



Parkland County

Wabamun Area Vision

v8.5 | 2022.12.16





Land Acknowledgment

The Wabamun Area Vision recognizes and acknowledges that the Wabamun Area resides with Treaty 6, a traditional and ancestral place, home to many First Nations, Métis and Inuit, including our neighbours at Paul First Nation. We also recognize that Wabamun Lake is a traditional hunting and fishing territory and is significant to many Indigenous communities across central and northern Alberta. We embark on this work with recognition and gratitude for the land, and good intentions for its future.



Wabamun Area Vision

The Wabamun area will leverage its unique natural and industrial assets to enable its transformation into a thriving regional anchor.

Executive Summary

The Wabamun Area Vision sets out a 50-year concept for growth in the area around Wabamun Lake. The Vision embarks on an investigation into key questions prompted by major changes to the economy and physical fabric of the area. It explores the ideas, values, and opportunities that will invite a prosperous, healthy, and inclusive future for “Wabamun Country”.

The work is premised on a grounding vision statement: *The Wabamun Area will leverage its unique natural and industrial assets to enable its transformation into a thriving regional anchor.* This high-level intent is bolstered by six pillars that give shape to the analysis and recommendations:

1. Natural Systems
2. Regional Identity
3. Organization and Connectivity
4. Community Growth
5. Economic Diversity
6. Recreation and Amenity

The document reviews the current conditions of the area, and undertakes a thorough investigation into the spatial suitability of a range of development types. This work culminates in the Area Concept, which describes high-level intent and strategy through lenses of use, natural function, and connectivity. Maps showcasing the concept through these lenses are included on the following pages.

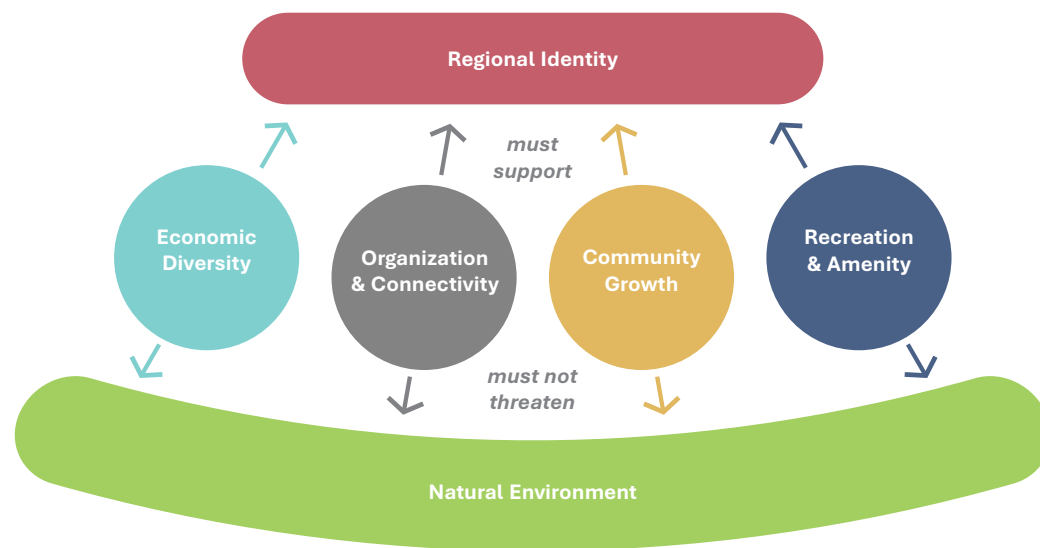
The final section of the document outlines a series of strategic actions—organized by goal—that will help lead the Wabamun Area purposefully into its next chapter.

The content of the vision was informed by a rigorous public engagement process throughout 2022. Three stages of engagement were completed, which included online surveys, in-person open houses, pop-up sessions, stakeholder meetings, and reviews with Parkland County Council. These sessions had high-exposure, with record-setting attendance and online participation. Thanks to the efforts of the community’s participants, the Wabamun Area Vision moves forward with a strong mandate and constituency of support.

A more complete guide to the document’s structure can be found on page 8. The Area Vision is supported by seven appendices that provide additional technical detail in support of the engagement results, natural systems analysis, development opportunities study, infrastructure review, and market evaluation.

The Wabamun Area Vision is a non-statutory plan that will function as a touchpoint and constant reference for more detailed planning and development work throughout region over the coming decades.

The next pages showcase the final concept for the Area Vision through three lenses: use priorities, natural systems, and connectivity.



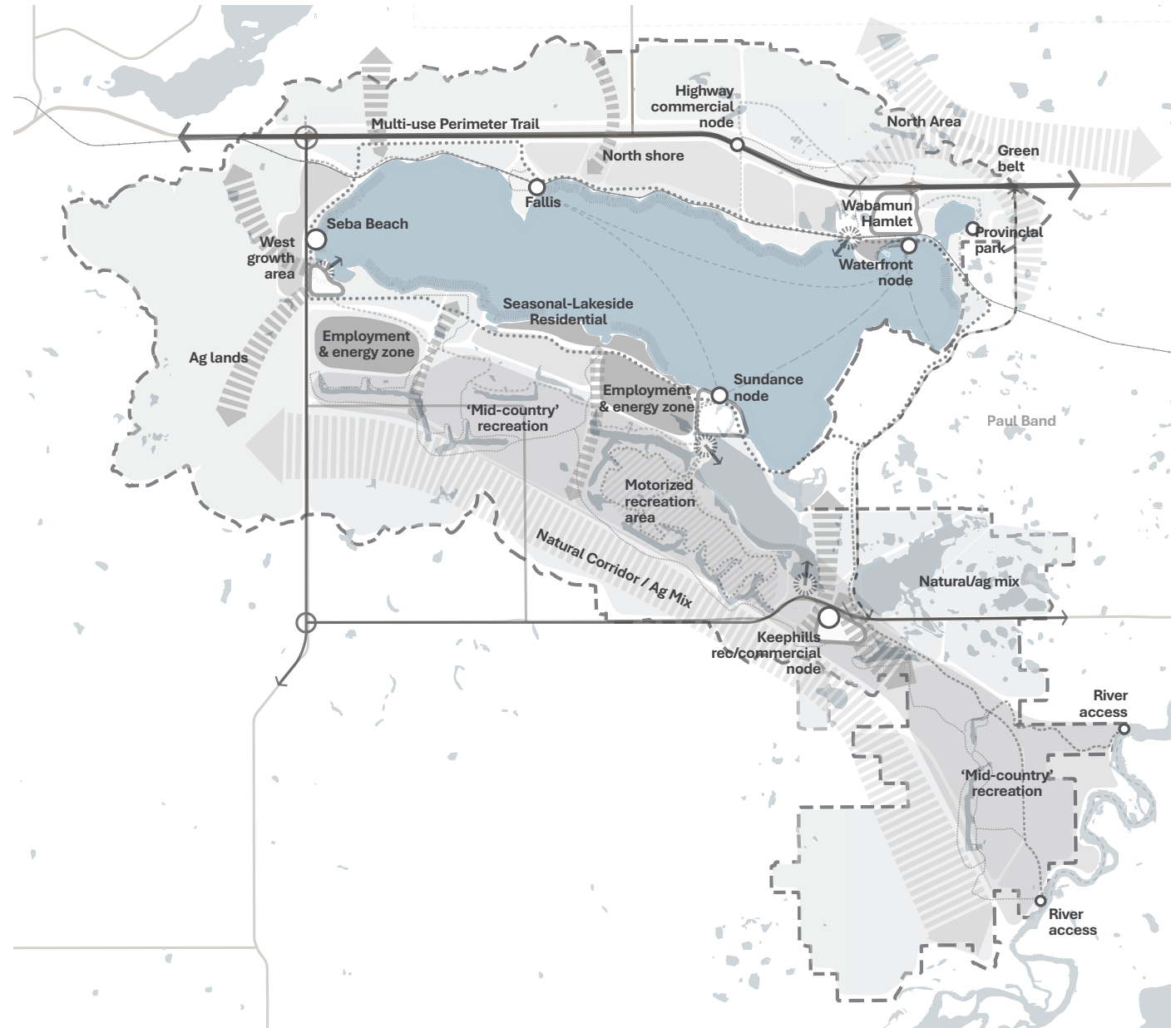
The Wabamun Area will leverage its unique natural and industrial assets to enable its transformation into a thriving regional anchor.

- premised on healthy and well-connected ecologies for all generations
- widely known as a beautiful, unique, and accessible regional destination
- strategically planned to create a well-connected rural region
- sharing its community spirit to attract a wide range of families and lifestyles
- energized by diverse, year-round economic drivers and employment
- with an exciting collection of recreation sites and amenities

Fig 1. Vision Statement and Pillars of the Wabamun Area Vision

Wabamun Area Concept

The Wabamun Area Concept builds directly on the project's analysis and public engagement. The development opportunities outlined in Chapter 4 were generalized into key areas and these were brought to the public in the second stage of engagement. Refinement and prioritization for each opportunity helped spark conversations about the coordination of development across the Wabamun Area.

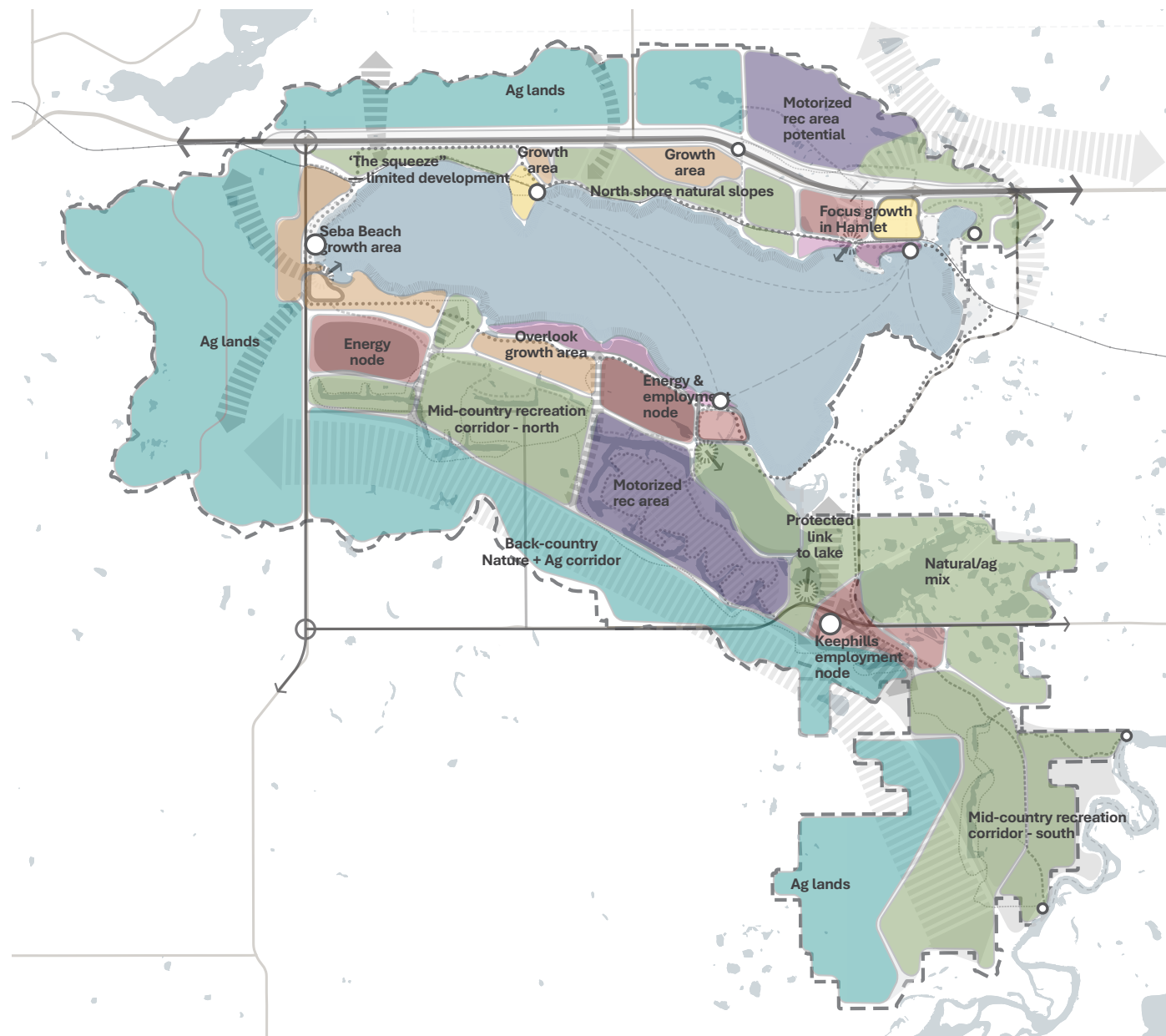


Wabamun Area Concept – Use Priorities

The use concept breaks down the area into subregions that capture the range of activities imagined for the future of the Wabamun Area. These subregions were drawn based on natural or human-made barriers, difference in existing role and use, or different potentials that emerged from the site analyses.

Legend

- Ag/Nature priority
- Nature/Rec priority
- Motorized Rec priority
- Employment priority
- Residential/Commercial priority
- Resort priority
- Vacation/Nature priority

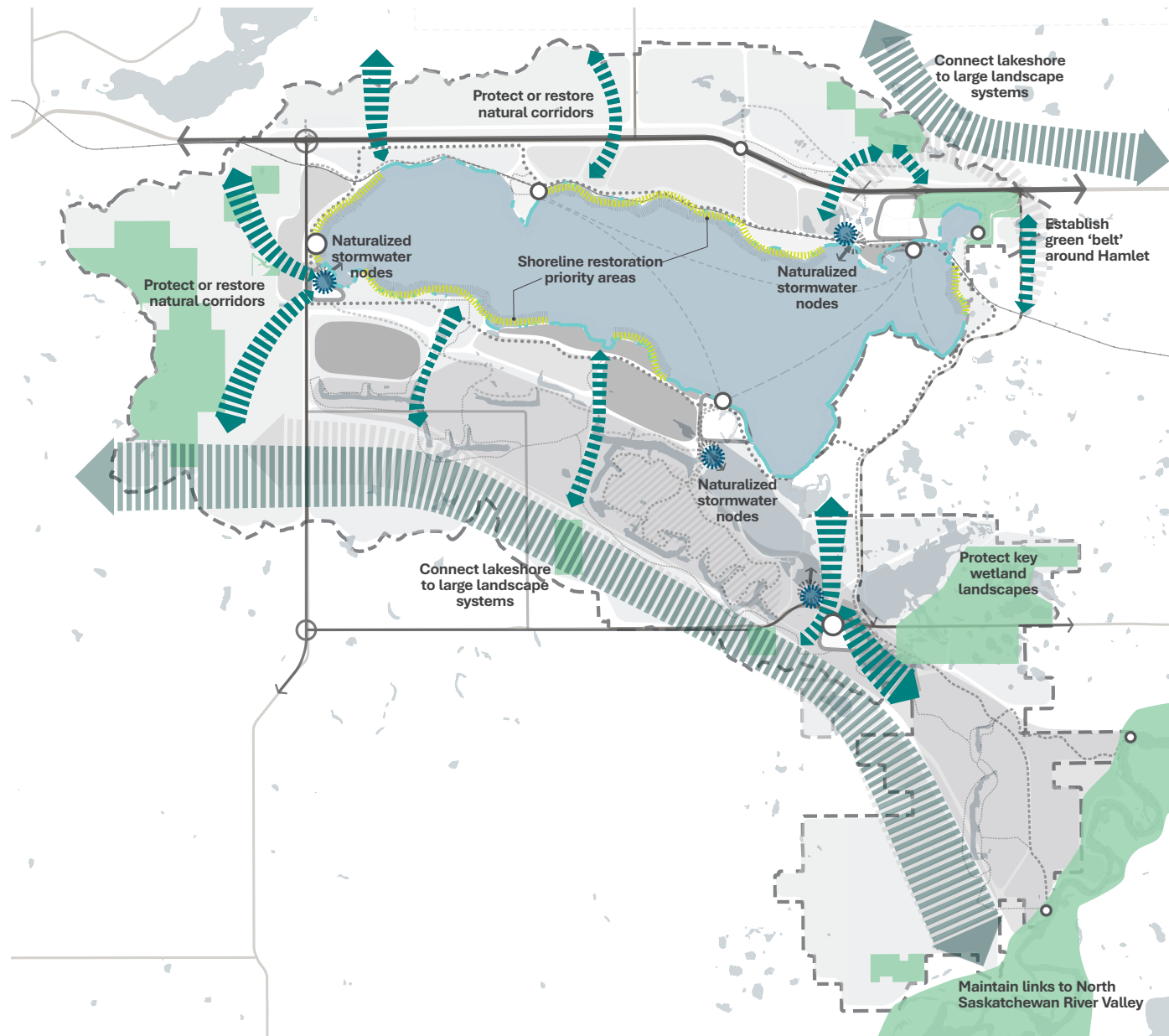


Wabamun Area Concept – Natural Systems

The concept draws together objectives from across the vision. Following a ‘defense-first’ approach to development, it seeks to identify and protect lake quality and enhance the health of natural systems throughout the watershed. It does this by finding and connecting key functional landscapes—the lake shore, large nearby landscape patches, and the corridors that link the two together.

Legend

- Key natural spaces
- Lakeshore restoration priority
- Mid-scale natural corridors
- Broad-scale natural corridors
- Stormwater treatment location

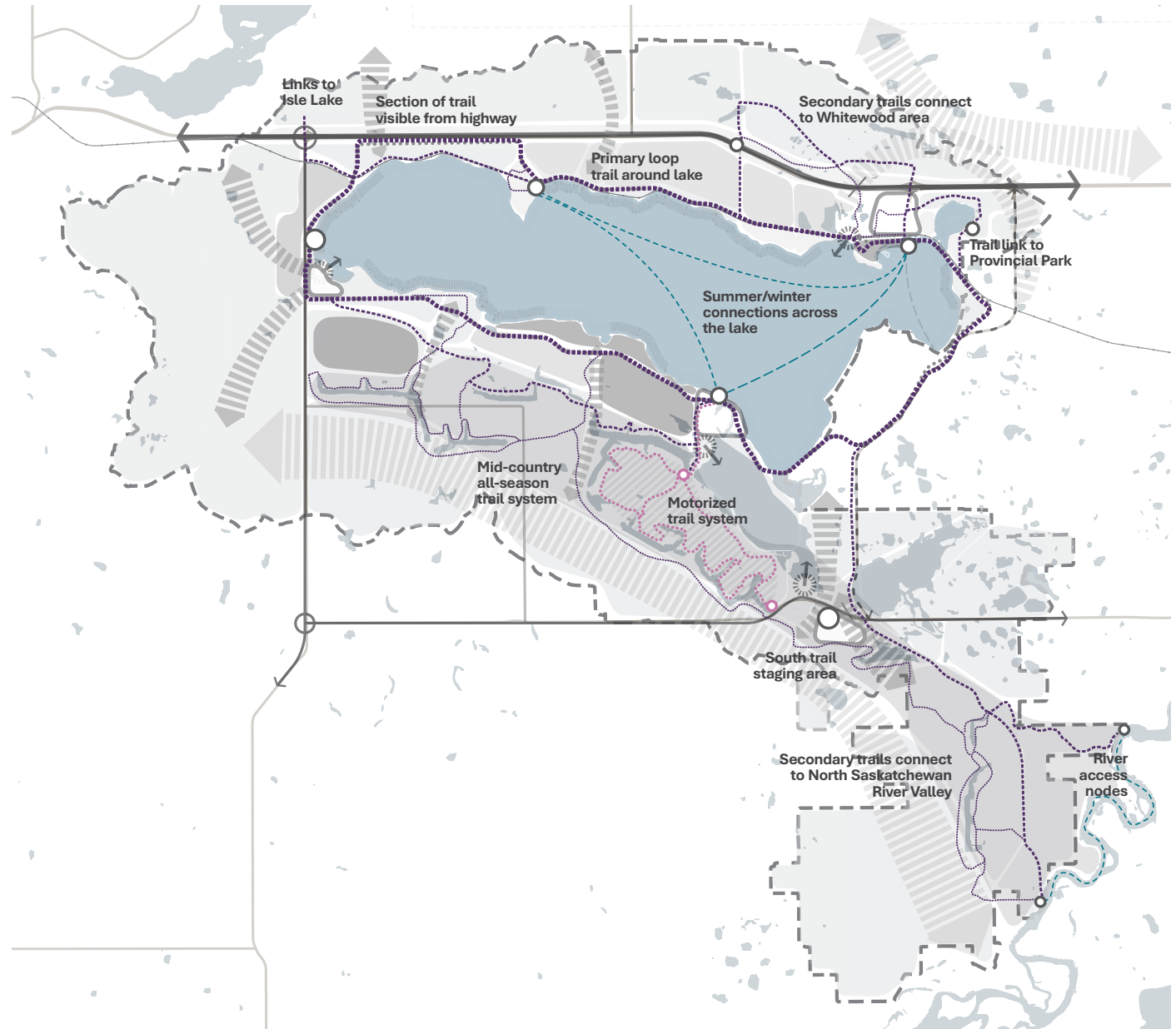


Wabamun Area Concept – Connectivity

Multi-use connectivity—through pathways, trails, and right-of-ways along existing routes—has a wide range of positive impacts at a regional scale. The Area Vision's public engagement results pointed to a broad desire for better trail connectivity to benefit both locals and visitors.

Legend

- Primary loop trail
- Secondary access trails
- Tertiary adventure trails
- Motorized trails
- Water connections



Document Structure

The Wabamun Area vision is broken into 6 chapters followed by a series of appendices.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

The first chapter of the document introduces the project purpose, describes the Wabamun area and its boundary, provides an overview of the project's engagement process, and speaks to how the document should be used.

Chapter 2 - Vision

The second chapter introduces the vision statement, pillars, and goals that comprise the high-level project intent. The project pillars presented here are the product of iterations that were brought to every community touchpoint and stakeholder conversation.

Chapter 3 - Current Conditions

The third chapter delves into Wabamun Country through an analytical lens, providing an overview of the area's natural, infrastructural, and market conditions.

Chapter 4 - Development Opportunities

Chapter 4 provides a summary of the development opportunities process, which built a model that helps map suitability for a range of development types across the area. Each development type is profiled and paired with a series of opportunities and key recommendations.

Chapter 5 - Wabamun Area Concept

The concept described in Chapter 5 is a culmination of the work and ideas captured throughout the first four sections of the document. It provides an overview of the concept, highlights three key lenses (use, natural systems, and connectivity) and then zooms into a series of five districts to provide a more detailed account of the concept's intention around the lake.

Chapter 6 - Strategic Actions

The final chapter of the document revisits the pillars and goals, but breaks them down into strategic actions enabled by the concept.

Appendices

The document has seven appendices that present more detailed process and technical components that informed the Area Vision:

- A. Engagement Summary Touchpoint 1
- B. Engagement Summary Touchpoint 2
- C. Engagement Summary Touchpoint 3
- D. Natural Systems Memo
- E. Development Opportunities Memo
- F. Market Conditions Memo
- G. Infrastructure Memo

Contents

Introduction	1	Wabamun Area Concept	75
Purpose	1	Overview	75
Wabamun Country	2	Revisiting Goals	77
Subject Area Boundary	4	Coordinating Opportunities	78
Engagement Overview	4	Natural Systems	80
Links to Other Plans	7	Use Priorities	82
Document Structure	8	Connectivity	84
		Focus Areas	88
Vision	11	Strategic Actions	95
Natural Systems	13	Overview	95
Regional Identity	14	Natural Systems	96
Organization and Connectivity	15	Regional Identity	98
Community Growth	16	Organization and Connectivity	100
Economic Diversity	17	Community Growth	102
Recreation and Amenity	18	Economic Diversity	104
		Recreation and Amenity	106
Current Conditions	21	Appendices	109
Natural Context	21	Engagement Summary Pt 1	109
Environmentally Significant Areas	23	Engagement Summary Pt 2	109
Land Use	28	Engagement Summary Pt 3	109
Transportation and Mobility	33	Natural Systems Memo	109
Servicing and Utilities	37	Development Opportunities Memo	109
Tourism and Recreation	41	Market Conditions Memo	109
Residential and Recreation Market Conditions	45	Infrastructure Memo	109
Development Opportunities	49		
Defining Suitability	49		
Natural Areas	50		
Full-time Residential	52		
Vacation Residential	54		
Destination Resort	56		
Energy and Production	58		
Motorized Recreation	62		
Non-motorized Recreation	64		
Commercial	66		
Agriculture	69		





1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The Wabamun Area Vision arrives at a time of significant change for the region around Wabamun Lake in Alberta. The transitioning of the Keephills and Sundance generation stations to natural gas, and subsequent closure of the Highvale coal mine in 2021, have hastened the area's transition into a new era. Alongside profound changes in the foundations of regional economy, the area is also subject to the new geographies of work-from-home, new demands for recreation and connectivity, ongoing provincial growth, and increasing attention to natural systems anchored by the lake.

With this change come existential questions. What does the next chapter hold for the Wabamun Area? What economies will carry it forward through the next fifty years? How can the area leverage its tremendous assets to create places that are attractive, and sustainable for residents and visitors? The Wabamun Area Vision embarks on an investigation into these questions, exploring the vision, values, and opportunities that will invite a prosperous, healthy, and inclusive future for the region.

A Collaborative Approach

The vision this document presents is the product of many converging streams. It draws together direct community intention—gathered from a comprehensive series of three surveys and in-person engagement events, direction from Parkland County Council and administration, and robust technical analysis of natural systems and development opportunities. The vision that emerges from these streams represents the collective intentions and imaginations of the people of the Wabamun Area.

'Defense-First' – A Focus on Lake Health

The health of Wabamun Lake is a central tenet of this work. To put the lake at the heart of the approach, the project took a 'defense-first' approach, which meant that it started with a natural systems analysis. Once this was complete, the project then explored development opportunities (the 'offensive' component) with an embedded sense of natural systems protection. These opportunities were then coordinated within the concept.

Framing

The document is not statutory, but offers a framing that should be referenced in the creation of other planning documents. It identifies key opportunities and indicates strategic recommendations that build a bridge toward implementation, but is not itself a comprehensive

implementation plan. Rather, the vision should be a scaffolding that helps imagine different futures, shines a light on impactful interventions, and inspires the next chapter of investment into the community.

1.2 Wabamun Country

Wabamun Country describes the land around Wabamun Lake in Alberta, a name derived from the Cree word for “mirror”. The area has a long precontact history and is known to have been used by Indigenous peoples for millennia (Hallson, 2017). The lake continues to be the home to the Paul First Nation, and many other First Nations retain claims to the lake as a traditional hunting and fishing territory.

Wabamun Lake covers 82 square kilometres and is the sixteenth largest lake in Alberta. The lake is relatively shallow, with an average depth of six meters, and a volume of 513 million cubic meters. Both surface water and groundwater are important to the lake’s hydrology and water balance. The lake’s outlet is Wabamun Creek, which, because of a weir, flows only at times of high water.

Located approximately seventy kilometres away from the provincial capital of Edmonton, the lake is a popular recreation destination that also provides thriving fish and bird habitat. The 57.3-km shoreline hosts diverse uses, including housing, camping, recreation, natural areas, and heavy industry. Shoreline settlements include the hamlets of Wabamun and Fallis, along with the

five Summer Villages (Betula Beach, Kapasiwin Beach, Lakeview, Point Alison, and Seba Beach), and other rural country residential areas. The Paul First Nation reserve is located along the lake’s eastern shore.

Coal extraction within the lake’s watershed began in the early 1910s. For decades, this operation was run by TransAlta, who extracted thermal coal to burn in nearby power-generating stations. The Whitewood Mine (established in 1962) was located near the north shore of Wabamun Lake and was reclaimed by 2015. The Highvale Mine (established in 1970) south of Wabamun Lake ceased mining operations in 2021, following the conversion of the Keephills and Sundance power generation stations to natural gas feedstock. Before it closed, Highvale was Canada’s largest surface strip coal mine. It is now the subject of ongoing reclamation work.

Wabamun Country

Throughout this document, in an effort to sow the seeds of a regional identity, the Wabamun area will sometimes be referred to as ‘Wabamun Country’.

Finding Wabamun

Wabamun Country is located about 50 km west of Edmonton, south of Highway 16.

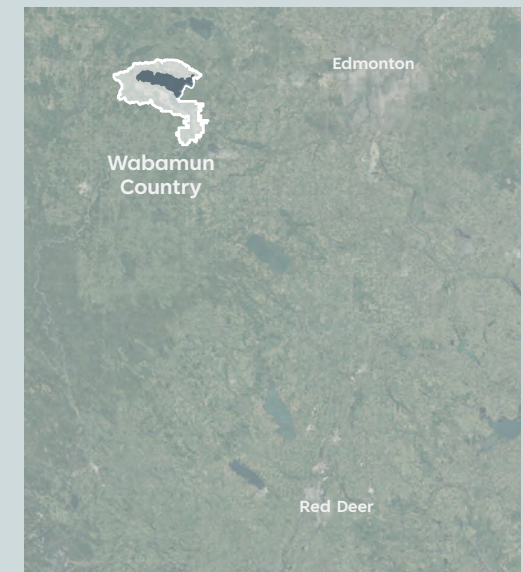
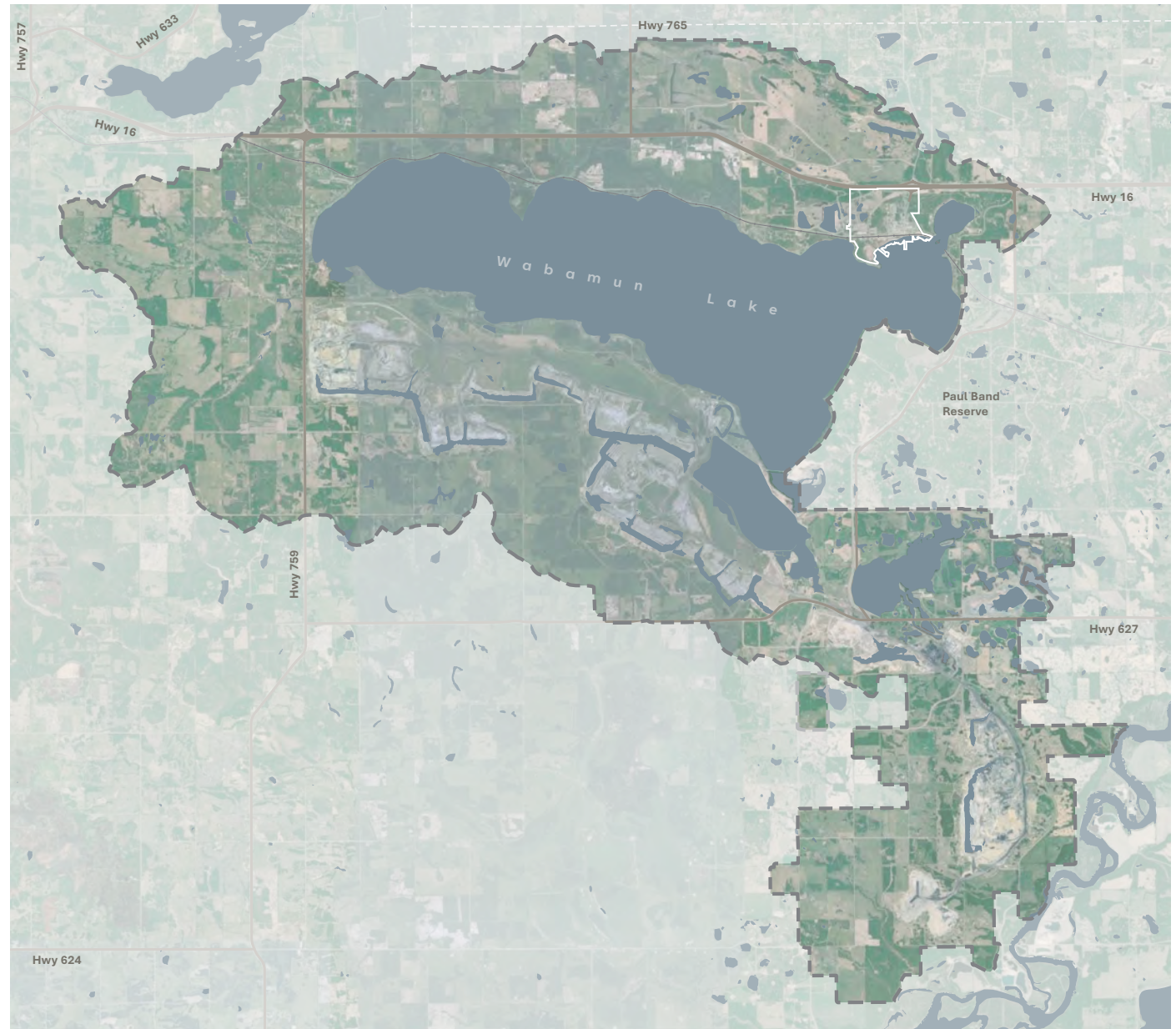


Fig 2. Wabamun’s location in Central Alberta

Wabamun Country

Legend

- Subject Area Boundary
- Water
- Major Highways



1.3 Subject Area Boundary

The subject area for the Wabamun Area Vision is comprised of the Wabamun Lake watershed (excluding the Paul Band Reserve lands) and two former coal mine areas. The watershed boundary provides a logical, natural demarcation, including all lands that influence the long-term health of Wabamun Lake. TransAlta's former coal mine properties at Whitewood (north of Wabamun Hamlet) and Highvale (south of Wabamun Lake) are also included in the subject area, as their ongoing transformation is both a catalyst and focal point for the Area Vision work.

