

**MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF YELLOWHEAD NO. 94  
BY-LAW NO. 5.98**

*BEING A BY-LAW TO ADOPT AN AREA STRUCTURE PLAN*

**WHEREAS**, the Municipal Government Act, S.A., 1994, and amendments thereto, authorize a Council to adopt an area structure plan for the purpose of providing a framework for subsequent subdivision and development of an area of land;


**AND WHEREAS**, a public hearing was held in respect to the proposed area structure plan on the date written below;

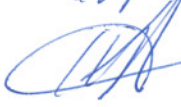
**NOW THEREFORE**, the Council for the Municipal District of Yellowhead No. 94, in the Province of Alberta, duly assembled, hereby enacts as follows:

- 1) That the "Branch Corner, Area Structure Plan, Municipal District of Yellowhead No. 94" dated February, 1998 and attached hereto as Schedule "A" for land described as N1/2 9-53-18-W5M, N1/2 10-53-18-W5M, S1/2 15-53-18-W5M and S1/2 16-53-18-W5M is hereby adopted.
- 2) This bylaw comes into force at the beginning of the day that it is passed in accordance with Section 189 of the Municipal Government Act, S.A., 1994.

 READ a first time this 10<sup>th</sup> day of March, A.D., 1998.

PUBLIC HEARING held this 14<sup>th</sup> day of April, A.D., 1998.

 READ a second time this 26<sup>th</sup> day of May, A.D., 1998.

 READ a third time this 26<sup>th</sup> day of May, A.D., 1998.

SIGNED this 26<sup>th</sup> day of May, A.D., 1998.

  
Reeve

  
Municipal Secretary

*copy*

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# **BRANCH CORNER Area Structure Plan**

**Municipal District of Yellowhead**

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February, 1998

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## Branch Corner Area Structure Plan

### Municipal District of Yellowhead

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## **Branch Corner Area Structure Plan**

### **Municipal District of Yellowhead**

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## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Purpose

This Area Structure Plan (ASP) provides a framework for future subdivision and development of lands located along Highway 16, directly to the east and west of the intersection of Highways 16 and 47. The lands are referred to as Branch Corner.

Proximity to the Town of Edson and the Sundance Wood Products plant, combined with good highway access, is generating development pressure in the Branch Corner area. This demand is expected to continue. However, the concerns and aspirations of area landowners, as well as natural and manmade features, must be considered in dealing with future development. Also, potential land use conflicts must be reconciled. As such, the Council of the Municipal District of Yellowhead No. 94 authorized the preparation of the Branch Corner ASP. The ASP has been prepared in accordance with Section 633 of the Municipal Government Act.

### 1.2 Location

The location of the ASP area is illustrated by Figure 1. Specifically, the Branch Corner area contains the following lands:

- ◆ N 1/2 of 09-53-18 W5M
- ◆ N 1/2 of 10-53-18 W5M
- ◆ S 1/2 of 15-53-18-W5M
- ◆ S 1/2 of 16-53-18-W5M

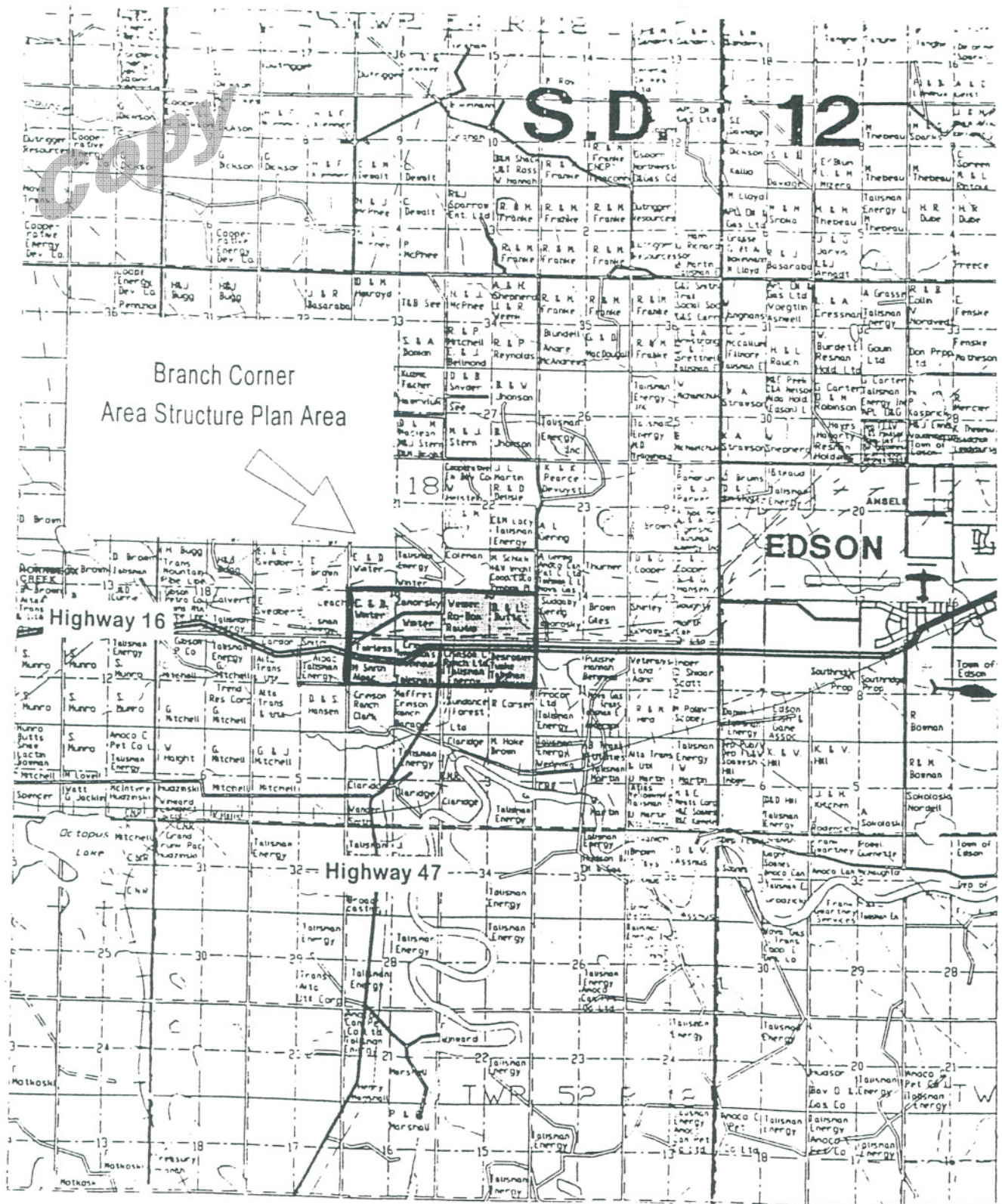
The subject area is centred on the intersection of Highways 16 and 47, and extends ½ mile to the north and south, and one mile to the east and west. The corporate limit of the Town of Edson is located some three miles to the east.

### 1.3 Process

The impetus for the preparation of this ASP resulted from the recent approval of a significant industrial operation (Yellowhead Wood Products) in the Branch Corner area. As part of the approval process, a need to co-ordinate existing and future land uses, and associated infrastructure requirements, was identified. Also, although proximity to such features as the major Sundance Wood Products plant, the Town of Edson and two provincial highways make the Branch Corner area attractive for future commercial and industrial development, future development must recognize existing residences, commercial and industrial uses, a manufactured home community, agricultural lands, environmental features and numerous transportation and utility right-of-way corridors.

Lovatt Planning Consultants was retained by the M.D. of Yellowhead to prepare an ASP for Branch Corner to serve as a framework for the ASP lands. The framework identifies opportunities and constraints to future development, and also provides a basis for decision making in regard to future development proposals.





The plan preparation process commenced in November of 1996 and involved two major components. First, all relevant background information regarding the plan area was gathered, reviewed and synthesized. Second, stakeholder and public input was solicited. Individual meetings with all area landowners were held to provide the opportunity to discuss concerns and/or aspirations related both to individual land holdings, and to the future of the Branch Corner area in general. Also, direct input was solicited from the Town of Edson, Alberta Transportation and Utilities, Alberta Energy and Utilities Board (AEUB), and Talisman Energy. These meetings were followed by a Public Information Session at which time the draft ASP future land use concept and implementation policies were presented.

The findings of the two pronged plan preparation process are documented in Section 2.0 of this ASP document. The planning issues and land use policies listed in Section 3.0 result from these findings. A method for implementing the policies is provided in Section 4.0.



## 2.0 Existing Conditions

The Branch Corner ASP area encompasses two sections of land containing some 518 hectares (1,280 acres). However, the rights-of-way for Highways 16 and 47 consume a good portion of the area, which is fragmented not only by the two Highways, but also by numerous utility and pipeline right-of-way corridors. North of Highway 16, Highway 47 is downgraded to a secondary status (Secondary Highway 947). This Section summarizes these and the remaining conditions of the plan area which are significant for identifying opportunities and constraints to future land use, and for formulating appropriate ASP policies.

### 2.1 Natural Features

The Branch Corner ASP area contains few significant topographic or environmental features. As is evident from Figure 2, most of the ASP area is flat to gently rolling, and remains in its natural forested state. The forested areas are dominated by mature poplar and spruce stands, with a variety of underlying bush species. Where possible, future development should attempt to integrate some of the more attractive tree stands. Substantial clearing for agricultural purposes is limited to about two quarter sections of land, primarily south of Highway 16.

The lands east of Secondary Highway 947 and north of Highway 16 are particularly well suited for supporting future development because of well drained soil and ground conditions. The lands west of Secondary Highway 947 tend to slope down towards the west, and are typically quite rolling. This terrain provides excellent opportunities for mountain views towards the west and south. However, detailed planning and design will be required to ensure that development occurs in appropriate locations on stable slopes.

Additional natural features which may influence future development in Branch Corner are listed below.

- ◆ A portion of Little Sundance Creek runs through the very southwest corner of the plan area. This Creek is the only significant environmental feature in the area. The owner of the parcel containing the creek has indicated that Trout Unlimited is operating a habitat rehabilitation project on Little Sundance, suggesting that this stream feature is an important fish habitat. Appropriate setbacks from the valley break will need to be applied when considering future development for lands adjacent to Little Sundance.
- ◆ Small bodies of standing water are located in the northeast and northwest segments of the ASP area.
- ◆ An area of wet, boggy conditions is located in the eastern portion of the ASP area, south of Highway 16. These conditions may constrain some types of uses unless the wetland can be drained and/or filled.

Natural features are described in greater detail on a quarter section and parcel basis as part of the detailed land use description provided in the Section 2.2.





