



Seven Persons Area Structure Plan



Bylaw No. 2018/07





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Highway 3 Future Twinning Study – Overall Recommended Plan



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF PLAN

The purpose of the Seven Persons Area Structure Plan is to provide a framework to guide future growth and land uses in an orderly and economical manner which supports the aspirations of the land owners, the community, the County and other major stakeholders.

This plan was developed as part of the Cypress County Council's strategic planning efforts. The County recognizes the need to preserve agricultural land, especially irrigated land. As part of this strategy, Council is promoting hamlets as an alternate residential location for County residents and is striving to provide a higher level of services in all hamlets. The Hamlet of Seven Persons receives a variety of services such as excellent potable water, sanitary sewer collection, hard surfaced streets, parks and play grounds, recycling and solid waste transfer sites and a local fire station.

The Council has specifically recognized the unique attributes of the County's hamlets, and has identified Seven Persons as one it wants to promote. The Council believes that Seven Persons has the potential to slowly attract residential and commercial development over time that will help strengthen and enhance an already healthy community. Seven Persons is serviced by water and sanitary sewer infrastructure which has additional capacity to service additional growth for the foreseeable future. In addition, in the last two years the Council has contributed funding towards improvements to important community facilities; namely the Seven Persons School playground and significant repairs and maintenance to the Seven Persons Community Hall. The Council is also budgeting for future water distribution and sanitary sewer replacements in certain areas in the near future.

1.2 APPROVAL AND ADOPTION PROCESS

In accordance with current Provincial Planning Legislation and the planning practices of Cypress County, this draft of the Area Structure Plan will be submitted to the County for review and was the subject of an open house in the community in December of 2017. Adjustments may be made to the plan after public input and before the adoption of the plan being submitted to Council for adoption in the beginning of 2018.

As part of the adoption process this plan will be circulated to various affected government agencies such as Alberta Transportation for feedback before the final plan is approved by Council.



1.3 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

An Area Structure Plan is considered to be a “Statutory Plan”, one of a hierarchy of plans established within Section 633 of the Municipal Government Act (MGA). (Other types of statutory plans include Municipal Development Plans and Area Redevelopment Plans). Statutory plans serve as planning tools, explicitly provided for and defined by the MGA and therefore must follow specific content and consultative requirements. This framework of plans is required to be consistent and complimentary with each other in the process of guiding decisions made in the subdivision and development process. It should be noted however, the MGA also states the adoption of a statutory plan does not obligate a municipality to undertake any of the projects referred to in it.

The MGA states an Area Structure Plan must describe:

- The sequence of development proposed for the area,
- The land uses proposed for the area, either generally or with respect to specific parts of the area,
- The density of population proposed for the area either generally or with respect to specific parts of the area and
- The general location of major transportation routes and public utilities and
- May contain any other matters, including matters relating to reserves as the
- Council considers necessary.

The Seven Persons Hamlet is included in the Cypress County Municipal Development Plan, Bylaw 2015/26. This document references Seven Persons as one of the hamlets in the County which “may be permitted to develop a large variety of land uses as is necessary to accommodate the needs of residents and the surrounding rural communities”.

1.3.1 LAND USE BYLAW (LUB)

The Cypress County Land Use Bylaw, 2016/16, divides the County and its hamlets into a number of land use districts. The Hamlet of Seven Persons is currently divided into the following eight land use districts: two Residential (Hamlet & Hamlet Single Family); two Commercial (Commercial & Highway); two Industrial (Hamlet & Light); Public Service and General Agricultural. These districts should be sufficient to accommodate any potential developments. As future developments are proposed, there may be a requirement to re-designate some properties to a more appropriate land use district. This could be done as part of a subdivision or development proposal depending on the specific parameters of the project.



2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 LOCATION AND PLAN AREA

The Hamlet of Seven Persons is located approximately 20km southwest of Medicine Hat in a predominately irrigated agricultural area in the Western portion of Cypress County. The Hamlet lies between Highway 3 and the Canadian Pacific Railway that extend from Medicine Hat to Lethbridge.

