

# Rocky Ridge Estates Structure Plan

## SW4-24-25 W4M



Prepared for Wheatland County

Adopted August 20, 2012

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& Associates



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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Purpose**

The purpose of this Area Structure Plan (ASP) is to comply with Wheatland County guidelines where an ASP is required if proposed development will create more than 4 lots/parcels in a quarter section of land. This document will provide evidence of conformity with County policies and the suitability of the proposed development.

### **1.2 Plan Area and Ownership**

The lands subject to this Area Structure Plan include the SW4 – 24 – 25 W4M. There are three owners: Terry Thiessen, Danny Thiessen and Debby Thiessen. Figure 1 illustrates the location of the site.

### **1.3 Rationale for the Proposed Development**

This quarter section of land has been previously subdivided into large parcels and 4 country residential parcels were recently subdivided out of the southern parcel. There is a gas well on the property and several communication towers on the northwest quarter, as well as another four country residential lots. There is an application for 8 lots on the NW32, immediately southwest (a quarter that already has 7 parcels subdivided from it) and the NE33 has multiple titles (illustrated on Figure 1). The southwest quarter of Section 4 is appropriate for further subdivision due to the existing fragmentation, ability to accommodate individual water and sanitary sewer systems, the proximity to good access, and the proximity to the Town of Strathmore.

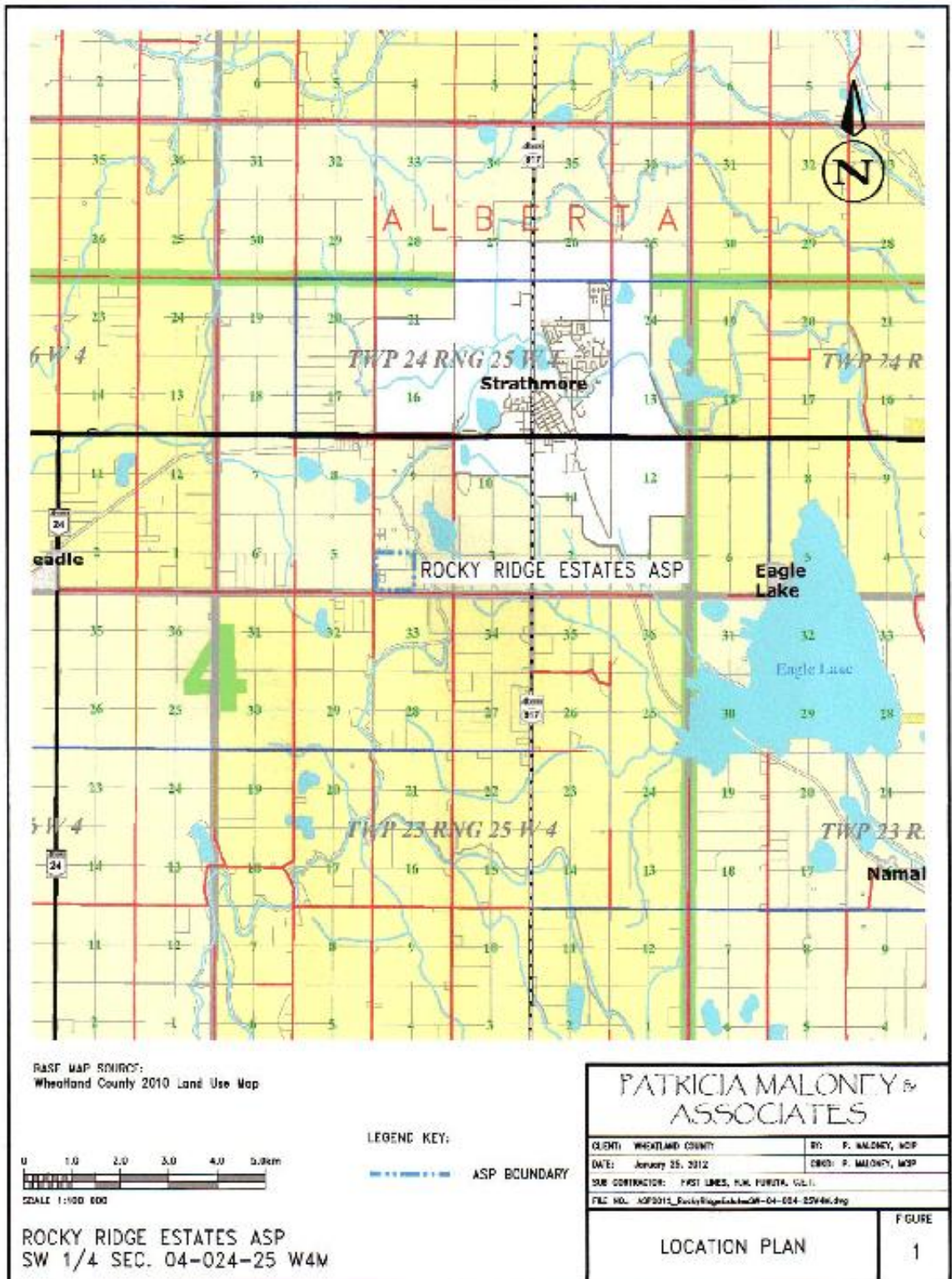
### **1.4 Objectives and Planning Principles**