The subject area is large, covering approximately 413 square kilometres. The Area Vision will zoom in and out of this territory to provide a sense of high-level coordination, while still detailing specific opportunities and nodes.

1.4 Engagement Overview

The Area Vision is built on a foundation of public input. The creation of this work was enabled by three community touch-points throughout 2022.

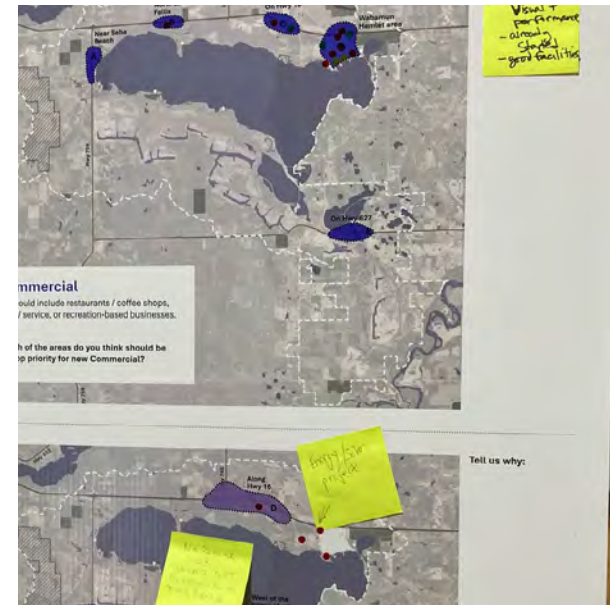
Touchpoint 1 - April-June 2022

The first touchpoint took place in the Spring of 2022. Given ongoing COVID-19 restrictions, engagement was solely hosted online in this stage. The purpose of the first touchpoint was to introduce the project, gather feedback on the draft vision statement and project pillars, and collect information about issues and opportunities in the area. The survey received 411 responses, and the online map (which captured feedback by location) collected over 231 comments. In the first touchpoint, the project saw over 1200 unique

visitors to the project website. A comprehensive report on the first touchpoint engagement, including results, can be found in Appendix A.

Touchpoint 2 - July 2022

The second engagement touchpoint took place in the summer of 2022 and included both online and in-person components. The purpose of the engagement was to share the natural systems and development opportunities analyses, and solicit feedback to help identify where future use types should be prioritized in the region. The online survey for touchpoint 2 saw 172 responses, 91 map comments, and had over 700 unique website visitors. The open house and farmers' market



pop-up engagements saw over 80 participants. A full report on the results of the engagement can be found in Appendix B.

Touchpoint 3 – October 2022

The third touchpoint took place in the fall of 2022, and had both online and in-person components. It showcased the area concept (Chapter 5) and sought a final round of feedback before the Area Vision was finalized. The in-person and virtual open houses saw 23 attendees, and the online survey had 110 responses. A copy of the engagement report is available in Appendix C.

Communications and Inclusivity

A robust engagement is supported by strong communications to build broad awareness, and measures to reduce barriers to participation. All engagement touchpoints were promoted via a range of methods to try and attract high levels of participation. Channels included:

- + The project website
- + Social media campaign
- + A message on Parkland County's spring tax notice
- + Emails
- + Postcard mail-outs
- + Digital signage
- + A newspaper ad in the Stony Plain Report and the Spruce Grove Examiner
- + Notices posted on the County's event calendars

In addition to these promotions, each touchpoint offered online opportunities to review the material. When the survey was online, paper versions of the survey were available at the library and County office. Touchpoints 2 and 3 also offered a live virtual open house option to enable face-to-face access to the project team for those who were unable to attend an in-person event.

Key Regional Interests

In addition to the public touchpoints, the project team had exchanges with key regional interests. These included Parkland County Council, TransAlta, the CAOs of Wabamun's five Summer Villages, and the Wabamun Watershed Management Council. Initial discussions took place between Paul First Nation and Parkland County, who provided the team with background planning materials to aid the team's contextual analysis and concept coordination.

These exchanges provided the project with specific insight into a set of focused issues, priorities, and alignments brought forward by these organizations. Outputs from the exchanges were brought forward into the public engagement content.



...nt strategy for the area.

...the engagement, we conducted a survey that gave us the draft vision and pillars, and indicated new s for the area. In Stage 2, we would like your input on three topics:

in Area: where development should be prioritized

f Wabamun: key places and investment ties

it Park: how you would like to see it improved

our completed survey by **July 31, 2022** to the r Service counter at the County Office, located at:

779
. AB

t to engage@o2design.com.

your participation!

wabamun.ca for more information and ongoing lect.

to our survey. ... about yourself so we know v

How old are you? (check one of the bo

<input type="checkbox"/> 0-9 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 50
<input type="checkbox"/> 10-19 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 60-
<input type="checkbox"/> 20-29 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 70+
<input type="checkbox"/> 30 - 39 years	<input type="checkbox"/> Pref
<input type="checkbox"/> 40-49 years	

Are you a...

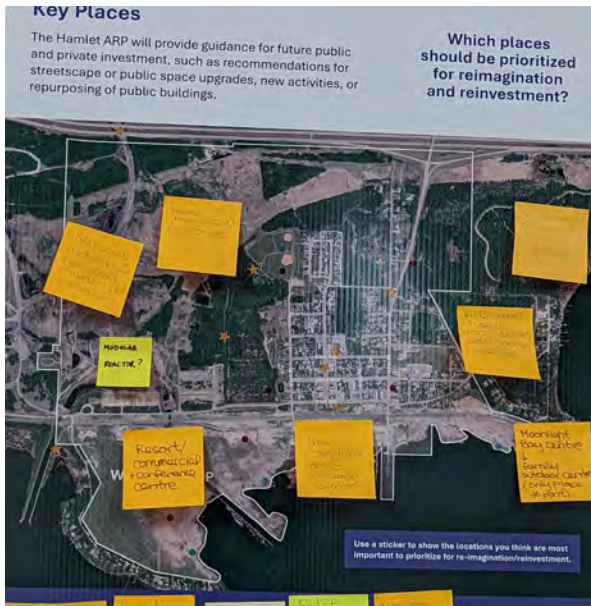
<input type="checkbox"/> Permanent Resident of the Wabamun Area	<input type="checkbox"/> Visitor Waban
<input type="checkbox"/> Seasonal/temporary resident of the Wabamun Area	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (i
<input type="checkbox"/> Permanent resident of another area in Parkland County	

Permanent/Seasonal Residents of Wabamun:

Where do you live in the Wabamun Area

<input type="checkbox"/> Hamlet of Wabamun	<input type="checkbox"/> Seba Beach
<input type="checkbox"/> Betula Beach	<input type="checkbox"/> Fallis
<input type="checkbox"/> Kapasiwin	<input type="checkbox"/> Ascot Beach
<input type="checkbox"/> Lakeview	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (pleas
<input type="checkbox"/> Point Alison	

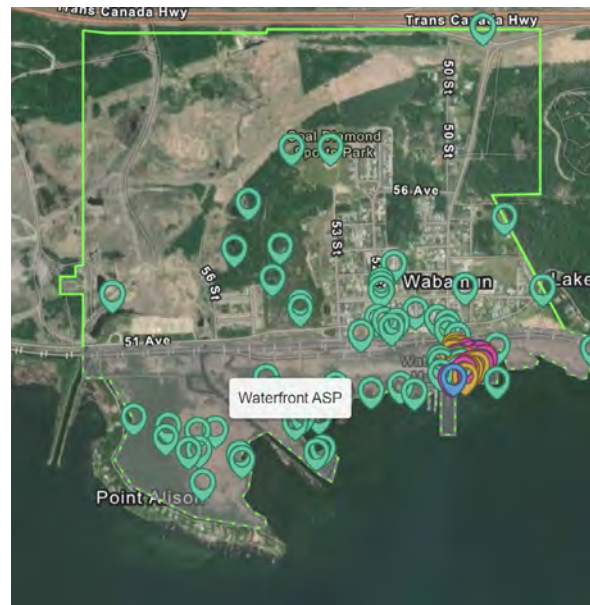
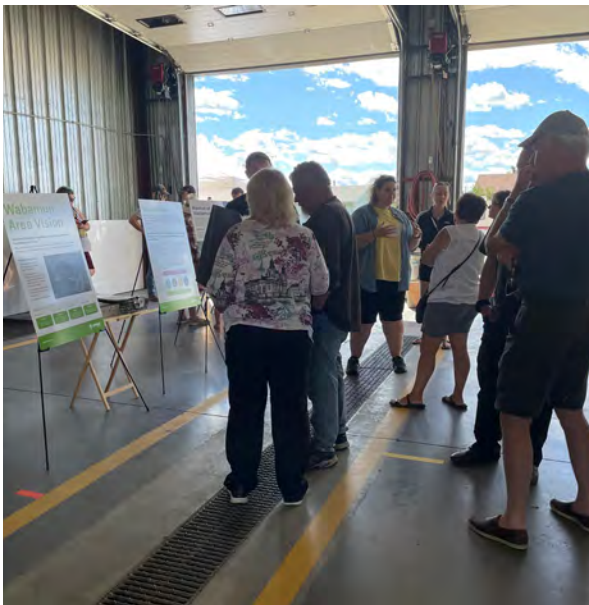
Non R...



1.5 Links to Other Plans

The Wabamun Area Vision will interface with a great deal of planning work in the coming years. At the time of publication, it has already been drawn on to help frame the Hamlet Area Redevelopment Plan for Wabamun Hamlet, a series of growth studies and exercises in the Hamlet area, and several more detailed design and feasibility projects around the lake. In the coming year, it will influence an update to the Municipal Development Plan for Parkland County, the Parkland County Trails Strategy, and a new Land Use Bylaw, among other ongoing planning work.

The Wabamun Area Vision should be seen as a frame that helps coordinate intention, identify opportunity, establish mandate, and build excitement.



1.6 Document Structure

The Wabamun Area vision is broken into 6 chapters followed by a series of appendices.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

The first chapter of the document introduces the project purpose, describes the Wabamun area and its boundary, provides an overview of the project's engagement process, and speaks to how the document should be used.

Chapter 2 - Vision

The second chapter introduces the vision statement, pillars, and goals that comprise the high-level project intent. The project pillars presented here are the product of iterations that were brought to every community touchpoint and stakeholder conversation.

Chapter 3 - Current Conditions

The third chapter delves into Wabamun Country through an analytical lens, providing an overview of the area's natural, infrastructural, and market conditions.

Chapter 4 - Development Opportunities

Chapter 4 provides a summary of the development opportunities process, which built a model that helps map suitability for a range of development types across the area. Each development type is profiled and paired with a series of opportunities and key recommendations.

Chapter 5 - Wabamun Area Concept

The concept described in Chapter 5 is a culmination of the work and ideas captured throughout the first four sections of the document. It provides an overview of the concept, highlights three key lenses (use, natural systems, and connectivity) and then zooms into a series of five districts to provide a more detailed account of the concept's intention around the lake.

Chapter 6 - Strategic Actions

The final chapter of the document revisits the pillars and goals, but breaks them down into strategic actions enabled by the concept.

Appendices

The document has seven appendices that present more detailed process and technical components that informed the Area Vision:

- A. Engagement Summary Touchpoint 1
- B. Engagement Summary Touchpoint 2
- C. Engagement Summary Touchpoint 3
- D. Natural Systems Memo
- E. Development Opportunities Memo
- F. Market Conditions Memo
- G. Infrastructure Memo

Engagement Highlights

Watch for these boxes throughout the document for direct quotes from community members, gathered through the project engagements.







2 Vision

The Wabamun Area will leverage its unique natural and industrial assets to enable its transformation into a thriving regional anchor.

The project team initiated the work by building a draft of the vision statement, premised in early conversations and the project brief. This draft was brought in front of the public through early engagements and in front of Council for workshop sessions. It evolved at each step of review.

It is a strong and focused statement that anchors the rest of the visioning work. It also re-frames what might be seen as a liability (the area's industrial legacy) as a core strength.

To support the vision statement, six core topics were codified into pillars that provided additional focus.

Six Pillars

1. Natural Systems
2. Regional Identity
3. Organization and Connectivity
4. Community Growth
5. Economic Diversity
6. Recreation and Amenity

"I think you've captured everything, but I don't think all of the components are equal. Thriving natural landscapes are foundational and what attract homeowners, businesses, etc. to the area - the other five pillars are secondary"

- Engagement participant

The Wabamun Area will leverage its unique natural and industrial assets to enable its transformation into a thriving regional anchor.

- premised on healthy and well-connected ecologies for all generations
- widely known as a beautiful, unique, and accessible regional destination
- strategically planned to create a well-connected rural region
- sharing its community spirit to attract a wide range of families and lifestyles
- energized by diverse, year-round economic drivers and employment
- with an exciting collection of recreation sites and amenities

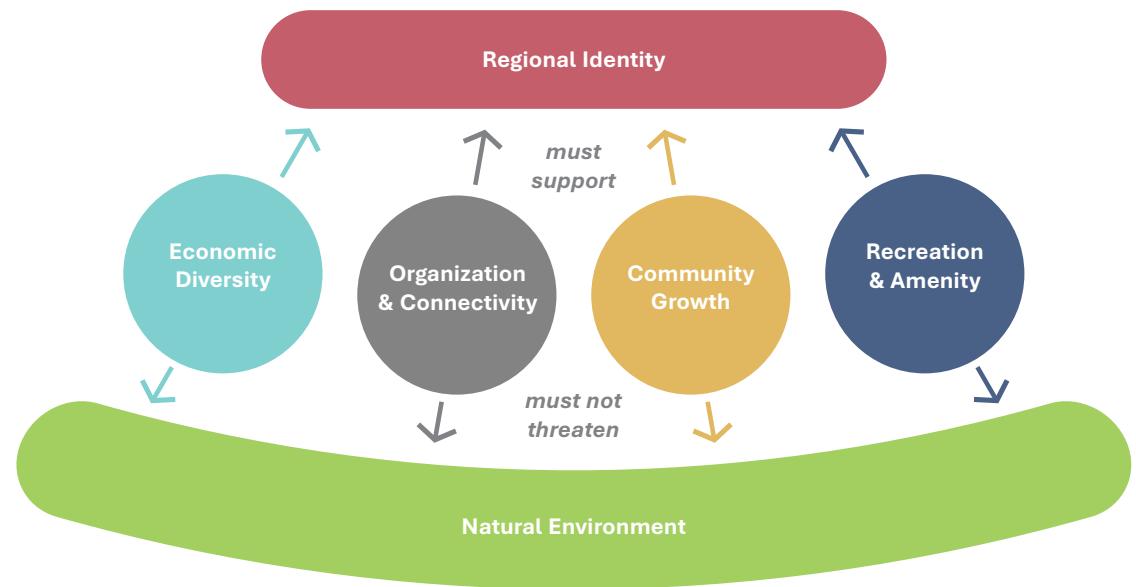


Fig 3. Vision Statement and Pillars of the Wabamun Area Vision

...premised on healthy and
well-connected ecologies
for all generations



2.1 Natural Systems

Goal A Wabamun Lake anchors a clean and healthy watershed.

Wabamun Lake is the defining feature of the Wabamun Area. Keeping the lake clean and healthy supports the entire region, as a healthy and beautiful lake is fundamental to the quality of life of local ecosystems and communities. Initiatives to protect and restore riparian areas, reduce runoff, and protect the watershed will help to achieve this goal.

Goal B Wabamun Country has high quality natural landscapes that are well connected through the region.

Wabamun Country boasts diverse natural landscapes, including watercourses, forests, and wetlands. To protect ecological function, natural areas will be well connected to support wildlife movement and reduce habitat fragmentation.

Goal C Post-industrial landscapes are restored in ways that recover natural function, protect water, and produce new opportunity.

The post-industrial landscapes, specifically the former mine lands, present a significant opportunity to re-establish and reconnect natural areas in the region. Parts of the former Highvale mine lands should be strategically reclaimed and re-naturalized to provide additional habitat, protect the Wabamun Lake watershed, and provide new opportunities for people to connect with nature.

“Would like to see more emphasis on thriving natural landscapes to maximize protection of the lake and the watershed.”

- Engagement participant

...widely known as a beautiful,
unique, and accessible
regional destination



2.2 Regional Identity

Goal D **Wabamun Country has a distinct and well-known regional identity.**

The Wabamun Area already contains many key attractions for visitors and residents. The strategic actions within this goal focus on leveraging these discrete destinations to create an overall connected regional identity for Wabamun through branding, signage, and other place-making elements.

Goal E **Wabamun Country showcases its unique natural assets and industrial legacy.**

Two of the things that make Wabamun Country unique are its diverse natural landscapes and its industrial legacy. All new development and recreational opportunities should find ways to draw from and showcase these important aspects of the region's identity.

Goal F **Wabamun Country provides a positive and memorable visitor experience.**

Wabamun Country attracts visitors for a variety of different activities and experiences – from ATVing to birdwatching. Strategic actions within this goal focus on continuously improving and building upon these experiences to ensure that visitors have positive experiences and will continue to return again and again.

...strategically planned to create
a well-connected rural region



2.3 Organization and Connectivity

Goal G **Wabamun Country grows in collaboration with Indigenous communities**

Wabamun Country is located in Treaty 6 Territory, on lands that are important to diverse First Nations and Metis Peoples. The region is a direct neighbour to Paul First Nation. Parkland County is committed to working in close collaboration with Indigenous Partners on stewardship, economic development, and other matters of interest.

Goal I **A clear mobility network connects Wabamun Country.**

There are many ways to travel Wabamun Country. Focused improvements on roads and trails will help better connect existing communities, amenities, and landscapes in coherent and accessible ways.

Goal H **Residential and commercial growth is focused in Wabamun Hamlet**

Focusing growth within Wabamun Hamlet will reinforce its position as the largest fully serviced community in Wabamun Country and a gateway to adventure in the region. Focusing growth will also make efficient use of existing services and amenities, while supporting a full-time residential population in the area.

...sharing its community spirit to attract a wide range of families and lifestyles



2.4 Community Growth

Goal J Wabamun Country supports a year-round population with diverse housing types and supporting services.

The population of Wabamun Country is growing as many people continue to discover what the region has to offer. Focused actions within this goal will ensure that there are diverse housing options available and that the necessary services and amenities are in place to support a high quality of life for residents.

Goal K Wabamun Country promotes community life and culture, with great places and public spaces.

There are many unique cultural organizations, destinations, and events in Wabamun Country that can be supported, connected, and promoted. Improving public spaces and providing new locations to host such activities will continue to foster vibrant community life in the region.

Goal L Residents of Wabamun Country feel safe and have a strong sense of community.

Wabamun Country already has an impressive network of volunteer community organizations and initiatives that bring people together and strengthen community resiliency. Focused actions will help support these existing initiatives.

“Permanent residents should occupy most of the areas surrounding wabamun to increase businesses and support particularly during the winter months.”

- Engagement participant

...energized by diverse,
year-round economic
drivers and employment



2.5 Economic Diversity

Goal M Wabamun Country attracts new mainstay employment opportunities.

Wabamun Country is undergoing an economic transition. The legacy of its infrastructure offers opportunities to draw new mainstay employment, such as renewable energy, light industrial, manufacturing, and local entrepreneurship.

Goal N Wabamun Country provides a variety of hospitality options and experiences.

Wabamun Country is becoming a sought after visitor destination. Encouraging a wide variety of hospitality options and experiences will enable the area to host a more diverse visitor base and contribute to the region's economic development.

Goal O Agricultural uses are integrated and protected.

Agriculture will remain a mainstay use in the Wabamun Area and a key part of its identity. It is important to protect the highest quality lands for this use, and to continue to foster innovation in agriculture as well as complimentary uses that can contribute to the region's other goals.

...with an exciting collection of recreation sites and amenities



2.6 Recreation and Amenity

Goal P **Wabamun Country supports motorized and non-motorized recreation in all seasons.**

Wabamun Country is an all-season destination. Expanding and promoting existing and new recreational opportunities will help to attract more permanent and seasonal residents to the area as well as support an increasing visitor population. Opportunities for both motorized and non-motorized recreation will ensure that there is something for everyone.

Goal Q **Wabamun Country provides recreation opportunities for diverse users.**

There is great potential to expand the range of recreation opportunities available in the region. Diversifying these opportunities will support active living for all ages and draw visitors with broad interests.

Goal R **Wabamun Country has clear and accessible public lake access.**

With Wabamun Lake as the region's greatest asset, it is essential that there is adequate, clearly signed public water access. Actions within this goal will improve upon existing access points and enhance connections to them.

"We need more areas to access the lake in these areas. We are short beach areas, boat launches, winter access."

- Engagement participant

"Recreational use can be done responsibly and protect the lake and the environment. We must remember people use the lake and areas for recreational purposes and is why people have chosen the Wabamun Lake area."

- Engagement participant







3 Current Conditions

3.1 Natural Context

A Natural Foundation

The natural setting, including the amount, quality, and connectivity of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems – are key amenities that shape the experiences of those who live, work, or play in the region, and must be a cornerstone that is maintained or improved for environmental quality, watershed health, and quality of life.

To help maintain compatibility with watershed management and environmental restoration goals, Parkland County and its stakeholders in the Wabamun region will need to be thoughtful, careful, and proactive as the area undergoes land use change, mine reclamation, and development. A comprehensive report synthesizing and summarizing existing opportunities and constraints of the natural setting is found in Appendix D.

The Wabamun Area Vision pursues a “defense first” strategy, which delineates and promotes key natural landscapes and watershed elements. It is a critical departure point in developing a vision for the area.

Subregions

Based on Alberta’s six Natural Regions, the Wabamun area is in the Boreal Forest Natural Region. At a finer scale, Alberta is divided into twenty-one Natural Subregions based on differences in vegetation, soil, climate, elevation, latitude, and physiography. As shown in Map 3, the study area is mostly in the Dry Mixedwood Natural Subregion, with a small band of Central Mixedwood along southwestern parts of the study area.

Watersheds

The entire study area is located within the North Saskatchewan River Watershed. Within the sub-watershed groupings created by the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance, the vast majority (95%) of the study area is grouped with the Modeste sub-watershed.

Most of the Wabamun Area coincides with the Wabamun Lake watershed and its’ outlet creek – Wabamun Creek. This is a critically important area, since the cumulative effects of land uses and best practices located in this area will directly determine the health of Wabamun Lake into the future.

A small part of the study area (5%) is located in the Sturgeon River sub-watershed. This area is included in the study area because TransAlta's Whitewood Mine footprint was defined as in scope for the project. The Sturgeon River meanders across the prairie for 259 kilometres, before draining into the North Saskatchewan River near Fort Saskatchewan.



Fig 4. North Saskatchewan Watershed in Alberta, source: North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (2012)



3.2 Environmentally Significant Areas

Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs) have been defined by both the Province and the County as “places vital to the long-term maintenance of biological diversity, soil, water, or other natural processes at multiple scales.” ESAs are priority areas for conservation, and have been identified, mapped, and classified based on multiple ecological criteria analyzed in GIS models.

Defined ESAs in the study area have been synthesized within in this project based on prior reports and plans.

Due to the regional significance of Wabamun Lake and the influence of the Wabamun watershed on lake health, considerable information from the Wabamun Lake Watershed Management Plan (2020) and Wabamun Lake Sub-Watershed Land Use Plan (2016) are included throughout all components related to water resources and watershed values.

The model took seven key environmental criteria as inputs, weighted them, and arrived at a final score to estimate the environmental significance of different areas across the Wabamun Area.

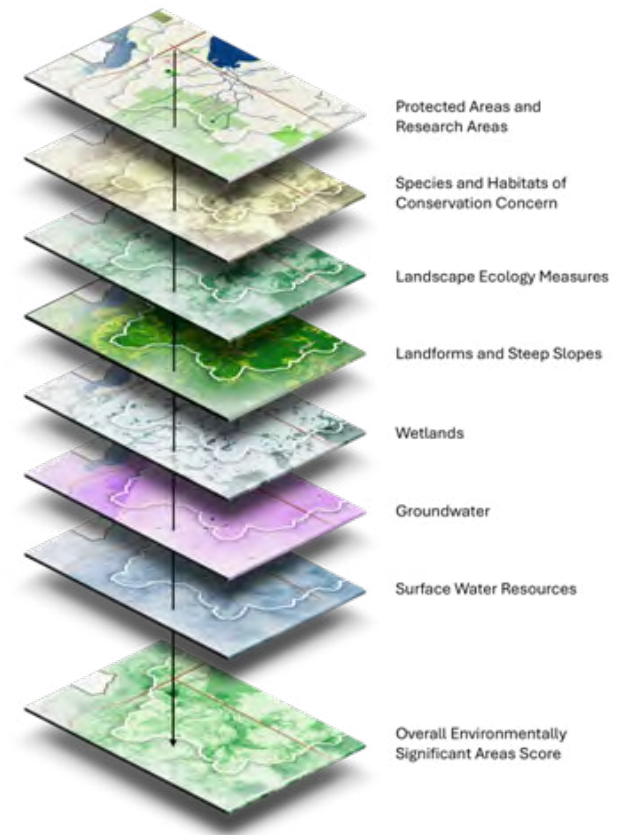


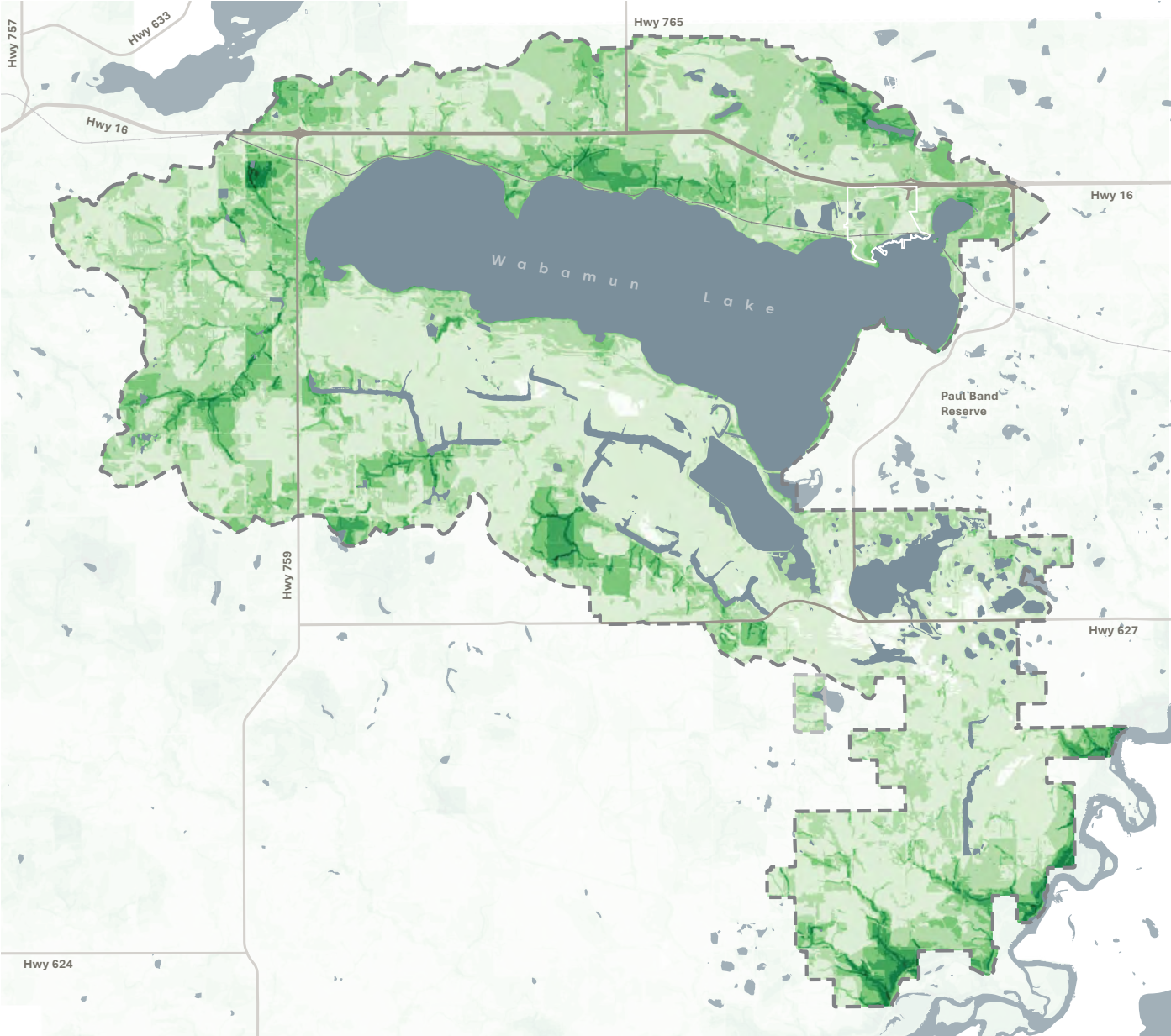
Fig 5. Natural Systems Influencing Layers

Map 06

Current Environmental Significance

Legend

- Wabamun Area
- Higher significance
- Lower significance





Landscape Ecology and Connectivity

As an indicator of environmental significance, connectivity is strongly related to habitat fragmentation in a landscape. Together, natural habitat fragmentation and connectivity refer to the degree to which vegetation communities are broken apart into smaller isolated sections within a landscape. Connectivity amongst large patches of natural habitat ensures that wildlife and plants can disperse and move easily across the landscape, and that ecological processes persist, contributing to the health and functionality of the entire landscape. Maintaining connectivity for broad-scale ecological processes like dispersal and gene flow is essential for conserving endangered species in fragmented landscapes.

Synthesis

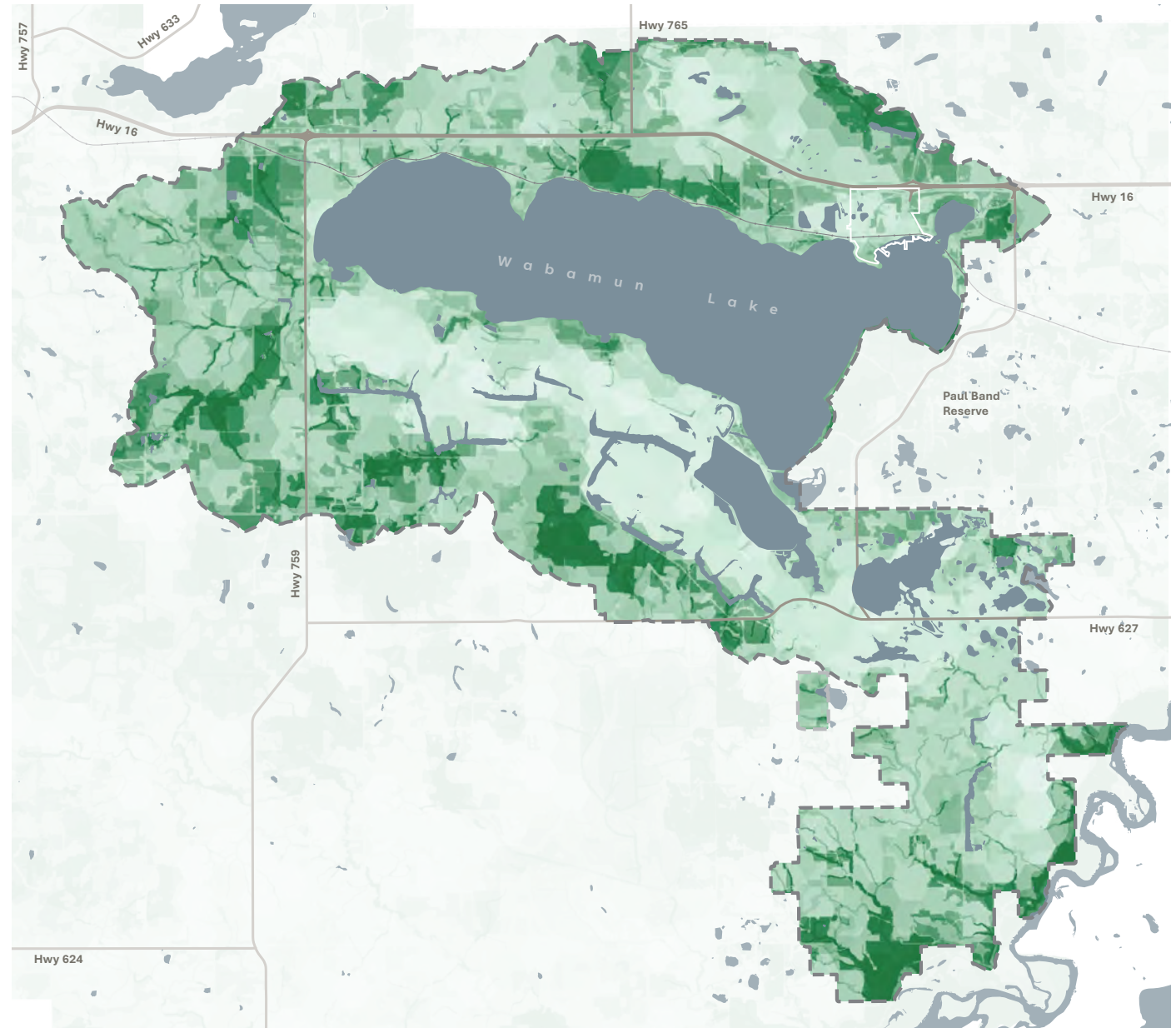
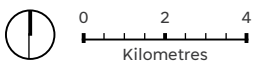
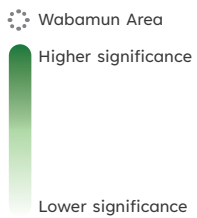
The analysis highlighted here is excerpted from a comprehensive natural systems report captured in Appendix D. The outputs from this review form critical inputs into the development suitability maps in Chapter 4, as well as the natural systems concept described in Chapter 5.