Figures 1 & 2 show the area structure plan boundary which includes the Hamlet of Seven Persons as well as a significant area of adjacent agricultural land. While no major developments are currently envisioned for the agricultural lands northwest of the Hamlet, this area was included as Alberta Transportation commissioned a Highway 3 Future Twinning Study which has identified three alignment options for future twinning in this area. The plan envisions these lands will remain in agricultural use until such time as there is a demonstrated need for development.

Although this area structure plan does not recommend any of the options as a preferred option, proper planning dictates the Highway 3 Future Twinning Study is taken into account. (*see Section 5 & Appendix A*).

The Canadian Pacific Crowsnest Railway line creates a major barrier to future development south of the hamlet due to the limited rail crossings. As a result no development south of the rail line is envisioned at this point, it is expected these lands will remain in agricultural use. The sewage lagoons and waste transfer site are included in the study area because they are existing infrastructure and vital services for the Hamlet.

2.2 HISTORY

The Hamlet of Seven Persons was founded in the 19th century by Cyril Ogston as part of the great migration of Mormon settlers leaving the United States due to laws preventing them from practicing polygamy, a part of their religion at the time. The railway was an important mode of transportation to bring settlers into the area.

There are several versions of the story of as to how Seven Persons got its unique name. One story is the name comes from native legend which involves seven braves from one tribe being killed by a rival tribe. A Jim Marshall mural in the Seven Persons School portrays this version.

A more modern version of the story is the Hamlet got its name from graves of seven railway workers who died building the railway. In any event, Seven Persons name is unique and helps to provide the Hamlet with some renown.