The objectives to be achieved through the preparation and adoption of this Area Structure Plan are:

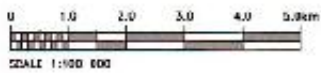
- To subdivide the 8 proposed lots
- To demonstrate the long range planning for the plan area

The planning principles to be followed in this Area Structure Plan include:

- To conduct the appropriate background studies to ensure responsible planning
- To provide a long range document for the County to assess future development proposals



RASF MAP SOURCE:  
Wheatland County 2010 Land Use Map



LEGEND KEY:  
ASP BOUNDARY

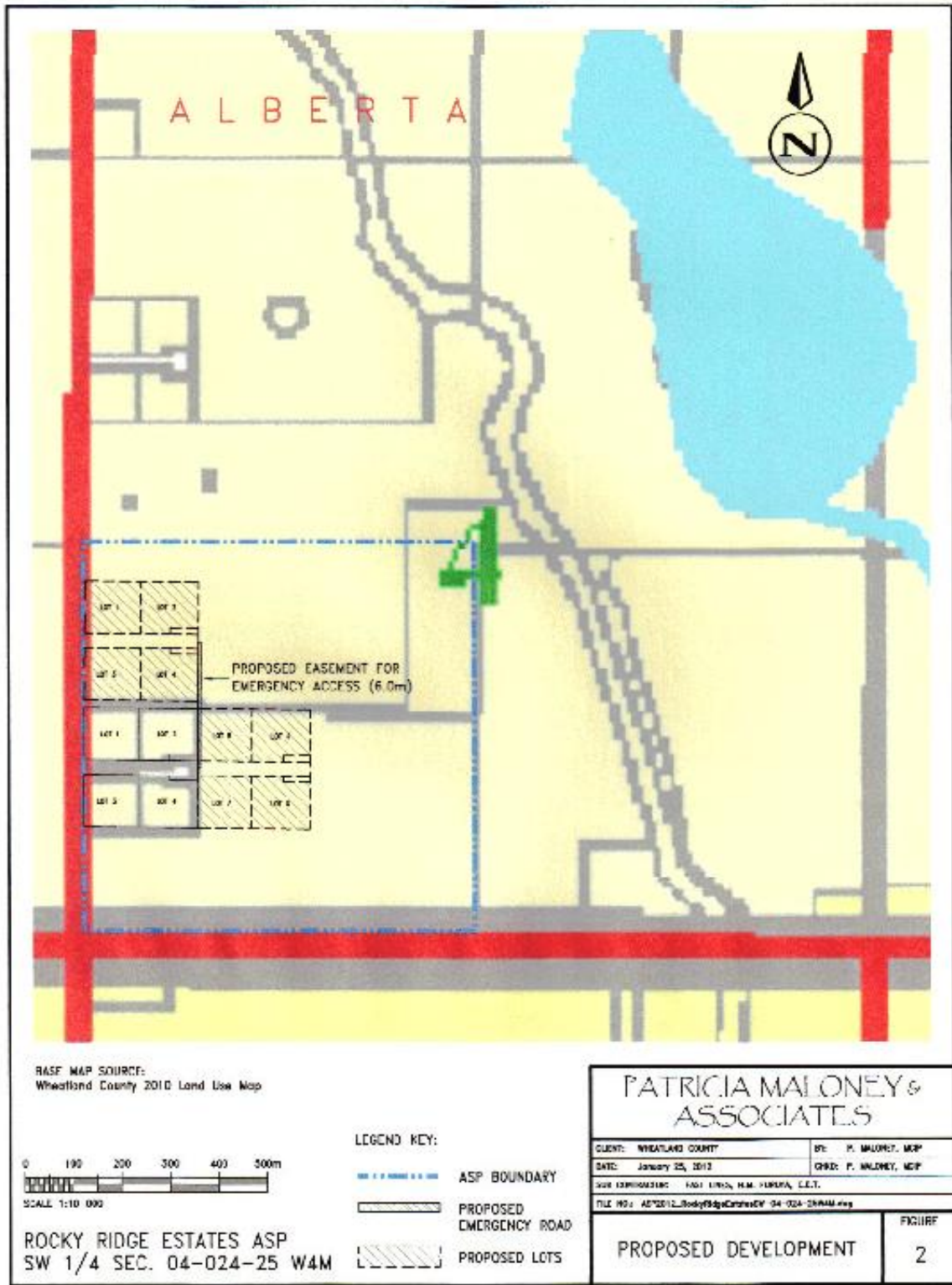
ROCKY RIDGE ESTATES ASP  
SW 1/4 SEC. 04-024-25 W4M

PATRICIA MALONEY &  
ASSOCIATES

CLIENT: WHEATLAND COUNTY	BY: P. MALONEY, MGP
DATE: January 25, 2012	CHKD: P. MALONEY, MGP
SUB CONTRACTOR: FIRST LINES, P.L.L.C. FURTRA, U.S.A.	
FILE NO.: ACP2012_RockyRidgeEstatesASP-04-024-25W4M.dwg	