“Protect existing fens, wetlands and existing birding and nesting areas around the lake.”

- Engagement participant

Landscape Ecology

Legend



3.3 Land Use

Parkland County's long-standing history of agricultural practices and industrial pursuits has shaped existing land uses and patterns of growth. The economic shift in the province, coupled with changes to coal-fired transmission plants and lower employment in agriculture, have created opportunities to re-imagine the County's economic base and the future growth and development of the region. As TransAlta Utilities shifts from coal to natural gas, many hectares of land are undergoing the process of land reclamation. Newly reclaimed land has the potential to accommodate a variety of end land uses, including agriculture, recreation, commercial, residential and employment lands. This change has become the catalyst for a comprehensive review of existing land use patterns to guide future development and inform end land use decisions.

Existing Land Use Patterns and Opportunities

The Wabamun Area is characterized by several land use designations with a primary focus on agricultural lands, country and lakefront residential and resource extraction designations (See Figure 2). Agriculture and resource extraction, the primary economic drivers of the area, represent approximately 64% of the total land area, emphasizing the strong history of agriculture and stable local employment in the area. Industrial/commercial land uses are centrally located near the rural Hamlet of Fallis, providing access to convenient everyday amenities to serve local and seasonal residents.

Residential land uses are centred around the periphery of Wabamun Lake, providing rural housing opportunities to support the permanent and seasonal population.

The amalgamation of the Village of Wabamun into Parkland County creates an exciting opportunity to re-brand and re-imagine the next chapter of Wabamun. Reclaimed TransAlta land also presents a unique opportunity to develop recreational, residential and employment lands to attract new business and provide distinctive, year-round amenities to elevate Wabamun as a priority growth hamlet.

Growth Areas















Growth Areas are guided by the development concept of the Municipal Development Plan which considers the regional growth context and the policies of the Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Growth Board (Growth Plan). Four growth categories are identified in the Parkland County MDP: priority growth hamlets, growth hamlets, rural hamlets and greenfield areas. Priority growth areas and growth hamlets are strategically located near road networks, enabling convenient access to major goods movement corridors. Focusing growth in and around existing hamlets and towns enables clustering of infrastructure, services, and amenities to support growth, while minimizing adverse impacts to existing natural systems and agricultural lands. New growth located outside of existing urban areas, identified as greenfield growth, will require Council review and approval. Within the Wabamun Area, Wabamun is identified as a priority growth hamlet, identified for increased County investment

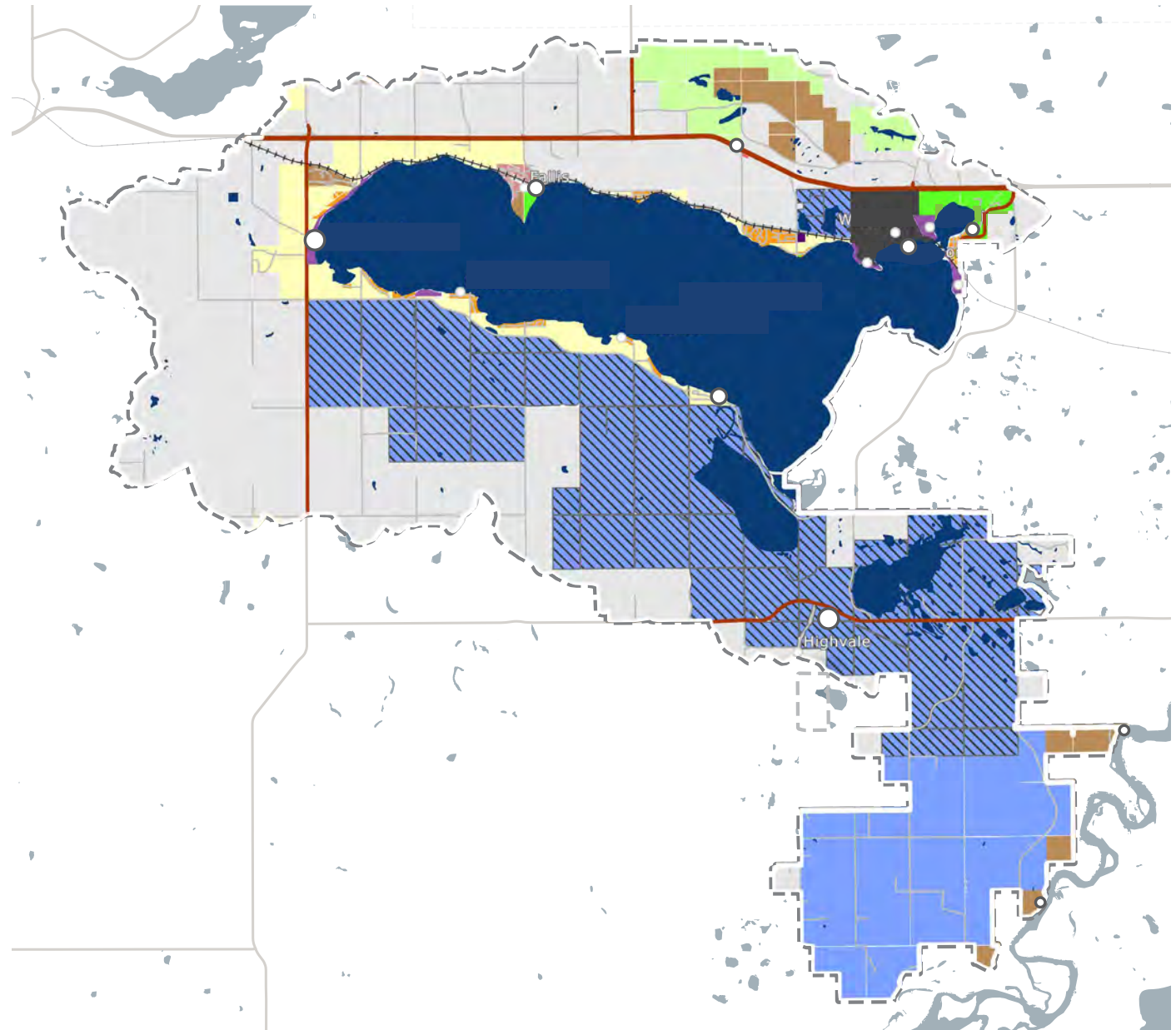
"This hamlet already attracts the summer crowds but with the proper commercial development and more residents to the west it could flourish during the winter as well"

- Engagement participant

Land Use

Legend

-  Wabamun Area
-  Highways
-  Summer Village
- Land Use Districts**
-  Agriculture General District
-  Agriculture/Nature Conservation District
-  Conservation District
-  Country Residential District
-  Lakeshore Residential District
-  Local Commercial District
-  Recreation District
-  Resource Extraction District
-  Rural Centre District
-  Rural Industrial/Commercial District
-  Direct Control



to accommodate future population and amenity growth. Fallis, an identified rural hamlet, is planned to accommodate growth on a site-by-site basis.

The land use policies in this section guide development throughout the County, and support the identified growth areas, residential, commercial, and industrial development, as well as the preservation of agriculture. The goals and policies provided in the Municipal Development Plan are intended to guide development within the County and represent the goals of Council and the community.

Residential Development

Residential areas are categorized under Hamlets and Rural Housing, focused on different land use objectives and policies to support the residential growth needs of the County. Hamlets represent unincorporated urban communities which include a range of land uses, housing types, employment, and amenities to support a local service area. Rural Housing encompasses both lakefront and country residential areas, aimed to provide a variety of affordable housing opportunities to enable residents to ‘age in place’, and access community services and employment.

Summer Villages are small municipalities which have independent long range planning direction tailored to the specific needs of each summer village community. Collectively, residential development aims to support Parkland County residents with diverse opportunities to live in a desirable, healthy and complete community.

Hamlets

The Land Use Bylaw defines a Hamlet as “any area declared by a Bylaw of Parkland County to be a Hamlet.” Within Parkland County there are eight hamlets ranging in population and size. Historically, hamlet growth areas like Wabamun have been driven by infrastructure needs and opportunities for increased servicing capacity. Overall, existing hamlets support a variety of residential built forms such as single detached dwellings, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, low rise apartments (up to four storeys) and manufactured homes; encouraging mixed use development and other compatible land uses to create viable, integrated communities.

Existing policy encourages future greenfield development to support integrated complete communities, encouraging a range of housing types and densities connected to parks and recreational areas. New growth hamlets will require a Hamlet Area Redevelopment Plan (HARP) to guide future development. Currently, land use designations in Wabamun are focused on low density residential, general industrial, commercial and urban reserve districts (See Figure 3). Wabamun Hamlet is in the process of reviewing the Hamlet vision, objectives and land use designations through the HARP exercise to guide future growth and development in Wabamun.

Rural Housing

Rural Housing is categorized into two residential land use districts within the MDP: ‘Country Residential’ and ‘Lakefront Residential’, providing housing options which support complete communities and respect the rural character of the County. The northwestern

“There is a school and shopping within walking distance. It is better to concentrate growth and create walkable neighborhoods.”

- Engagement participant

shore of Wabamun Lake is designated 'Lakefront Residential', planned to accommodate residential development which integrates with the natural riparian areas. Key considerations for future development focus on maintaining the health of the watershed and lake through appropriate mitigation techniques and required technical studies in advance of development. Opportunities for increasing public access to the lake should be considered with new lakefront residential developments, increasing recreational opportunities, and strengthening the connection to the lake.

Summer Villages

The Summer Villages of Seba Beach, Lakeview, Point Alison, Betula Beach and Kapasiwin represent individual municipalities on Wabamun Lake. Each village is unique and provides residential land uses for permanent and seasonal residents. The average permanent population is quite low in these areas, however seasonally each village experiences a population increase through seasonal rental properties and residents. The dominant land use in this area is residential and recreational, incorporating low intensity pathways and trails to support connectivity throughout each village and provide lake access. Limited municipal servicing and sensitive riparian areas create a barrier to future growth opportunities. Most of the land is already developed; therefore, future growth opportunities are limited to the redevelopment of existing structures to accommodate lifestyle needs or energy upgrades. Opportunities for growth and development should focus on increasing connectivity to low-intensity recreation and expanding active travel options and amenities for permanent and seasonal residents.

"I think housing in wabamun should be prioritized for full time residents. Seasonal residents should be close to access amenities but don't actually need to be in the traditional village boundaries."

- Engagement participant

Employment

Agriculture, small/ large businesses, and natural resource industries represent the dominant employment drivers for economic growth in Parkland County. Employment areas are often concentrated in built-up areas such as hamlets or existing business parks with access to municipal and road infrastructure. Within the MDP, Wabamun is designated a 'local employment area' planned to accommodate a concentration of industrial, commercial, and institutional land uses. Existing policy encourages economic diversification to increase the tax base, attract future businesses and provide employment for residents.

Rural industrial /commercial lands represent a small portion of land, concentrated west of Point Alison. Local commercial development is focused in Fallis, providing access to local shops and services which support the daily needs of residents and visitors. Lands within Fallis are also designated 'Rural Centre District' supporting residential and non-residential land uses beyond daily amenities such as automotive shops, bed and breakfasts, cottage industries and community recreational services. Within the Wabamun Area there are emerging opportunities to expand employment lands to increase economic growth through mainstay industries of rural businesses, tourism, agriculture, and industrial/commercial development. The closure of the Wabamun power generation plant presents an exciting opportunity to re-imagine how these lands can be used. New recreational and employment uses are already being contemplated for the area, leveraging the site's access to Yellowhead Highway. Other opportunities such as agricultural value-added uses related to eco-tourism,

or cottage industries, create niche markets to attract visitors and enhance the quality of life for residents in the Wabamun Area.

Agriculture

Agricultural land is a vital part of Parkland County's history and current economic and community life. Approximately 31% of lands in the Wabamun Area are designated 'Rural Agricultural Area', representing a large portion of land in the economic marketplace. Existing policy supports the continued growth and protection of agricultural operations, discouraging lot fragmentation and promoting multi-generational living through farmstead agricultural subdivisions to enable continued farming.

Key agriculture legislation includes the *Agricultural Operations Practices Act* (AOPA) and the *Natural Resources Conservation Board* (NRCB). The AOPA – *Agricultural Operations Practices Act* (AOPA) provides direction and outlines the technical requirements that must be met for confined feeding operations (CFOs) and livestock manure management in Alberta. In addition, the *Natural Resources Conservation Board* (NRCB) delivers the AOPA and represents the process of updating policies, guides, and fact sheets to reflect updated regulations. Within the study boundary there are no lands designated for CFOs therefore existing and future agricultural lands focus on cropland and ranching.

Furthermore, value added agricultural initiatives have grown in popularity as an emerging response to agritourism and other niche markets, providing an alternative to traditional agricultural operations. Recent policy revisions to the Land Use Bylaw have expanded the definition of 'cottage industries' and

added 'wellness centres', expanding development opportunities to enable specialty stores, wineries, breweries, yoga/ meditation retreats and other end uses which protect the agricultural land base and diversify the economy. Residential development on agricultural lands is characterized by limited low density dwellings, providing only necessary housing to support rural living while protecting land for agriculture operations and production. New subdivisions should be clustered together to mitigate lot fragmentation and protect the most agriculturally viable land for operations and farming.

3.4 Transportation and Mobility

The Wabamun Lake area is well serviced through provincial and county road infrastructure to support mobility and connectivity throughout Wabamun. The site is bound by several provincial highways: Highway 16 (Yellowhead Highway) to the north, Highway 31 to the west, Highway 627 to the south and Paul First Nation to the east. This section summarizes existing road and active travel infrastructure, highlighting corridors to support future growth and development and opportunities to enhance existing mobility networks.

Provincial Highways

Highway 16 (Yellowhead Highway) represents the primary four-lane transportation corridor operating east-west directly north of Wabamun Lake (See Figure 4). Highway 16 forms part of the national Trans-Canada Highway network with controlled interchanges at Range Road 35 (Kapasiwin and Wabamun Lake Provincial Park), Road 40B (Wabamun Hamlet) and Highway 31 (Seba Beach). Numerous other uncontrolled intersections along Highway 16 provide access to other County Range Roads and Secondary Highway 765 (Darwell).

Other Highways around Wabamun Lake include:

- + Highway 31/759, a paved two-lane corridor which operates from Highway 16 south through Seba Beach and eventually connects to Highway 38, east of Drayton Valley
- + Highway 31 changes to Highway 759 at the south limit of Seba Beach




- + Highway 627 represents a two-lane corridor parallel to Wabamun Lake which extends from the City of Edmonton west to Highway 759
- + Highway 759 provides direct connectivity to major landmarks such as Sundance and Keephills generating stations; and
- + Highway 765 represents a paved, two-lane corridor located between the Wabamun Hamlet and Seba Beach
- + Highway 759 Looking North Towards Seba Beach

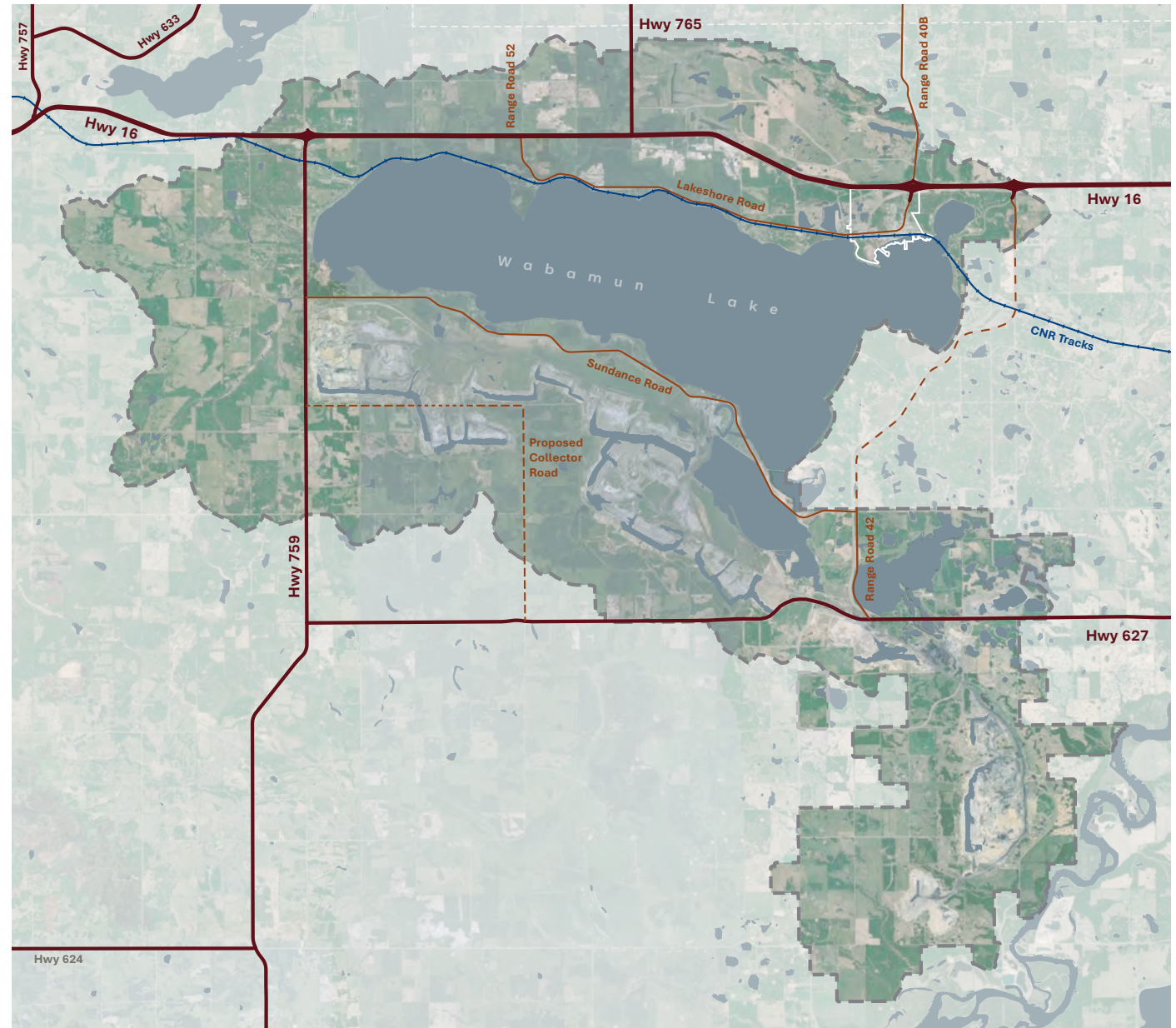
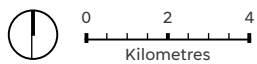
Rural Roadways

Parkland County operates and maintains a local road network consisting of Range Roads (north-south) and Township roads (east-west) which are characterized by two-lane rural cross sections with gravel and paved surfaces. The grid system roadway is supplemented by Lakeshore Road and Sundance Road which are paved, two-lane roadways that provide primary access to recreational properties along the north and south Lakeshore. Wabamun Hamlet roads are often constructed with an urban cross section complete with pedestrian sidewalks and sufficient space for on-street parking. The Fallis Hamlet roadways are often narrower and paved with a rural cross section. Seba Beach Summer Village consists of narrow paved roadways with a rural cross section. Typically, Summer Villages include narrow gravel roadways with private residential properties characterized by narrow paved roadways. Wabamun Provincial Park, located in the northeast corner of the study area and accessed from

Major Transportation Corridors

Legend

-  Provincial Roadways
-  County Roadways
-  CNR Tracks



“Walking and hiking trails for non motorized activities is currently missing for visitors, seasonal and permanent visitors. This area is large enough to incorporate at least 20 km of trails for physical activity to promote health and wellness.”

- Engagement participant

Township Road 531B is characterized by narrow and paved roadways with gravel parking lots at the park and beach.

Cycling and pedestrian networks

Paved and gravel roadways represent the primary transportation infrastructure available in the Wabamun area with pedestrian walkways focused in Wabamun Hamlet and Seba Beach. Additional elements of active transportation include the following:

- + A beachside boardwalk and trail system in Wabamun Lake Provincial Park
- + Concrete sidewalks on one or both sides of the roadways in Wabamun Hamlet
- + Asphalt shared-use pathways on the south side of 54 Avenue and north side of 56 Avenue in Wabamun Hamlet
- + A narrow asphalt path on the north side of 51 Avenue/Lakeshore Drive between 53 Street and 55 Street in Wabamun Hamlet

- + Concrete sidewalks on 1st Avenue North and South and 4 Street South in Seba Beach
- + Three public boat launches, including Wabamun Provincial Park, Wabamun Hamlet lakefront and a new launch currently under construction north of Sundance Road near the Sundance Generating Station. There is no public boat launch in Seba Beach.

From a cycling perspective, there are limited opportunities within the Wabamun area. Existing road infrastructure operates at high speeds, creating an unsafe environment for on-street cycling (100km/hr or 110km/hr) with limited room on the shoulder. Local, paved county roads represent a more appropriate location, however are limited given speed limits remain high (80km/hr) with limited shoulder space. Opportunities to enhance existing active transportation routes should be explored to increase connectivity between existing roadways, create new connections throughout the Wabamun Area and support active travel, recreation, and healthy living.

Enhancement Opportunities

- + Consider installation of an asphalt pavement surface for the remaining gravel section of Lakeshore Road east of Fallis.
- + Consider the extension of Range Road 52 to connect Highway 627 and Sundance Road.
- + Widening of Lakeshore Road and Sundance Road to provide adequate shoulder space to accommodate cyclists and pedestrians or construct a 3.0 metre shared-use path along one side of Lakeshore Road and Sundance Road.
- + Review opportunities to create a shared pathway along the perimeter of Wabamun Lake including missing connections such as:
 - + Shared-use path through Wabamun Hamlet and Summer Village of Seba Beach
 - + Shared-use path between 1 Avenue S in Seba Beach and Sunshine Bay Road
 - + Shared-use path between Fallis and Seba Beach possibly following the CNR tracks or using the Trans Mountain pipeline corridor south of Highway 16
 - + Partnering with Wabamun Lake Provincial Park to provide a continuous active transportation corridor to connect the Wabamun Hamlet with Range Road 35A
- + Partnering with the Paul First Nation to provide an active transportation corridor around the east side of the lake
- + Review opportunities to narrow the pavement width in the Wabamun Hamlet on 50 Street, 51 Avenue, 52 Avenue and 52 Street in the central business district to improve pedestrian and cycling opportunities, enhance the landscaping and urban realm
- + Enhance the intersection of 50 Street and 51 Avenue to improve active transportation use and safety. Review the opportunity for a roundabout



3.5 Servicing and Utilities

Servicing and Utility Alignments

The Wabamun Lake study area is primarily a rural area with concentrated clusters of residential and other land uses in the Wabamun Hamlet, Hamlet of Fallis and summer village of Seba Beach. In addition, the Wabamun Lake shoreline is lined on the north, south and west by small subdivisions consisting of private residential/recreational properties. Public urban services, such as potable water, sanitary sewers and storm sewers are only present in the Wabamun Hamlet. Other locations in the study area rely on rural well and septic systems. Due to the area's dominant use for power generation, there are significant overhead power transmission corridors. In addition, the Trans Mountain pipeline crosses the study area, plus significant natural gas pipeline and distribution networks.

Urban Services

The only location in the study area with urban services is Wabamun Hamlet. An underground sanitary sewer system provides individual lot services to all properties. The sewer network drains to a sanitary lift station on 51 Avenue, east of 49 Street. Sewage is pumped and conveyed in a 5 km long force main north on 50 Street and Range Road 40B to a sewage lagoon located at Township Road 534. Discussions have been initiated with Parkland County to review the current condition and capacity of the lift station, force main and lagoon system.

An underground storm sewer system provides a capture and conveyance system for stormwater runoff from the roadways and properties in the Hamlet. The concrete curbs are fitted with catch basins at regular intervals to capture and convey runoff to the storm sewer. The storm sewer system outlets directly to Wabamun Lake east of 50 Street and south of the CNR tracks. There is no evidence of stormwater management, including water quantity or quality control, prior to runoff discharge to the lake.

The Hamlet potable water supply is provided by the West Inter Lake District (WILD) Regional Water Services Commission. WILD purchases treated water from the Capital Region Parkland Water Services Commission. The water supply to the Hamlet is based on a 300 L/c/d demand and 3.0% growth up to the year 2043. The Wabamun metering station and reservoir are located on 53 Street north of 51 Avenue. The Hamlet storage, pumping, distribution, and firefighting system is operated and maintained by Parkland County. Hydrants are provided at regular intervals throughout the Hamlet for fire protection. A new fire and emergency services station is located on 52 Avenue east of 50 Street.

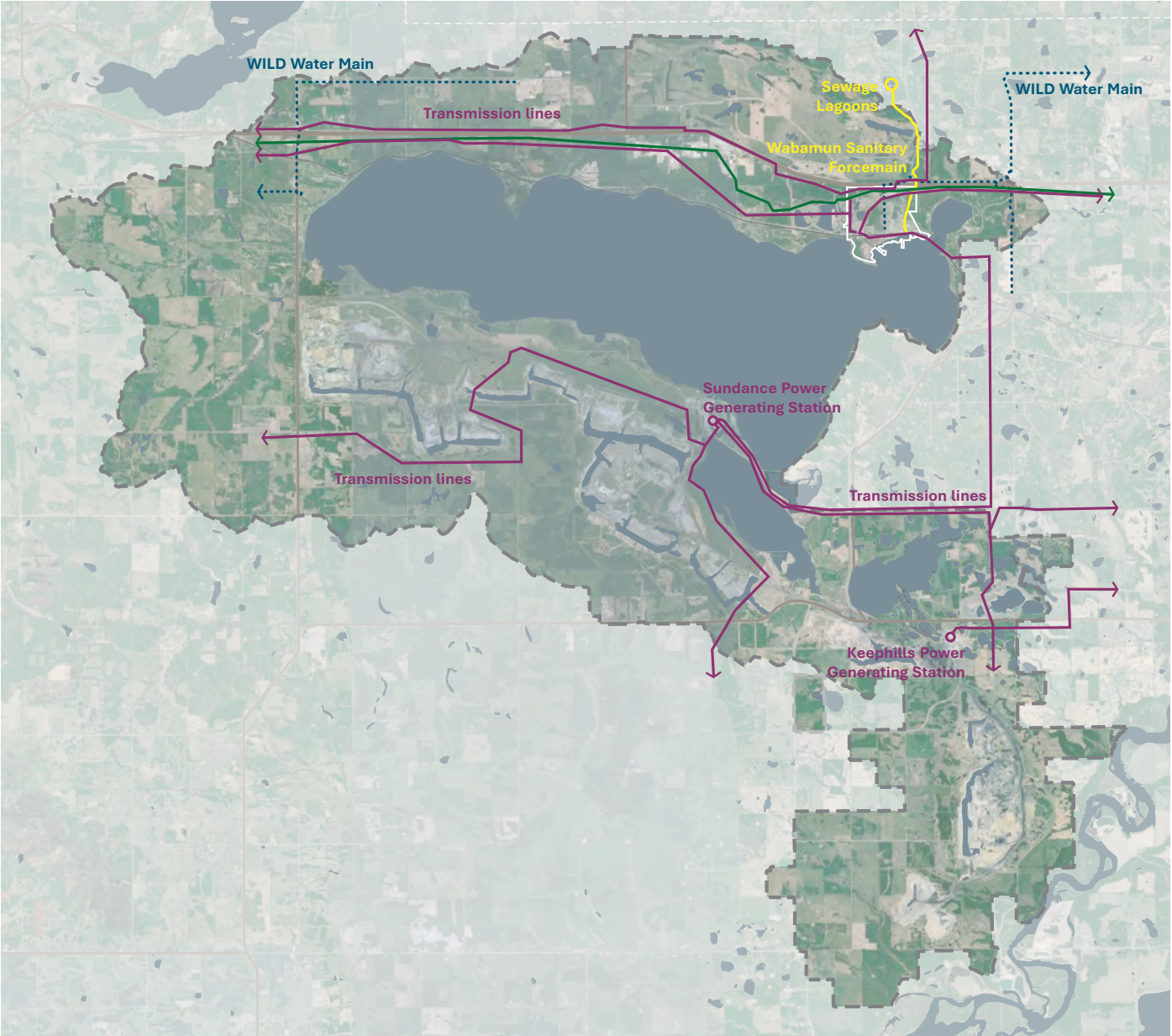
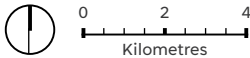
The Hamlet is also serviced with power, telecommunications, and natural gas infrastructure. Power and telecommunications are supplied on overhead lines and utility poles throughout the Hamlet. Power infrastructure is provided by Fortis Alberta, while a range of operators offer telecommunications services in the Hamlet. Natural gas infrastructure is operated and maintained by West Parkland Gas Co-Op.

Map 10

Major Utility Infrastructure

Legend

- Provincial Roadways
- Country Roadways
- CNR Tracks



Rural Services

Rural properties make up the vast majority of the study area. These properties obtain their potable water supplies primarily using drilled wells and dispose their sewage using lot-level systems. Sewage generation is addressed using septic tanks which are pumped out at regular intervals or septic fields, depending on location, available area, and soil conditions. The West Inter Lake District (WILD) Regional Water Services Commission currently operates and sells potable water through two bulk truck fill locations in the study area; one on Range Road 35 near Wabamun Lake Provincial Park, 1 km south of Highway 16 and a second on Highway 31 near Seba Beach, 1.5 km south of Highway 16.

Similar to the urban areas, rural areas in the study area are serviced with power, telecommunications and natural gas infrastructure. Power infrastructure is provided by Fortis Alberta, while a range of operators offer telecommunications services. Natural gas infrastructure is operated and maintained by West Parkland Gas Co-Op.

Major Utility Corridors

The Wabamun Lake study area also acts as a regional corridor for several major pipelines including:

- + The existing Trans Mountain pipeline. This line is currently being twinned along the existing corridor, located just south of Highway 16 but north of Wabamun Lake.
- + Various West Parkland Gas Co-op natural gas pipeline facilities supplying local distribution systems in the study area and surrounding region.
- + Various ATCO Gas and Pipelines natural gas pipeline facilities supplying the region and the Sundance and Keephills power generating stations.
- + A TransAlta natural gas pipeline under Wabamun Lake supplying the Sundance power generating station.
- + Various smaller natural gas pipeline facilities.
- + The Wabamun Lake study area is also known for its power generation capabilities. The Sundance and Keephills power generating stations supply power to a combination of 138 kV, 240 kV and 500 kV power transmission line corridors that cross the study area and provide a major contribution to the supply and continuity of the power grid in the province.

Utility Enhancement Opportunities

- + The Wabamun Lake study area is well serviced by both power and natural gas infrastructure due to the Sundance and Keephills generating stations. Due to the rural nature of the study area, there are limited urban services related to potable water, sanitary sewers and storm sewers. Potential improvements to the utility network include:
 - + Review the condition and capacity of the Wabamun Hamlet sanitary lift station, force main and sewage lagoons to determine expansion possibilities for the Hamlet.
 - + Review the opportunity to install permanent sanitary sewers, lift stations, force mains and a regional treatment facility. This depends on the desire to enhance existing residential/recreational nodes, such as Fallis, Seba Beach and possibly Sundance.
 - + Review the opportunity to provide a low-pressure sanitary force main system to properties along the lakeshore connected to a regional treatment facility.
- + Undertake discussions with WILD on an extension of their watermain transmission system to the existing residential/recreational nodes, such as Fallis, Seba Beach and possibly Sundance. This could be supplemented by the installation of a local potable water supply and firefighting network.
- + Review the quality of the broadband internet infrastructure in the study area and investigate the opportunity for improvements.
- + Introduce stormwater management practices in the Wabamun Hamlet, such as Low Impact Development (LID) or stormwater management facilities, such as stormwater pond and constructed wetlands, to improve water quality prior to discharge into Wabamun Lake.
- + Review servicing needs for potential commercial, employment and industrial lands.

“I am in favour of renewable energy development as long as it doesn’t harm the lake.”

- Engagement participant



3.6 Tourism and Recreation

The Wabamun Area is rich in attractive, natural landscapes which provide a variety of recreation, tourism, and cultural amenities to support active, healthy communities. The waterfront area of Wabamun creates a diverse anchor amenity, supporting a variety of activities in connection with the Wabamun Marina and Wabamun Provincial Park Area. Most residents in Wabamun live within an 8-kilometre drive to high quality, well utilized amenities such as day parks, community libraries, water activities, active trails for hiking and biking, and community halls to support active living, community growth and identity.

