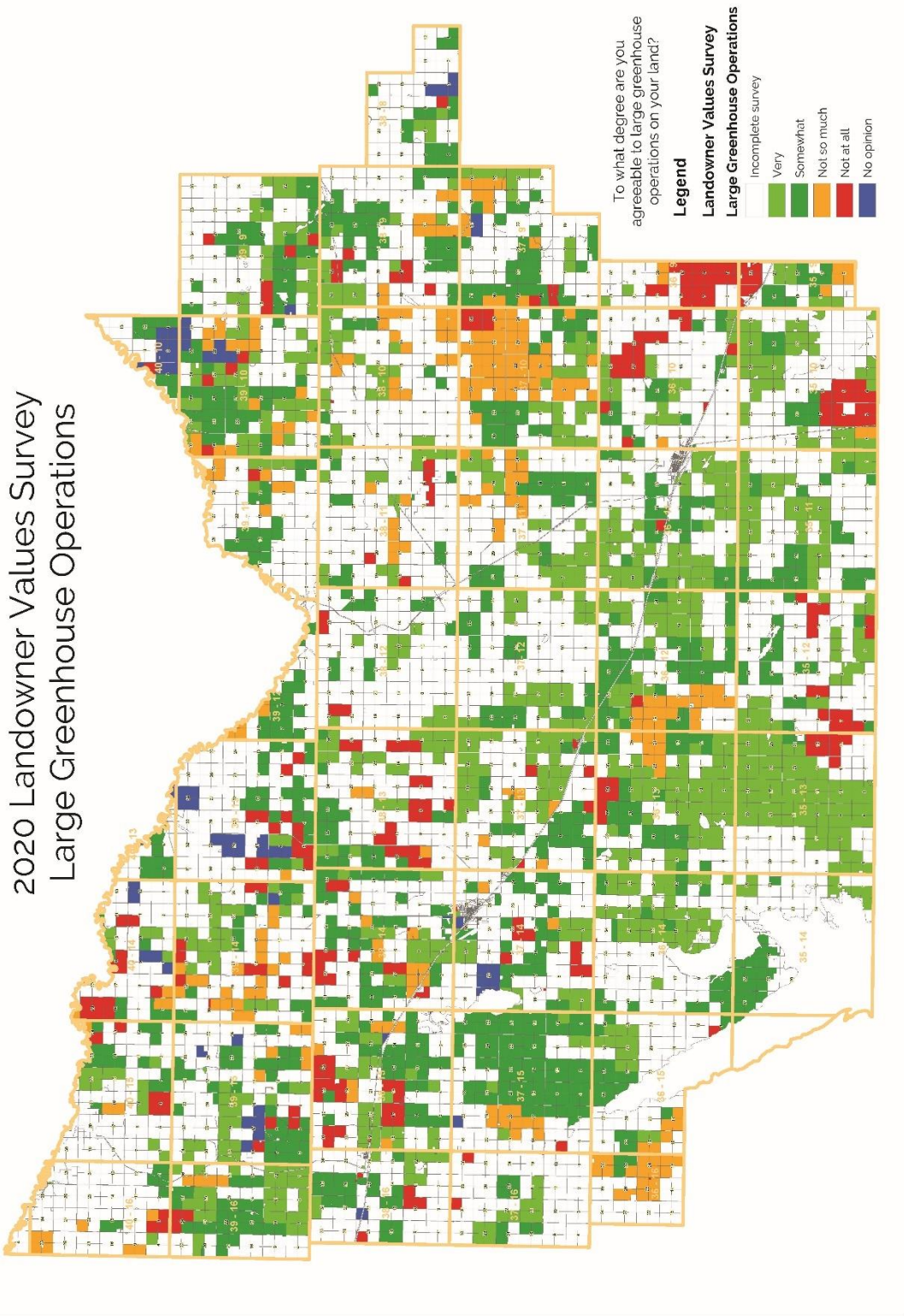


To what degree are you agreeable to intensive agriculture operations on your land?