LOCATION PLAN

FIGURE  
1



## 2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

### 2.1 Municipal Government Act

The Municipal Government Act outlines the tools available to local municipalities to regulate and control future development. All municipalities must prepare and adopt a Municipal Development Plan and a Land Use Bylaw. In addition, they may use Area Structure Plans to provide land use direction. Section 633 of the Municipal Government Act states:

*633(1) For the purpose of providing a framework for subsequent subdivision and development of an area of land, a council may by bylaw adopt an area structure plan.*

*(2) An area structure plan*

*Must describe*

- a) The sequence of development proposed for the area,*
- b) The land uses proposed in the area, either generally or with respect to specific parts of the area,*
- c) The density of population proposed for the area either generally or with respect to specific parts of the area, and*
- d) The general location of major transportation routes and public utilities, and*  
*May contain any other matters the council considers necessary.*

The Area Structure Plan requires three readings and a public hearing to be adopted.

### 2.2 Municipal Development Plan

A Municipal Development Plan is the senior planning document for a municipality. The Wheatland County MDP was adopted in 2006. The MDP was based on a very rural concept and was not supportive of country residential development but supported development in established hamlets and some large proposed development areas. Since then the Growth Management Strategy has been finalized and several Hamlet Area Structure Plans have been adopted and the MDP has been amended to provide new direction, including:

- Significant emphasis on balancing the conservation of the County's natural capital – its environment and agricultural lands – with its long term growth needs.
- Strong policy direction for protecting significant environmental areas and features.
- Policies that recognize new agricultural initiatives like value added agricultural industries.
- Policies that support Conservation Subdivision Design principles (CSD) for new development such as compact, efficient, fully serviced residential subdivisions.
- While recognizing that a demand for county residential lifestyles will continue to exist, and that these may continue to be accommodated within a sound management strategy, a priority will be placed on directing residential development to existing hamlets and named areas.
- Strong support for clustering new industrial and commercial development in planned industrial and business parks.

New policies include:

1. Rural subdivisions may be considered. The following statements may apply:
  - In close proximity to towns, hamlets, villages and named areas
  - Multi-lot clustering
  - Conservation Subdivision Design Principals (CSD)
  - If an ASP is required, it must be prepared by a qualified professional
2. For all applications, internal road access (including service roads) shall be provided by landowner/developer at their cost for each of the existing and proposed parcels that are part of the application. All roads to be constructed to County standards
3. All applications will be required to connect to existing water/wastewater services where and when available. Each approval will require a deferred service agreement
4. The County promotes residential applications which consider a smaller parcel size and contributes to moving the average housing density in Wheatland County to greater than four (4) units per acre.
5. Multi-lot residential applications may provide a mix of housing types.
6. The County may direct industrial, business industrial and commercial applications to designated areas as identified specifically for industrial, business industrial or commercial in the RGMS.
7. All applications shall include methods of land conservation to protect productive and viable agricultural lands. By methods such as:
  - Smaller parcels
  - Multi-lot clustering
  - Conservation easement
  - Dedication of Environmental Reserve (ER)
8. The County supports applications which emphasize the conservation of natural capital (ie: environmentally sensitive areas). Maintain trees, wildlife habitat and natural water features.
9. All applications within or adjacent to hamlets and named areas may encourage trail and road linkages to adjacent lands.

It is recognized that the primary direction for Wheatland County is as an agricultural community and the protection and maintenance of good agricultural land will be a priority.

### **2.3 Growth Management Strategy**

In 2009, the County initiated the preparation of a Growth Management Study to identify the areas most appropriate for growth. During the preparation of this document, all subdivision was put on hold for the ultimate identification of the growth nodes and policies for country residential development were determined. The Growth Management Strategy was completed and adopted in 2011. The following vision statement was adopted for Wheatland County.

#### *VISION STATEMENT*

*Wheatland County promotes sustainable well planned development which enhances and protects existing agricultural land and natural areas. We will do this in four ways: focusing growth in existing Hamlets, working with other municipalities to ensure mutually beneficial land uses in bordering areas, balancing growth while promoting good use of land, and improving and upgrading infrastructure in our communities to support a good quality of life.*



While the document focuses on development in current communities, it recognizes the demand for a rural lifestyle. There is focus on green infrastructure and conservation design for subdivisions. The document also includes direction for country residential development:

Rural Community Nodes – Represent areas where existing country residential development will be maintained. However, conservation design principles will be required in new country residential subdivision proposals to ensure a smaller development footprint. These areas will not be the focus of investment for future development; however, existing servicing levels will be maintained.

There are many regulations that apply to country residential development other than the local municipal regulations, such as sewer, water, provincial highways etc. However, the County directs where growth may occur. The Growth Management Study provided several directions for future Country residential development, but Policy 11 outlines the key requirement.

Policy 11.       Ensure an Area Structure Plan (ASP) is prepared for developments greater than three (3) lots or where subdivision of land will result in greater than three (3) lots per quarter section.

