

# ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

BACKGROUND | 7 OF 8



## INTRODUCTION

Strathcona County has made major strides towards protecting and enhancing the environment over the last 20 years, but there is always the opportunity to do more. The County has undertaken several new, successful environmental initiatives, and improved its environmental management policies and systems considerably over this time period. At the same time, it has been supported by the efforts of several other agencies, community-based organizations and private sector groups.

## CURRENT TRENDS

- An appreciation for the need to provide for more compact forms of rural development to protect agricultural lands.
- A recognition that a regional approach to managing land, transportation facilities and servicing infrastructure is one of the keys to protecting the County's environment.
- Interest in walkable, urban village style living (e.g. Palisades Estates), and other forms of compact urban housing (e.g. medium and high rise condos).
- Ongoing desire for different forms of country residential.
- Continued strong collaboration on environmental management between the County and groups like the Beaver Hills Initiative.
- New technological and systems approaches to environmental protection and enhancement (e.g. using waste as a resource, advancements and lower costs in alternative energy such as solar and wind power, local waste management systems, etc).
- Younger generation with an understanding of the critical importance of environmental conservation.

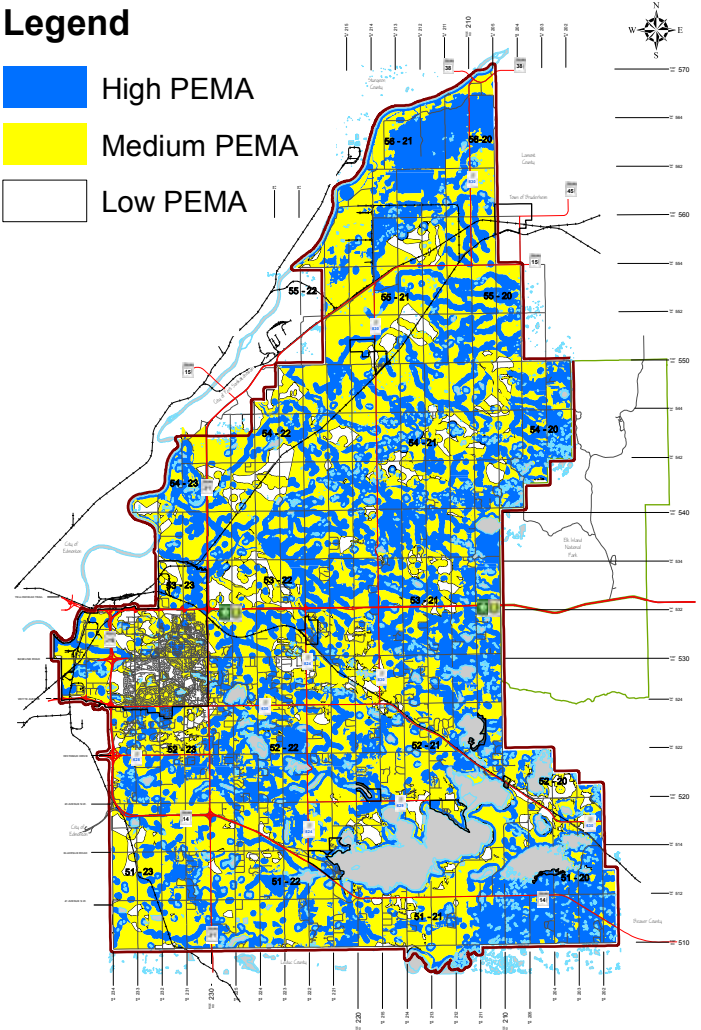
## Priority Environmental Management Areas (PEMAs)

### Legend

High PEMA

Medium PEMA

Low PEMA



## WHAT DOES THE 2007 MDP SAY?

The key components of the MDP's environmental management approach are to:

1. Identify and map high, medium and low Priority Environment Management Areas (PEMAs).
2. Use the PEMA areas as a guide to decision making when approving locations for development. The decision as to which lands will be conserved in a particular situation is based on further analysis (e.g., a biophysical assessment completed at the time of more detailed planning, such as the Area Structure Plan stage).
3. Protect and enhance PEMAs through:
  - » Regulations and development guidelines.
  - » Biophysical assessments, geotechnical assessments, environmental impact assessments.
  - » Environmental reserves, municipal reserves, and easements.
  - » Educational programs and community involvement.

Some of the other key MDP policies include:

- Create a large network of wildlife corridors.
- Protect and enhance significant/sensitive natural areas.
- Utilize Conservation Subdivision Design.
- Protect the Beaver Hills Moraine area, the North Saskatchewan River Valley and all water bodies.
- Promote higher densities and compact development.
- Restrict development in areas prone to flooding, shoreline erosion, soil instability or other potential hazards.
- Ensure wetlands are not filled in, drained or altered to accommodate development; require replanting and naturalization if needed.
- Ensure the type and scale of recreation/tourism developments within the Beaver Hills Moraine are appropriate to the environment.
- Implement recycling programs (e.g. curb-side recycling and recycling depots).
- Protect the environment through waste management, weed and pest control.
- Protect wildlife habitat areas by prohibiting the clearing of native vegetation, and requiring tree retention/planting.
- Carry out education on environmental matters.
- Collaborate with other jurisdictions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, monitor groundwater quality, address air quality concerns, etc.

## SUCCESS STORIES SINCE THE 2007 MDP

- Environmental Sustainability Framework report (2009)
- Country Residential Area Concept Plan (2012) – environmental protection re country residential.
- Beaver Hills Tourism Development Opportunity Assessment (2012)
- Legacy Lands policy (2007) – acquisition of lands of historical, cultural and environmental significance.
- Wetland Conservation policy (2009)
- Municipal Sustainable Buildings policy (2010)
- Heritage Tree Retention policy (2011)

Other environmental initiatives include

- Backyard composting
- Enviroservice events for recycling/safe disposal options
- Green Routine - program to divert waste from landfills
- Hybrid/solar vehicles and buses
- Think trees and 2008 Urban Forest Conference
- Water conservation program

## CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

- Balancing the need to accommodate a growing population and keep housing prices reasonable, while protecting valuable environmentally sensitive areas.
- Addressing air quality concerns, given the close proximity of industry to residential areas, and a high reliance on private vehicle use.
- Opportunities to promote more compact, higher density, walkable communities.
- With density gradually increasing in the urban area, transit solutions become more feasible.
- The Country Residential Area Concept Plan has provided more clarity to encourage Conservation Design subdivisions and other forms of compact rural development.
- The County has created a positive momentum through the many success stories in the last few years.

## THINGS TO CONSIDER

- What important environmental issues do you think need to be addressed in the MDP update?
- What suggestions do you have for protecting and improving the environment in Strathcona County?