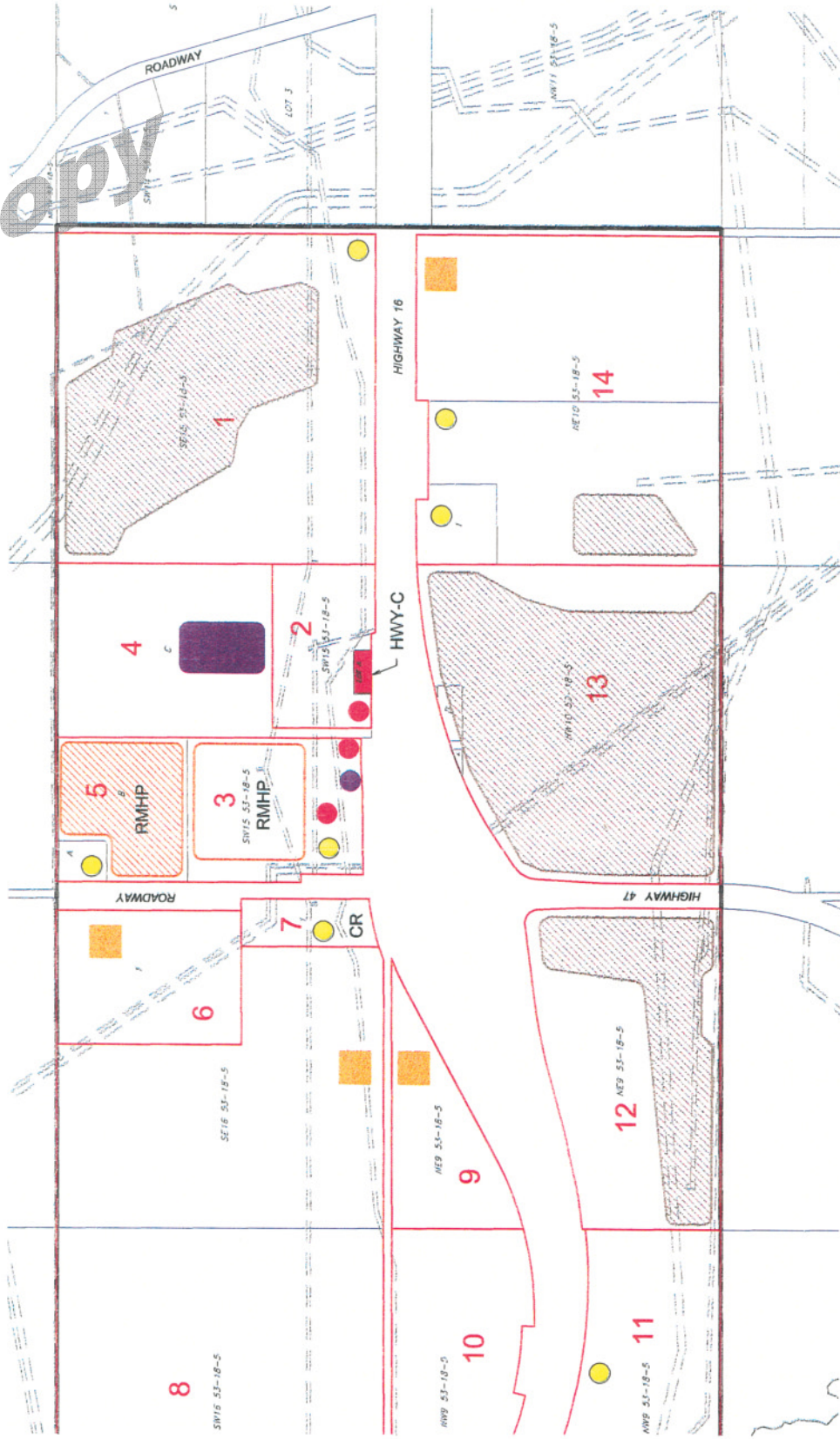
## 2.2 Existing Land Use and Zoning

The existing land use pattern of Branch Corner (see Figure 3) is described below on a parcel basis (see Figure 2). Generally, the land use reflects the area's current zoning. Most of the area is zoned Rural General District (RG). This zoning category permits *uses which are appropriate in a rural environment on lands with limited agricultural capability*. Other zoning includes Rural Mobile Home Park (RMHP) for a manufactured home community located along Highway 947 north of Highway 16, a Country Residential (CR) parcel located in the south east corner of SE 16-53-18-W5M, and a strip of Highway Commercial District (HWY-C) extending along a service road paralleling the north side of Highway 16. This strip contains a mix of commercial and industrial type uses, as well as some residences. An area directly south of the manufactured home community also is zoned RMHP, but has never been developed. It is likely this area will be redistricted at some future date.

The M.D. is currently updating its Land Use Bylaw and, although the update is expected to affect zoning in Branch Corner, the implications on existing and future land use will be minimal. The most significant change is a greater emphasis on supporting agricultural activities in the proposed Rural District which, under the updated Bylaw, will replace the current Rural General District. The update is due to be completed in summer of 1997.

**Area 1 (SE 15-53-18-W5M)** - Area 1 is used primarily as pasture land and contains one residence. The central portion of the unsubdivided quarter section is cleared while the northeast and southwest segments are covered with spruce/poplar tree stands. Other than a steep slope extending along the south side of the quarter section, adjacent to Highway 16, the terrain is gently rolling to relatively flat. A small body of water is located in the very northeast corner of Area 1, and the owner has indicated that two natural springs are located on the property. The single residence is located in the southeast corner of the parcel. The residence is serviced by two water wells and a private sewage disposal system. Access to the residence is directly onto Highway 16. Two pipeline rights-of-way extend through the south portion of the quarter section. Two parallel lines, including a large diameter high pressure natural gas line, also extend diagonally across the quarter section, thereby fragmenting the northeast corner of the quarter section from the balance of the parcel. Although the proposed Land Use Bylaw contains no development setback requirements for high pressure lines, Alberta Energy and Utilities Board recommends a 200 metre (656 feet) setback from any public institutional type use.

**Area 2 (SW 15-53-18-W5M)** - Two parcels comprise Area 2 which contains a mix of highway commercial and residential uses. Bush and poplar/spruce tree stands wrap around the east and north sides of these uses. The area is fronted on the south side by the service road approach off of the westbound lanes of Highway 16. The west side of the property is bordered by the private access road to Area 4. A private road, looping through the central portion of Area 2, provides access to five older manufactured housing units. Open grassland, covered with some chattels and debris, forms the centre of the loop. A 1.2 acre (0.49 hectares) parcel located along the service road contains an old workshop/garage/shed type facility, along with some abandoned equipment. The Trade Winds motel is located in the southwest corner of the area, adjacent to the service road. This motel is about 30 to 40 years old and, although still operating,



Figure

## EXISTING I AND I SE



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an american made company

Country Residential

CR

Highway Commercial Facility





has been for sale for some time. Chattels and debris of various sorts is scattered across an open area behind the motel.

Three utility (power and natural gas) rights-of-way extensively bisect this area and may constrain future subdivision and, to a lesser extent, development.

**Area 3 (SW 15-53-18-W5M)** - Area 3 comprises one parcel and contains a mix of commercial, residential, recreation, and open space. The southeast corner of this area contains the UFA truck stop. The truck stop includes a gas station, store/restaurant, fuel depot with storage tanks, and large parking area located on the south (front) and west sides. The parking lot and approaches are gravelled. Access is directly off of the service road. The owner of the parcel has erected a wood chip bagging operation to the west of the truck stop. This operation will use material from the Sundance plant located south of Highway 16. The lands directly to the north of the UFA truck stop contain three manufactured homes, one permanent home, and a commercial camping/RV parking area with open fire pits and a horse shoe pitch. Most of this area is cleared with some patches of bush and poplar/spruce tree stands surrounding the residences. Access to the residences is off Secondary Highway 947 to the west. A second access exists from the UFA truck stop. The north half of Area 3 is forested. A sewage lagoon is located in approximately central to this forested area. Three utility rights-of-way and a sour gas line traverse the south of the area. The sour gas line has recently been downgraded to a Level 1 facility so that the required setback coincides with the right-of-way. All four rights-of-way will impact future subdivision and development patterns.

**Area 4 (SW 15-53-18-W5M)** - Most of this single parcel area is devoted to Yellowhead Wood Products, a relatively new log/lumber storage and processing facility which uses by-products from the Sundance plant to manufacture wood products. The processing facility consumes some 15 acres (6.07 hectares). A water storage facility, for fire protection, is located in the northeast corner of the area. The remainder of Area 4 is covered with a thick stand of bush, poplar and spruce. This stand provides an effective buffer between the Wood Products operation and residential uses to the west and south. The area contains no rights-of-way and is generally flat, making it particularly well suited for further future industrial uses. Access to Area 4 exists off the service road along Highway 16, via a panhandle road located between the UFA truck stop and the Trade Winds Motel.

**Area 5 (SW 15-53-18-W5M)** - Access to Area 5 is off Secondary Highway 947. This area includes two parcels, the larger of which contains a manufactured home community comprising 31 manufactured home units. The community is designed to accommodate 39 units and contains a mix of older and newer units fronting onto an internal gravelled roadway. Much of the intervening lands between, and surrounding, the individual units are treed. A sewage lagoon is located in the northeast corner of the parcel and services the manufactured home community. The site of the sewage lagoon is fenced and provides storage for several trailers, vehicles, and other types of equipment. A private residence exists on the 3.0 acre (1.21 hectares.) parcel located in the very northwest corner of Area 5. The lands surrounding the house are also quite heavily treed. Access to this parcel is directly off Secondary Highway 947.



**Area 6 (SE 16-53-18-W5M)** - The northeast segment of the parcel comprising Area 6 contains a small saw mill operation and a private residence. The site is located on rolling terrain and, except for those lands cleared for the saw mill and residence, is heavily treed. Access to Area 6 is directly off Secondary Highway 947 which defines its east boundary. The Level 1 sour gas line facility which extends through Area 3 continues through the centre of Area 6 in a diagonal alignment.

**Area 7 (SE 16-53-18-W5M)** - A private residence is located in the southeast corner of this single parcel area. The parcel is zoned Country Residential (CR). Access to the residence is off a local municipal road which runs along the south boundary of the parcel parallel to Highway 16. The south half of Area 7 is cleared providing excellent views of the Canadian Rockies to the west. The north half is covered with bush and poplar/spruce tree stands. The area is traversed by two utility rights-of-way and the previously noted Level 1 sour gas line.