The County has developed guidelines for the preparation of Area Structure Plans and has indicated that the land use concept should include features and characteristics, density, servicing, geotechnical investigation, traffic impact assessment, historical resources overview, land use districts and compatibility with existing municipal policies, phasing, water, wastewater and storm water management plans. This may require an environmental site assessment to identify oil and gas facilities, emergency services and potential hazards.

### **3.0 SITE FEATURES**

#### **3.1 Setting and Topography**

The land is gently rolling with views to the west. It is located one and a half miles south of the TransCanada Highway and 2 miles north of Glenmore Trail (Highway 560) and is one and a half miles south of the Town of Strathmore. The land has been cultivated for decades and there are currently leases for a gas well and two communication towers on the quarter section. The quarter section has been divided into three large lots with four country residential parcels in the southwest corner of the property.

The Wheatland County Regional Growth Management Strategy, adopted in June 2011, has mapping that illustrates:

- Figure 3 - Map 4, the study area is within an area generally considered as having satisfactory ground water yield, in the range of 5 to 25 imperial gallons per minute
- Figure 4 - Map 5, the study area is within lands considered to be Class 3 to 4 in Agricultural Capability having moderately severe limitations for agricultural production (the site slopes to the west severely in some areas)

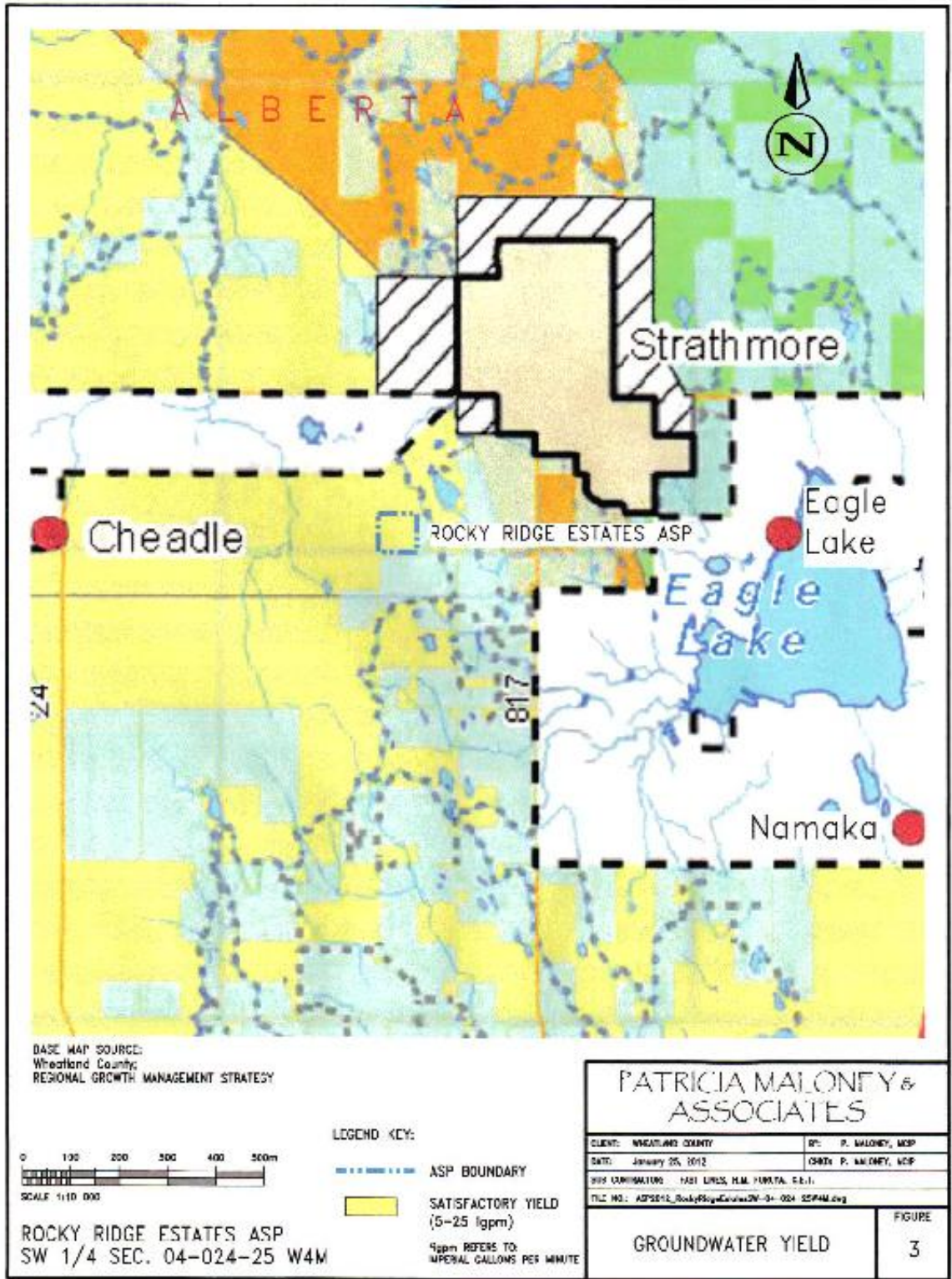
SubSoil Septic Services was engaged to conduct soil assessment for the study area. The scope of work for the assessment to meet the Level Two Assessment for a PSTS was:

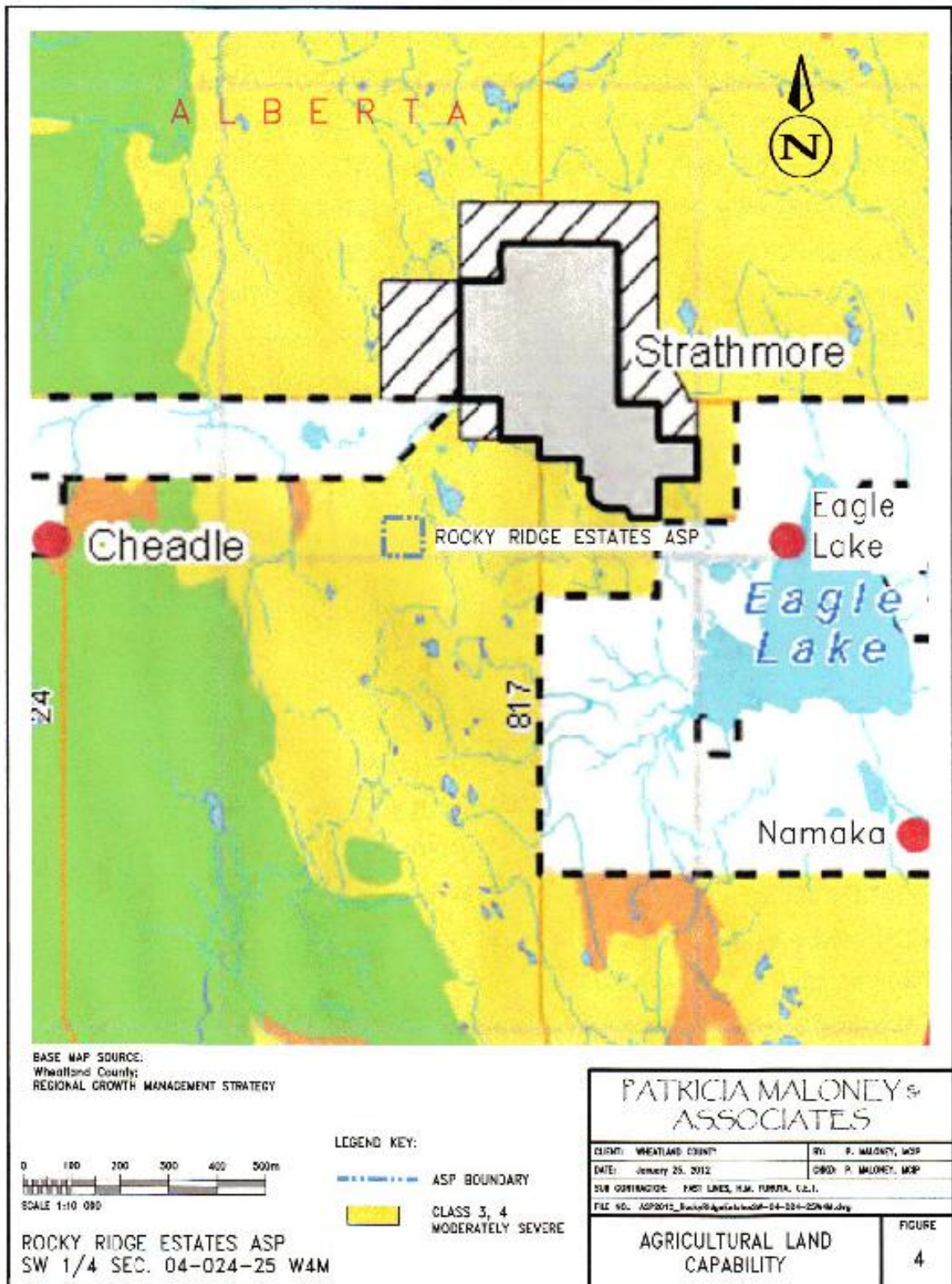
1. Co-ordinate field activities, field schedule and safety with SubSoil Septic Services Inc. and contractor personnel.
2. Conduct line locates including private locates and Alberta One-Call prior to the site assessment.
3. Conduct a safety meeting with contractors, landowner and all personnel on site prior to beginning the assessment.
4. Conduct a site assessment based on the lot boundaries and likely locations of Private Sewage Treatment System (PSTS)
5. Submit soil samples for laboratory analyses to determine soil texture.
6. Summarize field observations, logs, analytical data received from the lab in a Level One or Two Assessment report
7. Provide recommendations on suitable PSTS for each lot.

The study identified that the soils are well drained and are comprised of a loam and clay loam mixture. Groundwater mounding will not be a significant consideration as water will move at a sufficient rate through the soil both vertically and horizontally. The report concluded that the land is very to moderately suited to Private Sewage Treatment Systems.