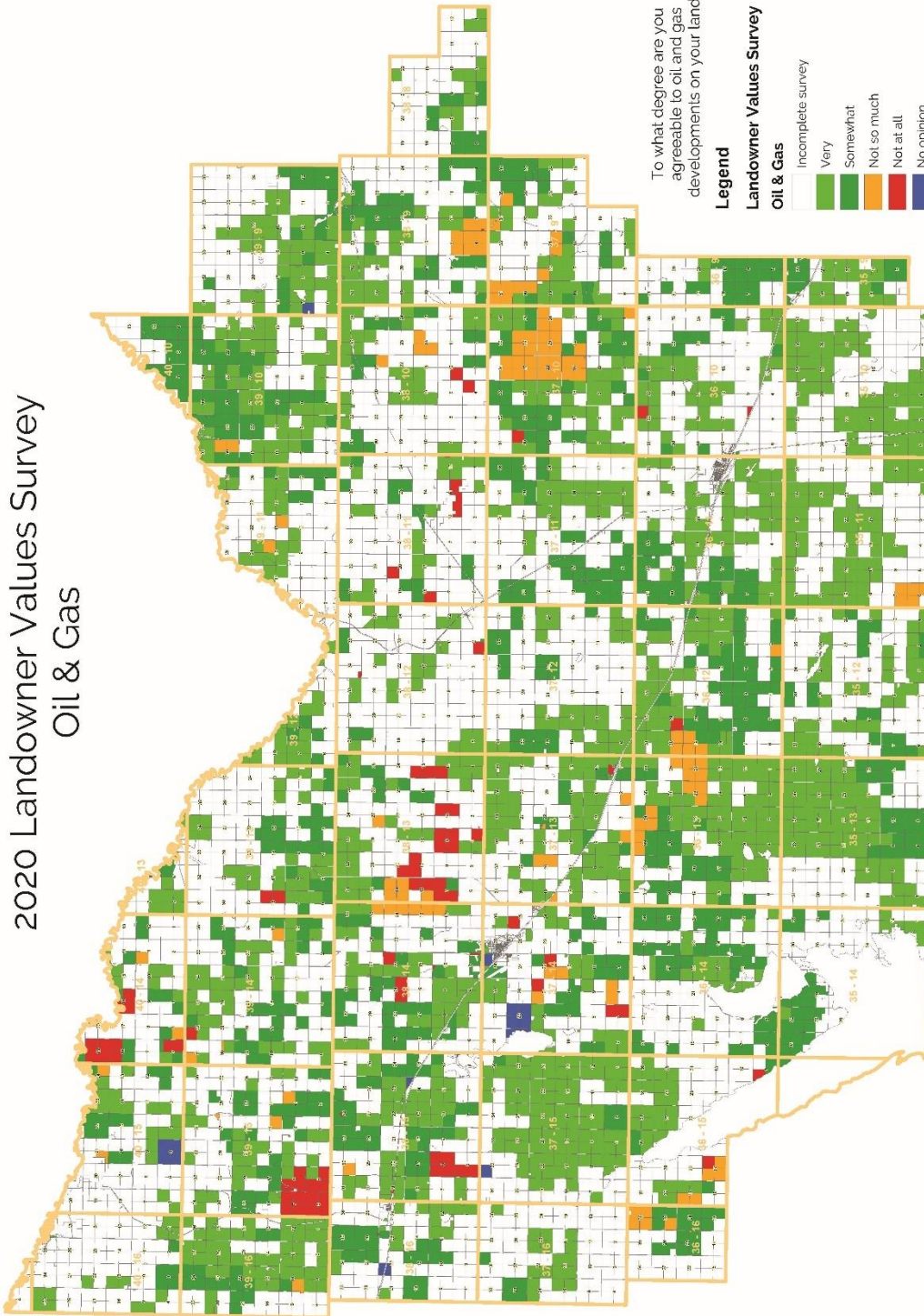
Legend

**Landowner Values Survey
Intensive Agriculture Operations**

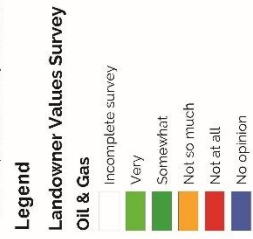
- Incomplete survey
- Very
- Somewhat
- Not so much
- Not at all
- No opinion