**Area 8 (SE/SW 16-53-18-W5M)** - Area 8 comprises two parcels including all of the west half of SE 16-53-18-W5M, and all of the SW 16-53-18-W5M. The south half of the easterly parcel (i.e. the west half of SE 16-53-18-W5M) contains two residences and a construction business, with some larger sheds and workshops, and numerous pieces of machinery and equipment stored on site. Access is available off the local road which defines the area's south boundary. A fenced horse corral is located adjacent to one of the residences, while the second residence is surrounded by a mature spruce wind break. The residences are serviced by a private sewage system and two water wells. Excepting some small cleared patches and water bodies, the remaining portion of Area 8 is naturally forested. The lands located directly west of the quarter section line slopes steeply down towards the west, and then level out as gently rolling terrain. Any future development in this segment of the area would have excellent views of the mountains. Two utility rights-of-way extend through the south half of Area 8.

**Area 9 (NE 9-53-18-W5M)** - The triangular parcel comprising Area 9 is defined by Highway 16 to the south, a local municipal road to the north and a quarter section line to the west. A residence and an adjoining commercial greenhouse operation exist on the parcel. Access is available off the municipal road to the north and servicing is on-site. Much of the parcel is treed and slopes steeply down towards the west and south. Once again, the area displays excellent view potential.

**Area 10 (NW 9-53-18-W5M)** - Area 10 comprises a fragmented parcel *sandwiched* between the north side of Highway 16 and the east/west municipal road which parallels the Highway to the north. The majority of the parcel is covered by trees, and slopes quite steeply from the east towards the west. Similar to the surrounding areas, Area 10 displays a high quality of view potential. A pipeline right-of-way runs adjacent to the north boundary of the parcel.

**Area 11 (NW 9-53-18-W5M)** - Area 11 comprises the fragment of land located on the south side of Highway 16, across from Area 10. The terrain is gently rolling to flat with an overall slope to the south and west. This fragmented parcel contains a single residence (and ancillary work shop) serviced by a water well and an on-site sewage disposal system private sewage (septic tank and field). Although the parcel is bounded to the west by a municipal road, the residence is accessed directly off of Highway 16.



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The remainder of Area 11 is comprised of a some cleared pasture land surrounded by forest. An abandoned railway results in a cleared strip through the forested area. A segment of Little Sundance Creek runs across the southwest corner of the parcel and is contained in a relatively deep ravine. Two pipeline rights-of-way traverse the parcel.

**Area 12 (NE 9-53-18-W5M)** - The Area 12 parcel is located at the southwest corner of the Highway 16 and 47 intersection and is being used for agricultural purposes. Specifically, the combined pasture and sparsely vegetated area is being used for a cattle operation. The area is primarily flat; however, towards the west, the lands slope downward towards the parcel boundary. A well site is located in the southwest corner of the parcel, and is linked to Highway 47 by a gravel access road. Several pipeline rights-of-way, including the previously noted Level 1 sour gas line, also traverse the southern portion of this area.

**Area 13 (NW 10-53-18-W5M)** - Area 13 comprises the agricultural parcel located across Highway 47 from Area 12, at the southeast corner of the Highway 16 and 47 intersection. The Sundance Wood Products Plant is located directly south of this area. The plant's primary access point (off Highway 47) is located on the quarter section line which separates Area 13 from the plant. The area is primarily flat, open and cultivated, with a line of trees to the east and south. The tree stand to the south forms a natural barrier to the Sundance plant. Three pipeline rights-of-way traverse the south portion of the quarter Section, and the Level 1 sour gas line right-of-way runs diagonally through the middle of the area. These pipeline rights-of-way may constrain future internal subdivision and development within Area 13.

**Area 14 (NW 10-53-18-W5M)** - Area 14 is located on the south side of Highway 16, and contains three separate parcels, each with a single residence. The two parcels to the west share an access road and approach onto Highway 16. Site lines from the approach onto Highway 16 are generally poor as a result of a substantial slope to the west. Future development in this area may require an alternate access onto Highway 16. The approach to the residence located on the easterly 80 acre (32.4 hectare) parcel also is off Highway 16, but site lines are safer than for the westerly approach. All three residences are serviced by private water and sewage facilities. Area 14 is relatively flat with some gently rolling topography toward the north along the highway. The primary use of the area is agriculture and includes a mix of cleared pasture land and spruce/poplar tree stands. A boggy strip is evident along the middle of the east boundary of the quarter Section. Two well sites, with an associated pipeline right-of-way and access roads, are located on the west half of the area. The pipeline right-of-way extends southward, beyond the ASP plan boundary, and contains a Level 2 sour gas line. Future development in the vicinity may require a substantial setback from this Level 2 line.

### 2.3 Agricultural Capability

The soils in the Branch Corner ASP area display a low capability for crop production. All soils are rated Class 5 and 6 by the Canada Land Inventory (CLI) rating system. This is reflected in the Rural General district classification (zoning) for most of the ASP, which is applied to lands with limited agricultural capability. Regardless, much of the land is



located south of Highway 16 is currently in agricultural use, specifically as pasture land and for growing hay. The agricultural use of these lands suggests that the CLI ratings are too general to be applicable on quarter section basis. The land use district (zoning) proposed under the draft Land Use Bylaw to replace the existing Rural General District strongly supports agricultural operations of all kinds in rural areas. This proposed land use district (zoning) provides landowners the opportunity to pursue a variety of agricultural pursuits, depending on local soil conditions, while still recognizing the overall limited capability of the area to support extensive agriculture. Small hobby farms may be a viable option for some of the cleared, or partially cleared, segments of Branch Corner.

## 2.4 Natural Resource Features

AEUB has identified several pipelines and well site facilities within the Branch Corner ASP area (see Figure 4). The most significant of these facilities include a Level 1 sour gas line, a Level 2 sour gas line, a large diameter/high pressure natural gas pipeline, three active well sites, and a number of abandoned well sites. The active well sites are concentrated south of Highway 16.

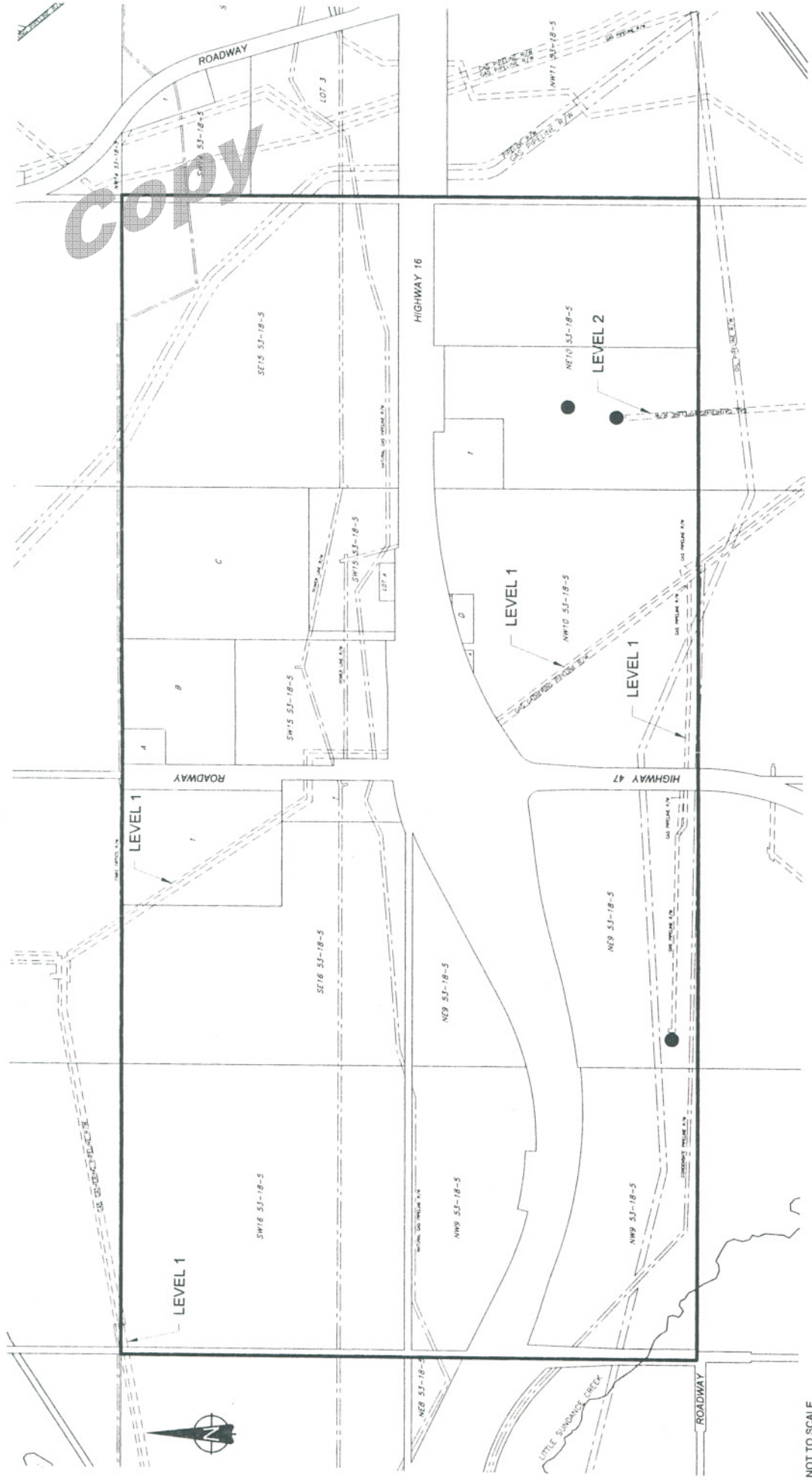
The plan area is extensively fragmented by the resource pipeline rights-of-way which must be accommodated in future subdivision patterns. However, except for the Level 2 gas line, development setback requirements coincide with the pipeline right-of-way boundaries. The Level 2 sour gas line, which affects only a small portion of the southeast segment of the ASP area, may require up to a 200 metre (656 feet) setback for certain types of institutional uses. This requirement must be recognized in developing a future land use concept for Branch Corner.

According to the Alberta Geological Survey Maps, no significant gravel deposits exist in the ASP area, although two inactive pits are located along Highway 16, within a half mile of the Branch Corner ASP lands.

## 2.5 Transportation

The Branch Corner ASP plan area's existing transportation system is illustrated on Figure 5. The centre of the plan area is dominated by the intersection of Highways 16 (east/west) and Highway 47 (north/south).