#### **3.2 Surrounding Land Uses**

As noted earlier, there are several adjacent quarter sections that have been fragmented and as such, further subdivision will not impact the agricultural nature of the area. Most surrounding lands are utilized for some form of crop production.





### 3.3 Existing Access and Surrounding Road Network

Bunt Engineering was commissioned to complete a Traffic Impact Assessment to investigate the impact of the proposed development on the adjacent road network. The scope of the study included:

- a site visit to obtain laning information, geometry, photos and manually collect peak period
- traffic counts at two intersections
- a comprehensive intersection capacity analysis at two intersections on Range Road 255 under existing and post-development conditions for the AM and PM peak hours
- daily link analysis for the adjacent roadways using existing and post-development traffic conditions to determine if roadway improvements are required

Recommend the appropriate roadway/intersection treatments with or without the inclusion of the site generated traffic volumes.

The conclusions of the report were as follows:

*Bunt & Associates (Alberta) Ltd. developed a series of conclusions and recommendations based on the analysis undertaken as part of this study. They have been summarized here as follows:*

- *The proposed development is expected to generate up to 8 peak hour trips during the AM peak hour and 10 peak hour trips during the PM peak hour.*
- *The results of the intersection analysis confirmed that the study area intersections are operating within acceptable capacity parameters and will continue to do so with the addition of the site generated traffic.*
- *The results of the daily link analysis indicated that traffic volumes on Range Road 255 between the site and Twp Rd 244 will necessitate dust control treatment of this section of roadway.*

*It is expected that the proposed development can be accommodated on the adjacent transportation network with the improvement described above.*

### 3.4 Environmental Site Assessment

An Environmental Phase 1 Assessment with wetland considerations, was completed by Rangeland Conservation Services in December 2011. Some of the concerns regarding site conditions related to a refrigerator and abandoned vehicles at the rental unit on the Terry Thiessen property (proposed Lot 3). This is currently being cleaned up appropriately.

However, there may be some minor wetland issues and the report states:

*“While avoiding disturbance to wetlands is always preferred, approval and compensation will be required through Alberta Environment and Water (AEW) if this Class I wetland is to be disturbed. The rate for Ducks Unlimited to complete restoration activities as compensation for wetland disturbance is \$17,500 per ha in the region...and based on GPS waypoints taken in the field, the wetland is estimated to be 1190 sq. m. AEW requires a minimum wetland restoration ration of*



*3:1. Artificial wetlands tend to be less complex than their natural counterparts and as such, a greater area of artificial wetlands must be created to compensate for lost natural wetlands. Based on size estimates and the minimum wetland replacement ratio, the compensation fee would be approximately \$6,250, if granted approval through AEW. A compensation plan other than restoration provided by Ducks Unlimited may also be proposed to AEW.*

*The borrow pit, while man-made, is also legislated through AEW and the Water Act. Through difficult to estimate accurately due to the snow and ice present at the time of the site visit, the borrow pit is estimated to have a capacity greater than 2500 sq. m., and areas which hold this capacity or greater require approval through AEW to place, construct, maintain or fill in.”*

Figure 5 illustrates these areas. The wetlands will be assessed at time of subdivision by Alberta Environment. There is some confusion regarding the wetland on Danny Thiessen’s property in that it appears to be located on the access road for the Encana Gas well and as such will be re assessed in the spring when the snow is off the site.

The conclusion of the report is that the property does not warrant a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment and as such, no further assessments are recommended at this time.

### **3.5 Historical Assessment**

An Historical Assessment was conducted on the property to create a Statement of Justification for *Historical Resources Act Requirements* in October 2011. Lifeways of Canada Ltd. The evaluation of the report stated that

“the proposed land subdivision development will occur in cropland that has been previously heavily disturbed by cultivation. The lands are all relatively flat with no topographic features to concentrate/encourage occupation, or any potential sediment traps precluding possibility of deeply buried historic resources. None of the project lands are listed in the *Listing of Historic Resources (September 2011)*. All known sites within three kilometers of the project area have HRV ratings of 0 and no known sites are present within the project area. No listed historic structures are present within the project footprint, which at currently only includes vacant cropland. However, any changes to the development plans that will affect pre – 1960’s structures that may exist in the currently excluded farmyards will necessitate an Historical Resources Impact Assessment to record these as per Alberta Culture and Community Spirit requirements. Due to the lack of previously recorded sites in the project area, and low potential for encountering undisturbed historic resources, no further Historic Resource Investigations are recommended for this project as it currently stands.”

The letter of clearance from Alberta Culture and Community Services was received dated November 7, 2011.

### **3.6 Hydrological Assessment**

A Phase 1 Groundwater Feasibility Assessment was prepared for this property by Western Water Resources (WWR) Inc. in November 2011 for the original Danny Thiessen four lot subdivision. An updated version was prepared in January 2012 to assess the additional 7 lots (while there are 8 lots proposed for subdivision, there currently exists a well and mobile home

on the Terry Thiessen property and therefore is not considered “new” for the purpose of ground water). The report was prepared based on the 7 wells on the SW4-24-25 W4M and a total of 25 wells in the 9 quarter sections in the vicinity.