Traditionally, tourism has been centralized around the waterfront; attracting day users, campers, and summer residents to enjoy the diversity of activities afforded by water access to Wabamun Lake. Two public boat launches located at the Wabamun Marina, and Wabamun Provincial Park Area provide vital amenities and infrastructure supporting water-based activities, diversifying available activities beyond traditional outdoor camping and accessory activities. The provincial park attracts a variety of visitors, providing 276 campground and RV sites and three group day use areas for sports activities, water sports and nature trails. Tourism remains an important sector to the Wabamun area, supporting the local economy and contributing to the community identity afforded by the beautiful natural landscapes and activities Wabamun has to offer. Diversifying recreation and tourism amenities to increase year-round activities can

expand the Wabamun brand identity as a mainstay attraction year-round and help to increase employment opportunities.

There are several mainstay cultural amenities in Wabamun which create welcoming environments to support learning, cultural heritage, and create a sense of community. Locally, cultural amenities have centred around education and community-based facilities such as Wabamun Community Hall or Wabamun Library. On a regional level, the Tri-Municipal Regional Plan recommends several cultural initiatives to boost cultural programming. Opportunities to leverage public arts programs and host a cultural summit can elevate cultural heritage and strengthen sense of community throughout the region. Previous engagement conducted by Parkland County concluded cultural amenities have received less funding compared to parks and recreation amenities (Parks, Recreation and Cultural Master Plan, PC, 2017). Therefore, re-imagining Wabamun creates an opportunity to explore the most effective strategy to leverage existing amenities and expand services to support permanent residents and visitors.

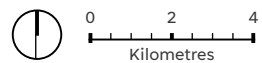
Inventory

A Total of 63 recreation, culture and tourism amenities were captured in the Wabamun Area. Recreation and tourism amenities represent most available services in the Wabamun area, focusing on outdoor activities centred around Wabamun Lake and Wabamun Provincial Park. As noted in the map below (Refer to Figure 5), the Wabamun Area encompasses a variety of activities which provide both a recreation amenity for

Recreation Inventory

Legend

-  Boat Access
-  Boat Launch
-  Bowling
-  Curling
-  Day Use
-  Golf
-  Marina
-  Outdoor Rink
-  Playground
-  Shooting Range
-  Sports Field
-  Spray Park
-  Yacht/Sailing Club
-  Campground
-  Group Camp
-  Hotel
-  RV
-  Cemetery
-  Church
-  Cultural Feature
-  Library
-  Museum
-  School
-  Farmer's Market
-  Tourist Attraction
- Protected Areas**
-  Other Crown Lands
-  Provincial Natural Area
-  Provincial Grazing Reserve
-  Wabamun Lake Provincial Park
-  Municipal Conservation Areas
-  Lands Owned/Managed by Conservation Organizations



permanent residents and provide a tourism attraction for visitors. Culturally there are limited facilities available, emphasizing a potential need to enhance existing services to support permanent residents and visitors.

Recreation

Mainstay recreation activities are often outdoors, available in the spring/summer and centred around Wabamun Lake and Wabamun Provincial Park. Within the study area, there are over 20 activities available to support active and passive recreation, enabling healthy communities. Indoor facilities are limited, creating additional demand for residents to access facilities outside of the Wabamun area.

Cultural Heritage Features and Community Culture

Cultural heritage comprises of built heritage buildings and places hosting cultural events such as live music, dance and crafts. There are minimal built heritage facilities in Wabamun, with most facilities providing a gathering space to enable education, history and performing arts. The Wabamun area hosts two key events at Wabamun Lake attracting residents from outside of the Wabamun area to celebrate Indigenous history, watch musical performances and experience a fun-filled day for the entire family. Several additional festivals are located outside of the Wabamun area, drawing residents to nearby communities and cities to enjoy cultural events.

Tourism

Wabamun Lake is a vital tourism anchor to attract visitors throughout Alberta to enjoy various beaches, campgrounds, and outdoor activities. The Wabamun Lake Provincial Park is a highly utilized amenity, centralizing accommodation through 276 campgrounds and day use areas for large groups to enjoy various outdoor activities. Two active boat launches located at Wabamun Pier, and the Wabamun Provincial Park support various water and boating activities for residents and visitors. A new boat launch located south of Wabamun Lake, Wabamun Sundance Boat Dock Launch, has been approved and is currently under design. The additional boat launch will increase public access to the lake and accommodate increased tourism and recreation needs. Additional tourism amenities are required to attract visitors year-round, ultimately expanding amenities for residents and creating a larger economic benefit for Wabamun.

Tourism and Recreation Enhancement Opportunities

The size of Wabamun Lake facilitates both passive and active forms of tourism – enabling picnicking and bird watching while participating in various physical activities through water sports and camping. The closure of the Highvale Mine presents an opportunity to explore adaptive reuse to increase recreation and tourism activities in the Wabamun area. As of January 2022, the Highvale Mine has shifted operations to full-time reclamation with the goal of reclaiming the 12,600 hectares of land by 2046. Reclaimed land presents a unique opportunity to re-imagine the highest and best use of the TransAlta lands to enable a variety of

year-round activities currently unavailable or under serviced in the Wabamun Area. Leveraging nature-based recreation and tourism has been highly successful in postindustrial landscapes such as Freshkills landfill in Staten Island or Landschafts Park in Germany. The Highvale Mine has a unique history which can be leveraged to create a destination attraction to complement Wabamun Lake. Nature-based recreation and tourism connects people to places, creating an experience beyond a singular attraction. Future end uses at Highvale mine support the creation of a diverse landscape to allow a variety of interconnected activities while respecting existing riparian areas and wildlife associated with end pit lakes.

New amenities

- + Develop an outdoor adventure hub in areas of reclaimed lands which considers the following:
 - + Non-motorized and motorized trails to support mountain biking, cross country skiing/snowshoeing, biking, running and nature walks
 - + Non-motorized water access for end pit lakes to support water activities like kayaking, canoeing and paddle-boarding
 - + Front-Country Camping including a designated RV area to expand available camping sites
 - + Utilize outdoor park space to create outdoor rinks in the winter for skating and ice hockey
 - + Create a multi-purpose space for gathering and social activities, to support concerts, markets, and festivals etc.
 - + Explore the potential for a wellness resort/spa in Wabamun Hamlet

- + Opportunities to collaborate with Tri-regional partners of Stony Plain and Spruce Grove to collaborate on funding cultural activities (public art programs, music, networking opportunities)

Enhancing existing amenities/ services

- + Expand community awareness of available services through online platforms (social media, County website)
- + Increase trail signage and visitor amenities (wayfinding, garbage bins, street furniture)
- + Enhance Park and trail utility to maximize use (e.g., education and interpretive programming, partnerships with schools for nature hikes, outdoor education etc.)
- + Invest in upgrades to existing indoor facilities such as Wabamun arena

Key considerations when reviewing opportunities for growth include access, cost to the user and availability of services. Expanding amenities and services in Wabamun should not result in hardship borne solely by Parkland County or permanent residents. Proposed recommendations can be phased over time and developed through public or private investments with the end goal to enhance the lives and experiences for the Wabamun community and all who visit.

“These are areas being reclaimed from past mining activity and should readily lend itself to ATV and Snowmobile use.”

- Engagement participant

3.7 Residential and Recreation Market Conditions

Overview

The following section provides highlights from an assessment market conditions in the Wabamun Area for full time residential and recreational properties. For a more detailed and comprehensive report, please see Appendix F.

Full Time Residential

Parkland County is an active regional hub, however small areas such as Seba Beach, Wabamun and Betula Beach have slower year-to-date activity. Based on the Greater Edmonton Real Estate Association, there are limited new builds year over year in Wabamun highlighting the historic lack of new housing development:

- + 98.9% of residents live in single family units (rental and for sale) creating a highly homogeneous housing stock.
- + Single family residential demand forecasts predict a slight decline in single family homes between 2020-2050, with a slight increase in multi-unit living.

Average sale prices in rural areas continue to increase, suggesting a potential marketplace for multi-unit dwellings in rural communities. However, average rural housing prices in the greater Edmonton area remain more affordable than comparable rural properties or recreational properties elsewhere in Alberta.

Forecasted Market Demand by 2050 for the identified Wabamun/ Parkland County Trade Area forecasts approximately 6,240 Single Family Units including an estimated 15% of demand anticipated from outside of the Trade Area.

Full time residential nodes will likely be targeted towards existing areas as well as possible new resort-growth areas where a mix of seasonal residential may likely be prevalent:

- + Wabamun Hamlet and Point Allison
- + Fallis
- + Seba Beach, and
- + Betula Beach

Single family residential for full time residents is a strong opportunity for the Wabamun Area Vision and could be located in a few targeted areas around the lake to varying degrees, pending compatibility with seasonal residents and amenities. Several market share scenarios (conservative, moderate and aggressive) would dictate the total forecasted land required for new single family residential development.

Single Family Home Growth Projections

Conservative

Assuming an estimated single family density of 3 units per acre (which would account for an average range of formats from estate housing to lower density lots, and a provision of smaller lot single family homes), the total

forecasted land required for single family residential at a conservative market share of 35% would be in the range of 730 acres (295.4 ha).

Moderate

Assuming an estimated single family density of 3 units per acre (which would account for an average range of formats from estate housing to lower density lots, and a provision of smaller lot single family homes), the total forecasted land required for single family residential at a moderate market share of 50% would be in the range of 1,040 acres (420.9 ha).

Aggressive

Assuming an estimated single family density of 3 units per acre (which would account for an average range of formats from estate housing to lower density lots, and a provision of smaller lot single family homes), the total forecasted land required for single family residential at aggressive market share of 65% would be in the range of 1,350 acres (546.3 ha).

Multi-Unit Residential Demand

Multi-unit residential is not forecasted to be a major component of the desired residential format in Wabamun based on current market pricing of residential. However, if residential price points escalate, as can be the case in recreational resort communities (e.g. Sylvan Lake, Canmore etc.), there may be an opening for greater demand in multi-unit housing. Regardless, the land needs are not expected to be great and most of this housing will be desirable in and around the Wabamun Hamlet. Assuming only modest growth in the ratio of multi-unit to single family units, forecasted

Market Demand by 2050 for the identified Wabamun/ Parkland County Trade Area in the order of only 54 Multi-Units including an estimated 5% of demand anticipated from outside of the Trade Area.

The reality of the multi-unit market is that single family residential price points will dictate the future share or ratio of multi-unit housing, so this future figure could likely change after the next 10-year horizon and may need to be revisited.

Recreational Property

2022 has shown a continued recovery in sales for “Acreages with homes” and “Vacant Acreage and Recreational” properties in the greater Edmonton region, resulting in quicker selling times for those desirable properties

Existing market conditions emphasize a limited supply of “recreational housing”, implying there is demand for housing in areas which provide recreational amenities

Average sale prices in rural areas continue to increase suggesting a potential marketplace for multi-unit dwellings in rural communities however average rural housing prices remain more affordable than comparable rural properties or recreational properties elsewhere in Alberta

“If Wabamun townsite gets a few more working class homes, apartments, row houses and some more commercial it could become a semi self-sustained viable, even walkable town again after the plant closures. But not if everything is spread out with new developments at highway junctions 4km away from town.”

- Engagement participant







4 Development Opportunities

4.1 Defining Suitability

To help inform land use decisions in Wabamun, a model was crafted that assessed the spatial suitability of a range of development opportunities. 9 distinct strategic development opportunities were identified:

- + Full-Time Residential
- + Vacation Residential
- + Destination Resort
- + Commercial and Light Industrial
- + Energy and Production
- + Motorized Recreation
- + Non-Motorized Recreation
- + Agriculture
- + Reclaimed/ Natural Areas

The model generated a suitability map for each use based on a range of variables mapped across the site. Each development type in the list was profiled, identifying both push and pull factors influencing its suitability across the landscape. Commercial, for example, benefits from proximity to existing commercial, road and servicing. Using these inputs, the model created a summary ‘heat-map’ showing the range of suitability

Each development type in the list was profiled, identifying both push and pull factors influencing its suitability across the landscape.

for each use across the site. These maps provide a generalized sketch of where each use might be most appropriate into the future. Rather than be a strict directive, they formed a scaffolding for additional conversation and review.

Inputs to the model included market analysis, current land use, stakeholder engagement, and the desktop analysis work completed in earlier phases.

The nine opportunities were also reviewed against the evaluation framework of the draft pillars to ensure appropriate ‘fit’ and confirm that they supported the vision’s intent. The following chapter provides profiles of each development opportunity followed by the results of the suitability mapping exercise.

4.2 Natural Areas

Intent

The ongoing growth and success of the Wabamun Area—across all pillars of the vision—is premised on well-connected, beautiful natural areas, and a clean and healthy lake. Emerging from the natural systems analysis, this first layer of suitability sets out the “defense-first” strategy. Subsequent development opportunities are modelled to avoid high-quality natural areas as a component of their suitability.

Opportunity Highlights

- + Extensive natural land cover is located within and around the Wabamun area, but existing land uses have fragmented these natural lands over time.
- + The reclamation of the disturbed Highvale mine area will see the creation of important habitats including forests, shrub-lands, grasslands, riparian vegetation, along with stream channels and lakes, which will improve the natural functioning of the regional landscape.
- + Natural habitats will provide important contributions to the region via their scenic quality and recreational potential, creating an attractive destination for full-time residents and visitors.
- + Intact riparian vegetation should be maintained around all streams and waterbodies to minimize runoff from the surrounding landscape and maintain or improve water quality throughout the area.
- + High water quality is an essential aspect of recreational use of the region’s waterbodies, providing attractive draws into the region for swimming, fishing, and wildlife viewing.

- + By maintaining natural lands around the lakeshore and along streambanks, agricultural run-off into water courses will be reduced, biodiversity will be increased, and the inherent scenic quality and sense of naturalness will be maintained.
- + Sustainable development of this area must ensure a more connected corridor between existing natural areas to the north, west, and east, and the North Saskatchewan River Valley to the southeast.
- + Connected corridors of vegetation will reduce the likelihood of wildlife crossing attempts and vehicle collisions, minimizing public safety risks.

- + The impact of motorized travel along the primary highways on wildlife movement should be minimized through wildlife crossing structures where feasible (and aligned with planned road maintenance projects).
- + These crossing structures may serve double duty providing active transportation connections across busy highways for the recreational trail network.

The ongoing growth and success of the Wabamun Area—across all pillars of the vision—is premised on well-connected, beautiful natural areas and a clean and healthy lake.

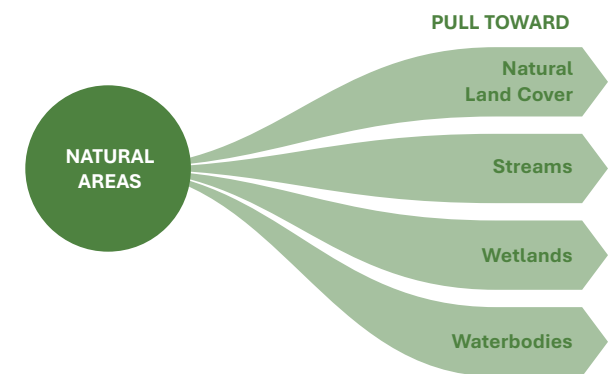
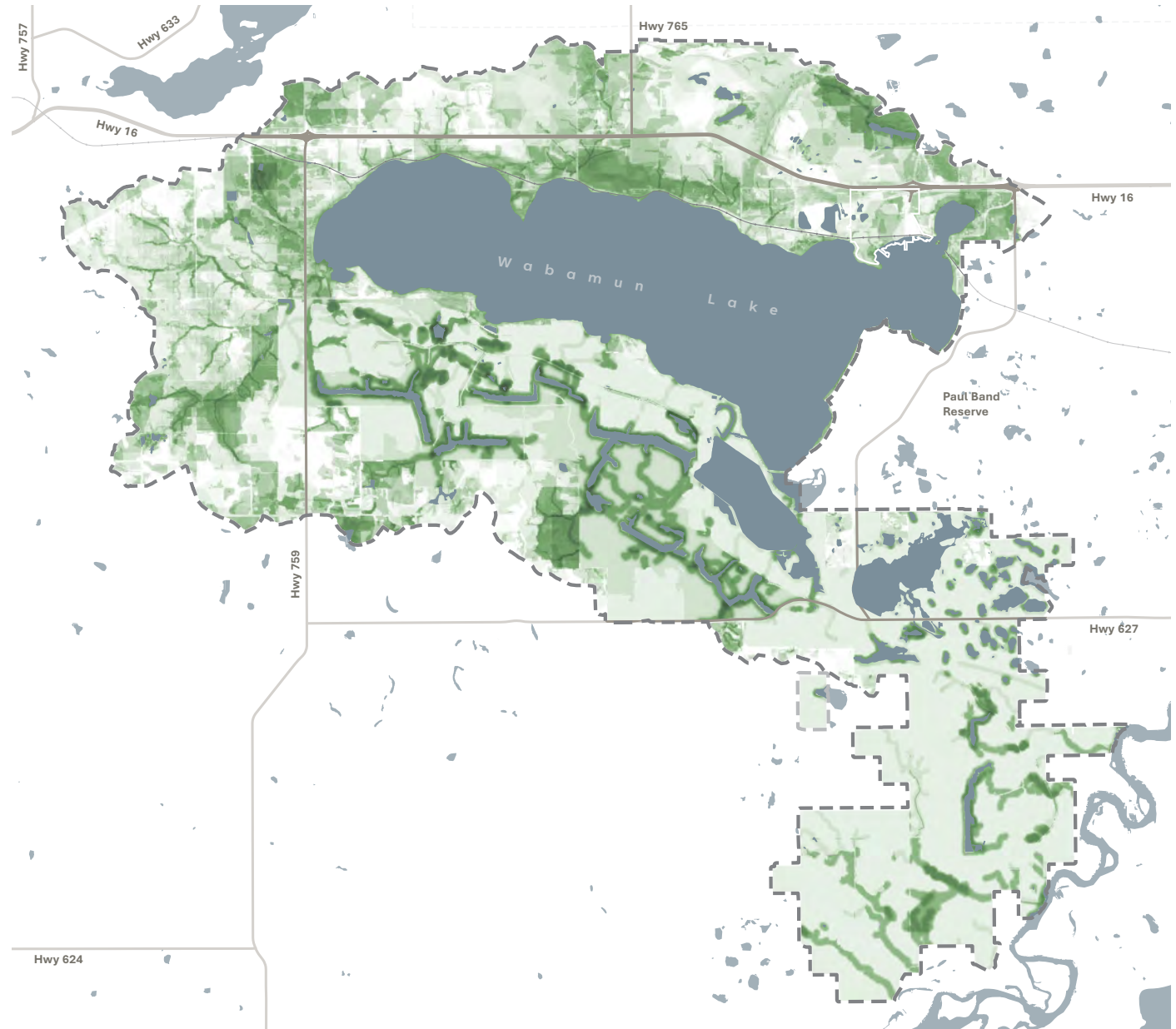
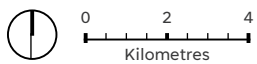
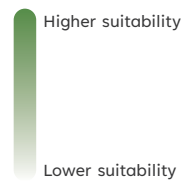


Fig 6. Suitability influences – natural areas

Map 12

Natural Area Suitability

Legend



4.3 Full-time Residential

Intent

Many of the project's goals can be indirectly achieved through strategically increasing full-time residential stock. Available housing signals the area is growing and can accommodate new development and new population. New multi-unit housing, seniors housing and single detached dwellings cater to a variety of individuals attracted to lakeside life. The increase in population from new residential creates a ripple effect to generate higher tax revenues and justify additional investment in recreational amenities, services, and employment.

Opportunity Highlights

- + Wabamun is a priority growth hamlet, creating a unique opportunity to target County investment towards this area to bring a variety of full-time residential options to the Hamlet.
- + Increasing housing stock signals community growth and generates tax revenue required to justify and support increased community services and amenities, contributing to an improved quality of life.
- + Diversifying the housing stock contributes to affordable housing to combat the rising costs of living, and supports a range of lifestyles and incomes.
- + Remote working has allowed individuals to live further from urban centres, creating demand to live in amenity rich areas that provide recreational opportunities more supportive of a balanced work/play lifestyle.

- + Potential for mixed-use development to stimulate economic diversification and provide additional commercial services to support existing and future populations.
- + Upcoming policy development (HARP) and changes to the Land Use Bylaw expand end use permissions for niche markets (wellness centre/ cottage industry) to enable these specialty services to be discretionary in residential areas – contributing to mixed use communities.
- + Public engagement has identified the need for increased single-family dwellings and opportunities for seniors housing to support aging population and fill a gap in the market.

- + Opportunity for seniors housing through private investment, marketing 'lake living' for baby boomers (existing demographic confirms there is a quantifiable market demand to support aging in place population).

Key Recommendations

- + Include mixed use development as a land use within the Hamlet of Wabamun to create immediate opportunities for additional commercial services.
- + Increase end use permissions of multi-unit housing for seniors/ older adults, however this may require private investment to ensure implementation.

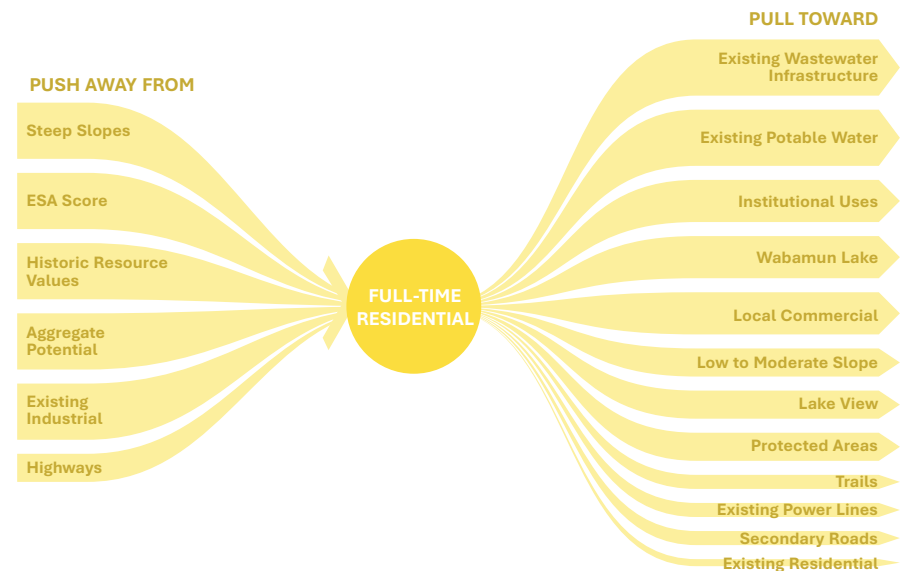
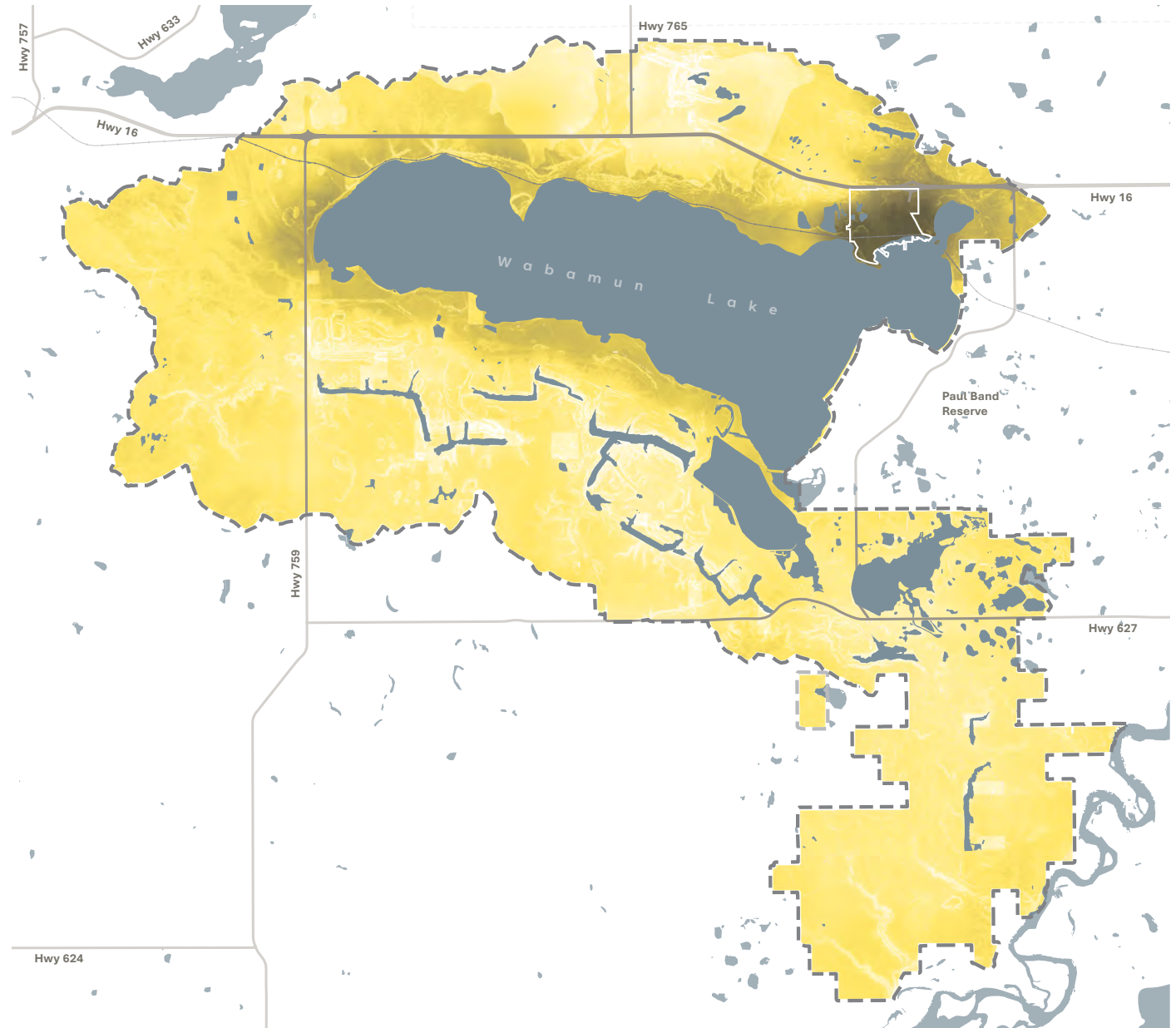
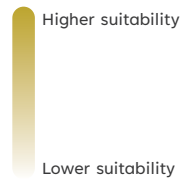


Fig 7. Suitability influences – full time residential

Map 13

Full-time Residential Suitability

Legend



4.4 Vacation Residential

Intent

Several of the project's pillars are achieved directly or indirectly through increasing the amount of available vacation residential lands. From a regulatory perspective, locating future vacation residential in prime recreation areas, near future recreation and resort development creates an activity node and re-brands the Wabamun identity as an attractive and 'must visit' lakeside community. Community growth is achieved seasonally; however as vacation opportunities increase, and mainstay employment increases, there is the potential for individuals to re-locate into full-time residential areas or purchase vacation homes.

Opportunity Highlights

- + Historically, lakeside communities represent an attractive opportunity for second home buyers.
- + Opportunity to provide affordable vacation rentals / vacation residential to alleviate the affordability crisis.
- + Vacation rentals and cottage living has grown in popularity throughout the COVID-19 pandemic as remote working continues and the growing desire to access nature and recreational amenities increases in popularity.
- + Opportunity to re-imagine Wabamun as the 'must visit' lakeside community, bustling with activity and events.

- + Market analysis concluded the market is generally limited in supply of affordable, strategically located vacation residential in proximity to urban centres.
- + From a land use perspective, future development can be accommodated in lands designated 'Rural Agriculture Area' and 'Prime Recreation and Tourism Area'.

Key Recommendations

- + Diversify vacation residential through manufactured homes and exploring different built forms such as tiny homes to enable an affordable vacation experience.

- + Increase market supply of affordable vacation residential to address the affordability crisis and enable first time home buyers, seniors or singles the opportunity to enter the housing market.

Vacation residential in prime recreation areas helps re-brand the Wabamun identity as a 'must visit' lakeside community.

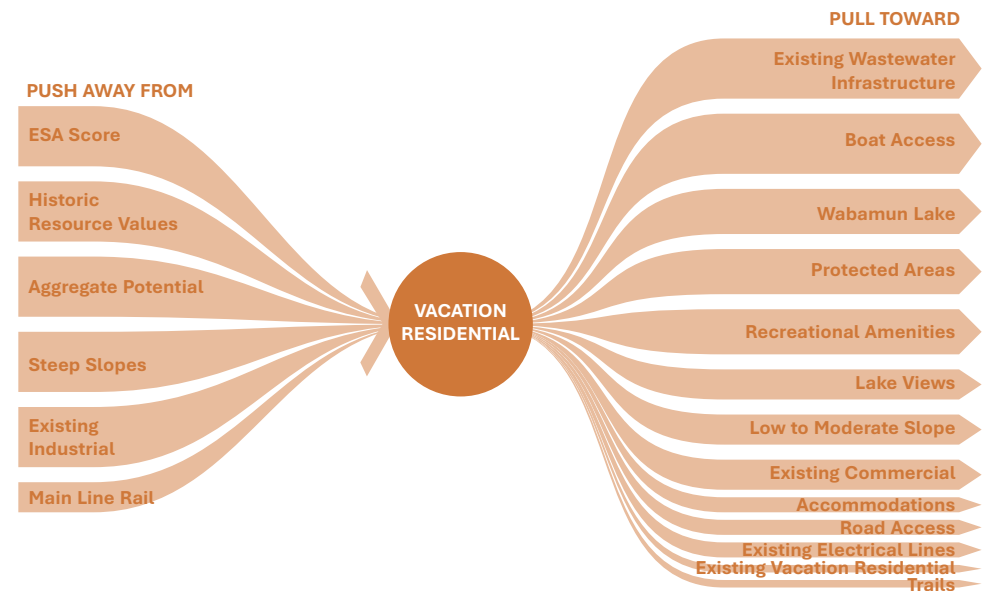
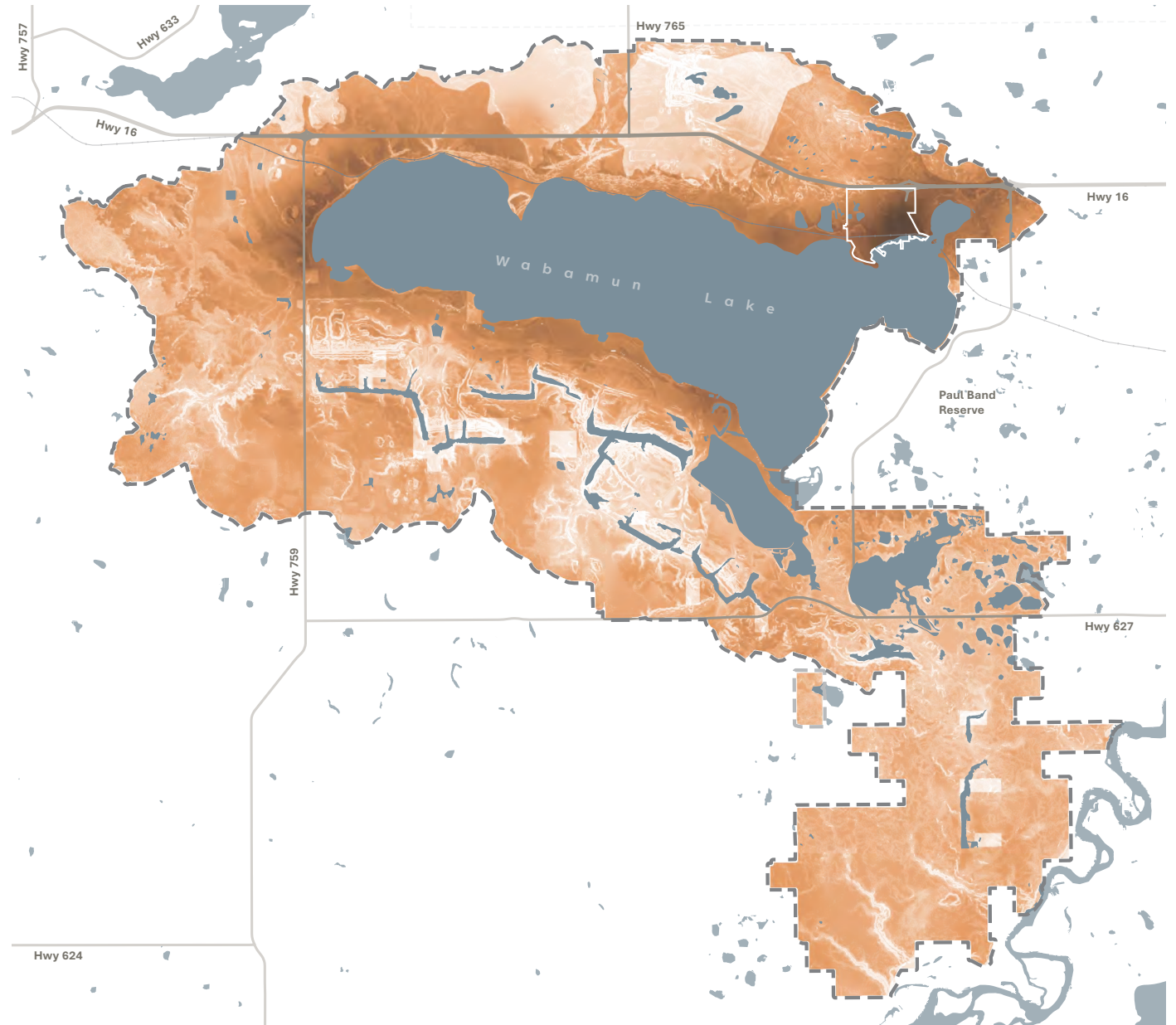
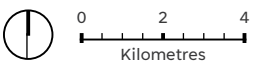
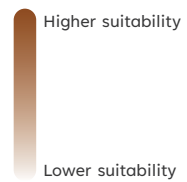


Fig 8. Suitability influences – vacation residential

Map 14

Vacation Residential Suitability

Legend



4.5 Destination Resort

Intent

Many pillars are achieved directly by the enhancement of natural spaces and creation of recreational/ tourism employment. Creating a variety of outdoor/ rec amenities attracts a broader demographic and re-brands Wabamun as a fun, thriving town with something for everyone.