- ◆ Highway 16 is a four lane divided highway, with half of a grade separated interchange at Highway 47. Three local access points exist onto the westbound lanes of Highway 16 where it extends through Branch Corner. These lanes are at a significantly higher elevation than the eastbound lanes, which pass under the interchange overpass. The west bound lanes are accessed at *grade* using a stop sign. A wide swath of open space exists within the Highway 16 right-of-way between the west and eastbound lanes. This open area accommodates the substantial elevation difference between these lanes, and will be used to complete the other half of the existing grade separated interchange. Alberta Transportation and Utilities has indicated that the interchange likely will be completed, although Secondary Highway 947 may not be extended further north since the Secondary's highway designation has been removed, for at least the foreseeable future.



NOT TO SCALE

LEGEND

- Large Diameter High Pressure Natural Gas Pipeline
- Sour Gas Pipeline
- Utility Right-of-Way
- Well Sites
- Study Area



Figure 4  
**NATURAL RESOURCE FACILITIES**  
Branch Corner Area Structure Plan  
Municipal District of Yellowhead No. 94



- ◆ Four local approaches exist to serve the residences located along the south side of the highway.

South of Highway 16, Highway 47 is a two lane highway facility. Two well site access roads extend off that segment of Highway 47 located within the plan area. North of Highway 16, the Secondary Highway 947 right-of-way contains a gravel road which extends about quarter mile outside the Branch Corner ASP area, providing access to a number of residences as well as the manufactured home community. Beyond that point, the road becomes a gravel access road and serves various resource facilities. Alberta Transportation and Utilities has indicated that the future extension and upgrading of the Highway will occur only if a demonstrated need is apparent (see Section 2.7).

- ◆ A local municipal road extends along the north side of Highway 16, on either side of Secondary Highway 947. Other than these two highways, this facility is the only public roadway within the ASP area. Although the road is intended to accommodate local traffic, it effectively functions as a service road for Highway 16, east of Highway 47, for about one third of a mile, where it intersects with the west bound lanes of Highway 16. The intersection is a right turn only access for west bound traffic. As the local service road is linked to the interchange, loaded logging trucks destined for the Sundance facility use the road to access Highway 47. This route reduces the swing effect of logs extending beyond the truck trailer. Since most logging trucks destined for Sundance arrive from the west, the impact on the local service road is not significant. However, when combined with the truck traffic generated by the truck stop, the volume of truck traffic accessing the highway via the service road is creating a concern for local area residents, particularly at the stop sign located at the base of the interchange. This concern is exacerbated by poor site lines north on Secondary Highway 947.

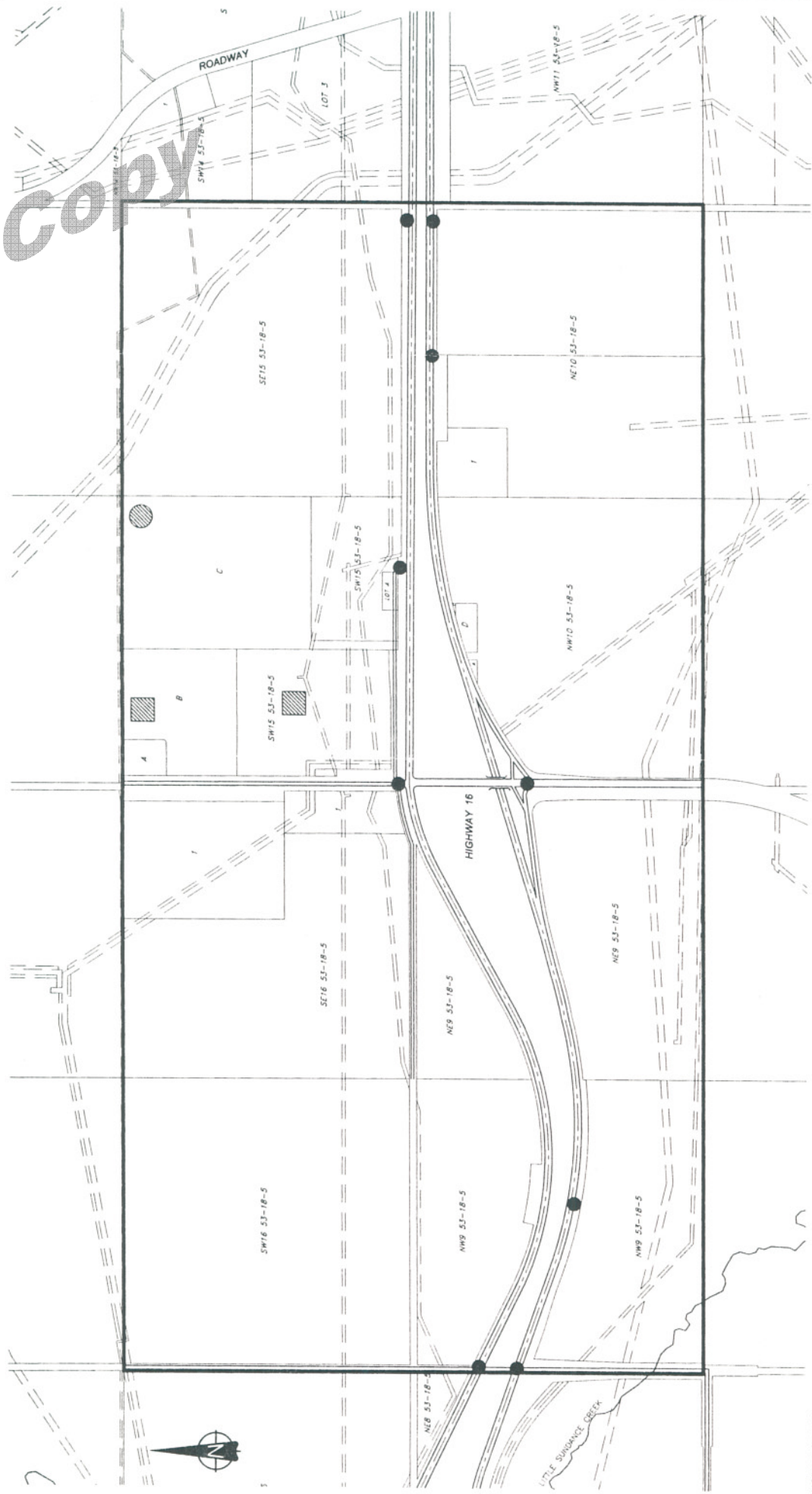
Although several approaches to individual parcels exist along Highway 16, future development along the Highway may require additional service road construction and/or upgrade. Also, proper spacing of all directional access, typically set at one mile intervals, may be required.

## 2.6 Utilities

### Surface Drainage

Based on topographic information, surface run-off from the plan area flows in all directions from a high point located just northwest of the intersection of Highway 16 and 47 (see Figure 5). Positive overland drainage routes may be identified to the east, west and south discharging into Sundance Creek and the MacLeod River. To the north, localized low areas outside the plan area intercept run-off which ultimately drains west to Sundance Creek.

There is no evidence of storm water management in the plan area and, it is understood that the newest development in the area - Yellowhead Wood Products - has not been subject to restrictions on discharge. Run-off is conveyed to the various receiving water courses either overland, or through culverts, and along well defined roadside ditches. With the exception of two small pockets of water, there is little evidence of ponding in the ASP area, although during times of snow melt or heavy rainfall, there may be localized areas of standing water.



NOT TO SCALE

LEGEND

- Highway Lanes
- Highway Access Locations
- Local Roads
- Sewage Lagoon
- Water Reservoir
- Study Area

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Planning Consultants





## Sanitary Sewage

Two privately owned and operated evaporation lagoons exist within the ASP area, both within the SW 15-53-18-W5M. Based on site inspection, these lagoons are poorly maintained and may be somewhat underutilized. Consideration may be given to the amalgamation of these facilities into one larger facility providing treatment for lands in the ASP area, particularly north of Highway 16.

Existing development not currently using the lagoon facilities, is either served by septic field or pumpouts. In the case of septic fields, soils have reportedly low to moderate percolation rates and, accordingly, the approval of further septic field systems should be subject to satisfactory soils analysis.

## Water

Excepting the manufactured home community which has a piped water distribution system fed from a well, all development in Branch Corner appears to be serviced by individual wells feeding from an upper zone aquifer. As far as can be determined, no testing has been carried out to establish the long term ability of the aquifer to provide an adequate water supply to the ASP area.

Further, with the possible exception of a water reservoir located on the site of Yellowhead Wood Products, there appears to be no provision within the ASP area for storage facilities for fire protection. Currently, the Edson Fire Department responds to fire emergencies under an agreement with the Municipal District.

## Shallow Utilities

Gas service is provided by Yellowhead Gas Co-op, telephone service by Telus and power by TransAlta Utilities. TransAlta recently upgraded its service facilities to accommodate the Yellowhead Wood Products operation.

## 2.7 Plans and Policies

The existing land use and development patterns of the ASP area conform to the Municipal District's current statutory planning documents (the General Municipal Plan and the Land Use Bylaw). The Municipal District of Yellowhead is expected to adopt new Municipal Development Plan and Land Use Bylaw bylaws by Spring of this year. However, the impact of the new bylaws on the Branch Corner lands, in terms of changes, is not significant. The land use impact of the proposed bylaws is as follows:

- 1. Agriculture** - Because no better agricultural lands are contained in the ASP area, most of the proposed agricultural policies are not relevant to the area. Better agricultural lands are defined as *lands identified by the CLI as having an agricultural capability of Class 1, 2 or 3 or with a Farmland Assessment Rating of greater than 35%*. Regardless, the proposed plans encourage those lands currently used for agricultural to be maintained for that purpose. Given that much of the Branch Corner area south of Highway 16 is being used as pasture and for hay production, the intent of the proposed Municipal Development Plan would best be met by encouraging the continued use of these lands for agricultural activities. Up to five lots per quarter section may be permitted on lands not identified as better agricultural lands, so that small agricultural holdings may be an appropriate longer term option for the owners of the existing larger parcels.



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2. **Country Residential** - Although no multi-lot country residential subdivisions are located in Branch Corner, a number of country residences exist. Proximity to Edson, mature and attractive tree cover, high quality transportation access, and mountain views combine to create potential opportunity for further such development. The proposed Municipal Development Plan *encourages a variety of residential opportunities which meet the housing preferences of residents*. Assuming the land can support on-site and /or communal municipal services, up to five single country residential/small holding lots per quarter section are permitted in the proposed Rural District. More than five lots requires a rezoning to Country Residential District.

The Municipal Development Plan proposes that multi-lot country residential subdivisions of *forty (40) lots or more must access from a primary or secondary highway, or paved municipal road*. This policy proposal suggests that the high quality of access available in the Branch Corner ASP area create opportunities for higher density country residential development.