The report stated:

*“A review of the well data within all 9 quarter sections reveals that preliminary estimated flow rates range from 13.2 cubic meters per day (2.1 igpm) to 163 cubic meter per day (25.0 igpm)... the majority of the wells were completed over a depth range of 15 meter (49.2 feet) to 60 meters (197.0 feet) and the Total Cumulative Mean Groundwater Production Potential (TCMGPP) for the entire 9 quarter sections was estimated to be 249.7 cubic meters per day per quarter (38.1 igpm/quarter). The overall Geometric Mean Depth and Geometric Mean Non Pumping Water level were estimated at 45.2 meters (148.0 feet) and 9.9 meters (32.6 feet) respectively.”*

The analysis demonstrated that there was sufficient water to accommodate the additional 7 lots while retaining adequate ground water reserve for future.



## 4.0 LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

The following sections and policies outline the guidance for the development of the Rocky Ridge Estates Area Structure Plan lands.

### 4.1 Development Concept Overview

The proposed development for the first phase of this ASP is 8 lots.

Wheatland County currently requires an Area Structure Plan for any development that proposes more than three lots in a quarter section. There are currently 7 lots in the quarter and the owners are proposing an additional 8. An Area Structure Plan is designed to plan for 20 to 25 years. By specifying the need for an Area Structure Plan, the County has required the owners to undertake many expensive background reports (traffic impact assessment, environmental and wetland overview, private sanitary assessment, historic/archaeological clearance) and therefore, the owners will review the total development level. To maximize the value of the work to be done, the landowners have identified additional lands for future development, the lot layout to be determined at time of development and prior to any development beyond Phase 1, an ASP amendment will be required and the appropriate background studies updated.

The adoption of the Area Structure Plan does not allow the owners to do any development on the land until the appropriate redesignation, subdivision and development approvals and permits are in place.

- Policy 4.1.1 The Southwest Quarter of Section 4 – 24 - 25 W4M, is appropriate for country residential development.
- Policy 4.1.2 Development will occur in conformity to the conceptual lot layout provided in Figure 3, Proposed Land Use Plan.
- Policy 4.1.3 Currently there are four country residential lots and three larger agricultural parcels of land on the quarter section (a total of seven titles) plus a developed area with a mobile home/well/septic field that is currently leased.
- Policy 4.1.4 Phase 1 of the Rocky Ridge Estates Area Structure Plan proposes 8 new country residential lots.
- Policy 4.1.5 In conformity with the Wheatland Land Use Bylaw, the proposed Country Residential lots are approximately 3 acres in size.
- Policy 4.1.6 Phase 2 of the development is appropriate for future country residential development if future studies are completed including: hydrology study, further soil and private sewage treatment system suitability, and supplement to the Traffic Impact Assessment.
- Policy 4.1.7 While this ASP allows for future development, an amendment will be required to this Area Structure Plan to demonstrate lot layout and sufficient background studies and the land must be redesignated to country residential zone and application for subdivision must be made.
- Policy 4.1.8 The land uses appropriate for this Area Structure Plan are for residential and agricultural uses only.

## 4.2 Land Use and Density

This section outlines the lot density and population projection for the development proposed in this Area Structure Plan.

- Policy 4.2.1 The proposed Phase 1 development is for 8 country residential lots.
- Policy 4.2.2 The lot configuration illustrated on Figure 3 is conceptual and exact lot lines and areas will be determined at time of subdivision.
- Policy 4.2.3 Phase 1 generates 8 new residential lots and, based on an occupancy of an average of 2.6 persons per residential unit, a population of 21 people.
- Policy 4.2.4 The density of Phase 1, including the existing parcels, is 15 parcels in approximately 160 acres or a density of 0.93 units per acre.
- Policy 4.3.5 Adoption of this Area Structure Plan does not provide approval to develop the land, appropriate land use designations must be applied for and approved and the appropriate subdivision application must be approved prior to any development of roads or building sites.
- Policy 4.2.6 The population projection for the 8 country residential lots is 21 for Phase 1 development (based on 2.6 persons per residential unit), making the estimated population for the full quarter at 39.

## 4.3 County Approvals

The new lots will be designated Country Residential under the Wheatland County Land Use Bylaw. The Country Residential District provides for smaller parcels of a rural nature with the intended primary use being a residential site. The lots are approximately 3 acres in size. The Land Use Bylaw requires a minimum 50 foot front yard from an internal road and a 125 foot setback from any county road.

- Policy 4.3.1 Approval of this Area Structure Plan does not authorize any construction or subdivision, but provides the support and guidance for applications for land use bylaw amendment and subdivision.
- Policy 4.3.2 The balance of the large parcels will remain in General Agriculture.
- Policy 4.3.3 The proposed small lots will be redesignated to Country Residential.
- Policy 4.3.4 Subdivision will conform to the approved land use category.
- Policy 4.3.5 Conditions of subdivision will include the designation of cash in lieu for Municipal Reserve and a Development Agreement for road construction.