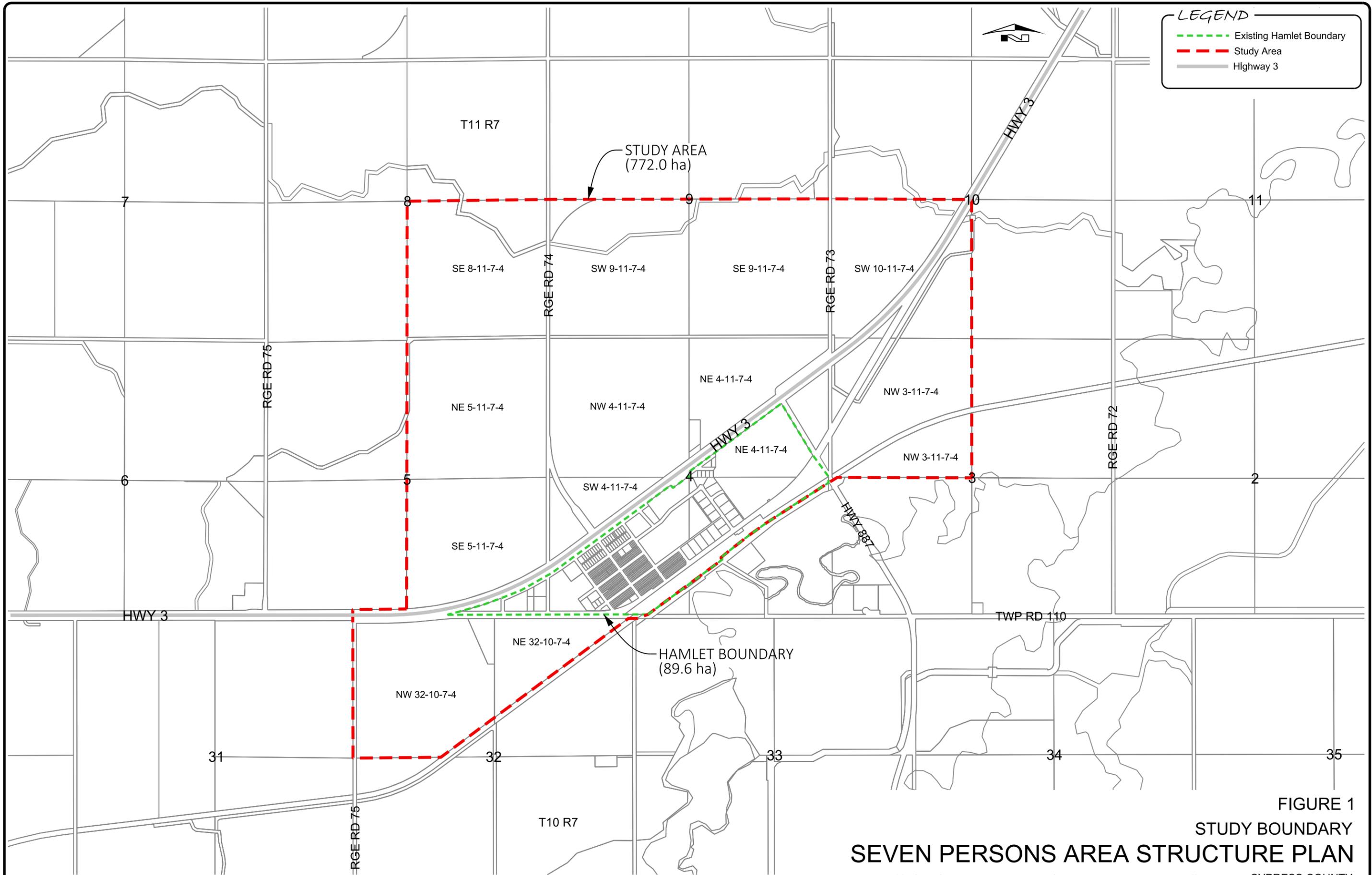


FIGURE 1
STUDY BOUNDARY
SEVEN PERSONS AREA STRUCTURE PLAN

CYPRESS COUNTY
 Scale 1:20000
 December 2017



Seven Persons Area Structure Plan

The rail line through Seven Persons was originally a narrow gauge railway; known as the Galt Line built by Sir Alexander Galt in 1885 to haul coal from Lethbridge (Coal Bank) to the Canadian Pacific main line in Dunmore. The Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) purchased the Galt Line in 1897 to ensure they had ownership of its entire southern line running from Dunmore through the Crowsnest Pass to the west coast. Seven Persons was a water supply depot for the old steam engines on this line, with water being taken from a dam on the Seven Persons Creek.

Irrigation in the area began in 1955 when the St. Mary River Irrigation District started delivering water to the area. Prior to 1955, there were also private water licenses in the area. The availability of irrigation has increased crop productivity enabling agriculture to become a key economic driver in this portion of the County.



Photo of the Jim Marshall Mural in the Seven Persons School.



3 LAND USE ANALYSIS

3.1 PHYSICAL FEATURES

The study area is situated in a primarily irrigated agricultural region of the County. The topography of the study area is relatively flat, sloping in a south easterly direction. Although there is an elevation difference of approximately 17 metres across the study area, this only translates to a gradient of 1.5%.

The topography within the Hamlet is slightly flatter, with an elevation difference of 5 metres and an average gradient of 1%.

3.2 EXISTING DEVELOPMENT

Figure 3 and Table 1 shows the breakdown of land uses in the Hamlet. Seven Persons is predominantly a residential community with approximately 127 parcels of land.

Table 1 - Existing Land Use

Land Use	Area (ha)	%
Residential – HSF & HR	18.1	20
Commercial - HC	3.3	4
Industrial – HI & LI	6.2	7
Public Service – Parks, School & Hall	12.4	14
Agricultural – Vacant land	21.4	24
Transportation – Roads, Lane & CPR	24.2	27
Miscellaneous	4.0	4
Total	89.6	100

The area outside the Hamlet boundary is predominately agricultural with approximately 93% (560+ ha) of the agricultural land being irrigated with the remaining 7% (45+ ha) dry land.