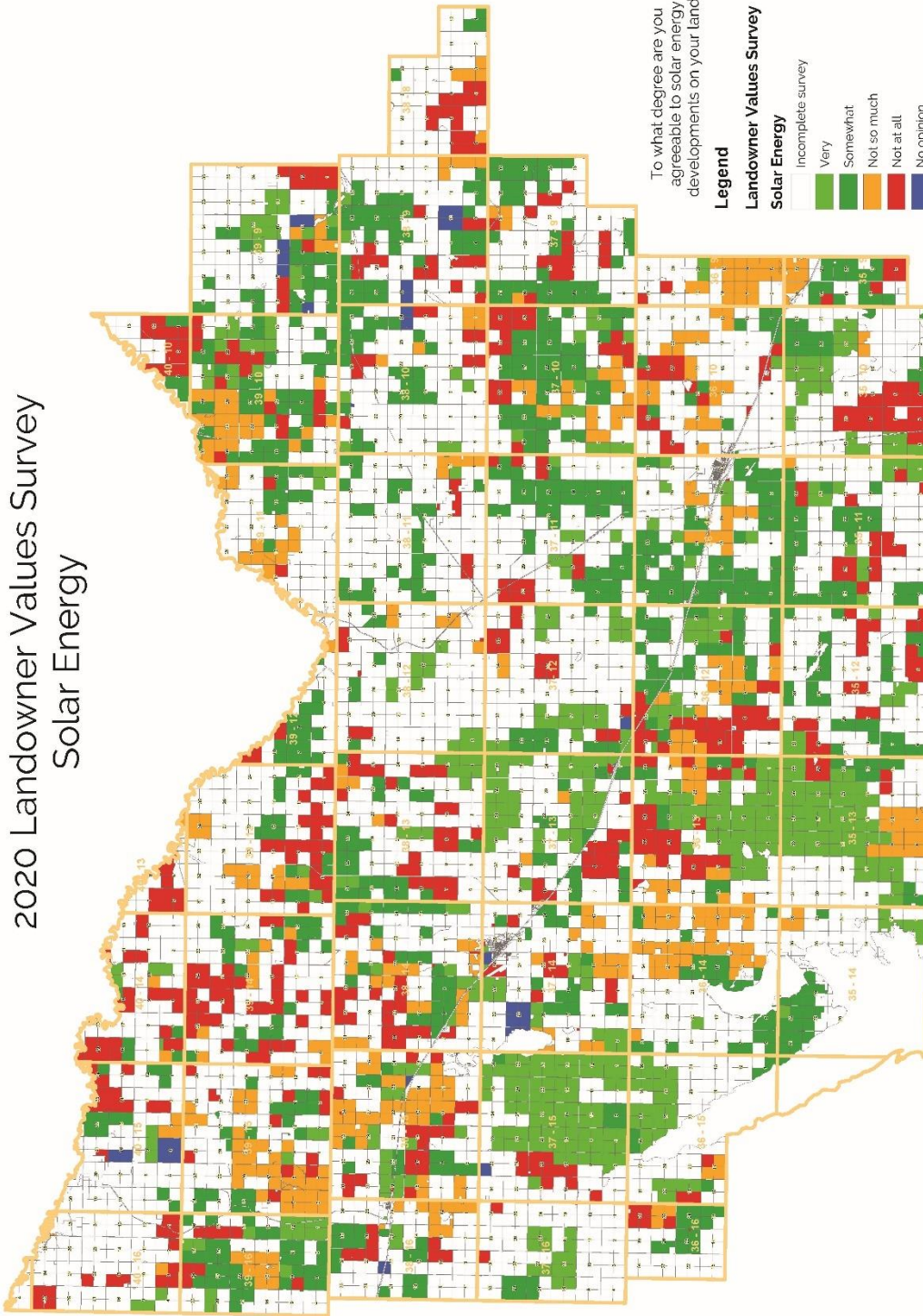
2020 Landowner Values Survey Oil & Gas



To what degree are you agreeable to oil and gas developments on your land?