3. **Commercial** - The Municipal District of Yellowhead's proposed Municipal Development Plan identifies the lands in the general vicinity of the Highways 16 and 47 intersection as a highway commercial development node. The Plan also proposes that the functional integrity of adjacent highways be maintained through *the use of service roads or controlled highway access points approved by Alberta Transportation and Utilities*. Although no permitted uses are listed under the Highway Commercial District proposed by the draft Land Use Bylaw, the existing Branch Corner commercial developments fronting onto the service road paralleling Highway 16 are listed as discretionary uses. By listing all uses in this district as discretionary, the Municipal District ensures that each application for commercial development is considered, and thoroughly scrutinized, based on its own merits. The general purpose of the Highway Commercial District is very specific in limiting the type of commercial uses to those which serve the travelling public.
4. **Industrial** - The draft Municipal Development Plan recognizes the importance of industrial activity to the economic well-being of Yellowhead, and encourages that such development be located in industrial parks rather than randomly throughout the M.D. The approval and subsequent development of the Yellowhead Wood Products operation, combined with the existence of the Sundance plant located just south of the ASP area, suggest that Branch Corner is potentially well suited for accommodating an industrial park. However, the draft Plan is also very specific in stating that land use conflicts between industrial and other uses must be minimized. As was previously noted, most of the ASP area is zoned Rural General which allows for resource extraction and processing type industries. Such uses, which include the Yellowhead Wood Products facility, will continue to be allowed, on a discretionary basis in the new Rural District, which will replace the current Rural General District. Home industries and occupations are listed as permitted uses under the new Rural District category, so that the existing construction and greenhouse uses which exist as part of a residential use also will continue to operate legally without a Land Use Bylaw district amendment (rezoning). However, the development of a rural industrial park will require an amendment to Rural Industrial District. This District allows for any *manufacturing, processing, packaging or assembly, warehouse, storage, receiving or*

*distribution of goods or materials which may not be appropriate within an urban municipality.*

5. **Hazard Lands** - Most of the proposed Municipal Development Plan Hazard Lands Policies which affect the Branch Corner area apply to future development close to Little Sundance Creek. The proposed policies indicate that a new development within 100 metre (328 feet) must identify the top-of-the -bank by legal survey as part of the development application, and that any development within 20 metres (65.6 feet) may be required to provide detailed site specific analysis. Also in regard to the creek, the creek itself, its bank and a minimum six metre (19.7 foot) wide strip abutting the creek must be dedicated as Environmental Reserve as per the Municipal Government Act. Landowners are strongly encouraged to maintain forested areas along the creek. Finally, any development of those boggy lands located in the southeast corner of the plan area will be required to *prepare a geotechnical assessment in order to identify mitigate measures to ensure a safe building site.*
6. **Urban Fringe** - It is important to note that Branch Corner is located beyond the proposed Edson Fringe Area, so that subdivision and development applications need not be referred to the Town for comment. Also, although a written agreement exists with Edson to allow country residential development within five miles of the Town, after March 31st, 1998, this agreement will no longer be required. Nevertheless, the proximity of Branch Corner to Edson requires that the Municipal District continue its good neighbour policy of ensuring that any uses which locate in the ASP area do not adversely affect the Town.

The draft Municipal Development Plan contains a number of general themes which apply to all land uses within the Municipal District. The most relevant of these include the need to protect the environment through appropriate servicing and development techniques, and to ensure land use compatibility. These themes must be recognized by this ASP.



## 2.8 Stakeholder Input

Eleven interviews were held over a two day period with all ASP area land owners. All but two land owners participated. Discussions also took place with affected stakeholders including the Town of Edson, Alberta Transportation and Utilities, Alberta Energy and Utilities Board and Talisman Energy. The significant input resulting from these interviews and discussions are summarized below.

### Land Owner Interviews

In addition to providing a detailed description of their land holdings (see Section 2.3), land owners were requested to provide input regarding short and longer term development aspirations. Some land owners stated they have no such aspirations at present. Interestingly, the responses result in a future development scenario for Branch Corner which generally reflects exiting land use and development patterns, and physical/topographic opportunities and constraints. For presentation purposes, the input provided by affected land owners is broken down by the four quadrants comprising the Branch Corner ASP area.

**Northeast Quadrant** - Those owners of land holdings located in the northeast quadrant of the ASP area (northeast of the intersection of Highways 16 and 47) indicated that the area is best suited for highway commercial development along the Highway 16 service road, and larger scale commercial/industrial uses north of the highway commercial zone.

The owner of the most easterly quarter section recognized that the service road would need to be extended to allow for such development on his property. However, his plans for such development are not imminent.

Three of the four land owners in the westerly quarter section of this quadrant participated in the interviews. All three agreed that, if further commercial/ industrial development occurs in the area, the manufactured home community and adjacent residential holding could remain viable compatible uses assuming proper buffers and screening are maintained. The owners also agreed that some form of communal servicing system, particularly the sharing of lagoons, is appropriate.

The soil and ground conditions for further commercial/industrial development are excellent according to the owner of the Yellowhead Wood Products property. His access road has been designed to accommodate further such uses along the west side of his property.

The owner of the truck stop property is interested in further utilizing his service road frontage for highway commercial uses and, given the extent of fragmentation created by pipe and utility lines in the north portion of his holdings, considers some form of future commercial/industrial development as being most appropriate. Such uses are particularly compatible with his existing truck stop facility.

**Northwest Quadrant** - None of the three owners of the parcels located north of the municipal local road have any aspirations for further developing their holdings at least for the short, if not the long term. The owner of the sawmill in the northeast corner of the quadrant expressed no opposition to further commercial or industrial development of his and surrounding properties.

The owners of the residential parcel directly south of the sawmill indicated that, although the volume of traffic using the intersections of the local road and Secondary



Highway 947 north, and Highways 16 and 47, is a problem at times, they have no plans for their property and are content to remain in their residence for the next ten years or so.

The owner of the remaining parcel (some 240 acres) located north of the local road also is content to continue to operate his construction business and to *run some cattle*. Overall, this owner considers the Branch Corner lands to be better suited to industrial rather than residential uses, since Edson provides a more appropriate opportunity for residential development.

The owners of the two properties located south of the municipal local road have different aspirations for their respective properties than those of their neighbours to the north and east. Due to the excellent view potential of this parcel, the owners of the greenhouse parcel have noted a desire to subdivide two or three additional residential lots out of the west portion of their property. However, they also acknowledge that the access onto Secondary Highway 947, north off the local road, is a problem because of poor site lines to the north and that dust is a concern. Although concern also was expressed as to the implications on their land holding if the Highway interchange is upgraded into a full diamond facility, Alberta Transportation and Utilities has indicated that such upgrading can be accommodated in the present Highway 16 right-of-way. The owner of the parcel to the west of the greenhouse also recognizes the excellent view potential of his property, as well as its proximity to urban amenities and the mountains. In the longer term, he envisions developing a lodge tourism facility surrounded by some country residential acreages. However, such development would result in further demand on the local road access onto the highway system.

**Southwest Quadrant** - Both the owners of the two predominantly agricultural parcels comprising this quadrant of the ASP area are content to leave their holdings as they currently exist for the time being. The owner of the westerly parcel indicated that, in the long term, the natural amenities of his parcel suggest that it may be suited for small agricultural holdings or low density, large lot country residential development. The owners of the easterly parcel are adamant that their lands be left as Rural General but that future options for more intense highway commercial type uses be maintained.

**Southeast Quadrant** - The owners of the westerly quarter section in this quadrant also own the parcel to the west, directly across Highway 47 in the southwest quadrant. Their position in regard to the future of their quarter section, which is currently in hay production, is consistent for both parcel, i.e. that their lands be left as Rural General but that more intense development be considered as an option in the future. The owners of the two 80 acre or 32.4 hectare (more or less) splits comprising the easterly quarter section both expressed an interest in further subdividing their respective parcels into a *few small holding or larger country residential lots*. Both owners have been approached by persons interested in purchasing such lots in the event of subdivision. No adverse impacts which would preclude future residential uses result from either the Sundance to the southwest or the sour gas processing plant to the east. The owners also agreed that they would not oppose commercial/industrial development across Highway 16, provided that proper screening is included. The owner of the 10 acre ( 4.05 hectare) parcel located this quadrant did not participate in the interviews. However, the size and current use of the parcel reflects the aspirations of the remaining owners so that potential conflicts are not a concern.



To summarize, the input provided by affected landowners regarding future development aspirations in the Branch Corner ASP area suggests that:

- highway commercial uses be restricted to the north side of Highway 16, in the northeast quadrant, and that the balance of the undeveloped portions of this quadrant be developed to allow for industrial/large commercial type uses;
- the north portion of the northwest quadrant be subdivided into a few smaller parcels, while the south portion be developed for a mix of country residential and tourism accommodation type uses, also in the long term;
- the west half of the southwest quadrant is best suited in the long term to small holding, large country residential lot type of development, while the existing extensive agricultural use on the east half should be maintained although highway commercial development may be considered in the long term; and,
- the southeast quadrant mirror the southwest quadrant, by maintaining the existing extensive agricultural use on the west half with some potential for long term highway commercial uses, and allowing small holding, large country residential lot type of development in the east half, but perhaps in the shorter term.

### Stakeholder Meetings

The results of the meetings and discussions held with the affected stakeholders in the ASP area are summarized below. Specifically, the consultants met with Edson's Town Manager, and with Alberta Transportation and Utilities representatives. Two meetings were held with Alberta Transportation and Utilities representatives; one at the regional Edson office, and a second at the district office in Edmonton. The Alberta Energy and Utilities Board was contacted to determine the location of any facilities that might affect future development. Finally, Talisman Energy, which operates two well sites and three sour gas lines within the Branch Corner ASP area, was contacted in regard to the current status of their facilities and to determine any concerns regarding future development in the vicinity of these facilities.

### Town of Edson

- Concern was expressed by the Town's manager in regard to the manufactured home community located in the Branch Corner ASP area, and the use of the Town's community services by manufactured home community residents. The Town does not object to larger lot, low density country residential development along the west boundary of the ASP area, but would be concerned if additional manufactured home communities or more dense country residential subdivision was permitted in Branch Corner. However, it was noted by the Town's representative that Edson and the Municipal District of Yellowhead are in the process of negotiating a new community services agreement (split between recreation and FCSS). At the time of writing, all servicing agreements had been negotiated and ratified.
- Because the Town's potable water supply is obtained from a different aquifer than is used for the Branch Concern ASP area, adequate water supply to support future development in the area not a concern.
- In issuing a development permit for Yellowhead Wood Products, the Town had suggested that an area structure accompany the application. Regardless, the Town supported the application recognizing the rural flavour of the facility. As long as new industrial operations are best suited to rural environments, the Town will not compete with the Municipal District for such uses. In fact, Edson generally supports appropriate rural industrial development because of the value added *spin off* activity which benefits



the Town. For example, the \$10 million Sundance plant generates about \$160,000 in local municipal taxes for the Town.