3.3 DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS

3.3.1 Canadian Pacific Railway

The Canadian Pacific Rail line that runs along the south boundary of the Hamlet creates a significant barrier to development south due to limited vehicular access across it. There is currently only one rail crossing in the immediate area and additional crossings in the future will not be permitted. It is for this reason that it was decided all future growth would occur north of the rail way.



FIGURE 3
CURRENT LAND USE
SEVEN PERSONS AREA STRUCTURE PLAN

CYPRESS COUNTY
 Scale 1:15000
 December 2017



3.3.2 Future Highway 3 Twinning

Alberta Transportation has endorsed the **Highway 3:16 Future Twinning Study West of Seven Persons to Range Road 63 – Final Report #R-1112**, prepared by Stantec Consulting Ltd. The agricultural land north of the Hamlet is included in the ASP study area given the Recommended Plan is located in the area north of the current alignment.

Recent information obtained from Alberta Transportation revealed the current traffic volumes along this stretch of highway are well below the threshold to warrant twinning. Twinning of this portion of Highway 3 is considered long term, or, not likely to occur within the next 20 years. Enquiries made regarding a potential construction time table have indicated that even when the roadway is designated as a “high priority”, matters such as budget approval, right of way acquisition and construction plan completion would realistically put the beginning of any construction into an 8-10 year time horizon.

3.3.3 Municipal Services

The hamlet is currently serviced by a piped water system and sanitary sewer system, both of which have capacity to accommodate approximately 600 people. These systems are dealt with in more detail in Section 6.0.





4 DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT AND POLICIES

4.1 GENERAL DESCRIPTION

This Area Structure Plan specifies that development should occur wholly within the existing Hamlet in the initial stages as there is sufficient land to accommodate future growth for the foreseeable future. At some point in the future, Highway 3 will be twinned and according to Alberta Transportation plans, the highway will then be moved requiring existing accesses to be changed (see Section 5.3). In the ultimate stages of the highway development, an interchange would be built and access to the Hamlet from Highway 3 will only be via Highway 887. At that time, a number of existing roads will be closed or realigned to serve as service roads. The twinning of Highway 3 does not impact immediate development within the Hamlet, however, future road alignments may have some impact on adjacent areas and these need to be taken into consideration during current and short development projects so as not to negatively impact long term development. For example, the areas on both sides of Highway 887 between the existing Highway 3 and Railway Avenue within the Hamlet and areas along Highway 887 outside the Hamlet are considered ideal locations for commercial development; given the uncertainty on the timing of the highway upgrading, this land may not be required for many years. This land could be used for other activities in the meantime until there is demand for it, but it is suggested that such uses should be either temporary or be easily relocated if there is a demand for a higher and better use. Alberta Transportation will need to review any development which may encroach these plans in both the short and long term. (Further details on these implications are discussed in Sections 4.3 and 5.3).