2020 Landowner Values Survey Solar Energy

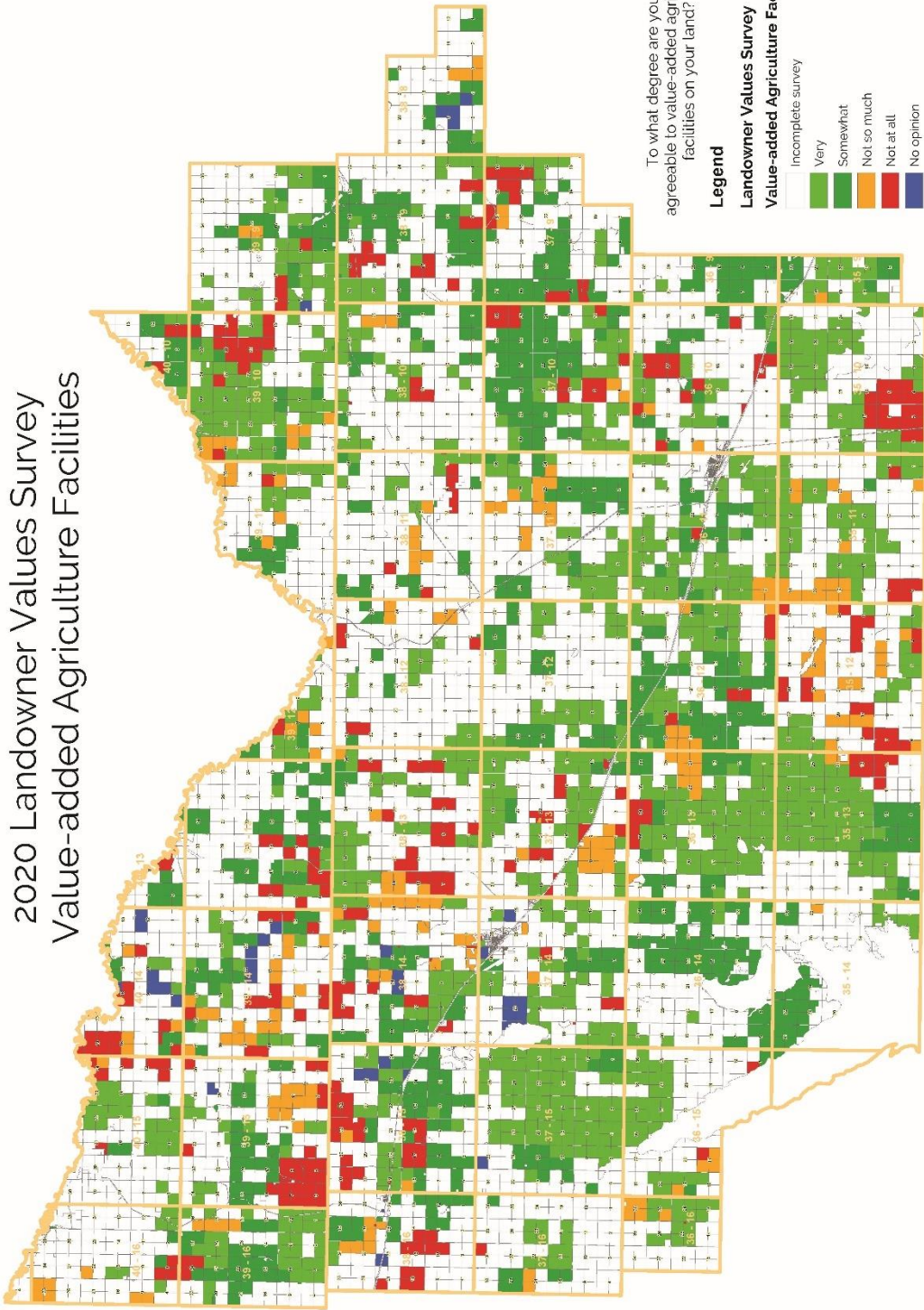


To what degree are you agreeable to solar energy developments on your land?