#### **Alberta Transportation and Utilities**

- Representatives from both the Alberta Transportation and Utilities offices indicated that, in the long term, Highway 16 will bypass Edson and all at-grade level intersections at Edson and in the surrounding areas (including the plan area), will be eliminated. Access to and from Highway 16 will be restricted to grade separated interchanges.
- The intersection of Highways 16 and 47 will be upgraded in the long term to a full diamond, grade separated interchange. New west bound lanes for Highway 16 would be constructed adjacent to the existing east bound lanes which now extend under the overpass (see Figure 7).
- Existing approaches onto Highway 16 are to be considered temporary and will be closed once the grade separated interchange is constructed. As such, no new approaches will be contemplated. Depending on the volume of traffic generated by future subdivision and development, some of the existing approaches may be eliminated and replaced with alternate, safer access points. Again however, these safer access points should be considered temporary. Appropriate service road dedication would be required at times of subdivision to access those areas not currently linked to the highway. Future service roads likely would be required to extend from the existing service road north of Highway 16. South of the Highway, access would focus onto Highway 47.

#### **Alberta Energy and Utilities Board (AEUB)**

- A sour gas processing plant is located approximately half mile from the southeast corner of the study area. The Subdivision and Development Regulation indicate a setback distance of 1.5 kilometre (0.93 miles) from a sour gas facility is required for a development that results in permanent overnight accommodation or public facilities, or a lesser distance if negotiated between AEUB and the Subdivision Authority.
- A large diameter / high pressure natural gas line extends through the SE 15-53-18-W5M. The pipeline is licensed to Nova Gas Transmission. The setback requirement is coincident with the right-of-way boundary. However, this boundary must be clearly defined at the time of development to ensure construction activities do not interfere with the pipeline.
- Three sour gas lines and two well sites, operated by Talisman Energy, are located in the ASP area. Setbacks for a Level 1 sour gas lines are coincident with the pipeline right-of-way boundary. A 100 metre (328 feet) development setback is required for some uses for a Level 2 sour gas line, and from a well site (Subdivision and Development Regulation), or a lesser distance if negotiated between AEUB and the Subdivision Authority.
- AEUB recommends that, anytime a development is contemplated within 200 metres (656 feet) of any AEUB licensed pipeline or facility, that the licensee be contacted.

#### **Talisman Energy**

- As is noted above, Talisman operates the three sour gas lines in the plan area. Excepting the sour gas line located in NE 10-53-18-W5M, these lines have been downgraded to Level 1 to reduce the setback requirements to coincide with the pipeline right-of-way boundary. As long as these setbacks are adhered to by future development, Talisman does not oppose further development in the Branch Corner area but requests that they be notified of any adjacent construction activity.



## 2.9 Implications for Future Land Use

A number of significant implications regarding opportunities for, and constraints to future land uses and development in the Branch Corner ASP area result from the findings and stakeholder input summarized in this section. The most significant of these are as follows:

### 1. Natural Features

Other than the boggy conditions found in the southeast portion of the ASP area (NE 10-53-18-W5M), future development is not constrained by the existing natural features. In fact, the attractive, mature tree cover, combined with the sloping terrain in the most westerly segment of the area which allows for excellent views of the mountains, provide considerable opportunity for country residential and tourism accommodation type uses.

Little Sundance Creek extends through the southwest corner of the ASP area and should be preserved in its natural state as a fish habitat. However, assuming proper setbacks, the Creek, combined with the view potential, provides a particularly high quality opportunity for country residential development.

The topography of the partially developed quarter section located directly northeast of the Highways 16 and 47 interchange (SW 15-53-18-W5M) does not lend itself to developing a completely gravity based sanitary collection system, since the highest point in the quarter section is central to the area. This topographic constraint must be recognized in preparing a sewage collection system for these lands.

### 2. Existing Land Use

Most development in Branch Corner is located north of Highway 16, and is concentrated in the quarter section (SW 15-53-18-W5M) located directly northeast of the Highways 16 and 47 interchange. Areas 2, 3, 4 and 5, as described in Section 2.2, comprise this quarter section and contain a mix of residential, industrial and highway commercial type uses, including Yellowhead Wood Products, a very successful truck stop and a commercial RV camping facility. Residential and industrial uses consume the greatest land area. However, only one of the residences located back of the highway commercial operations is a permanent structure. Assuming the manufactured home community can continue to be adequately buffered from future non-residential uses, the existing industrial development and the commercial uses fronting onto the Highway 16 service road create an opportunity for further such development.

The lands located directly to the west of the above noted quarter section, which comprise Areas 6, 7, part of 8, and 9, include a mix of residential and home industry type uses. However, most of land area is undeveloped. Future development options for this segment of the plan area, therefore, will be largely influenced by features other than existing land use. The two quarter sections (SE 15-53-18-W5M and SW 16-53-18-W5M) located at either end of that portion of the ASP area located north of Highway 16 are virtually undeveloped and are mostly in their natural forested state.

South of Highway 16, existing development is limited to four residences. Almost half of the area is being used for extensive agriculture while the remaining lands are forested. The existing land use pattern for this south portion of Branch Corner suggests opportunities for continued or further agricultural development, combined with residential uses in those areas further removed from the Sundance Wood Products plant.



### **3. Agricultural Capability**

In spite of the low capability of the soils in the ASP area to support agriculture, extensive agricultural activities (pasture and hay production) exist south of Highway 16. Recognizing the scarcity of such activities in the Branch Corner area, these activities should be encouraged to exist as long as possible.

### **4. Natural Resource Features**

Branch Corner is extensively fragmented by natural resource pipeline right-of-ways features. These features will constrain future subdivision and development patterns, particularly when combined with utility rights-of-way. Although virtually all the pipelines require setbacks to coincide with the line's right-of-way boundary, for those lands north of Highway 16 where fragmentation is most prevalent, larger uses, which can accommodate rights-of-way as part of open storage yards or parking facilities, should be considered. South of Highway 16, continued extensive agriculture uses provide the best option for avoiding conflicts with existing pipeline rights-of-way and the three active well sites. Other low density development options, such as small holdings and large country residential lots, also may avoid potential conflict.

### **5. Transportation**

Although the major transportation features of Branch Corner provide considerable opportunities for those types of land uses requiring high quality access, the functional integrity of these features must be maintained through the use of service roads and controlled access points as defined by Alberta Transportation and Utilities' standards. As was noted previously, Alberta Transportation and Utilities is not likely to approve any further single access points along this stretch of the Highway, and all existing access points are to be considered temporary and will eventually be closed. Ultimately, therefore, the only access for eastbound traffic for any development north of Highway 16 will be via the interchange. To ensure that future development, particularly highway commercial development, does not become dependent on a convenient access and highway crossover at the road allowance at the east end of the plan area, Alberta Transportation has requested that all access to additional development in the northeast quadrant of Branch Corner be via the Highway 16 overpass, the existing off ramp (existing service road), or the proposed west bound off ramp and service road (see Figure 7).

The existing local/service road extending along the north side of Highway 16 provides the most immediate opportunity for accommodating additional traffic volumes. However, the current volume of traffic accessing the interchange from the north has been cited as a problem by some area landowners. Although the completion of the other half of the interchange would solve this problem, Alberta Transportation has stated that the interchange completion is long term. Since any further development in the north portion of Branch Corner will increase traffic volumes at the current stop sign, future development will either require service road extensions and/or upgrading.

### **6. Utilities**

The SW 15-53-18-W5M is the only segment of the ASP area which provides an opportunity for consolidating the two existing sewage lagoons and developing a communal sewage collection and treatment system. Since the soils in the area display relatively low to moderate percolation, the construction of a comprehensive system will enable infill development of these lands. Excepting the the piped water distribution system serving the



manufactured home community, the remainder of the study area is served through individual on-site sewage systems and water wells. The manufactured home community's distribution system is based on a single well. Although no concerns have been raised in regard to water supply, higher density development in the Branch corner area requiring communal distribution or high water users such as certain industries requires investigation into the long term supply of the area's aquifer. This suggests that in the shorter term, more intense development be directed to the SW 15-53-18-W5M

## **7. Plans and Policies**

Based on the proposed Municipal Development Plan policies, Branch Corner provides a suitable location for a number of land uses. **First**, the Municipal Development Plan identifies the Branch Corner area as a highway commercial node. **Second**, because industrial development is encouraged to concentrate in rural industrial parks, rather than scattered throughout the municipality, the existing Yellowhead Wood products operation provides a basis for further industrial development into a rural industrial park type facility. **Third**, the Municipal Development Plan suggests that Yellowhead residents should be provided a variety of residential lifestyle options and that multi-lot country residential subdivisions of 40 or more lots must access off a primary or secondary highway, amongst others. Primary highway access is available for such multi-lot subdivision in Branch Corner as long as the integrity of the highway is maintained. However, setbacks from the Sundance Wood Products plant must be considered in evaluating and locating such subdivision. **Finally**, although the Branch Corner lands are not considered better agricultural lands, the purpose of the Rural District proposed by the new Land Use Bylaw to replace the current Rural General District encourages continued use of agricultural pursuits wherever possible.

## **8. Stakeholder Input**

The input provided by landowners affected by this ASP is very clear in terms of identifying future land use aspirations for their lands, and for the ASP area in general. The input suggests that:

- highway commercial and industrial/large commercial type uses should be directed to the northeast quadrant of the ASP area;
- in the long term, small agricultural holdings or country residential development may be suitable for the north portion of the northwest quadrant, with country residential and tourism accommodation facilities in the south;
- the portion of the plan area located south of Highway 16 should remain a mix of agriculture and agricultural small holdings uses, with some larger country residential parcels and, in the very long term, some highway commercial development..

The Town of Edson is not averse to rural industrial and low density country residential uses development in the Branch corner area would be concerned if higher density residential uses were permitted recognizing that such uses would rely on the Town's community and recreational services. The remaining stakeholders, including Alberta Transportation and Utilities, AEUB and Talisman Energy expressed concern that, regardless of the future land use concept proposed for Branch Corner, that the integrity of their facilities be maintained and respected.



### 3.0 Future Land Use and Related Policies

The future land use concept proposed for the Branch Corner ASP area is shown on Figure 6. Transportation and utility implications are shown on Figure 7. The concept recognizes and reflects the findings of the review of all relevant background information and, in particular, the input received through the land owner and stakeholder consultation process. The concept identifies short and longer term development strategies, and provides a framework for detailed area specific outline planning and subdivision design. Finally, the concept responds to the following objectives. These objectives recognize Council's concerns in initiating the preparation of an ASP for Branch Corner, as well as the landowners' input, and the proposed Municipal Development Plan policies.