Opportunity Highlights

- + Opportunity for new anchor industries: future spa/ wellness centre located at Alison Point to attract year-round investment and tourism.
- + Other recreational amenities to enhance the destination resort brand such as an ATV Park, mountain biking trails via reclaimed lands to attract visitors and enhance the quality of life for residents.
- + Increase winter activities – ski hill (located in the valley from Range 44 to 627 north of the Lake) and cross-country ski trails.
- + Provision of temporary RV park/ campgrounds to support seasonal accommodation.
- + Trail/ pathway enhancement to enable increased connectivity throughout Wabamun as well as areas designated for recreational activity.
- + Future resort development can be accommodated within the County's Prime Recreation and Tourism Areas.

- + Recent revisions to the Land Use Bylaw have added 'wellness use' as a permitted use to several recreational land use districts, making it easier to advance development of these mainstay industries.
- + Future destination resort requires sufficient transportation, infrastructure and Community services.

Key Recommendations

- + Provide a comprehensive suite of recreational activities and amenities to enhance overall quality of life for residents and contribute to re-branding the identity of Wabamun as a vibrant, thriving lake community.

- + Resort amenities will create new mainstay employment, strategically located in areas designated for recreation and tourism development.
- + Future investment in outdoor activities will enhance natural landscapes to mitigate development impact and increase connectivity between land uses.

Creating a variety of outdoor/ rec amenities attracts a broader demographic and re-brands Wabamun as a fun, thriving town with something for everyone.

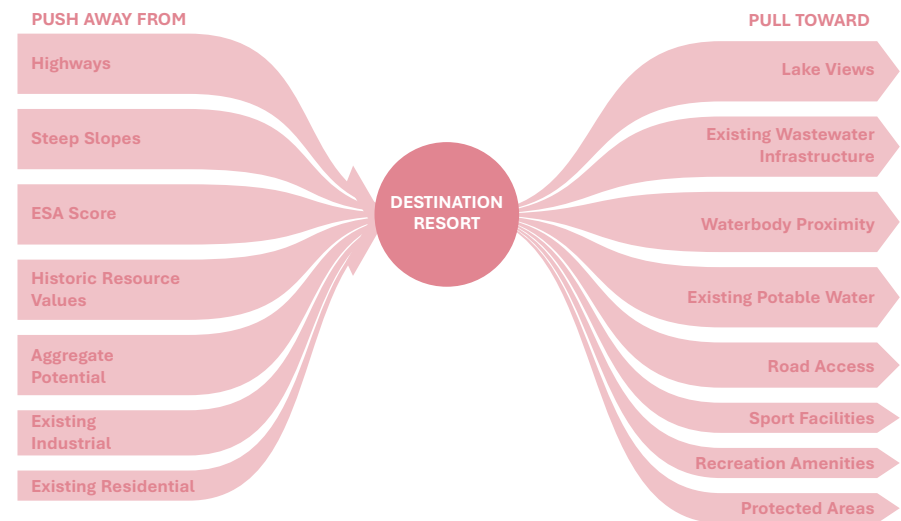
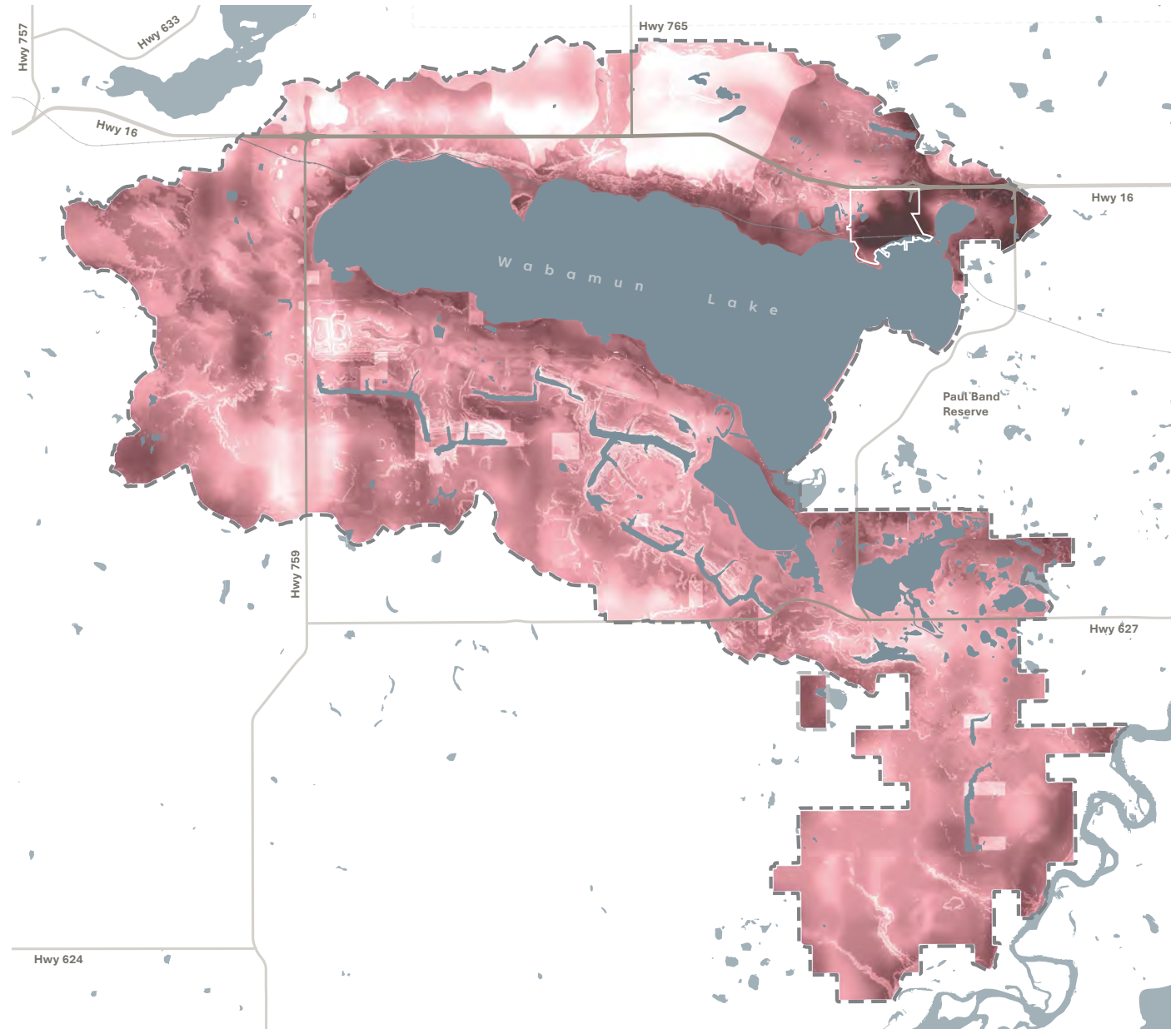
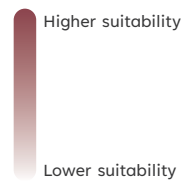


Fig 9. Suitability influences – destination resort

Map 15
**Destination Resort
Suitability**

Legend



4.6 Energy and Production

Intent

Pillars focused on economic development and broadening the Wabamun identity as one of innovation, economic diversification and employment can be achieved through renewable energy initiatives. Future renewable energy partnerships will maximize opportunity on TransAlta lands and attract private investment for new industry projects to support federal initiatives such as carbon reduction.

Opportunity Highlights

- + Opportunity to expand heavy industry such as gas plants or extensive agriculture on larger parcels of land away from residential lands (near existing resource extraction area adjacent Wabamun Hamlet or south of Wabamun Lake).
- + Potential for solar and renewable energy opportunities located on the reclaimed landscape south of Wabamun Lake.
- + Renewable energy (solar / wind) development can diversify existing tourism amenities. Through an educational program partnered with institutions, tours of the energy generation facilities (and former mine lands) could present a unique educational opportunity for visitors to explore alternative energy solutions.
- + Utilizing natural resources to support renewable energy such as treating Edmonton sewage sludge to replenish soil at the Paintearth Mine. Willows are grown to produce biomass feedstock for renewable energy products such as bio-plastics to meet federal

and provincial carbon strategy targets and provide a seamless transition from a mining hub to a clean technology industry.

Renewable energy/large-scale industrial

- + Opportunity to expand existing TransAlta Solar power fleet to construct on-site solar facilities south of Wabamun Lake.
- + Contribute to achieving Canada 2030 Emissions reduction plan – reducing greenhouse gas emissions and strengthening the economy with clean industrial growth.
- + Contribute to achieving Alberta's goal of sourcing 30% of the province's electricity from renewable sources by 2030.
- + Providing renewable energy to meet electricity demand on the local distribution grid is expected to be a growing industry in the region (including both solar and wind).
- + The nearby Moon Lake Solar Project between Entwistle and Drayton Valley is an example of the type of project that could occur in Wabamun Country. Canadian based Voltarix Group Inc. is planning a 24.9 megawatt (MW) solar power project at a private site at the intersection of Cowboy Trail (Highway 22) and Township Road 514. Once built, this project could power approximately 4,500 homes through local electricity distribution grids.



Manufacturing/Greenhouses

- + Opportunity to increase heavy manufacturing west of Wabamun Hamlet in proximity to major transportation corridors.
- + Provincial governments are investing \$900,000.00 to help grow the Alberta hemp industry in partnership with the federal government.
- + Opportunity to grow the agri-processing industry, creating new manufacturing and processing jobs and promoting rural economic development.
- + The use of geothermal energy to provide necessary heating in greenhouses in winter months through storing heating from the summer.

Hydrogen Hub Landscapes

- + Hydrogen and fuel cell technologies offer unique opportunities to secure cost effective, clean, secure energy for power, heat and transportation.
- + Communities of stakeholders need to work together to drive investments in hydrogen and fuel cell technology at local “hubs” of activity.
- + A hydrogen hub at Wabamun could create significant employment and development opportunities for the Wabamun area if enough investment and interest occurs.

- + By creating targeted hubs and concentrating activity locally, infrastructure can be shared, costs reduced, and communities engaged.
- + AB provincial government is on board with becoming a global hydrogen energy hub, and “bullish” on its’ hydrogen strategy, with a goal to attract \$30 billion capital investments by 2030.
- + Wabamun / Keephills may have sufficient base infrastructure (power grid, natural gas grid, new wind and solar power projects) to play a role in this low carbon future economy.
- + TransAlta has invested in early-stage hydrogen through a \$2 million investment in Ekona Power Inc., to support a novel methane pyrolysis that will be producing cleaner, lower-cost turquoise hydrogen.
- + Unclear to what extent Wabamun/Keephills could be competitive with identified locations for large-scale hydrogen hub investment initiatives such as the Industrial Heartland. However, it could play a role as a secondary smaller regional hub if sufficient interest and investment secured from industrial “big players” (e.g., TransAlta, natural gas company, transportation company consortium, etc.).

Key Recommendations

- + Potential partnership with existing horticulture/ greenhouse operations to increase agri-processing operations and diversify rural economic development.
- + Explore potential wind/ solar projects and partnerships with private investment south of Wabamun Lake to contribute to Canada's emissions reduction plan.
- + Include Hydrogen Hub/ renewable land use as a possible land use future but requires 'big player' investments for industrial cluster.
- + Lobby with provincial government and TransAlta to determine investment opportunities for industrial cluster.

**Renewable energy partnerships
will maximize opportunity and
attract private investment**

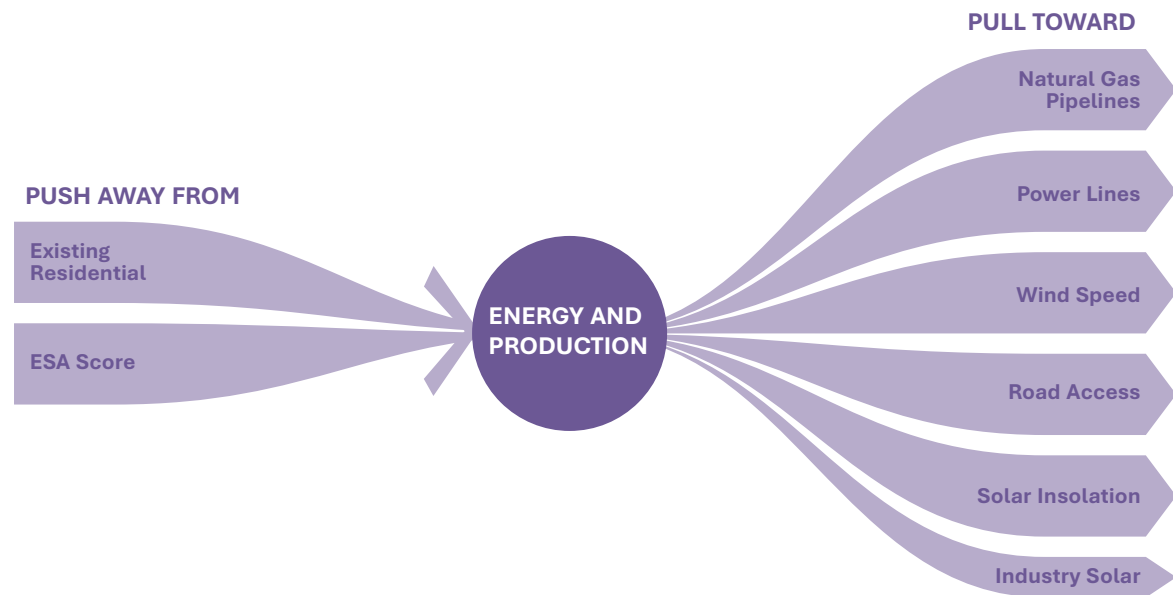
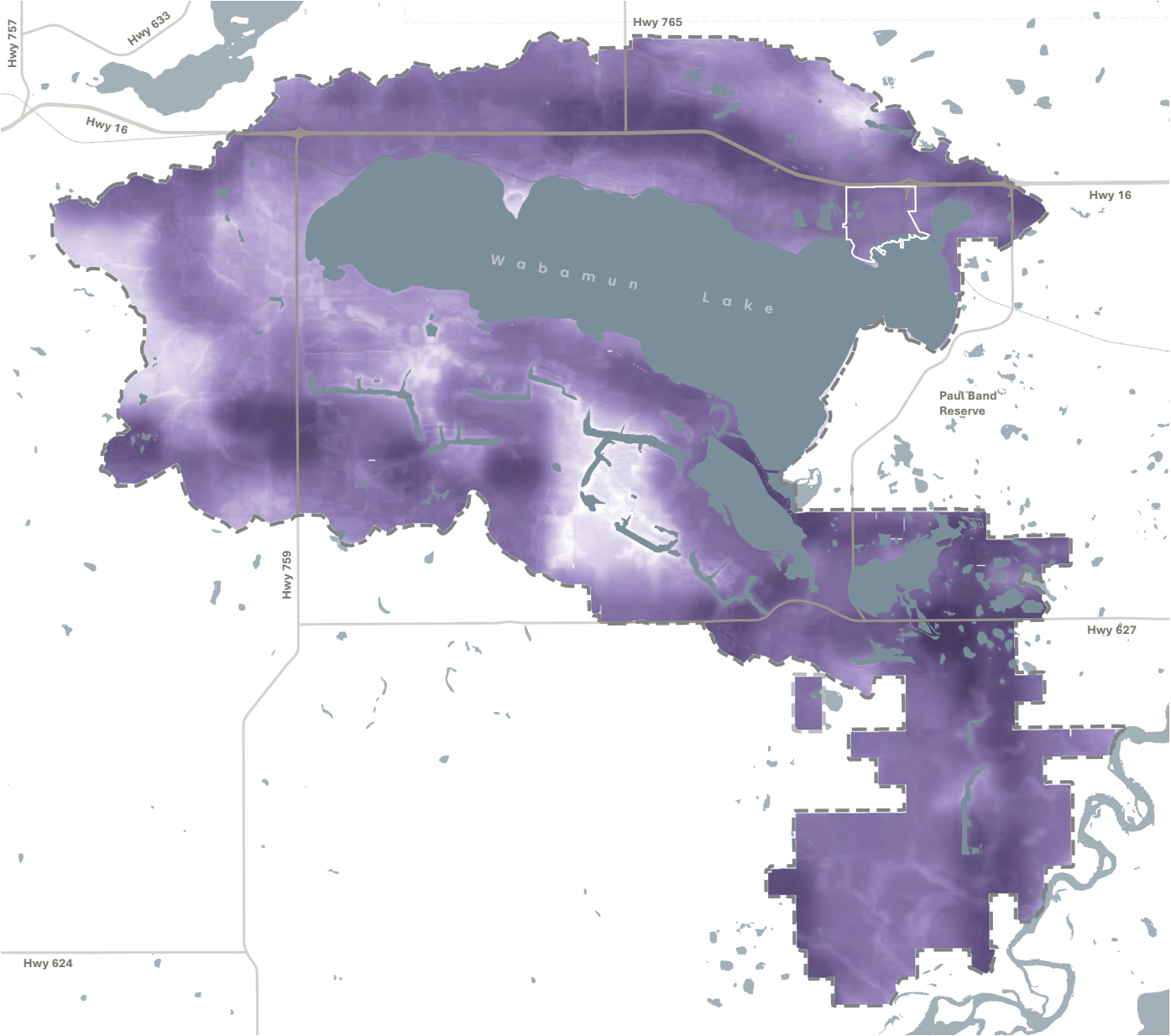
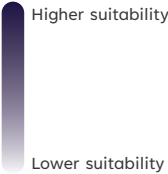


Fig 10. Suitability influences – energy and production

Map 16

Energy and Production Suitability

Legend



4.7 Motorized Recreation

Intent

Several pillars of the project vision are achieved by providing dedicated land to support motorized recreation that provides an attractive amenity, diversifies the recreation inventory, and indirectly discourages motorized activity in protected areas by providing a dedicated space for ATV/ 4-wheel/ dirt bike use. An adventure hub will provide an attractive use for permanent residents and visitors, contributing to the Wabamun identity as an area for fun, activity, and outdoor adventure.

Providing activities which operate year-round and attract various demographics elevates the identity of Wabamun as an attractive place for a variety of individuals of all ages and stages of life. Furthermore, increasing activities which create a reason to visit draws attention to the region as an area for investment and higher activity.

Opportunity Highlights

- + Opportunity to enable an adventure hub to create motorized recreation for dirt biking, ATV use, four wheels, snowmobiles etc.
- + Provide a desirable amenity which attracts visitors and provides dedicated land for specific activities.
- + Dedicated land to support ATV /dirt bike etc. use may deter illegal activity on highly sensitive lands and locates noise and pollution away from highly

residential areas. It acts as a magnet of activity, drawing users to suitable areas and leaving most natural systems more intact.

- + Public engagement confirmed the majority of seasonal residents reside in Wabamun from June-September therefore increasing winter activities can contribute to boosting seasonal resident population in the area.
- + Future recreation on reclaimed lands creates a unique connection to land with a historical past, telling a story of transformative lands which have been re-purposed to provide a community benefit.

Key Recommendations

- + Designate land to create an adventure hub with dedicated lands to support motorized recreation including appropriate signage and wayfinding
- + Potential to partner with the private sector to influence motorized recreation within a portion of the TransAlta lands to encourage biking in areas capable to support the activity.

An adventure hub will provide an attractive use for permanent residents and visitors, contributing to the Wabamun identity as an area for fun, activity, and outdoor adventure.

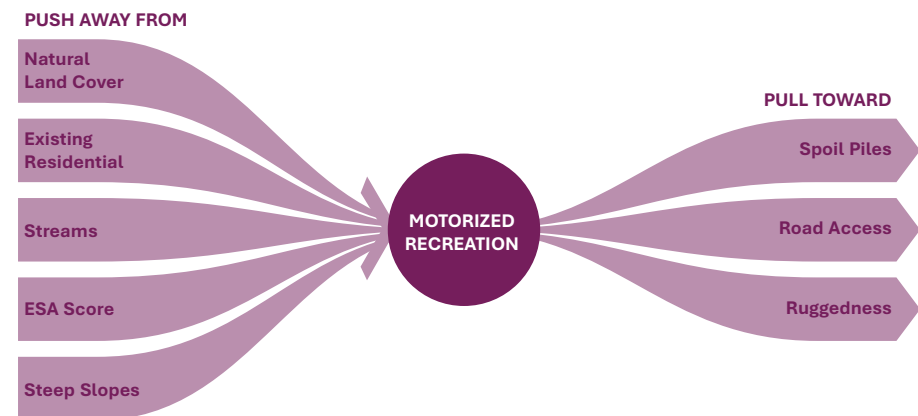
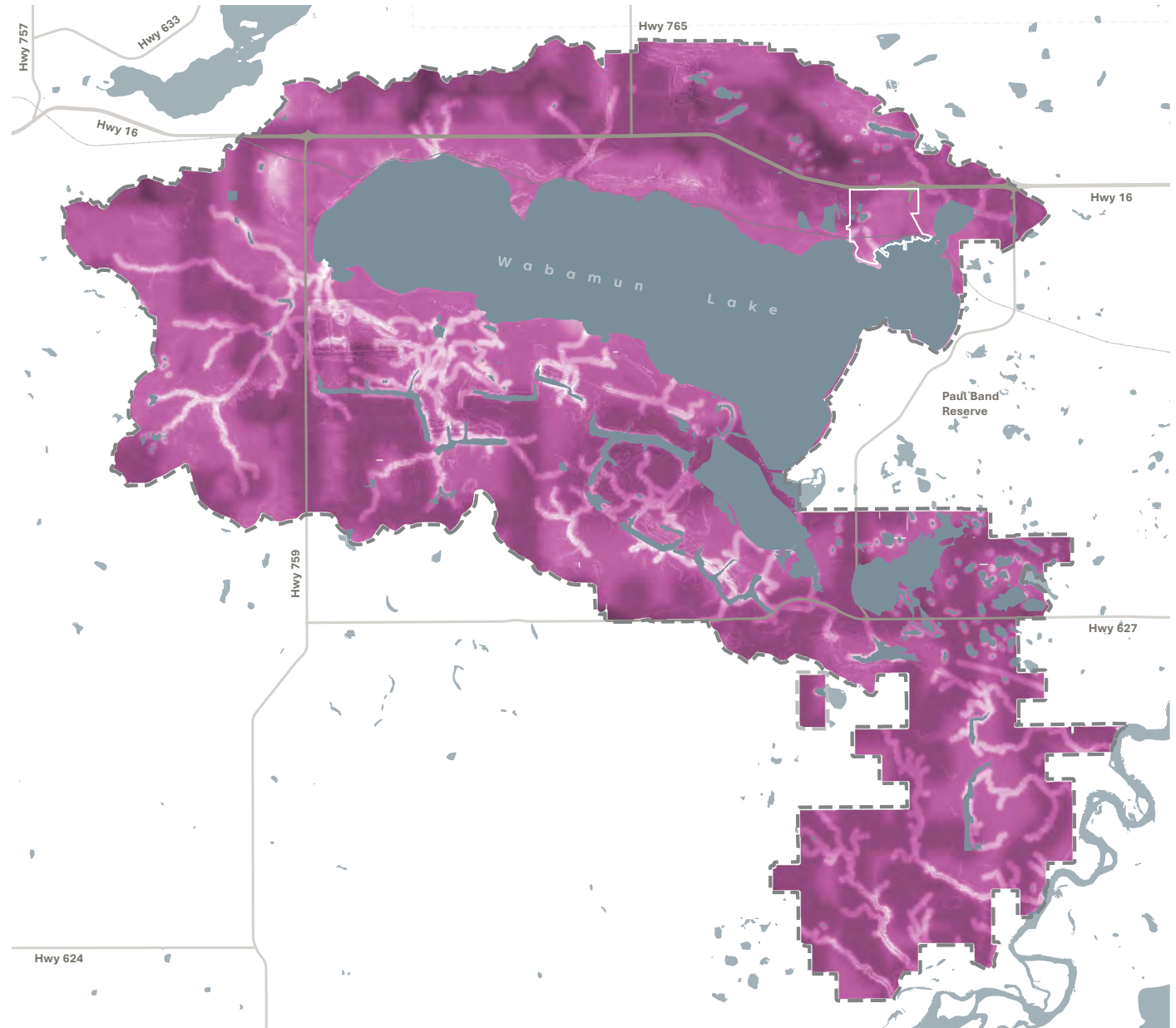
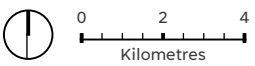
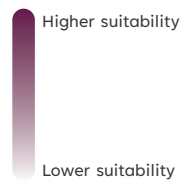


Fig 11. Suitability influences – motorized recreation

Map 17

Motorized Recreation Suitability

Legend



4.8 Non-motorized Recreation

Intent

Most pillars are achieved through dedicating land for recreational use/ protecting open space to create multi-purpose space which contributes attractive amenities, supports nature-based recreation/ tourism, strengthens the community identity and diversifies the economy through additional programming and available services.

Providing activities which operate year-round and attract various demographics elevates the identity of Wabamun as an attractive place for a variety of individuals of all ages and stages of life. Furthermore, increasing activities which create a reason to visit draws attention to the region as an area for investment and higher activity.

Opportunity Highlights

- + Designate a portion of the TransAlta lands to support non-motorized recreation to support activities such as: mountain biking trails, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, trail running, horseback riding etc.
- + Utilize end pit lakes to meet increasing public demands for water-based outdoor recreation facilities and opportunities ex. paddle boarding/ kayaking/ canoing, sailing to create nature-based recreation and tourism amenities.
- + Create/ expand trail system to enable year-round activities.

- + Create staging areas to support camping grounds, completing the outdoor experience with temporary accommodation on site.
- + Future multi-use building to support educational programming and outdoor education classes (potential to partner with institutional facilities, girl guides/ cubs etc.).
- + Existing policy supports future recreational trails (Highvale Mine ASP), demonstrating further support for future non-motorized recreation.
- + Utilizing reclaimed lands for recreation and conservation contributes to local sustainability efforts to protect and enjoy nature, utilizing nature as a tool for learning.

- + Opportunity to forge extended partnerships between institutional facilities and public land for educational purposes.

Key Recommendations

- + Identify TransAlta land to support non-motorized recreation space to provide recreational amenities for full-time residents and to attract tourism.
- + Expand existing public partnerships between institutions and open spaces (ex. YWCA Camp Yowochas and University of Alberta) to utilize future reclaimed lands to support outdoor education programs and expand ultimate use permissions for the open space.

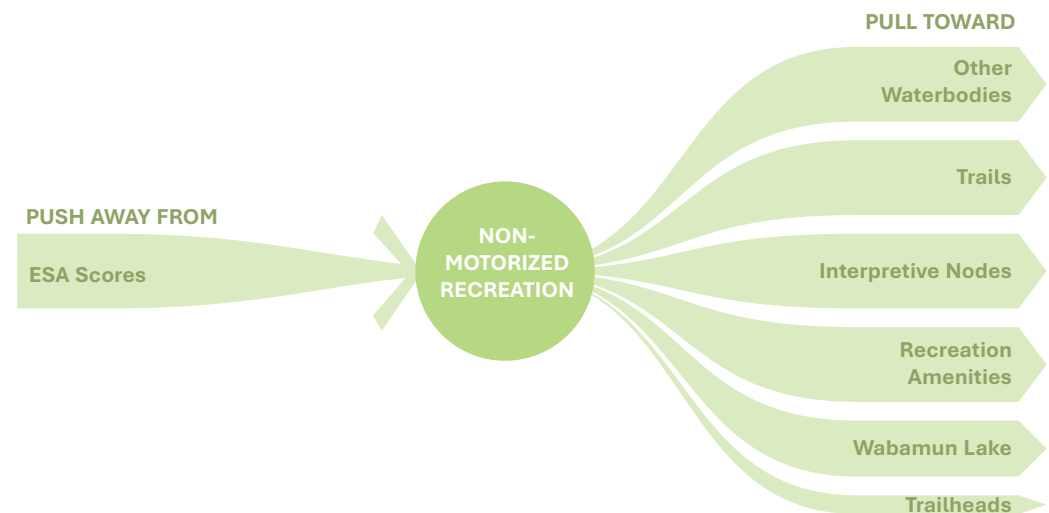
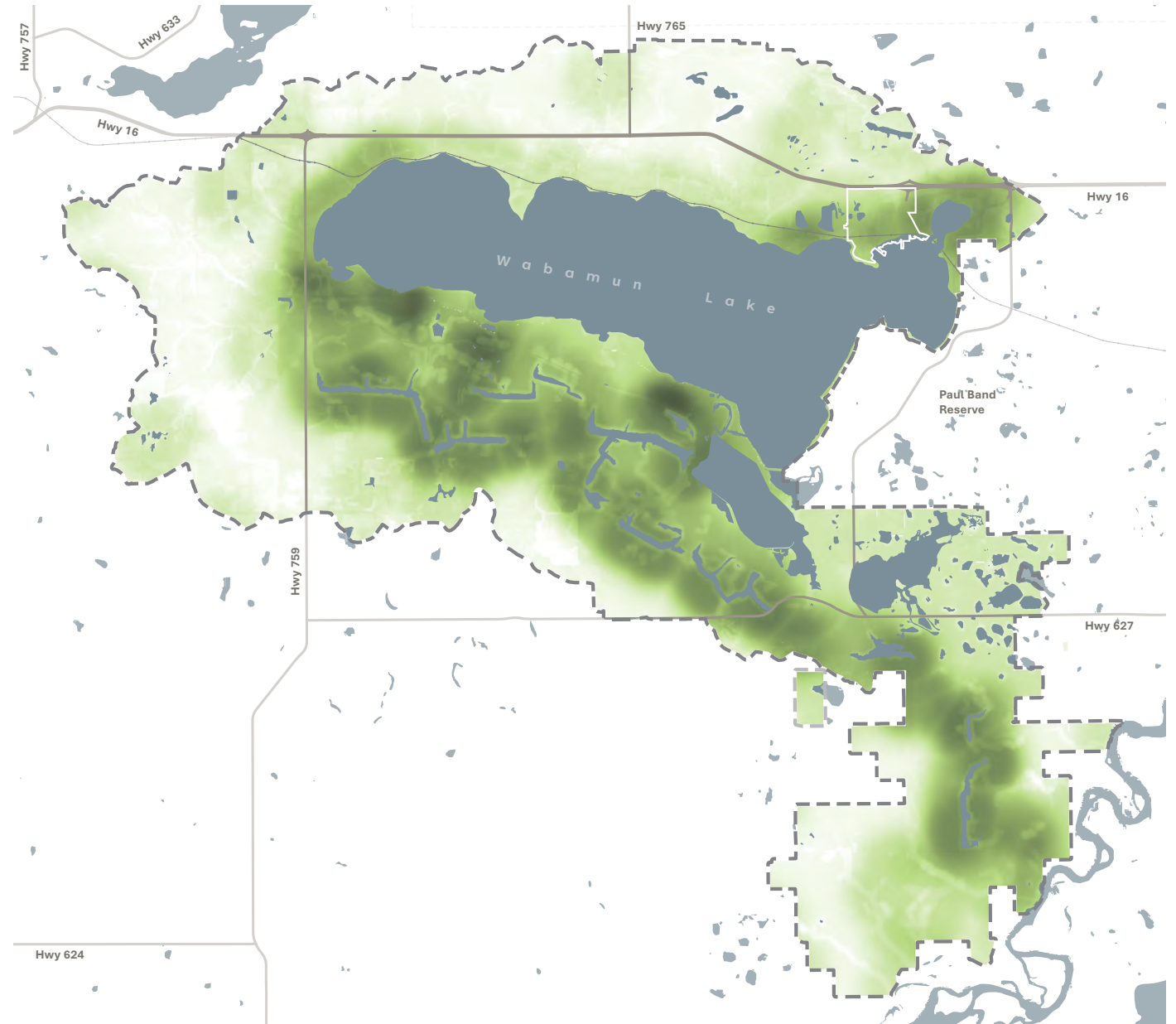
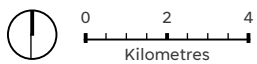
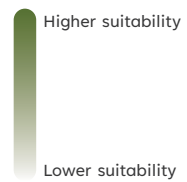


Fig 12. Suitability influences – non-motorized recreation

Map 18

Non-motorized Recreation Suitability

Legend



4.9 Commercial

Intent

Many of the vision's goals are achieved by encouraging new mainstay industries such as a wellness resort/ spa, expanding production uses to diversify existing employment and locating new industries adjacent to transportation corridors and away from natural areas. Increasing attractive and needed amenities for full-time residents and visitors will strengthen the local economy and provide needed healthcare and wellness services. Expanding available uses broadens the community identity as a place which supports not just physical well-being through the outdoors but mental wellness and self-care. Production uses represent innovative end uses to support a diversified economy, strategically growing the community in targeted areas to attract employment.