## 5.0 MUNICIPAL SERVICING

The following policies will guide the development and the servicing requirements.

### 5.1 Water and Sewer

All servicing will be individual and on site.

- Policy 5.1.1 The development will be serviced by individual wells.
- Policy 5.1.2 Each lot will be served by individual well, drilled by a journeyman water well driller and licensed and approved by Alberta Environment at time of building permit.
- Policy 5.1.3 When water wells are drilled, it is recommended that an aquifer test consisting of at least two hours of pumping and two hours of recovery be conducted.
- Policy 5.1.4 Each lot will be serviced by an individual septic system based on the provincial standards of the Private Sewage Waste Management guidelines.
- Policy 5.1.5 The features of the soils, as determined by SubSoil Septic Services, indicate the parcels are suitable for Primary or Secondary pressure treatment systems and implementation must follow the lot specific recommendations set out in the SubSoil Septic Service Inc. Report.
- Policy 5.1.6 The landowners will be required to sign a standard deferred servicing agreement with Wheatland County stating that at such time as piped services are available, the lot owners will tie into the available services.

### 5.2 Storm Water Management

- Policy 5.2.1 Individual lots are required to retain storm water runoff flows up to 1:100 event.
- Policy 5.2.2 Lot owners may create a pond to hold storm water runoff on each lot, subject to AEW approval and compliance with Water Act requirements.
- Policy 5.2.3 Natural drainage from the site may drain into ditches along the county roads at the same volumes as pre development.
- Policy 5.2.4 All development is encouraged to install cisterns to capture rain water for on-site irrigation of gardens and yards.

### 5.3 Shallow Utilities

Shallow utilities include power, telephone, internet, gas, and cable.

- Policy 5.3.1 The developer/lot owner is solely responsible for the cost of installing all shallow utilities and working with the various local utility companies.

## 5.4 Transportation

The transportation policies have been developed based on County standards and the recommendations and conclusions of the Bunt & Associates Transportation Impact Assessment completed in October 2011.

- Policy 5.4.1 The proposed development will be accommodated by the extension of the southern internal road and the construction of the northern internal road, both providing access onto Range Rd. 254.
- Policy 5.4.2 An emergency access easement will be dedicated to link the north and south access roads, registered on the title of Proposed Lot 5, and on the balance of the SW4-24-25 W4M.
- Policy 5.4.3 Future development, beyond the Phase 1 eight lots, will include looping the internal road to create dual access.
- Policy 5.4.4 The internal roads will be constructed to County standards, including the dedication of a 30 metre road right of way and construction of an 8.6 metre top surface.
- Policy 5.4.5 The total trip generation for this development is 80 vehicle trips per day with 6 peak AM trips and 8 peak PM trips accessing from the respective county road.
- Policy 5.4.6 Phase 1 development will end roads in a cul de sac with a standard turnaround surfaced radius of 15.8 metres subject to the approval of Wheatland County. Should the road be extended for future phases of development, the excess land previously dedicated for the turn around bulb, will be offered to the landowners for consolidation into adjoining lots.
- Policy 5.4.7 Road dedication has been provided allowing future road construction to link future phases of development. The road will not be constructed until future development is approved and future road construction will be paid for by the developer of the day.

## 5.5 Open Space and Municipal Reserve

It is the policy of Wheatland County does not take Municipal Reserve land in rural developments.

- Policy 5.6.1 There is no land in this ASP that qualifies as Environmental Reserve and as such no land will be dedicated for Environmental Reserve.
- Policy 5.6.2 As a rural development, it is not recommended that any land be dedicated as Municipal Reserve, parks or pathways.
- Policy 5.6.3 Reserves will be calculated on the land proposed for subdivision in Phase 1. Exact areas will be determined at time of subdivision.
- Policy 5.6.4 Verification of wetlands will be considered by Sustainable Resource Development Water Boundaries Unit, under Section 3 of the Public Lands Act, at time of subdivision.
- Policy 5.6.5 Cash in lieu of municipal reserve land will be paid to the County, based on a market assessment of the value of the land prior to redesignation and subdivision.

## 6.0 PHASING AND IMPLEMENTATION

- Policy 6.1.1 Phase 1 is proposed for eight (8) Country Residential lots.
- Policy 6.1.2 The balance of the Area Structure Plan lands are considered appropriate for future country residential development.
- Policy 6.1.3 Any future development in the Study area will require an amendment to the Rocky Ridge Estates Area Structure Plan.
- Policy 6.1.4 Any future development and amendment to this plan will require updates to hydrology, environmental, traffic and soil studies to demonstrate the suitability of additional development.
- Policy 6.1.5 Pursuant to Section 31 of the Historical Resources Act, should any historic resources be discovered during construction, the Historical Resources Management Branch is to be contacted immediately.
- Policy 6.1.6 All lands will require redesignation to Country Residential District before any activity or development may occur.
- Policy 6.1.7 A Subdivision application must be submitted and approved by Wheatland County along with a signed development agreement prior to any site development or road construction occurring here.