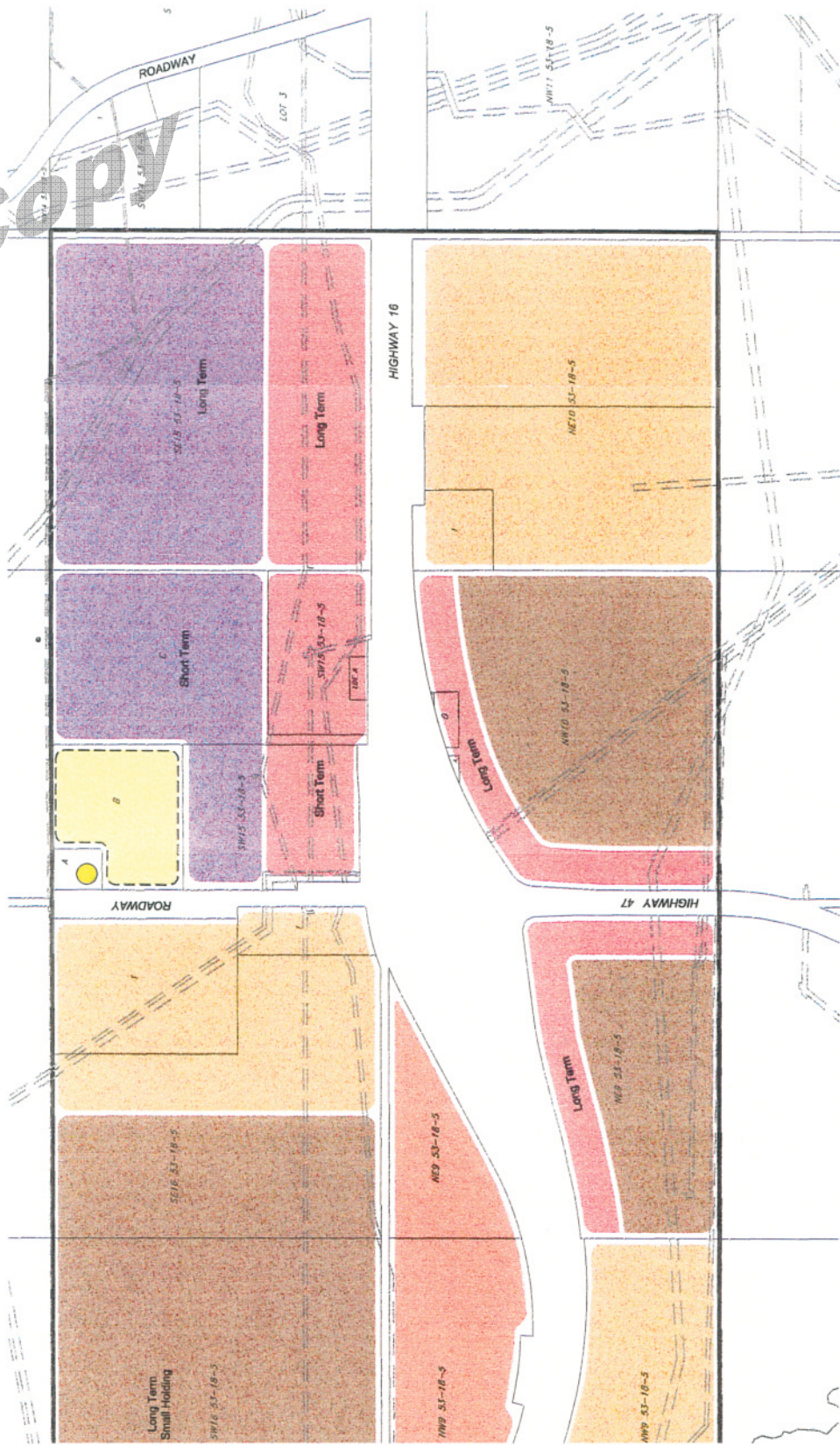
1. To provide the opportunity to fully realize the development potential resulting from the interchange of Highways 16 and 47 for highway commercial and industrial uses at Branch Corner.
2. To protect the integrity of Highways 16 and 47 (and the intersection of same) by ensuring that the proposed land use pattern and development density can be served by limited highway access as approved by Alberta Transportation and Utilities.
3. To minimize future land use conflicts by promoting a compatible land use pattern, applying proper screening and buffer techniques, or an appropriate combination thereof.
4. To protect significant environmental features in their natural state.
5. To optimize the development potential of unique and/or interesting natural features.
6. To direct country residential development to the west portion of the plan area where the vegetation, view potential and natural features provide the greatest opportunity for such development.
7. To provide the opportunity to protect existing agricultural land use for as long as possible.
8. To identify and promote opportunities to share municipal services.
9. To recognize the physical capacity of Branch Corner to sustain development.

### 3.1 Land Use Concept

The proposed concept is described below on a quadrant basis.

**Northeast Quadrant** - The west half (SW 15-53-18-W5M) of this quadrant provides the greatest opportunity for immediate and short term development in Branch Corner. The current land uses, combined with high quality existing access and the development objectives of the respective land owners, suggest that the strip of highway commercial land fronting onto the local service should be extended along the entire length of that roadway. Extension of the roadway eastward creates further longer term highway

COPY



Figure

FUTURE LAND

Lovatt  
Planning Consultants

Residence

Agriculture





commercial development opportunities. Such development conforms to the Municipal District's proposed Municipal Development Plan.

The existing motel operation is an appropriate highway commercial use. The commercial camping/RV parking facility also could be integrated within the commercial strip and is an appropriate use under the Highway Commercial Land Use District. However, the construction of the wood chip bagging operation along the service road may detract from its future viability.

Assuming that the existing buffer strip surrounding the manufactured home community will be maintained, continued industrial development, *extending back of the highway commercial strip*, is most feasible for the balance of the quarter section. The density of the vegetation comprising the strip provides a very effective visual, and to some extent noise barrier, although additional noise attenuation devices may be required depending on the type of industrial operations which locate in the area. The potential to construct a sewage collection system for this quarter section, as discussed in Section 3.2, provides an opportunity for cleaner light industrial uses, recognizing that such uses must be suitable to a rural location. The potential availability of sewage services, combined with the strategic location of these lands, the landowners aspirations, and the adjacent highway commercial development suggests that the lands should be comprehensively designed and developed as an industrial park in accordance with the proposed Municipal Development Plan policies. Utility and natural resource pipelines fragment the south portion of the potential industrial area and may influence the internal circulation pattern, and the size and configuration of lots.

As is noted above, proper screening and buffering of the manufactured home community will minimize any potential conflicts with future industrial uses. A 30 metre (98.4 foot) wide buffer is recommended. The manufactured home community provides proximate accommodation for existing and potential nearby resource based industrial operations and, according to the owner, is expected to continue to remain viable for the foreseeable future.

All but two of the residential units scattered across the south half of this quarter section are temporary units and can be phased out over time, depending on staging of development.

The land use concept proposed for the east quarter section (SE 15-53-18-W5M) comprising this quadrant assumes an extension of the land use pattern proposed for the west half. However, the local service road would need to be extended from the west to a point approximately mid-way along the south boundary of this quarter section. The extension will serve as the future off ramp for westbound traffic, when required due to industrial/commercial traffic. A local road will be required to link the service road/off ramp to the north/south local road extending along the east boundary of the plan area. All access to new development in the SE 15-53-18-W5M will be directed to the service road and the existing overpass to prevent any crossover movements at the existing all-directional access onto Highway 16 (located at the easterly north/south local road). This access will continue to serve the residence located on the quarter section, and two residences south of Highway 16. In the long term, highway commercial development is proposed to front onto the extended service road with industrial development proposed on the balance. The extent and width of the proposed highway commercial strip may be dictated by the high pressure natural gas pipeline as shown on Figure 4.



The land owner of this easterly quarter section has indicated that his plans for developing the section are not imminent, and that larger rural industrial uses may be most appropriate for his property, particularly if such uses can be serviced on site. The rate of natural resource development activities in the region will largely drive the demand for rural industrial land and influence its timing. Regardless, future highway commercial type uses can serve as a visual buffer between the travelling public on Highway 16 and rural industrial facilities on the balance of the quarter section.

**Northwest Quadrant** - Based on the residential development located directly to the south and west, and the existing low density residential/ home industry use, the northeast corner parcel of this quadrant is proposed for a mixture of agriculture (small holding) and country residential use. The owner is contemplating, *at some future time and if an opportunity arises*, subdividing out one or two sites. On site services would be provided. Depending on the rate and density of such subdivision and development, a more detailed outline plan may be required dealing with specific municipal servicing, buffering and access issues.

The rolling topography of the balance of the lands located north of the municipal road allowance in the northwest quadrant, combined with the existing low density country residential/home occupation uses, suggest that these lands are best suited to continue to accommodate similar such uses. The landowners in this area have no imminent plans for any form of more intensive use in the foreseeable future, and are content to enjoy the property as is. The easterly segment of this area will continue to be accessed off the municipal road to the south. The westerly portion, located west of the slope drop-off shown on

Figure 2, can be most economically accessed from the undeveloped road allowance bordering the ASP plan area to the west. Based on its challenging topography, the lack of immediate road access, and the landowner's aspirations to retain the lands for grazing and in their natural state for the time being, this westerly segment can be expected to remain as is in the longer term. Assuming a roadway can be extended further to the north in the westerly road allowance, some agricultural small holdings may be developed. In the very long term, and depending on ownership and detailed site investigation, the lands may provide an attractive opportunity for country residential uses.

The owner of the southwest, corner parcel of the Northwest Quadrant has indicated that, at some point, a tourism lodge facility and some country residential development may be considered for this parcel. The natural amenities of the parcel (i.e. mountain view, rolling terrain and attractive tree cover) combined with proximity to Highway 16, lend themselves to such uses. However, the existing Highway access at the southwest corner of the parcel likely will require upgrading (i.e. Section 3.2) and detailed site investigation to identify suitable building sites.

**Southwest Quadrant** - Given the existing agricultural uses in much of this quadrant, and the natural amenities towards the west and Little Sundance Creek, continued agricultural use of the east half of the Southwest Quadrant, and future small holding agricultural/country residential uses for the west half, are proposed by the land use concept. Given the proximity of Sundance Wood Products, country residential development is best suited to the most westerly portion of this quadrant, along Little Sundance Creek. This corresponds to the aspirations of the respective landowners. In



the long term, highway commercial development pressure may result in more intense utilization of the lands located adjacent to Highway 16, where it intersects with Highway 47, and some large country residential and small holding parcels may be considered *back of the highways*.