Opportunity Highlights

- + Existing policy and recent community engagement emphasized increased amenities and employment opportunities as key drivers to expand the local economy, support full-time residents and attract economic investment to Wabamun.
- + Create a spa/ wellness resort near Point Alison to diversify existing commercial/ retail businesses and create a direct push factor for tourism-based economic development.
- + Increased amenities focused on healthcare will support the aging population, attracting other wellness services such as chiropractic care, naturopath, yoga classes/ meditation etc.
- + Additional mainstay amenities such as a brewery and/or roastery will provide entertainment and wellness/ health benefits for full-time residents and attract residents to the area for short- and long-term stays including clustered nodes south of the Lake to support future recreation/ tourism uses.
- + Covid-19 has re-awakened individual awareness of one's health – physically, socially, mentally and physiologically causing people to question where they live, work, how they eat, exercise, socialize and all aspects of their lives which impact their health and well-being.
- + There is a stronger emphasis on branding Wabamun as a lifestyle – vibrant, exciting, adventurous but also peaceful and rooted to its rural history.
- + Providing niche services expand the service centre focus of Wabamun, attracting outside investment through visitors of neighbouring municipalities, increasing overall spending in the Wabamun area (waiting for appointments, spending the day in Town after a massage etc.).
- + Opportunity to maximize existing industrial lands located in Wabamun Hamlet given direct access to transportation corridors and large parcels of land.
- + Expand existing commercial and production uses such as: greenhouse development to support cannabis growing and processing, horticultural use (micro greens), warehouse storage (Amazon) and professional services to diversify employment and provide an end use which remains compatible with other commercial areas (does not create additional pollution/ noise/ dust/ vibration).

- + Supporting uses such as software publishing/ production, photocopying services, data processing, research and development in a laboratory etc. which expands employment diversification and increases the tax base without inhibiting the quaint charm of Wabamun.
- + Major transportation corridors such as Highway 16 provide opportunities for more intensive forms of development such as commercial, retail, institutional or production.
- + Opportunity to enhance existing commercial amenities in Seba Beach to strengthen the seasonal attraction and mainstay offering for full-time residents.
- + Potential to access provincial/ federal funding programs (ex. CARES) to increase funding for local businesses and attract investment to Wabamun.

Key Recommendations

- + Encourage a wellness/spa use on the waterfront near Wabamun Hamlet to broaden available wellness and healthcare services and create an attractive amenity for visitors.
- + Expand commercial and production uses along major transportation corridors and in Seba Beach to diversify local economy and support business development.
- + Access provincial/ federal funding platforms to create a Wabamun Business Improvement Area (BIA) to support local business development, encourage innovation and attract investment.

Increasing attractive and needed amenities for full-time residents and visitors will strengthen the local economy and provide needed healthcare and wellness services.

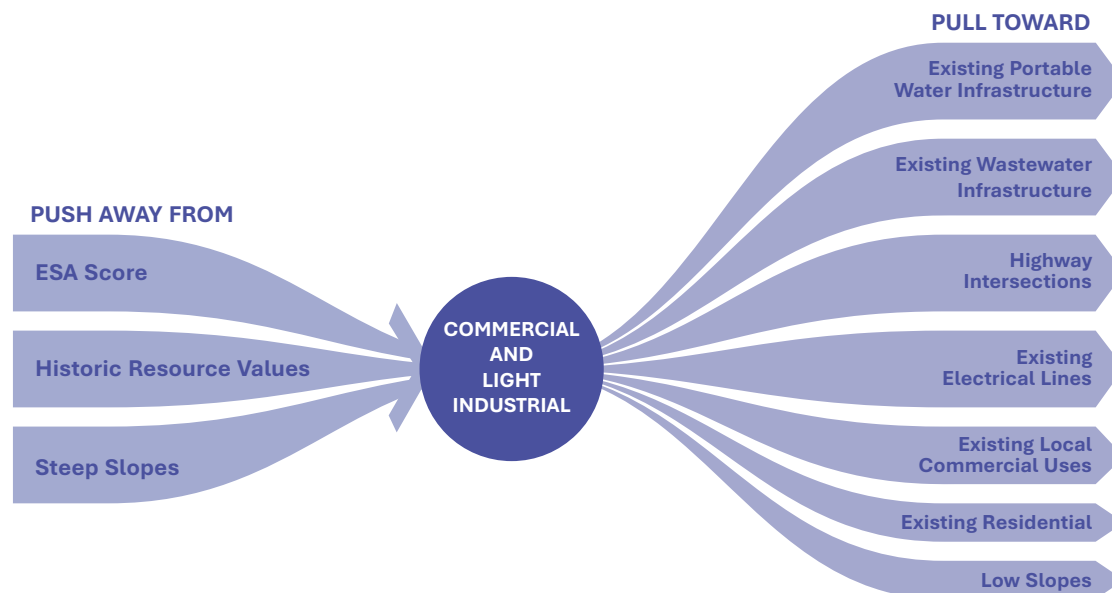
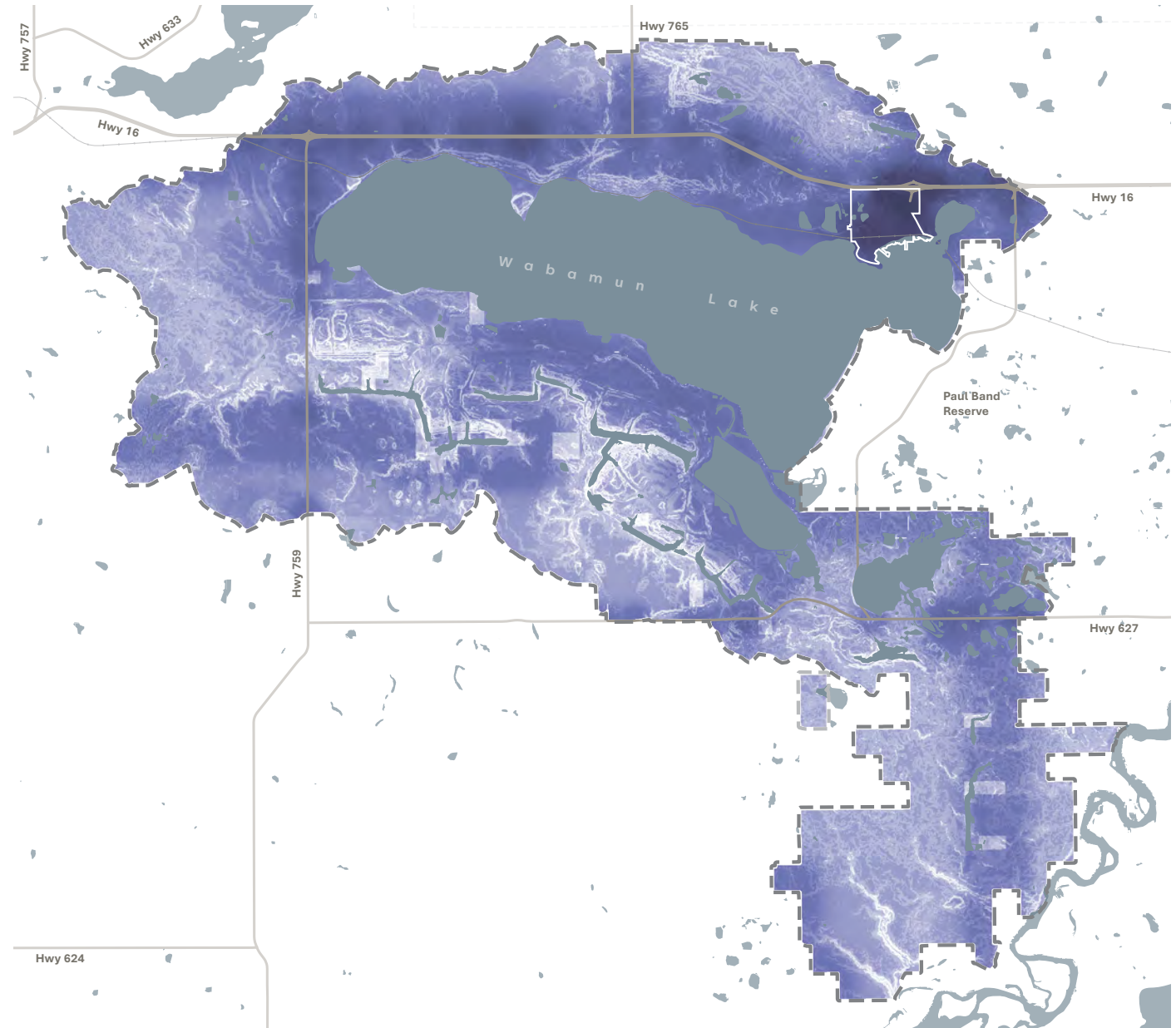
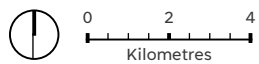
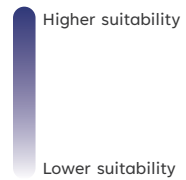


Fig 13. Suitability influences – commercial and light industrial

Commercial Suitability

Legend





4.10 Agriculture

Intent

The vision's goals can be broadly achieved by enabling multi-purpose agricultural lands on the reclaimed mine site and perimeter of the subject area. Maintaining a strong agricultural land base is crucial to support fertile cropland/ranchland and the area's rural character. The unique opportunity of the mine site supports adjacent multi-purpose uses to educate the public about the benefits of agriculture, create public/private partnerships around agricultural education, and create accessory structures adjacent to croplands for event spaces, educational centres, and recreation/ tourism activities.

Opportunity Highlights

- + By 2025, Canada will be one of the top five competitors in the agri-food sector – increasing domestic sales to \$140B by 2025 and \$85B in exports, demonstrating a strong focus to provide value-added products and maintain an innovative and technology-based supply chain.
- + Within the Wabamun area there are areas of high potential agricultural productivity, particularly north of Wabamun Lake with pockets of land south of the Lake capable to support the cultivation of crops (See Figure 12 – Canada Lands Agricultural Inventory Map). Existing Parkland County lands cultivate alfalfa, hay and cereal grains.
- + Opportunity to partner with private investment to enhance existing agricultural processing and ranching operations within Wabamun area and opportunity for cropland / ranching on reclaimed mine lands.
- + General concern regarding the average demographic of existing producers amidst the growing demand globally for food – opportunity to educate young people about the agriculture industry and opportunities for employment and entry into the industry.
- + Opportunity to create agri-tourism uses, diversifying agricultural industry practices through specialty crop growing, expanding partnerships to enable local food production and sales at stores/ restaurants, land for equine services and other end uses to support tourism and education.

- + Create a diversified event space adjacent to or on the edge of agriculture lands/ reclaimed mine lands. This will help enable educational programs to partner with camps, schools, and community halls to educate people about the importance of agricultural lands, host events, and generate additional revenue and expand use opportunities beyond farming/ranching operations.
- + Confined Feed operations (CFO's) are not zoned within the study area and should be avoided to prevent potential negative impacts to Wabamun Lake.

Maintaining a strong agricultural land base is crucial to support fertile cropland/ranchland and the area's rural character.

Key Recommendations

- + Designate appropriate sections of reclaimed land for agricultural uses, including multi-purpose space to support events, educational programming, accessory sales centre/ equine services to maximize usability of agricultural lands to generate additional revenue.
- + Strengthen policy to protect existing agricultural land for the purpose of maintaining a strong ranching/ cropland inventory including private partnership if possible.

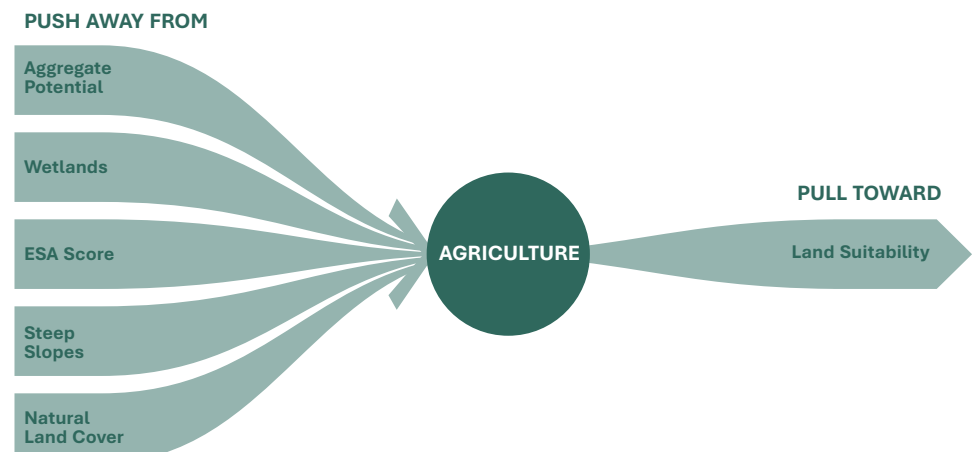
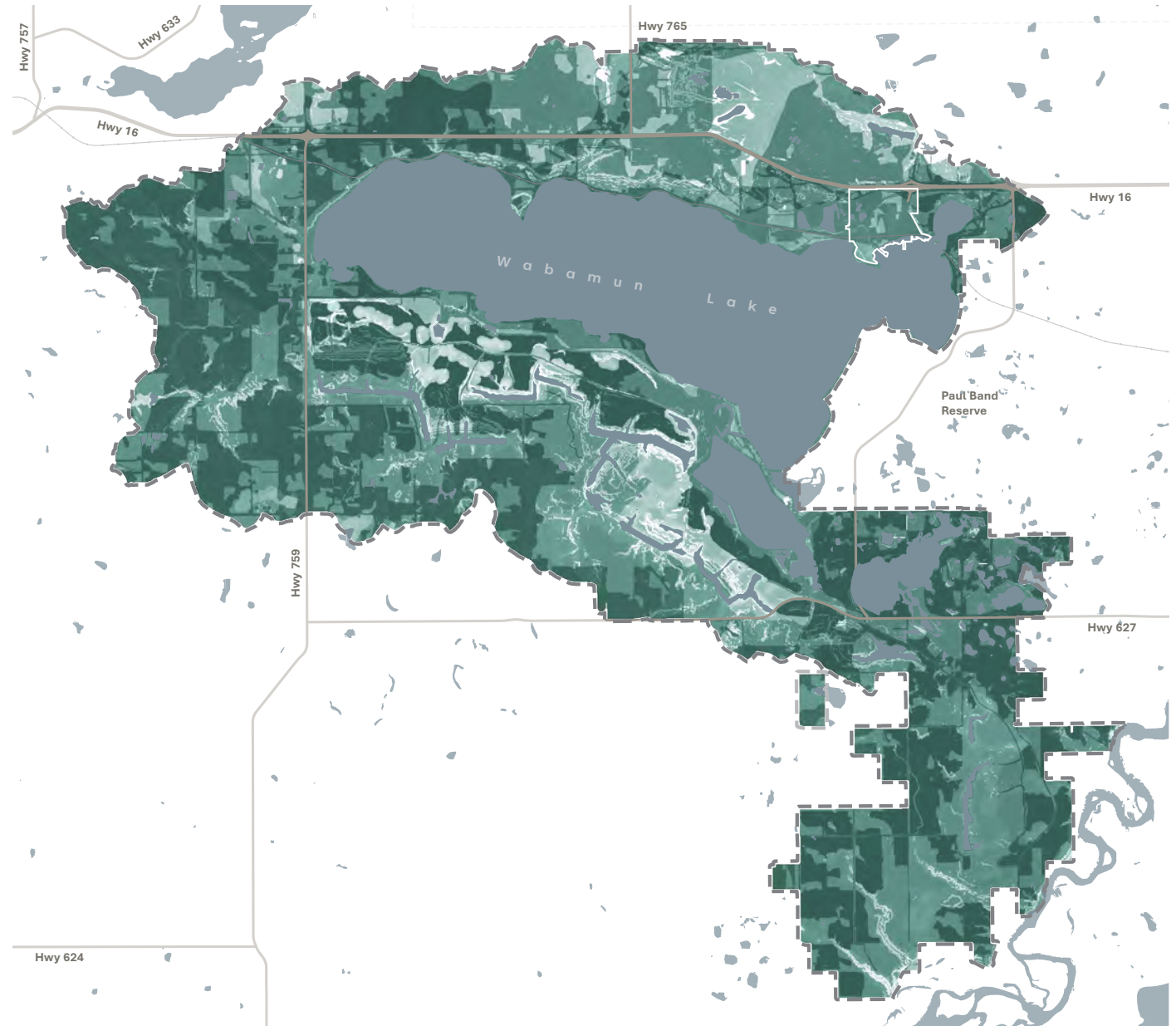
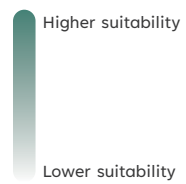


Fig 14. Suitability influences – agriculture

Map 20
Agriculture Suitability

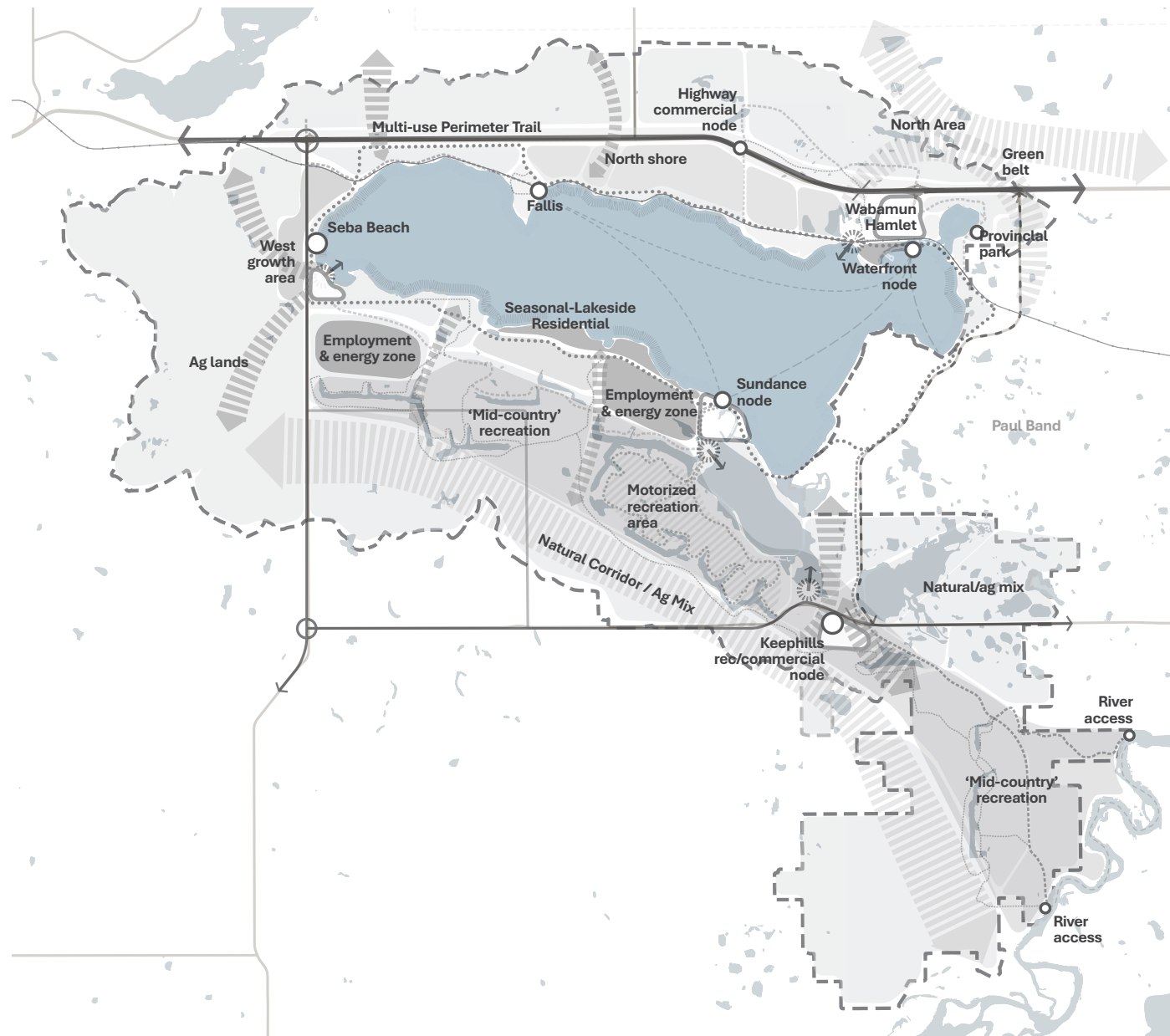
Legend







Wabamun Area Concept



5 Wabamun Area Concept

5.1 Overview

In the following chapter, the Wabamun Area Vision sets out a concept plan for the 50-year future of the Wabamun Area. This concept is aligned with the project's vision and pillars, and is comprised of opportunities drawn from background research, public engagement, stakeholder workshops, and conversations with Parkland County Council and administration.

The concept draws together objectives from across the vision. Following a 'defense-first' approach to development, it seeks to identify and protect lake quality and enhance the health of natural systems throughout the watershed. It does this by finding and connecting key functional landscapes—the lake shore, large nearby landscape patches, and the corridors that link the two together.

With the natural system as a foundation, the concept goes on to find new opportunities for human connectivity that help establish regional identity. There are few public pathways and trails in the Wabamun Area today. In response to significant public support to increase the pathway network in the area, and to unlock a new granularity for experience and economic development, the concept draws an extensive trail

network. The network links key nodes around the lake and reaches out to make broader systems a part of 'Wabamun Country'.

There are opportunities for new development and growth around the periphery of the lake, but the concept encourages concentrated growth in the existing Hamlet area. This helps prevent sprawl through the countryside and makes the town's existing services and businesses more vital and viable. New mainstay employment opportunities near the Hamlet, and in key infrastructure nodes identified through the region, can help drive growth and ease the area's economic transition.

As part of broadening the area's economic base, the concept then explores a suite of year-round recreation opportunities that bring amenity, diversity, and breadth to the area's recreation profile. It looks at both lake and lake recreation for motorized, non-motorized, and passive users, seeking to balance a range of experiences and create the basis for unscheduled adventure in the Wabamun Area.

The concept should be read as a series of high-level intentions for the Wabamun Area—intentions meant to spark imagination, attract investment, frame strategic opportunities, and coordinate growth. For this reason,

the concept's recommendations range in scale and specificity. This vision document is not a statutory plan, but should be referenced when more detailed policy and regulation is created. More detailed implementation of the concept is described in the next chapter: Strategic Actions.

The concept plan builds directly on the project's analysis work. It draws first on the natural systems review, ensuring that the scheme aligns with the project's foundational principle—protecting the health of Wabamun Lake. It then draws together the development opportunities analysis described in the previous chapters, which evaluated the suitability of a range of end use opportunities. The concept plan combines and reconciles the findings of this analysis, presenting a coordinated configuration.

The concept is described through three lenses.

1. Natural systems
2. Use
3. Connectivity

Each of these lenses isolates and describes a dimension of the concept. The final section of the chapter zooms in to explore more detailed opportunities in districts around the lake.

The Wabamun Area concept is comprised of opportunities drawn from background research, public engagement, stakeholder workshops, and conversations with Parkland County Council and administration.

"I just don't want to see the area I choose to live turn into something busy. I looked for a long time and decided to settle in a small lake community. Very quiet and relaxing year round. This is very new, so I'm intrigued to see the different ideas that do come to the table."

- Engagement participant





5.2 Revisiting Goals

The goals first described in Chapter 2 are shown again here, as they provide key touch points and topics that help anchor the concept as it translates into the space of the Wabamun Area.

■ Natural Systems

- + Wabamun Lake anchors a clean and a healthy watershed
- + The Wabamun Lake area is surrounded by high quality natural landscapes that are well-connected through the region
- + Post-industrial landscapes are restored in ways that recover natural function, protect water, and produce new opportunity

■ Regional Identity

- + *Wabamun Country* has a distinct and well-known regional identity
- + *Wabamun Country* showcases its unique natural assets and industrial legacy
- + *Wabamun Country* provides a positive and memorable visitor experience

■ Economic Diversity

- + *Wabamun Country* attracts new mainstay employment opportunities
- + *Wabamun Country* presents a variety of hospitality options and experiences
- + Agricultural uses are integrated and protected

■ Community Growth

- + *Wabamun Country* attracts new mainstay employment opportunities
- + *Wabamun Country* presents a variety of hospitality options and experiences
- + Agricultural uses are integrated and protected

■ Organized and Connected

- + Residential and commercial growth is focused in Wabamun Hamlet
- + A clear mobility network connects *Wabamun Country*
- + *Wabamun Country* grows in collaboration with local Indigenous communities

■ Recreation and Amenity

- + *Wabamun Country* supports motorized and non-motorized recreation in all seasons.
- + *Wabamun Country* provides recreation opportunities for diverse users.
- + *Wabamun Country* has clear and accessible public lake access.

5.3 Coordinating Opportunities

The Wabamun Area Concept builds directly on the project's analysis and public engagement. The development opportunities outlined in Chapter 4 were generalized into key areas and these were brought to the public in the second stage of engagement. Refinement and prioritization for each opportunity helped spark conversations about the coordination of development across the Wabamun Area.

A map containing an overlay of all generalized shapes is shown on the next page. This framework, along with the results of the natural systems review, provided a way to begin to divide the large Wabamun Area into a series of more legible regions and subregions. As the analysis progressed through the concept stage, each of these places began to play a more specific role in the broader conception of the Wabamun Area. Previous planning exercises had identified site-specific opportunities that answered an isolated question: "what works in this place?". The Area Concept goes a step beyond this, asking: "what role can this place play in bringing *Wabamun Country* to life?".

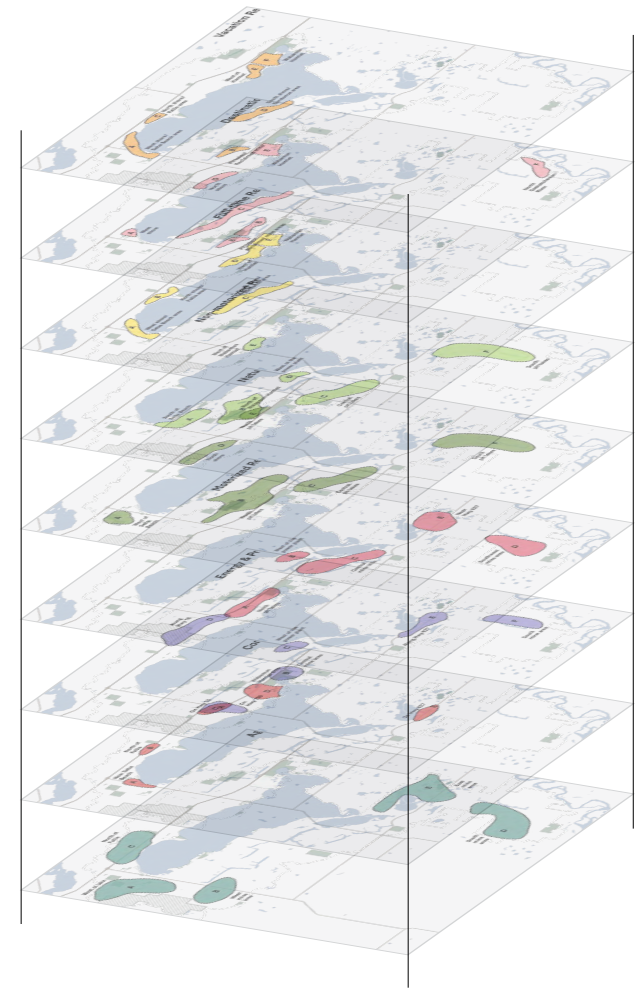
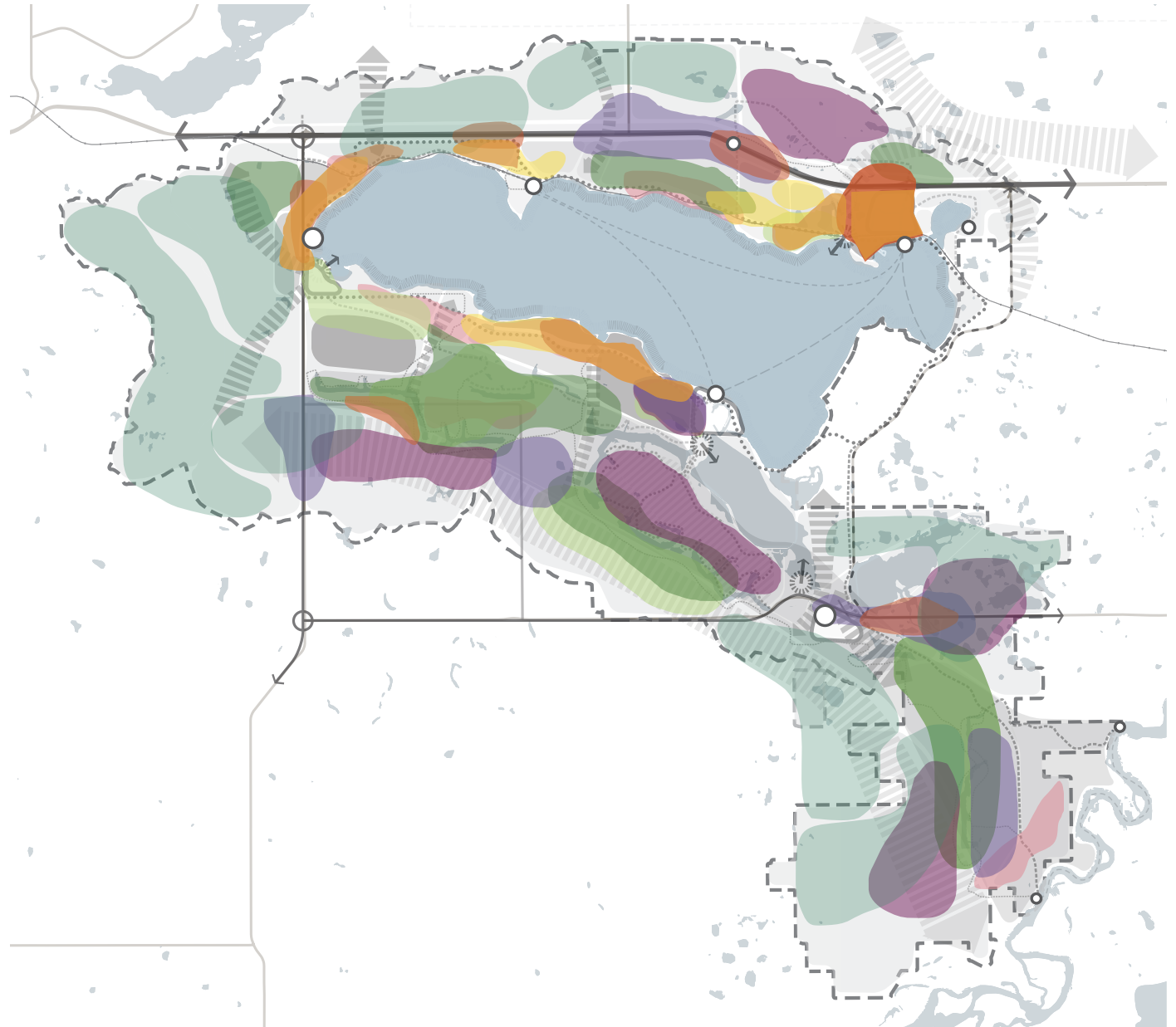


Fig 15. Nine different development opportunity types were overlaid to create the overlay diagram seen on the opposite page.

Development Opportunities Overlay

Legend

- Vacation residential
- Agriculture
- Energy and production
- Commercial
- Motorized recreation
- Natural spaces
- Resort
- Non-motorized recreation
- Full-time residential



5.4 Natural Systems

Natural systems provide foundational value to the Wabamun Area. Nearly every component of the project's engagement identified the health of the lake and its surrounding landscapes as a primary concern. A healthy lake is the premise for the area's future residential growth, hospitality, and recreation.

Key Corridors

At the broadest scale, the area vision concept identifies two key corridors that link the Wabamun Area to larger landscape systems. One of these runs east-west on the northeast corner of the project area north of Wabamun Hamlet. It connects habitat patches along the north side of Highway 16 to areas of high ecological value throughout Parkland County. The other major corridor runs northwest-southeast along the southern extent of the project area, linking conservation lands to the west through the Sundance natural area to the North Saskatchewan River Valley. These corridors provide regional movement for animals, birds, pollinators and nutrients. Connecting the Wabamun Area to these landscapes is like connecting local roads to highways—it supports the entire ecological network.