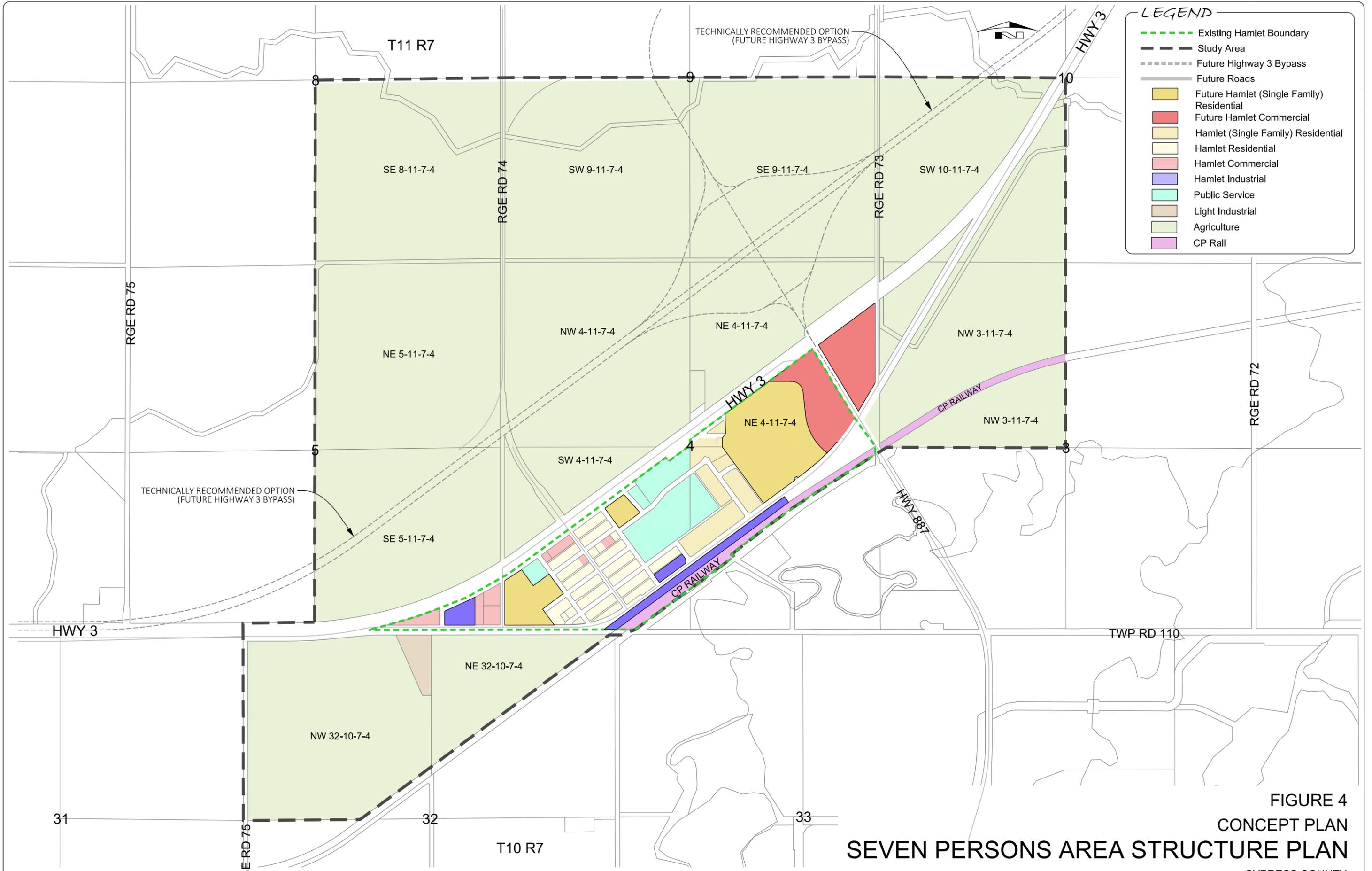
4.2 RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

In 2017 there were 127 residential parcels in the Hamlet with a population of 275 residents. Figure 4 outlines three parcels containing 21.18 ha of land that have been identified for potential residential development. Depending on the area designs and lot sizes, this would allow for an increase of 90 to 150 residential lots which in turn could allow for a doubling of the Hamlet's population.

4.3 COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT



There are presently nine parcels assessed as being commercial sites within the Hamlet. Of these, two are occupied by the following businesses: Premium Sausage and the Boars Nest Restaurant. (Other sites referenced are currently assessed for commercial use based on their capability, but have not been converted to their highest and best use at this time). Additionally, there are five home occupation licenses in the Hamlet which provide a range of services including vegetable sales, book keeping, contract driving, home renovations and trucking.