**Southeast Quadrant** - The west half of this quadrant is being used for hay production. In keeping with the draft Municipal Development Plan policies and the intent of the proposed Rural District under the Land Use Bylaw, it is proposed that these lands remain agricultural. Continued agricultural use respects the desire of the landowner. However, similar to the land directly across Highway 47, in the Southwest Quadrant, more intense highway commercial development may be contemplated in the future. The east half of the quadrant also is used primarily for cattle grazing and is predominantly forested. A small 10 acre (4.05 hectare) agricultural holding parcel is located in this east half and boggy conditions are evident in the central portion. The lands are well suited for the small agricultural holding/country residential type uses being considered by the landowners. Once again however, in recognition of the proximity of Sundance Wood Products, country residential development should be directed towards the northeast corner of this quadrant, near the proposed access point onto Highway 16.

### 3.2 Transportation Implications

Alberta Transportation and Utilities has constructed half of a diamond interchange at the junction of Highway 16 (Yellowhead Highway) and Highway 47. In the future, the other half of the interchange will be constructed to grade separate Highway 16 westbound and Highway 47. However, the potential and timing of such construction is uncertain, particularly since the extension of Highway 47 north of the interchange is no longer designated as a Secondary Highway. That portion of the former Secondary Highway right-of-way which is developed would continue to function as a local municipal roadway. As the Branch Corner area surrounding this road develops, it may be necessary for the Municipal District to designate it a local arterial and limit access accordingly. Such access may be restricted to appropriate distances north of the current service road access to avoid any further traffic volumes at the existing intersection.

Future highway commercial access to Highway 47 and to the extension north of Highway 16, according to Alberta Transportation and Utilities' Access Management Guidelines, will be located a minimum of 425 metres (1,394 ft.) from the interchange ramp intersections, or 150 metres (492 ft.) from the end of the ramp tapers on the crossroad of the interchange, whichever distance is greater. This would eventually require that the existing service road be diverted (relocated) to the north on the crossroad of the interchange to meet these requirements. Access to parcels west of this crossroad, and north of Highway 16, should also be attained from this same intersection in the long term. Alberta Transportation and Utilities would maintain this access control north of Highway 16 to ensure adequate interchange operations in future.

Present private at grade accesses to Highway 16 will be closed in the future and replaced by service roads to accesses at north-south road allowances located west of NW 9-53-18-W5M and east of NE 10-53-18-W5M respectively. The present at grade access to the highway commercial area in SW 15-53-18-W5M would be closed and the service road



extended east as required to serve the developments. Because Alberta Transportation and Utilities do not want commercial access from the intersection located east of the NE 10-53-18-W5M, the west bound ramp to the service road would need to be constructed.

South on Highway 47, the first point of access for a service road along the south side of Highway 16 would likely be at a point at least 425 metres (1,394 ft.) south of the south ramp of the interchange. This would likely result in a common access from the adjacent lands to Highway 47 and to Sundance Wood Products.

### **3.3 Utility Implications**

Any proposed development of lands within Branch Corner will require storm water management techniques to control discharge in accordance with guidelines established by Alberta Environmental Protection, under the Water Resources Act, the Alberta Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act and the Clean Water Act.

The two existing lagoons located in the SW 15-53-18-W5M should be amalgamated to serve the quarter section. In this initiative, the Municipal District may be able to act as facilitator.

The existing lagoons are located on the highest lands in the plan area and, accordingly, any sanitary discharge to these facilities from outside the immediate catchment area would generally need to be pumped, either through a low pressure system, or by gravity to a lift station and then by force main. In deciding the optimum location of an amalgamated area wastewater treatment facility, topography should be considered in order to maximize the areas that would be subject to pumping.

In the long term, and based on preliminary engineering observations, it may be appropriate to consider a joint use facility in the northeast corner of SE 15-53-18-W5M. This site would make full use of existing topography, maximize the use of gravity mains, and serve all the lands proposed as industrial north of Highway 16.

In terms of long term water supply, it is recommended that all future development in Branch Corner be required to carry out aquifer testing to determine the long term effect of the development on the aquifer. Such testing has occurred for the separate aquifer used to supply the Town of Edson with potable water. This testing determined that the aquifer is large and could meet the Town's needs well into the future.

Further, with the possible exception of the water reservoir located on the site of Yellowhead Wood Products, there appears to be no provision within the ASP area for water storage facilities for fire protection. Currently, the Edson Fire Department responds to fire emergencies under an agreement with the Municipal District. Consideration should be given to the provision of further storage facilities on the site to provide fire protection in accordance with the requirements of the Fire Underwriters Survey and Alberta Environmental Protection.

Any further development should ensure that adequate service is available from shallow utility companies.

### 3.4 Policies

The following policies have been developed specifically to assist in the implementation of this ASP and, in particular, the ASP objectives listed in this section and integrated into the Land Use Concept shown on Figure 6. These policies are intended to support, and be applied in concert with, the proposed Municipal Development Plan policies.

#### Land Use

1. All future subdivision and development of lands in the Branch Corner ASP area shall comply with the Land Use Concept shown on Figure 6 of this ASP and with the policies listed herein.
2. Any further subdivision and/or development proposed for the SW 15-53-18 W5M shall require that the applicant prepare and submit to council a detailed Area Structure Plan for the entire quarter section. The plan shall address:
  - proposed land use
  - specific types of development
  - internal circulation
  - impact on external roads and identification of required improvements at access points designated by this ASP onto Highway 16, to the satisfaction of Alberta Transportation and Utilities, and onto current Secondary Highway 947, to the satisfaction of the Municipal District of Yellowhead
  - the provision of municipal reserve
  - servicing requirements including a proposal to share a common sewage lagoon and to provide a common on-site water reservoir for fire protection
  - development standards and design criteria appropriate to the type of uses proposed
  - identification of locations where screening and buffering is required and proposed techniques
  - any other specific items as required by Council and the Development Authority.
3. A 30 metre wide buffer strip shall be provided between any incompatible existing and proposed land uses. Incompatibility and the specific treatment of the buffer will be determined in consultation with the Development Authority.
4. Any subdivision and/or development for industrial and/or highway commercial use shall require a redistricting to either Rural Industrial or Highway Commercial (respectively) under the Municipal District of Yellowhead's Land Use Bylaw.
5. Where a rural industrial subdivision, highway commercial subdivision or a multi-lot country residential subdivision (in excess of five lots) is proposed within the Branch Corner ASP plan area, the applicant shall prepare and submit to Council a detailed Area Structure Plan which considers the items listed in Policy #2 above, as well as the provision of environmental reserve (where applicable). The outline plan area shall encompass the entire quarter section unless otherwise agreed to by the Development Authority.



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6. Highway commercial development in the Se 15-53-18 W5M shall be considered only when it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Development Authority that land for such development is not available in the SW 15-53-18 W5M.
  7. Existing agricultural land uses south of Highway 16, within the Branch Corner ASP area, should be allowed to continue to exist at the landowners' discretion. However, in the long term, where development is contemplated along Highway 16, such development should be for highway commercial type uses in accordance with Policy 4.2 of the Municipal Development Plan, and in recognition of the market potential for such use resulting from the Highways 16 and 47 interchange.

### **Transportation**

1. The Municipal District of Yellowhead shall approach Alberta Transportation and Utilities for technical advice regarding the high volume of truck traffic accessing the Highways 16 and 47 interchange off the service road to the north, and potential improvements to the interchange and service road to better accommodate both existing, and future, traffic volumes.
2. Subdivision applications for lands located within the Branch Corner ASP area, east of the existing service road and fronting onto the north side of Highway 16, shall dedicate to the Municipal District of Yellowhead a 30 metre wide road right-of-way to allow for the extension of the existing service road. Any such dedication must meet the requirements of Alberta Transportation and Utilities.
3. Any future upgrading required at access points as designated by this ASP onto Highways 16 and 47 to accommodate new development, as per Figure 7 - Future Transportation and Utilities, shall meet Alberta Transportation and Utilities' design guidelines.
4. Long term highway commercial development south of Highway 16 will require further discussion and input from Alberta Transportation and Utilities.
5. The Municipal District of Yellowhead may limit access onto former Secondary Highway 947 to protect its potential to function as a future industrial arterial road.

### **Utilities**

1. The Municipal District of Yellowhead shall work with the landowners in SW 15-53-18 W5M to facilitate the amalgamation of the two existing sewage lagoons into a single lagoon capable of accommodating all existing and future development within this quarter section. In the long term, and depending on the type and density of development in the adjacent quarter section (SE 15-53-18 W5M), the municipality may play a similar facilitating role in encouraging the use of a common lagoon to serve the entire northeast quadrant of Branch Corner (see Figure 7).
2. Developers in Branch Corner, particularly in the northeast quadrant and the east half of the northwest quadrant, shall be encouraged to investigate the feasibility of communal collection and treatment of waste water.
3. Development and/or subdivision applications for uses requiring large water volumes or a communal water distribution system shall include test results to determine the quality and long term supply of potable water.

4. Proposed storm water management techniques shall accompany all subdivision and development applications in Branch Corner. The techniques proposed shall be to the satisfaction of the Development Authority.
5. The Municipal District of Yellowhead shall, in the short term, work with the landowners in SW 15-53-18 W5M and, in the longer term, and depending on the type and density of development, the remaining landowners in Branch Corner to ensure that adequate on-site water storage for fire protection is available.
6. Any further development shall ensure that adequate service is available from shallow utility companies.

#### **Natural Features**

1. Applications to subdivide land adjacent to Little Sundance Creek shall clearly identify the creek's top-of-the-bank (valley break) contour and shall dedicate to the Municipal District of Yellowhead, as Environmental Reserve Easement, a 20 metre wide strip extending from the contour. All lands below the top-of-the-bank, up to the high water mark, also shall be dedicated as Environmental Reserve Easement.
2. Existing natural features, including vegetation, shall be preserved, wherever possible by integrating these features into the design of new subdivisions.
3. All development and subdivision applications for the SW 16-53-5 W5M and NW 9- 53-18-5 W5M shall include detailed contour information. The level of detail and geographic extent of the required information shall be at the discretion of the Development Authority.



## 4.0 Implementation

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 633(1) of the Municipal Government Act, this ASP shall be adopted by the Municipal District of Yellowhead No. 94 as the Branch Corner Area Structure Plan. All subdivision and development within the Branch Corner ASP plan area shall be in accordance with the provisions and policies of this ASP, as well as those of the Municipal Development Plan and Land Use Bylaw.

Council may, from time to time, choose to amend this ASP. As part of the amendment process, the required public hearing will ensure the opportunity for considering input from all existing and future landowners.