Shoreline

The second order of the natural concept addresses the shoreline of Wabamun Lake. This critical ring around the lake – the riparian areas where water and land interact – plays important roles in maintaining lake health, but will contribute to cumulative degradation if it isn't managed properly. In its highest functioning natural state, the lakeshore soils and vegetation act as a filter, habitat, and sink for sediment and toxins. When

lakeshore vegetation is removed and replaced with fertilized landscapes and impervious surfaces, the result is additional chemical loading and a degraded ability to regulate and maintain water quality. Previous studies have identified sections of Wabamun Lake's shoreline that have been disrupted in ways that undermine the landscape's ability to protect the lake. In order to build back the integrity of this critical riparian ring around the lake, the concept recommends renewed attention to shoreline health and re-naturalization.

Smaller Connectors

The concept then addresses a series of mid-scale corridors that connect the broad landscape systems that frame the watershed to the critical shoreline around the lake. It identifies a series of green 'spokes' that reach outward from the lakeshore to critical points on the site's perimeter. The location of these spokes is driven by the location of critical connections, the current health and integrity of landscape patches, and the contribution of various corridors to the health of the lake. The general alignment of these corridors should be a priority for protected natural space. More detailed plans and proposals in the area should seek to protect or restore these corridors by maintaining or restoring natural vegetation and minor watercourses and wetlands.

Finally, the concept identifies stormwater treatment sites that align with key growth areas. These treatment sites should be conceived as naturalized wetland facilities that remove sediment and toxins from development runoff, create new natural habitat, and provide park-like amenities for residents and visitors.

Key Questions

- + How can ongoing efforts toward shoreline restoration be bolstered by this vision?
- + What partnership opportunities exist to establish stormwater treatment wetlands at existing and future growth nodes?

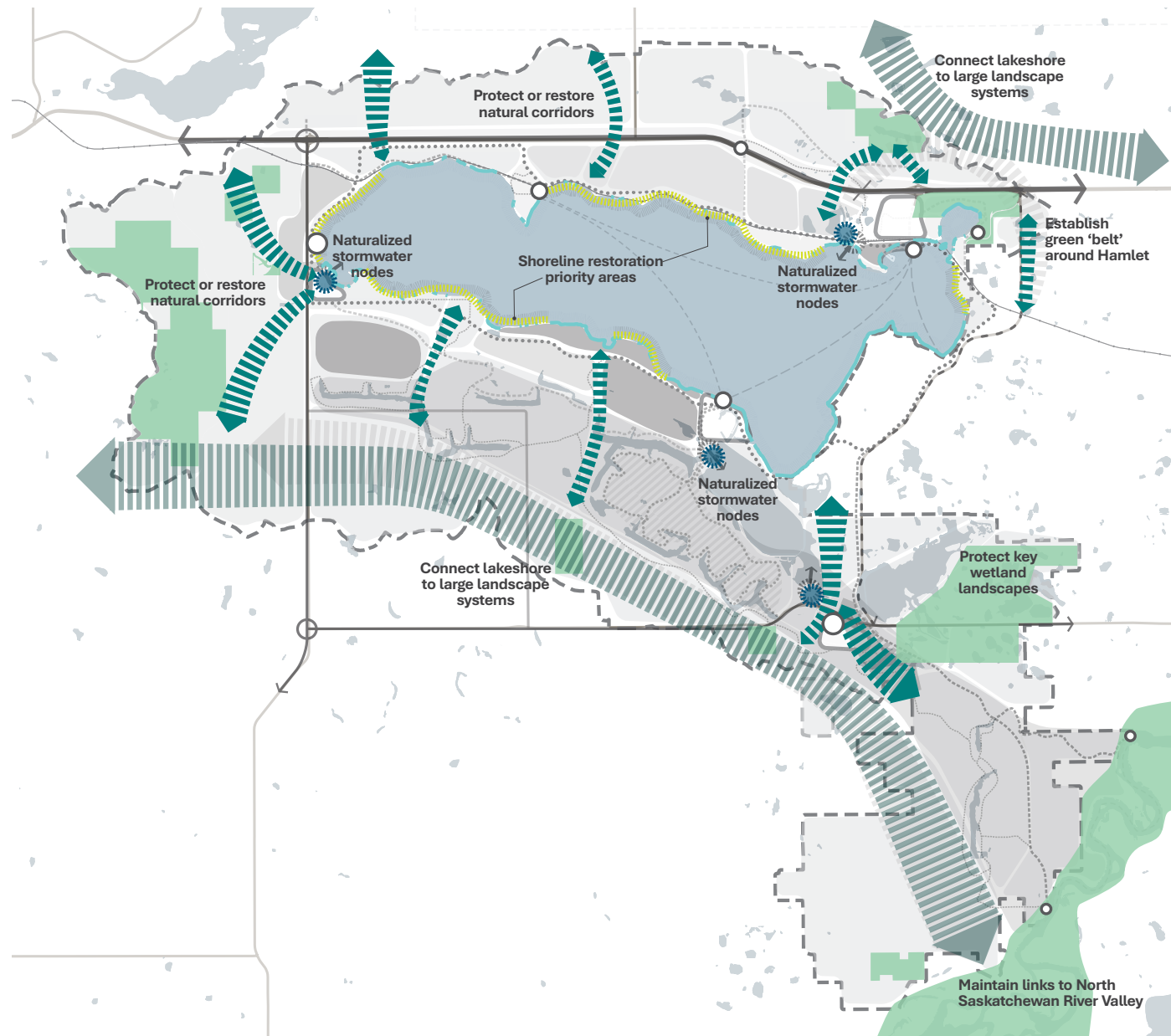
"I am in favour of maximizing the conservation of lands in this area for long-term protection of the lake."

- Engagement participant

Wabamun Area Concept – Natural Systems

Legend

- Key natural spaces
- Lakeshore restoration priority
- Mid-scale natural corridors
- Broad-scale natural corridors
- Proposed stormwater treatment location



5.5 Use Priorities

With the closure of the Highvale Mine, the Wabamun Area is subject to a massive shift in landscape use. With that shift comes changes in the area's economics and identity, along with a host of new opportunities.

The map on the opposite page breaks down the area into subregions that capture the range of activities the concept imagines for the future of the Wabamun Area. These subregions were drawn based on natural or human-made barriers, differences in existing role and use, or different potentials that emerged from the site analyses. The use priorities in the concept are driven by natural systems performance and the opportunities described in section 5.3.

Focused Growth in Wabamun Hamlet

Conversations with the community and key stakeholders reinforced the results of the project analysis, recommending that the Wabamun Hamlet was the best place to focus growth of full-time residential, new commercial, and employment uses. Focusing this growth in the Hamlet area leveraged existing infrastructure and services, supporting the vitality of the Hamlet, and helped reduce fragmented growth of residential and services throughout area.

Growth Around the Lake

There are opportunities for growth throughout the Wabamun Area. On the north and south shore, growth of vacation and seasonal uses should proceed with careful treatment of landscape, best practices for stormwater management, and consideration of future trail connectivity. To the west, growth around the Summer Village of Seba Beach unlocks opportunities to

make better use of existing infrastructure and facilities (like the Seba Beach School building) and coordinate lake protection measures like naturalized stormwater wetlands.

Re-imagining Highvale Mine

The concept divides the mine site into three corridors of activity: the front-country area to the north that overlooks Wabamun Lake, a mid-country recreation corridor that meanders through the pit lakes and connects to the South Saskatchewan River, and a back-country natural/agriculture corridor. Each of these corridors hosts a range of opportunities, including new growth, year-round recreation and trails, and natural connections to the lake. Interspersed through the front- and mid-country zones, the concept identifies a series of more intense nodes that are well suited to new energy and employment development. A node on highway 627 unlocks access to the mid-country and provides a new opportunity for commercial, employment, and staging.

Protecting Agricultural and Natural Lands

Much of the area's outer areas should be reserved for a mix of natural space and agriculture, supporting the rural economy and identity at the heart of this region. Efforts should continue to ensure that nutrients from agriculture activity are limited or captured before entering Wabamun Lake. Spaces along identified green corridors should be prioritized for protection or restoration with natural function and vegetation over time.

Each of these subregions will be home to a broad mix of different uses—the colours on the map provide an indication of priorities as the area evolves through the coming decades.

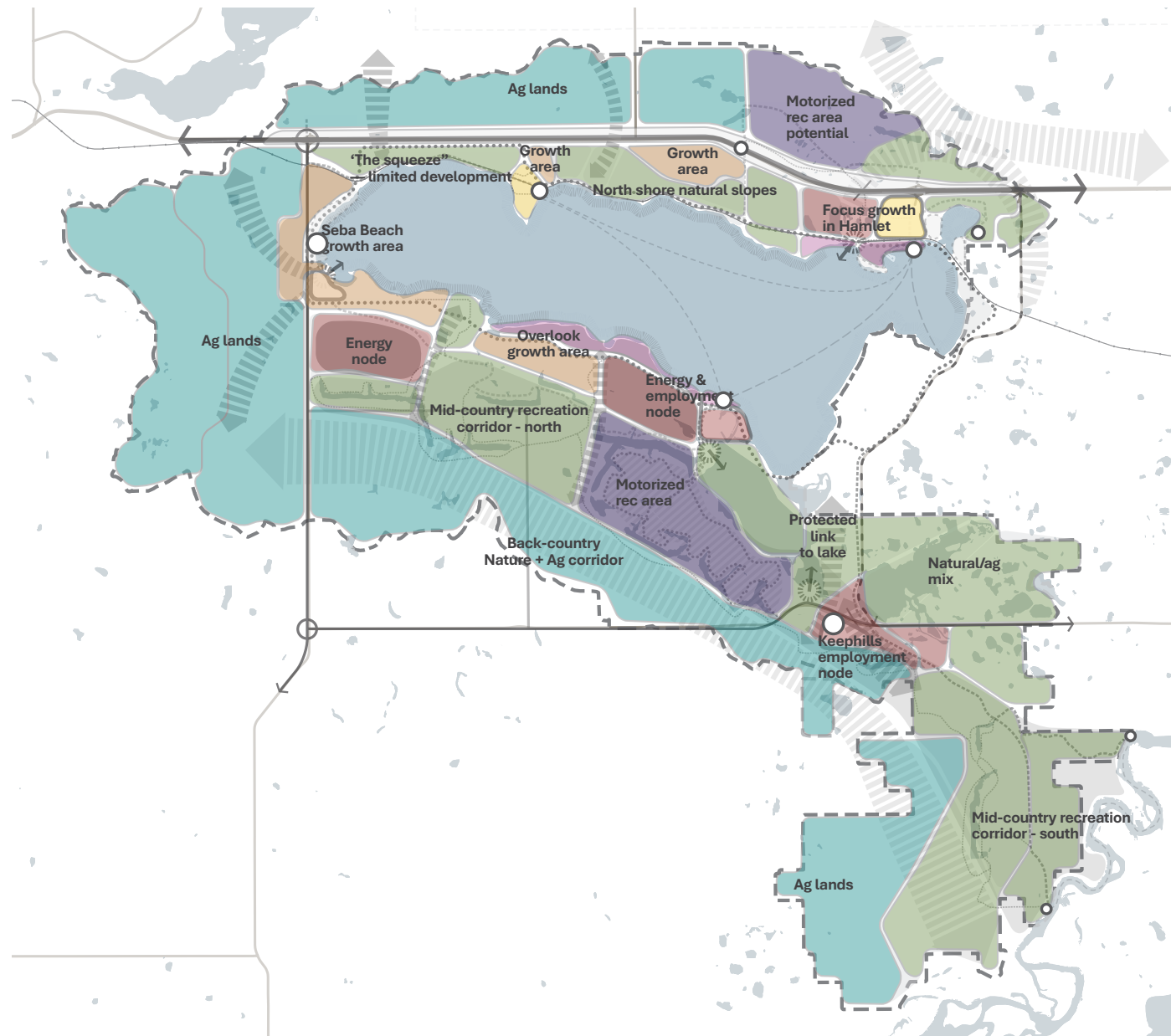
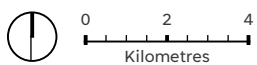
Key Questions

- + Where should new residential growth occur?
- + How best can the area leverage its existing assets and infrastructure to create new employment spaces?
- + How can the region capitalize on its natural draws and proximity to Edmonton to invite a new generation of visitors to *Wabamun Country*?

Wabamun Area Concept – Use Priorities

Legend

- Ag/Nature priority
- Nature/Rec priority
- Motorized Rec priority
- Employment priority
- Residential/Commercial priority
- Resort priority
- Vacation/Nature priority



5.6 Connectivity

Multi-use connectivity—through pathways, trails, and right-of-ways along existing routes—often has a wide range of positive impacts at a regional scale. The Area Vision’s public engagement results pointed to a broad desire for better trail connectivity to benefit both locals and visitors.

Hierarchy and Types

The concept proposes four levels of trail:

1. A primary regional trail that creates a continuous and accessible loop around Wabamun Lake.
2. Secondary trails that provide access to other regions of the Wabamun Area, like the Whitewood Mine north of Highway 16, the Highvale mid-country, and the South Saskatchewan River Valley.
3. Tertiary trails that provide walking, hiking, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing routes that explore Wabamun’s wilder spaces throughout the year.
4. Motorized trails used by ATVs, dirt bikes, and snowmobiles in a designated terrain playground that minimizes negative impacts and draws people specifically to these areas like a magnet, to help prevent dispersed use elsewhere.

New Forms of Mobility

The proposed system unlocks new forms of mobility and transportation through the area. In particular, it enables greater cycling access to key nodes around the lake, and brings together Wabamun Hamlet and the nearby Provincial Park. As Canada’s mobility profile shifts, and there is an increased use of electric bikes, scooters, and other mobility aids, this connectivity promises to increase the functional mobility potential of the area.

Year-round Recreation

The trail system would also provide significant new year-round recreation draws to the Wabamun Area. Hikers, cyclists, mountain bikers, snow-shoers, cross-country skiers, and runners would all be drawn to the area’s wide range of experiences.

Storytelling and Interpretation

The trail system lays the groundwork for interpretive storytelling about the area’s natural and industrial landscapes, helping link visitors to the history of the place, significance of the mine, and importance of the lake environment.

Economic Development

The trail system unlocks a stronger and more granular economy in the area. Small rural businesses and other services will thrive as trail users and other visitors seek food, drink, gear, and lodging.

Events

The trail network creates the basis for new events that bring people to the Wabamun region. Cycling and road races, triathlons, motorized sport events, and more all become possible once the area hosts a well-connected network of pathways and trails.

Regional Identity

The trail network draws the area together into a coherent region. Wabamun Country becomes the territory accessed through the pathway network, and all nodes within this network benefit.

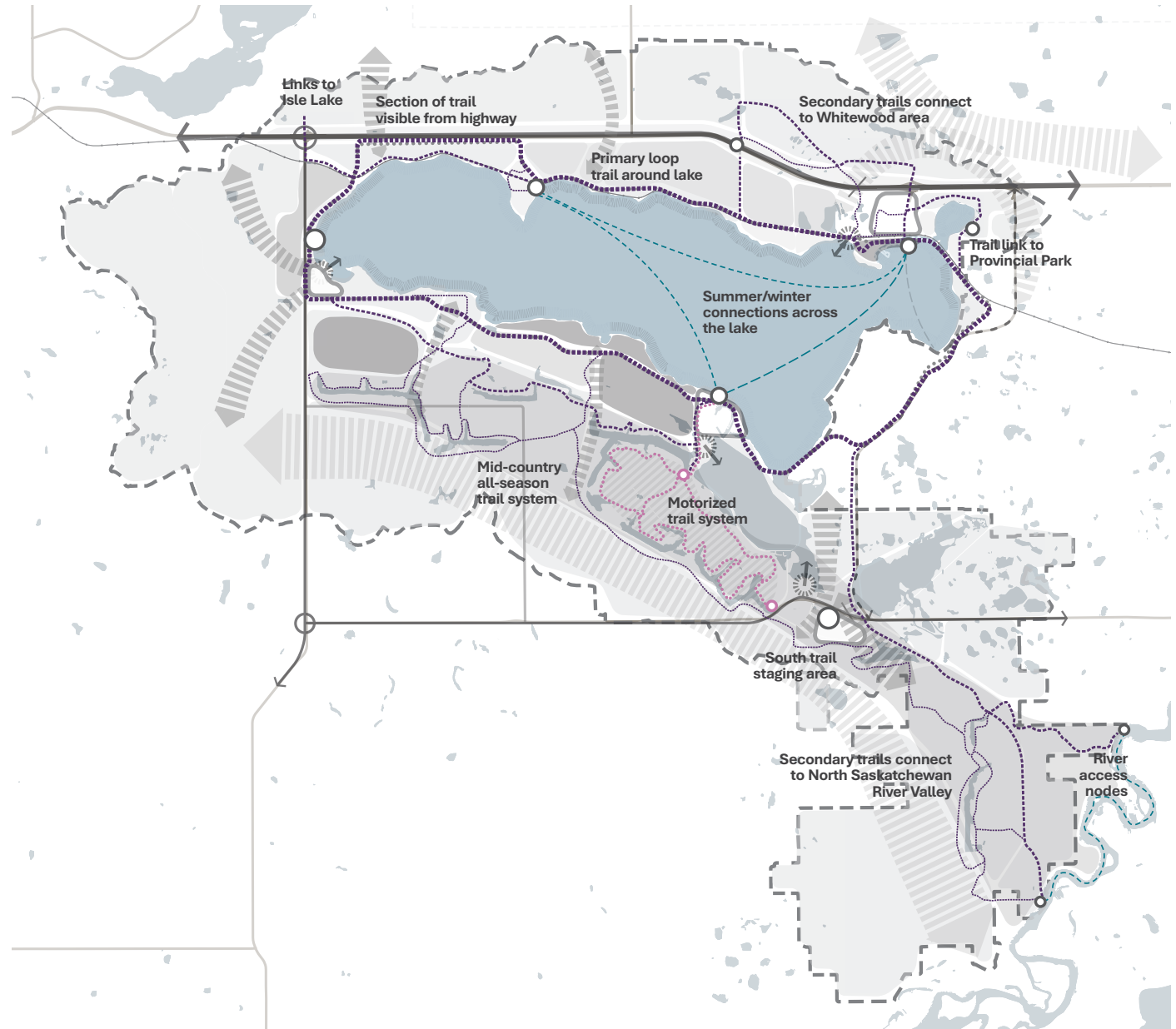
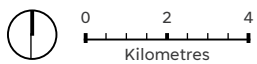
Key Questions

- + What sections of the primary loop can be activated immediately via signage?
- + How can existing routes be configured to enhance the connection between Wabamun Hamlet and the Provincial Park?
- + What kinds of public connectivity can be offered on the lake in the summer? Is a small ferry service between the boat launches attractive and viable?
- + How can the pit lakes in the reclaimed mine site become beautiful and fascinating draws for recreational users?
- + What other uses are enabled by the network? Camp sites, resorts, gear rental?

Wabamun Area Concept – Connectivity

Legend

- Primary loop trail
- Secondary access trails
- Tertiary adventure trails
- Motorized trails
- Water connections







5.7 Focus Areas

The Wabamun Area is vast. The following section dives into five focus areas to help overcome the area's tremendous scale. It explores in greater detail some of the spatial opportunities that emerge through the concept. The areas include:

Wabamun Hamlet, which is centred on the Hamlet but reaches across to the south boat launch.

North Shore, which captures the highway corridor and link between Wabamun Hamlet and Fallis.

Seba Beach / West Shore, which shows the links from Fallis to Seba Beach area and reaches into the west extent of the former mine lands.

North Mine, which is centred on the Sundance Plant and captures the core of the former mine area.

South Mine, which reaches south from the node on Highway 627 down to the North Saskatchewan River Valley.

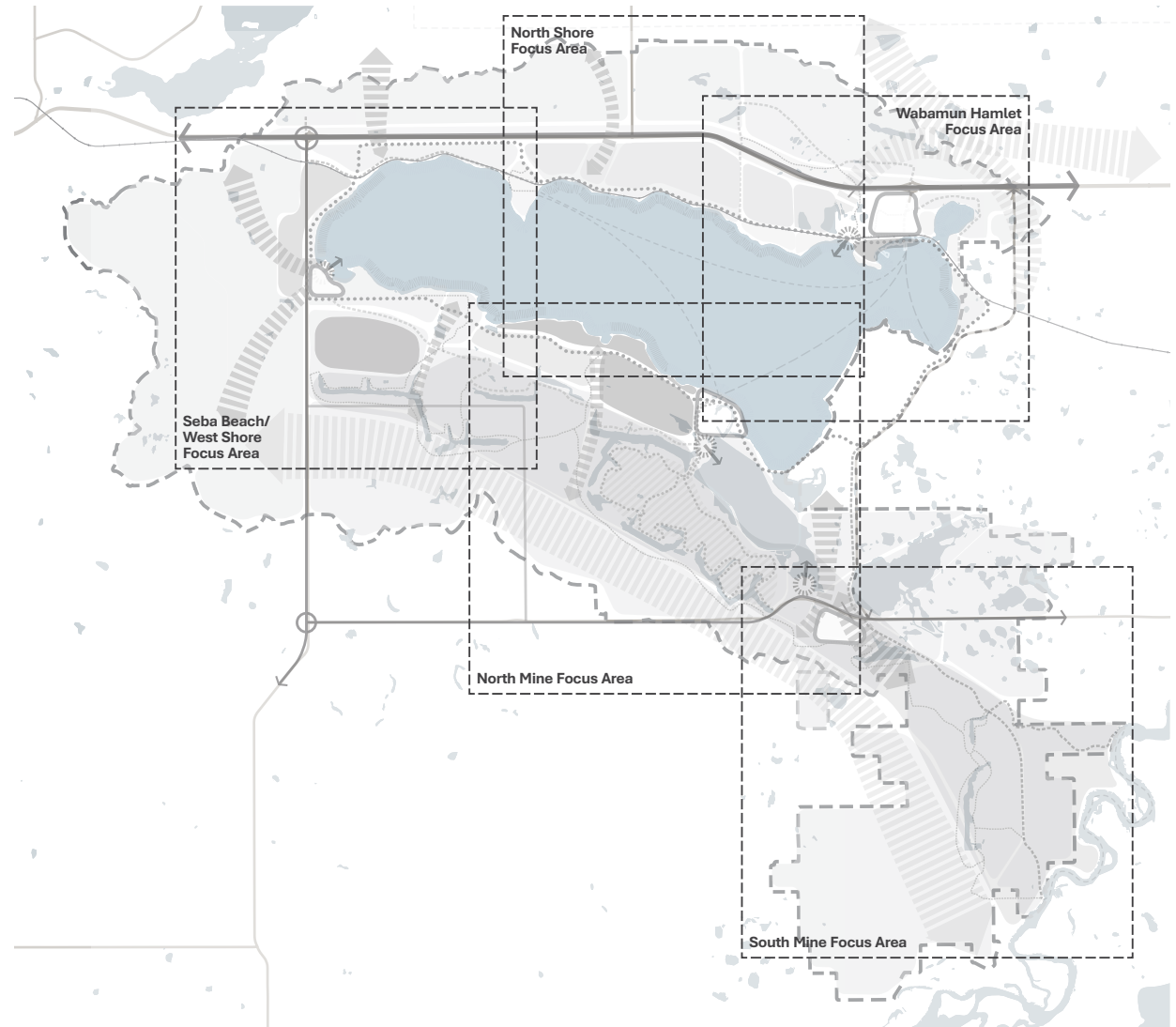


Fig 16. Focus Area Key Map

Focus Area A - Wabamun Hamlet

The Wabamun Hamlet Area is a hub for new growth and regional activity. It is the cultural heart, service centre, and base camp for the region.

- A. Passive and active recreation uses grow in the area north of Highway 16
- B. The highway underpass is maintained for recreation and wildlife use
- C. Gateway highway signage indicates traffic is entering or exiting 'Wabamun Country'
- D. Former industrial lands are leveraged to create unique RV and camping sites
- E. New growth is focused in Wabamun Hamlet
- F. A formalized and well-signed pathway connection links the Provincial Park and Wabamun Hamlet
- G. A naturalized wetland amenity treats stormwater and creates a green corridor
- H. A revitalized waterfront creates public access and new amenity
- I. A pedestrian bridge runs parallel to the CN rail bridge, providing a key link in the lake perimeter trail system
- J. A public ferry connection and winter snowmobile routes link boat launches, creating a wide range of experiences and loops
- K. The south boat launch becomes a new public activity focal point, drawing new recreation and commercial amenities and providing a public anchor to the south shore

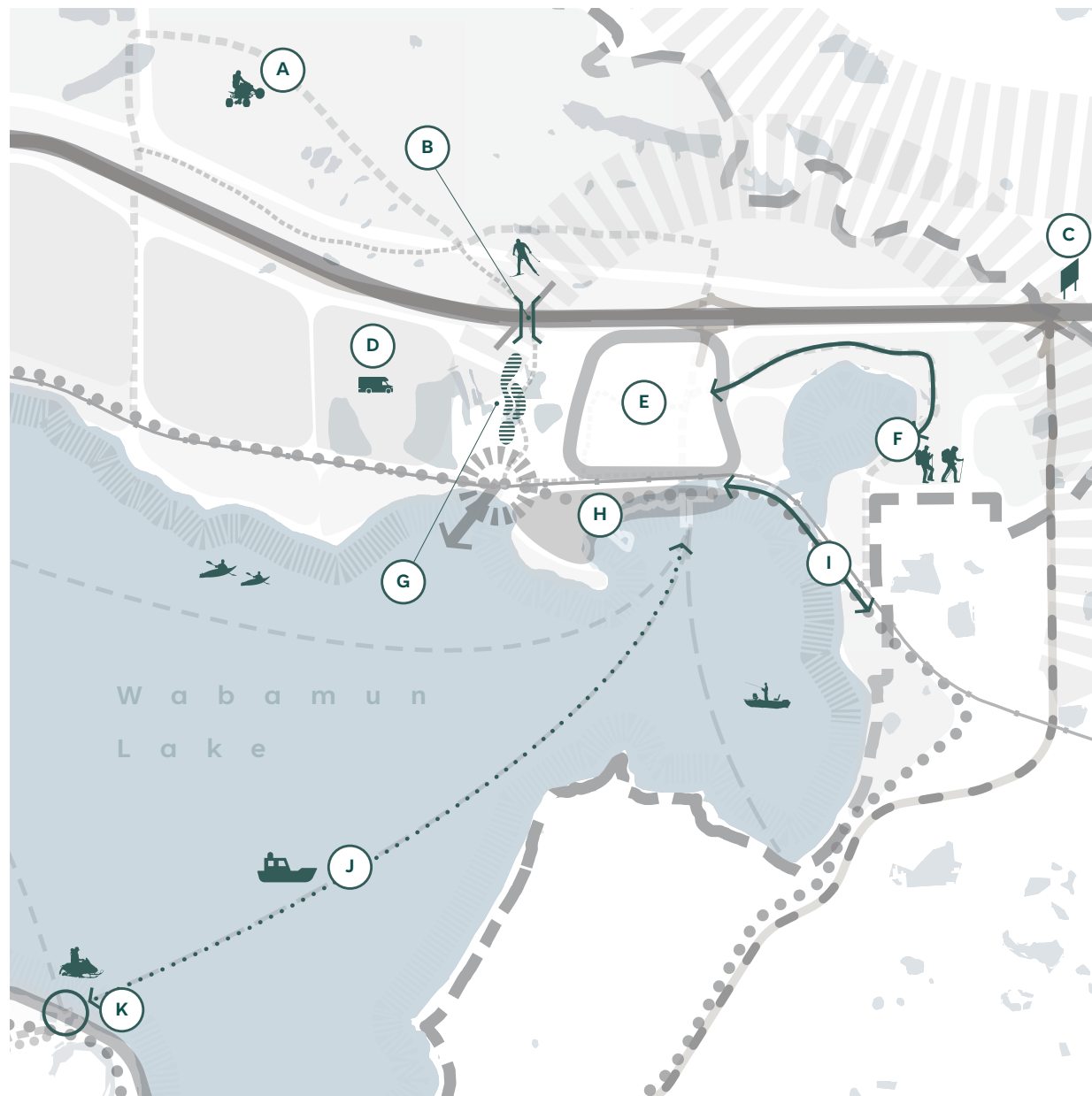


Fig 17. Focus Area A – Wabamun Hamlet

Focus Area B - North Shore

The north shore area is all about managing experience and development between Highway 16 and the lake. As settlements grow, the route between Wabamun Hamlet and Fallis will become increasingly important for all modes of transportation.

- A. A non-motorized public lake access point is formalized near Fallis
- B. Well-designed recreational and vacation developments grow in the area east of Fallis
- C. The Highway 16 corridor maintains natural and agricultural views and avoid sprawling commercial or industrial uses, creating a strong first impression of Wabamun Country
- D. Highway commercial development is focused around this highway node and extends a clear connection south to Lakeshore Road
- E. Intact vegetation patches are preserved where possible, in balance with development
- F. A multi-use trail links Wabamun and Fallis along Lakeshore Road, forming a key segment of the lake perimeter trail system
- G. Ongoing rumours of a monster that lurks in Wabamun Lake spread through the community

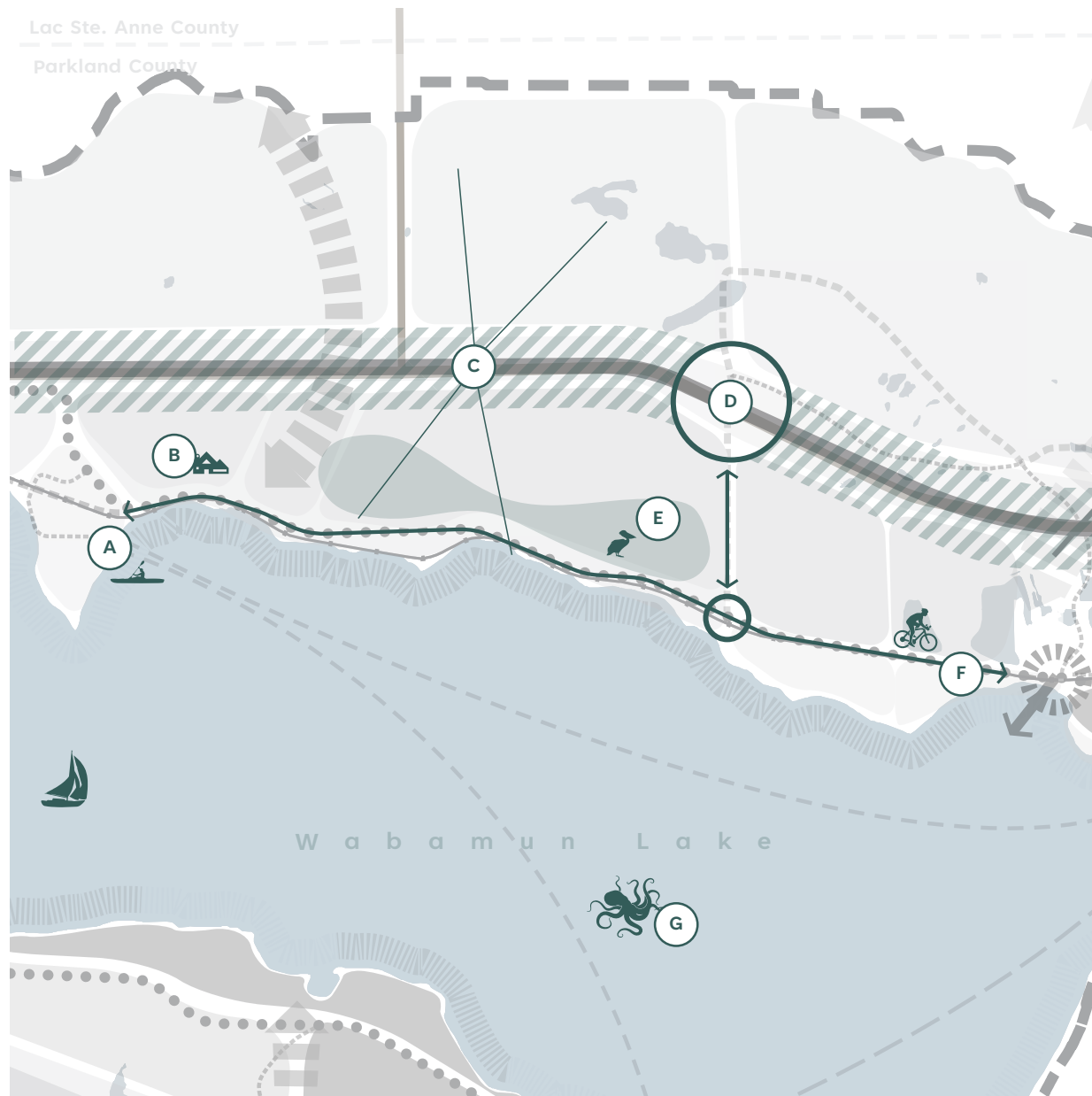


Fig 18. Focus Area B — North Shore

Focus Area C - Fallis to Seba Beach

The west end of the lake hosts a wide range of moments that help bring the area to life and connect key points of interest.