Legend

- Landowner Values Survey**
- Incomplete survey
 - Very
 - Somewhat
 - Not so much
 - Not at all
 - No opinion
- Solar Energy**

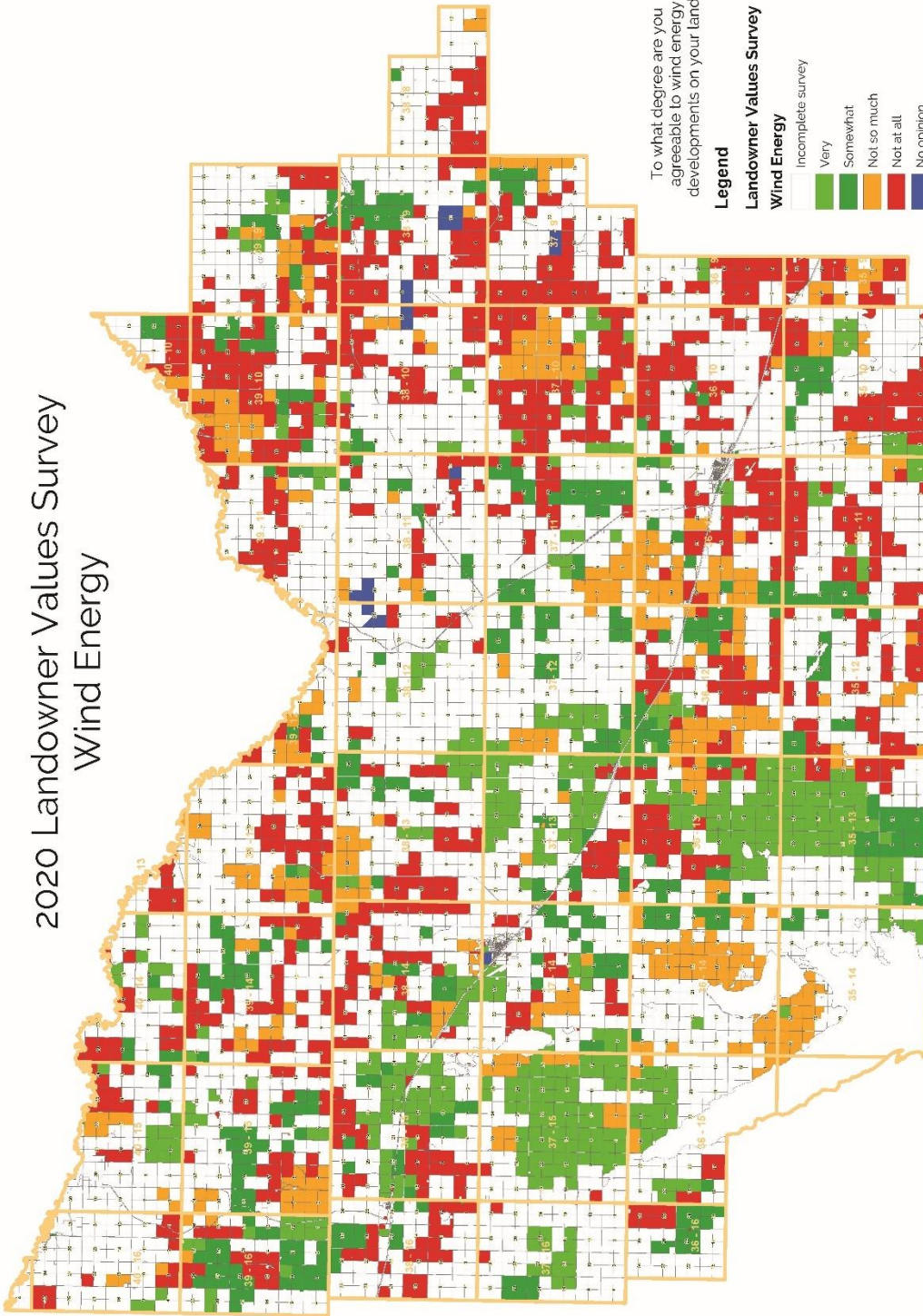
2020 Landowner Values Survey Value-added Agriculture Facilities



To what degree are you agreeable to value-added agriculture facilities on your land?

- Legend**
- Incomplete survey
 - Very
 - Somewhat
 - Not so much
 - Not at all
 - No opinion

2020 Landowner Values Survey Wind Energy



To what degree are you agreeable to wind energy developments on your land?

Legend

- Landowner Values Survey**
Wind Energy
- Incomplete survey
 - Very
 - Somewhat
 - Not so much
 - Not at all
 - No opinion