- A. Gateway highway signage for entering and exiting 'Wabamun Country'
- B. A trail segment along highway 16 is visible to vehicles traveling on the highway, showcasing the system
- C. Future trail connections between Fallis and Seba Beach are explored parallel to the CN rail line
- D. Full-time and vacation residential grows along the highway corridor at Seba Beach
- E. The primary lakeshore trail is linked through Seba Beach
- F. The Seba Beach school building is redeveloped into a multi-use community facility
- G. The area to the west is characterized by protected agriculture and natural landscapes
- H. Naturalized stormwater systems/amenities are created in partnership with Seba Beach
- I. Private landowners work with Parkland County to naturalize the lakeshore over time
- J. A hidden pocket of land with good solar exposure and infrastructure access makes a suitable energy node
- K. A natural connection south from the lake is maintained along Beaver Creek
- L. Large-scale landscape connectivity is maintained along the south edge of the watershed
- M. Multi-season trail networks explore the pit lakes and open up camping opportunities throughout the mid-country



Fig 19. Focus Area C – Fallis to Seba Beach

Focus Area D - North Mine

The north mine area will see complete reinvention over the next fifty years. Done right, it will open a new chapter for the area's identity and create an economic boon for the region.

- A. New vacation and resort developments are clustered on the slopes overlooking the lake south of Sundance Road
- B. Natural areas are protected among limited development footprints in the area north of Sundance Road
- C. A new employment node leverages existing infrastructure while avoiding visibility from the lake
- D. The south boat launch anchors a new node of recreation, commercial, and supporting uses
- E. The recreation corridor trail system continues along the pit lakes area of the former mine
- F. A key link between boat launch and motorized rec area provides a multi-use, multi-season connection
- G. A destination motorized recreation park utilizes the diverse landscape of the former mine
- H. The cooling ponds become part of a stormwater treatment strategy in this area
- I. The former rail line and bridge is converted into a section of multi-use pathway
- J. Trails and other uses are kept away from the south edge of the watershed to help maintain a natural corridor
- K. A commercial hub also provides staging functions for the trail system and the motorized recreation area
- L. Connectivity is maintained between the cooling ponds to the Paul Band lands to the north



Fig 20. Focus Area D — North Mine

Focus Area E – South Mine

The south mine is the quietest zone. Here the concept imagines new types of connectivity, exploration, thriving natural landscapes, and productive agricultural space.

- A. A multi-season staging centre provides a base camp for hiking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing throughout the trail network
- B. The existing highway underpass is used for connectivity of natural systems and trails
- C. Extensive wetlands are maintained as natural spaces with some agricultural use
- D. A secondary trail link from Wabamun Lake runs through Keepphills Landing east to the North Saskatchewan River Valley
- E. Agricultural uses are retained here with consideration for natural patches and corridors
- F. A broad corridor of natural and agricultural space links the south edge of the watershed to the North Saskatchewan River Valley
- G. Tertiary trail networks around the pit lakes host hiking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing
- H. Nodes at the North Saskatchewan River host camping and provide access for river recreation

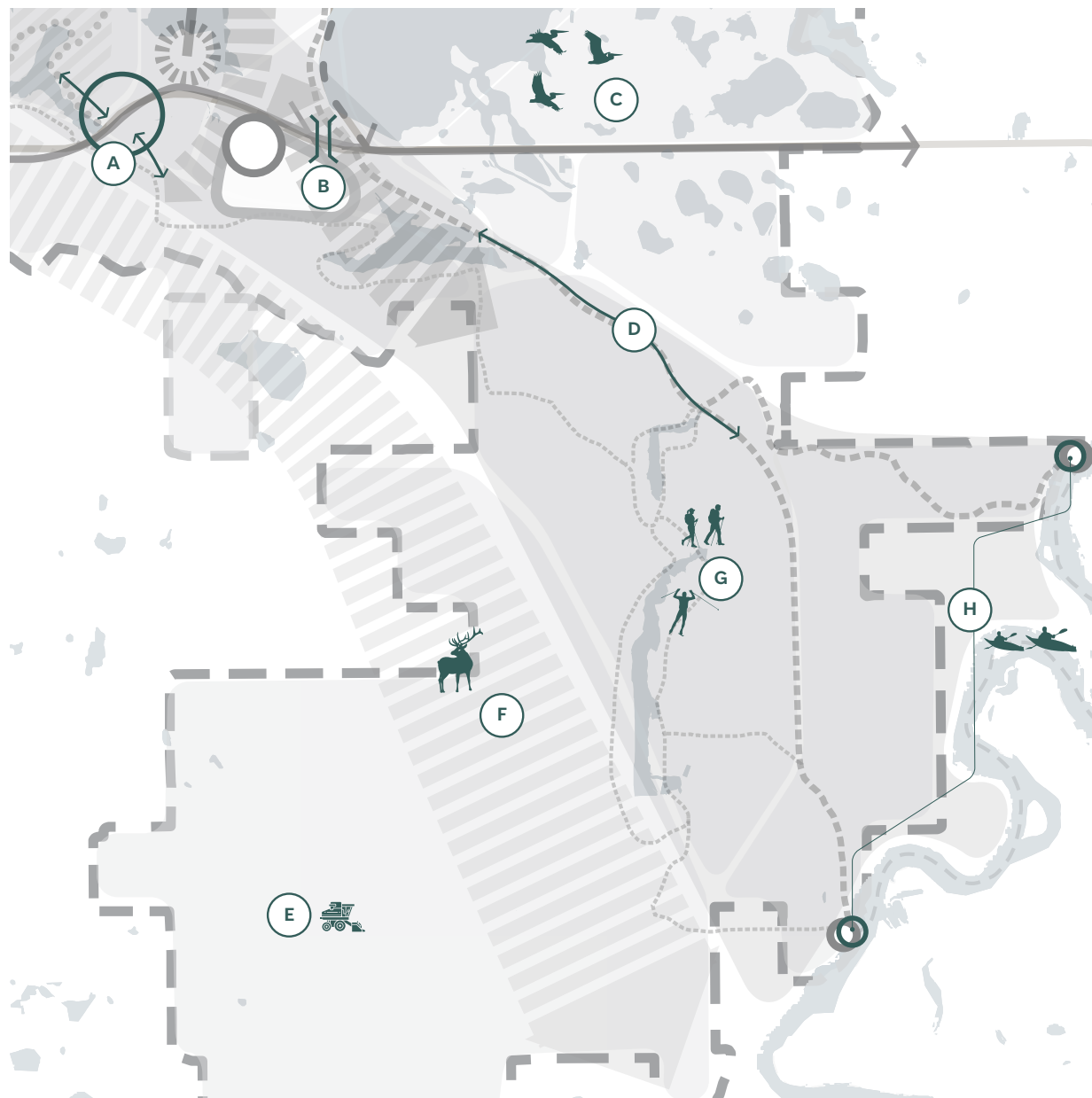


Fig 21. Focus Area E – South Mine





6 Strategic Actions

6.1 Overview

The final section of the Wabamun Area Vision outlines a range of strategic actions that build towards the area concept. The strategic actions listed here range in scale and specificity—from small, material interventions like signage to broad economic incentive packages. They are a departure point rather than a comprehensive set of instructions—they should be used as prompts that bridge between the concept plan, the project goals, and the pillars of the vision, connecting the aspirations of the vision to on-the-ground initiatives.

The goals are lettered from A-R, and each goal has a series of corresponding numbered actions, helping trace a thread back through the pillars to the project vision. For example, strategic action K-3 recommends that arts and culture destinations are connected into a network through the region. This supports goal K: *Wabamun Country promotes community life and culture, with great places and public spaces.* This supports the Wabamun Area Vision via the Community Growth pillar. This framework is flexible and enables future goals and strategic actions to be mapped into the strategic process as the Wabamun Vision unfolds.

These actions should be used as prompts that bridge between the concept plan, the project goals, and the pillars of the vision, connecting the aspirations of the vision to on-the-ground initiatives.

“Destination is nothing without artists and artisans.”

- Engagement participant

6.2 Natural Systems

Goal A Wabamun Lake anchors a clean and healthy watershed.

Wabamun Lake is the defining feature of the Wabamun Area. Keeping the lake clean and healthy supports the entire region, as a healthy and beautiful lake is fundamental to the quality of life of local ecosystems and communities. Initiatives to protect and restore riparian areas, reduce runoff, and protect the watershed will help to achieve this goal.

Action A-1 Initiate a shoreline education and rehabilitation program that provides guidance and grants to naturalize private lakeshore property.

Action A-2 Update Municipal Development Plan policies and Land Use Bylaw regulations to include greater protection of shoreline, floodplain, and other sensitive areas.

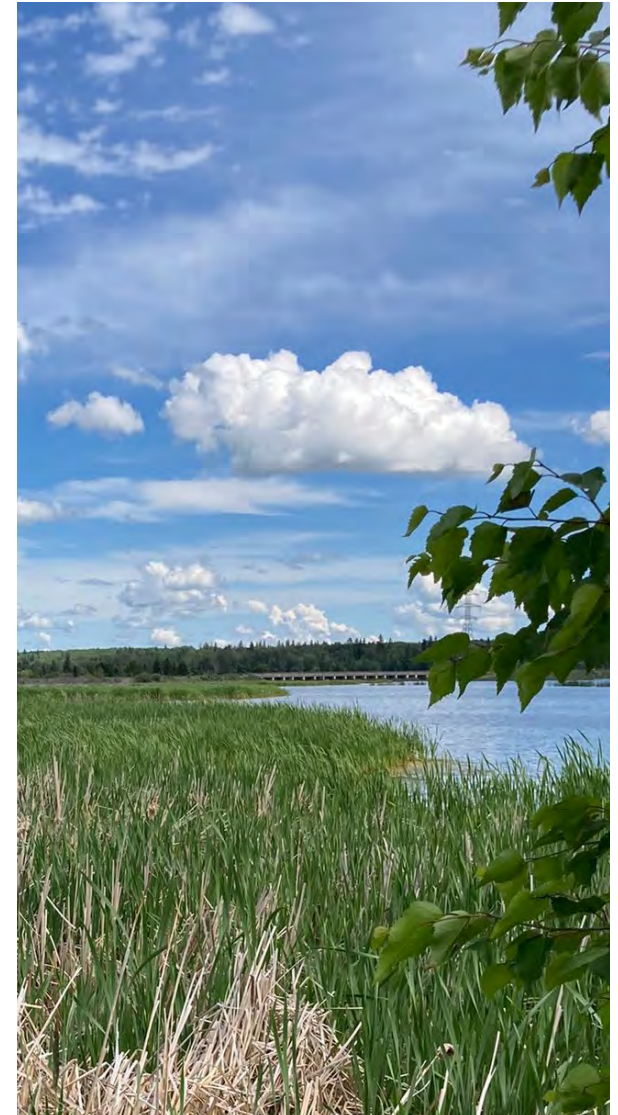
Action A-3 Develop a stormwater management system near Wabamun Hamlet to improve the water quality of urban runoff from the hamlet before it reaches the Lake.

Action A-4 Enforce septic standards through proactive inspections.

Action A-5 Explore expansion of municipal servicing connections from Wabamun Hamlet to surrounding development.

Action A-6 Create healthy shoreline restoration and maintenance programs or events (cleanups, etc).

Action A-7 Demarcate specific sensitive shoreline areas where lakeside travel is restricted.





Goal B Wabamun Country has high quality natural landscapes that are well connected through the region.

Wabamun Country boasts diverse natural landscapes, including watercourses, forests, and wetlands. To protect ecological function, natural areas will be well connected to support wildlife movement and reduce habitat fragmentation.

★ Action B-1 Establish municipal parkland areas along the shoreline, along riparian streambanks, and in key corridors (esp. near the underpasses).

Action B-2 Encourage and support citizen-led monitoring of natural areas using existing citizen science tools (ebird, inaturalist, etc).

Action B-3 Ensure natural connections through to the North Saskatchewan River Valley.

Action B-4 Retain and replace existing tree canopy where possible.

Goal C Post-industrial landscapes are restored in ways that recover natural function, protect water, and produce new opportunity.

The post-industrial landscapes, specifically the former mine lands, present a significant opportunity to re-establish and reconnect natural areas in the region. Parts of the former Highvale mine lands should be strategically reclaimed and re-naturalized to provide additional habitat, protect the Wabamun Lake watershed, and provide new opportunities for people to connect with nature.

Action C-1 Leverage the Highvale mine restoration as an opportunity for interpretation and storytelling 'the next chapter of Wabamun Country'.

★ Action C-2 Conduct a restoration demonstration project with public access.

Action C-3 Support new eco-tourism opportunities in post-industrial landscapes.


★ = high impact

🕒 = quick win

6.3 Regional Identity

Goal D **Wabamun Country has a distinct and well-known regional identity.**

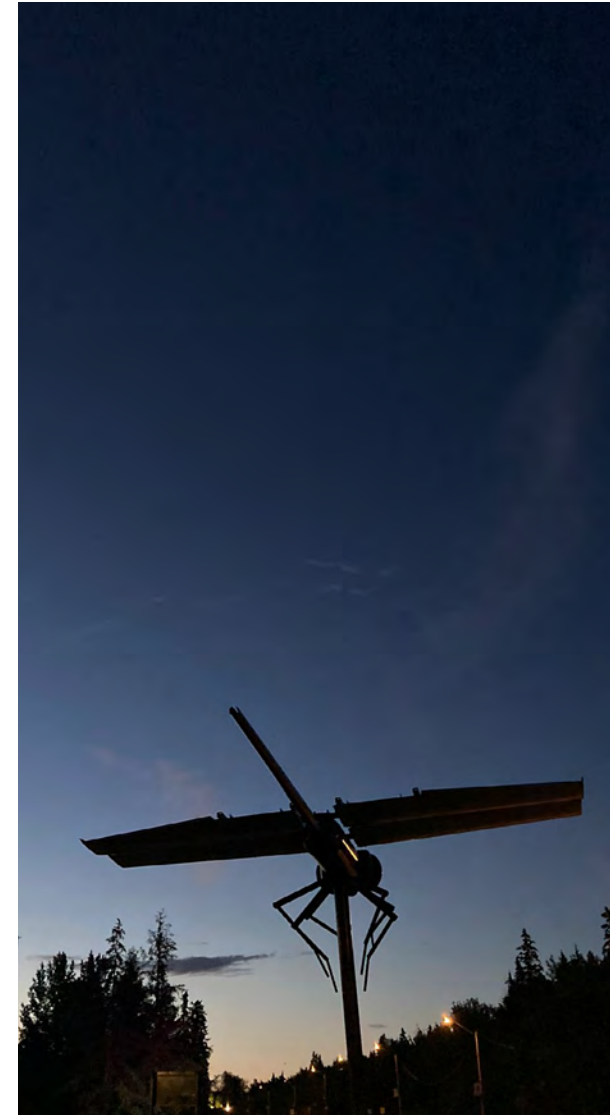
The Wabamun Area already contains many key attractions for visitors and residents. The strategic actions within this goal focus on leveraging these discrete destinations to create an overall connected regional identity for Wabamun through branding, signage, and other placemaking elements.

Action D-1  Develop a cohesive regional branding program for 'Wabamun Country'.

Action D-2 Upgrade signage, including at highway entries and Wabamun Hamlet.

Action D-3 Invent a lake monster. Use it as a playful opportunity for community-building and regional identity.

Action D-4 Seek out existing Indigenous stories as a basis for regional identity and community.





“Firstly we should recognize wabamun as a tourist destination and clean up the waterfront.”

- Engagement participant



Goal E Wabamun Country showcases its unique natural assets and industrial legacy.

Two of the things that make Wabamun Country unique are its diverse natural landscapes and its industrial legacy. All new development and recreational opportunities should find ways to draw from and showcase these important aspects of the region’s identity.

- Action E-1 Protect natural view corridors along Hwy 16 and expand potential views of the lake.
- Action E-2 Develop interpretation to highlight the natural history and function of Wabamun Lake.
- Action E-3 Provide education/signage opportunities about former industrial activities and reclamation work.
- Action E-4 Develop an interpretive trail that spans former industrial areas/buildings.

Goal F Wabamun Country provides a positive and memorable visitor experience.

Wabamun Country attracts visitors for a variety of different activities and experiences – from ATVing to birdwatching. Strategic actions within this goal focus on continuously improving and building upon these experiences to ensure that visitors have positive experiences and will continue to return again and again.

- Action F-1   Develop a visitor information kiosk/office in Wabamun Hamlet.
- Action F-2 Market events and opportunities in Edmonton and surrounding communities.
- Action F-3 Screen unattractive uses from Highway 16.
- Action F-4  Move the dragonfly sculpture to the Wabamun Commons plaza on 51st Avenue to drive visitors to main street businesses.


 = high impact

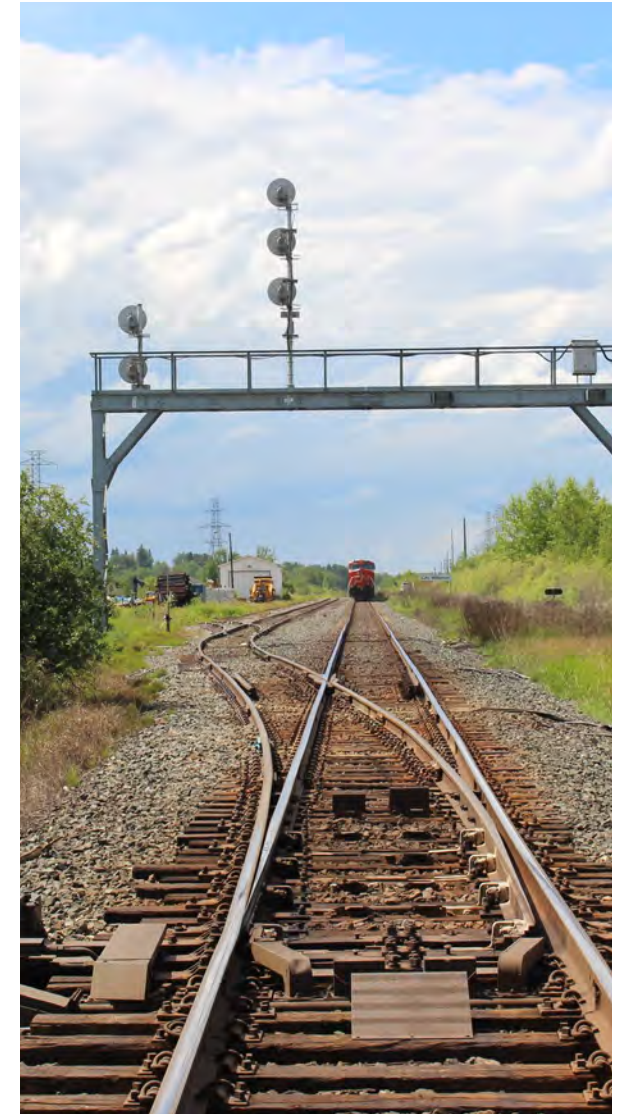
 = quick win

6.4 Organization and Connectivity

Goal G Wabamun Country grows in collaboration with Indigenous communities

Wabamun Country is located in Treaty 6 Territory, on lands that are important to diverse First Nations, Metis, and Inuit Peoples. The region is a direct neighbour to Paul First Nation. Parkland County is committed to working in close collaboration with Indigenous Partners on stewardship, economic development, and other matters of interest.

- Action G-1 Develop a connectivity agreement with Paul First Nation for roadway use in the cycling network.
- Action G-2 Formalize a connected green corridor and protected lakeshore.
- Action G-3  With Paul First Nation, explore the conversion of a rail link/ bridge to multi-use trail that links to Keephills and new south boat launch.
- Action G-4 Work with Paul First Nation to integrate Indigenous histories and storytelling into the interpretive elements around Wabamun Area.





Goal H Residential and commercial growth is focused in Wabamun Hamlet

Focusing growth within Wabamun Hamlet will reinforce its position as the largest fully serviced community in Wabamun Country and a gateway to adventure in the region. Focusing growth will also make efficient use of existing services and amenities, while supporting a full-time residential population in the area.



- Action H-1 Direct compact, walkable, mixed-use growth through HARP policies.
- Action H-2 Extend Wabamun Hamlet growth to the west.
- Action H-3 Meet with lending institutions to help remove financial barriers to new commercial/retail.
- Action H-4 Work with service providers to improve internet service and connectivity.

"I live just north of the mine, trails on the mine site would be such fun year round!!"

- Engagement participant

Goal I A clear mobility network connects Wabamun Country.

There are many ways to travel Wabamun Country. Focused improvements on roads and trails will help to better connect existing communities, amenities, and landscapes in a coherent and accessible way.

- Action I-1  Enhance the multi-use connection between Wabamun Hamlet and the Provincial Park.
- Action I-2  Create a connected trail/pathway around Wabamun Lake.
- Action I-3 Plan for segments of active routes to be visible/connected to major transportation corridors as a way to advertise the trail network.
- Action I-4 Increase signage for existing trails.
- Action I-5 Increase safe pedestrian crossing points over CN rail tracks at Wabamun Hamlet.

 = high impact

 = quick win

6.5 Community Growth

Goal J Wabamun Country supports a year-round population with diverse housing types and supporting services.

The population of Wabamun Country is growing as many people continue to discover what the region has to offer. Focused actions within this goal will ensure that there are diverse housing options available and that the necessary services and amenities are in place to support a high quality of life for residents.

- Action J-1 Provide residential construction incentives.
- Action J-2 Update MDP and LUB to remove barriers for development.
- Action J-3 Leverage grant programs to attract seniors housing developers and operators.
- Action J-4 Provide economic incentives for private sector (TIF program to stimulate economy).
- Action J-5 Convert village office to a community hub/service centre.



Goal K Wabamun Country promotes community life and culture, with great places and public spaces.

There are many unique cultural organizations, destinations, and events in Wabamun Country that can be supported, connected, and promoted. Improving public spaces and providing new locations to host such activities will continue to foster vibrant community life in the region.

- Action K-1 Comprehensively redevelop the Wabamun Waterfront.
- Action K-2 Redevelop and upgrade Wabamun Waterfront Park.
- Action K-3 Link arts and cultural destinations as part of an overall network.
- Action K-4 Promote arts and cultural destinations.
- Action K-5 Develop various art tours and routes.



“Continue with the revitalization started years ago and increase supports for the volunteer groups already providing community events and services.”

- Engagement participant



Goal L Residents of Wabamun Country feel safe and have a strong sense of community.

Wabamun Country already has an impressive network of volunteer community organizations and initiatives that bring people together and strengthen community resiliency. Focused actions will help support these existing initiatives.

- Action L-1 Support local organizations through grants and capacity building.
- Action L-2 Coordinate community events with Paul First Nation.
- Action L-3 Create partnerships/programming with Tri-Regional school boards to enhance cultural offerings.
- Action L-4 Continue to promote and expand farmers markets and festivals in public spaces.
- Action L-5 Create a winter festival or major event.




★ = high impact

🕒 = quick win

6.6 Economic Diversity

Goal M **Wabamun Country attracts new mainstay employment opportunities.**

Wabamun Country is undergoing an economic transition. Its industrial legacy offers opportunities to draw new mainstay employment, such as renewable energy, light industrial, manufacturing, and local entrepreneurship.

- Action M-1 Identify and delineate new employment areas.
- Action M-2 Create co-working/business incubator space.
- Action M-3 Develop municipally provided youth employment support programs/work placements.
- Action M-4 Explore opportunities for a hydrogen hub in the former mine site.
- Action M-5  Work with TransAlta to explore opportunities for solar generation plants in former mine site.
- Action M-6 Explore economic partnerships with Paul First Nation.
- Action M-7 Create local business partnerships/working groups (entrepreneurship opportunities).





Goal N Wabamun Country provides a variety of hospitality options and experiences.

Wabamun Country is becoming a sought after visitor destination. Encouraging a wide variety of hospitality options and experiences will enable the area to host a more diverse visitor base and contribute to the region's economic development.

- Action N-1 Develop strong relationships with employment and hospitality developers/operators.
- Action N-2 Attract a wellness facility/spa.
- Action N-3 Create opportunities for destination resorts/hotels.
- ★ Action N-4 Attract a brewery/distillery or other destination production facility.

"[We need] more recreational opportunities for kids of all ages, and diversity of businesses (new restaurants, specialty stores, arcades)"

- Engagement participant

Goal O Agricultural uses are integrated and protected.

Agriculture will remain a mainstay use in the Wabamun Area and a key part of its identity. It is important to protect the highest quality lands for this use and to continue to foster innovation in agriculture as well as complimentary uses that can contribute to the region's other goals.

- Action O-1 Protect high quality farming lands for continued agricultural use.
- Action O-2 Support ancillary farm uses, such as farm to table, tours, events, etc.
- 🕒 Action O-3 Host Alberta Open Farm Days Gathering/Festival/Meeting Point.


★ = high impact

🕒 = quick win

6.7 Recreation and Amenity


Goal P **Wabamun Country supports motorized and non-motorized recreation in all seasons.**

Wabamun Country is an all-season destination. Expanding and promoting existing and new recreational opportunities will help to attract more permanent and seasonal residents to the area as well as support an increasing visitor population. Opportunities for both motorized and non-motorized recreation will ensure that there is something for everyone.

Action P-1  Incorporate motorized recreation areas within the reclaimed Highvale Mine site.

Action P-2 Support the creation of an Adventure Hub to implement motorized recreation programming.

Action P-3 Incentivize the establishment of bike and paddle rental services in the area.

Action P-4  Support the creation of non-motorized adventure areas in the former mine site (mountain biking, pump track, etc.).

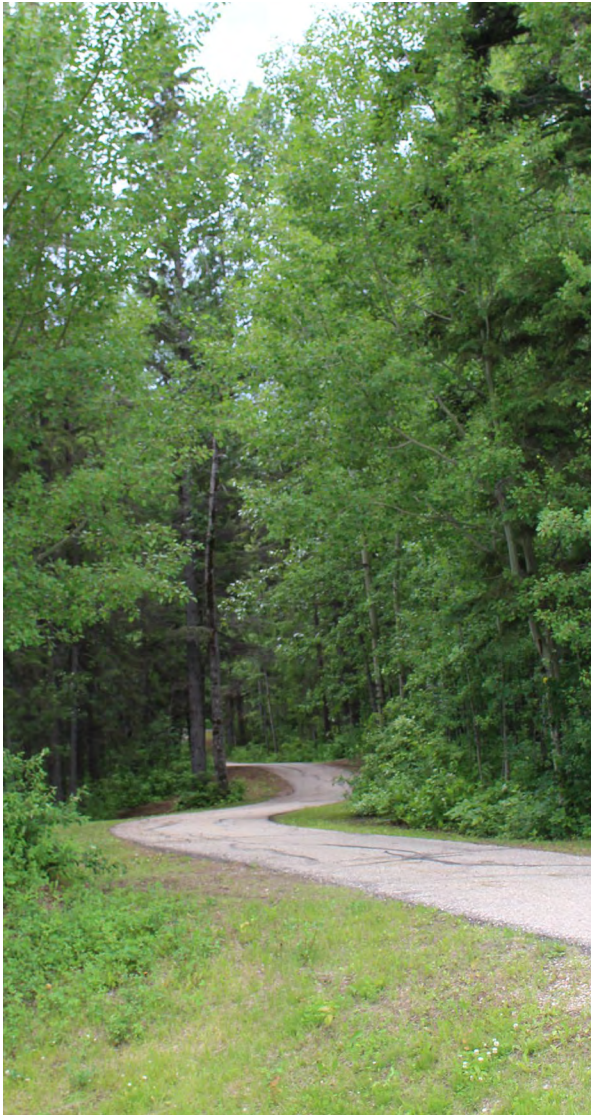
Action P-5 Create a skating area on Wabamun Lake near Waterfront Park.

Action P-6 Establish snowmobile routes between the lake and motorized recreation areas.

Action P-7 Investigate the potential for new Winter Hiking/Camping opportunities.




Action P-8 Partner to create a network of cross country and snowshoe trails.







Goal Q Wabamun Country provides recreation opportunities for diverse users.


There is great potential to expand the range of recreation opportunities available in the region. Diversifying these opportunities will support active living for all ages and draw visitors with broad interests.

- Action Q-1  Encourage outdoor community-based activities and programming which attract people to the lake.
- Action Q-2  Encourage private gym and recreation facilities as part of new development.
- Action Q-3 Build partnerships with recreation organizations.
- Action Q-4 Partner with existing businesses/school system for outdoor educational programming.
- Action Q-5  Support the completion and programming of the WAVES activity park.
- Action Q-6 Promote weekend recreation events in conjunction with other municipalities.

Goal R Wabamun Country has clear and accessible public lake access.

With Wabamun Lake as the region's greatest asset, it is essential that there is adequate and clearly signed public water access. Actions within this goal will improve upon existing access points and enhance connections to them.

- Action R-1  Develop a signage program to clearly identify public lake access points.
- Action R-2 Provide online mapping/resources for accessing the lake.
- Action R-3  Develop south boat launch as public node with park space and amenity.
- Action R-4 Create/enhance active travel connections between public lake access points.

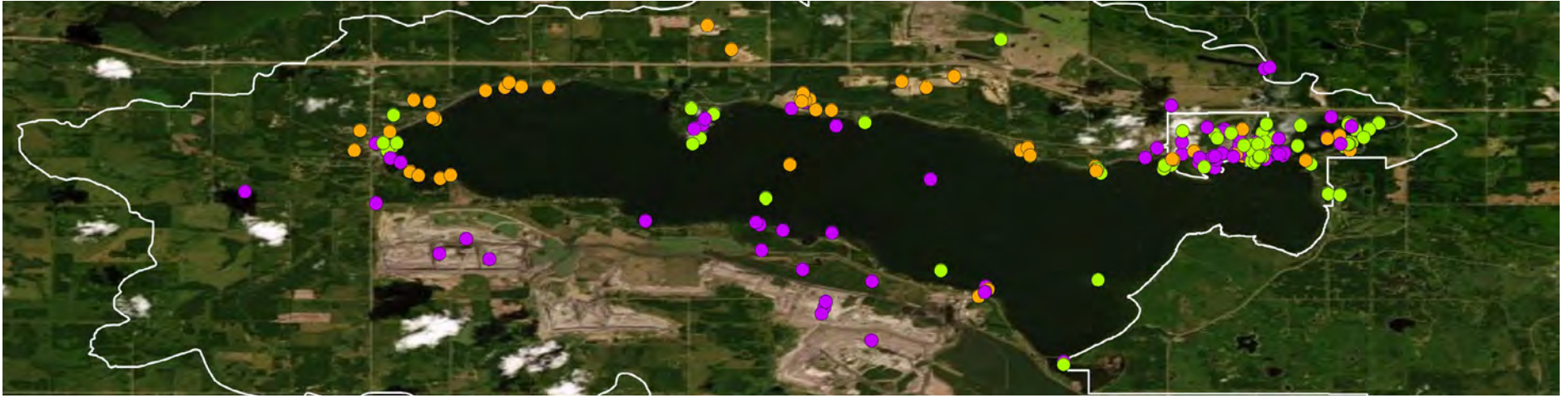
 = high impact  = quick win





7 Appendices

- A Engagement Summary Pt 1**
- B Engagement Summary Pt 2**
- C Engagement Summary Pt 3**
- D Natural Systems Memo**
- E Development Opportunities Memo**
- F Market Conditions Memo**
- G Infrastructure Memo**



Appendix A

Engagement Summary Stage 1



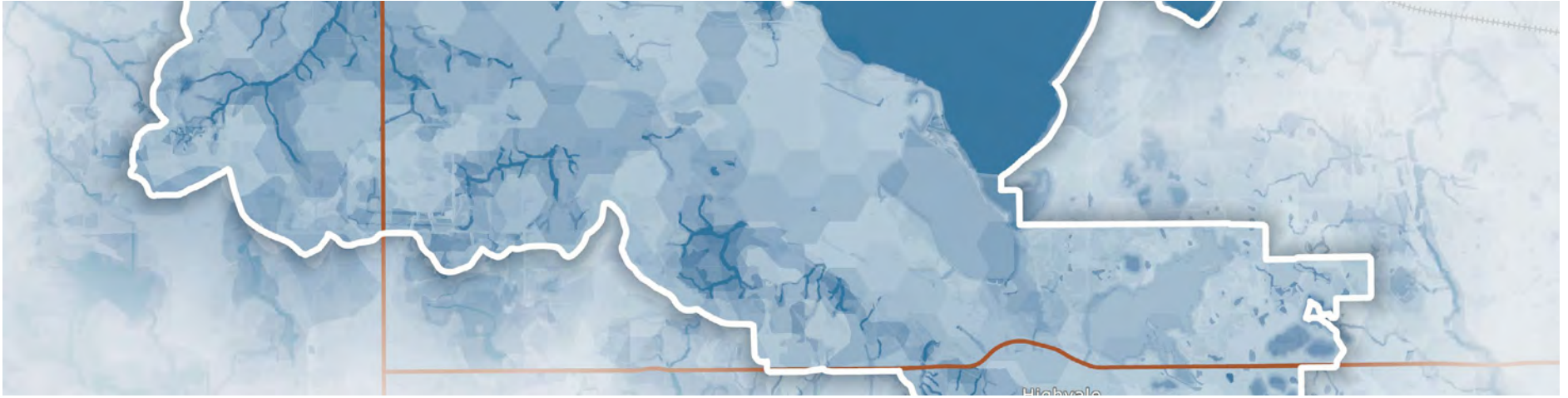
Appendix B

Engagement Summary Stage 2



Appendix C

Engagement Summary Stage 3



Appendix D

Natural Systems Memo



Appendix E

Development Opportunities Memo



Appendix F

Market Conditions Memo



Appendix G

Infrastructure Memo