LEGEND

- Existing Hamlet Boundary
- - - Study Area
- Future Highway 3 Bypass
- Future Roads
- Future Hamlet (Single Family) Residential
- Future Hamlet Commercial
- Hamlet (Single Family) Residential
- Hamlet Residential
- Hamlet Commercial
- Hamlet Industrial
- Public Service
- Light Industrial
- Agriculture
- CP Rail

FIGURE 4
CONCEPT PLAN
SEVEN PERSONS AREA STRUCTURE PLAN

CYPRESS COUNTY
 Scale 1:15000
 May 2018



Figure 4 shows two parcels along Highway 887 that could be used for commercial / highway commercial activities. These properties will become more prominent if the main access into the Hamlet as shown on 2 options is via Highway 887. In the future, as the highway twinning proceeds, access to the highway will be changed and there may be a need for some of this area to be used for service roads. This will need to be taken into account if development on these properties occurs before twinning occurs so potential service roads are not hampered. The areas north of current Highway 3 along Highway 887 may also be suitable for highway commercial activities, but only after the twinning has occurred and the interchange is constructed.

4.4 INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

There are currently several industrial parcels identified in the Hamlet and in the study area, four of which are currently vacant. It is not anticipated there will be a large demand for industrial properties in the short term, but should this occur, it is likely to be for uses not requiring serviced land which could be accommodated on some of the lands west of the Hamlet. Should this happen, in keeping with County policies, these uses should be directed to the non-irrigated agricultural lands.

4.5 PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Seven Persons has a centrally located park where the Seven Persons School, Seven Persons Community Hall, several ball fields, a track and an outdoor rink are located. Several other community facilities such as the Fire Hall, Water Treatment Plant, a Bulk Water supply depot and a church are shown on Figure 5. It is not anticipated that a significant amount of additional parks or open space will be required as the Hamlet grows.





5 TRANSPORTATION

5.1 EXISTING ROAD NETWORK

There are several highways (Highway 3 and Highway 887) and County roads (Range Road 73, 74 and 75) providing access to the Hamlet of Seven Persons and the study area. Highway 887 provides the only vehicular access across the CPR railway in the immediate vicinity.

5.2 HAMLET ROAD SYSTEM

The Hamlet is serviced by a network of paved/oiled roads, connecting to the County roads and Highways 3 and 887. At the present time there are several access points to Highway 3, with Highway 3 being the Hamlet's northerly boundary.

5.3 FUTURE HIGHWAY 3 TWINNING

Alberta Transportation has endorsed the **Highway 3:16 Future Twinning Study West of Seven Persons to Range Road 63 – Final Report #R-1112**, prepared by Stantec Consulting Ltd. , which includes the Overall Recommended Plan. At the Area Structure Plan Open House in June 2017, considerable opposition to this alignment was expressed by the area residents.

This Area Structure Plan does not endorse any of the proposed alignments for the future twinning of Highway 3 over the others. However, the plan recognizes that when twinning occurs, it will have a significant impact on the community. With the timing of this twinning project unknown, it is difficult to develop detailed plans at this stage, but the impact of this possibility must be considered none the less. Since two of the options (Options 1 & 2) and the Technically Recommended option, show access from Highway 3 to the Hamlet via Highway 887, it has been illustrated there will likely be a requirement for service roads along Highway 887.

Given the substantial costs of construction, the twinning of Highway 3 will likely take place in stages. For example, in the initial stage, the highway itself will likely be twinned and access will be via at grade intersections. Then as traffic volumes warrant, the interchange and over pass may be built and the highway would be converted to a limited access highway. As previously mentioned, this project is not currently on Alberta Transportation's priority list, however, once it is added, construction would still most likely be 8 to 10 years away. Considering current Provincial budgets and the fact the present traffic volumes in this area are below the thresholds for twinning, it is likely that twinning will not occur for 20 or more years and at that time plans will change and a new review will be required.



6 MUNICIPAL SERVICES

6.1 MUNICIPAL WATER SYSTEM

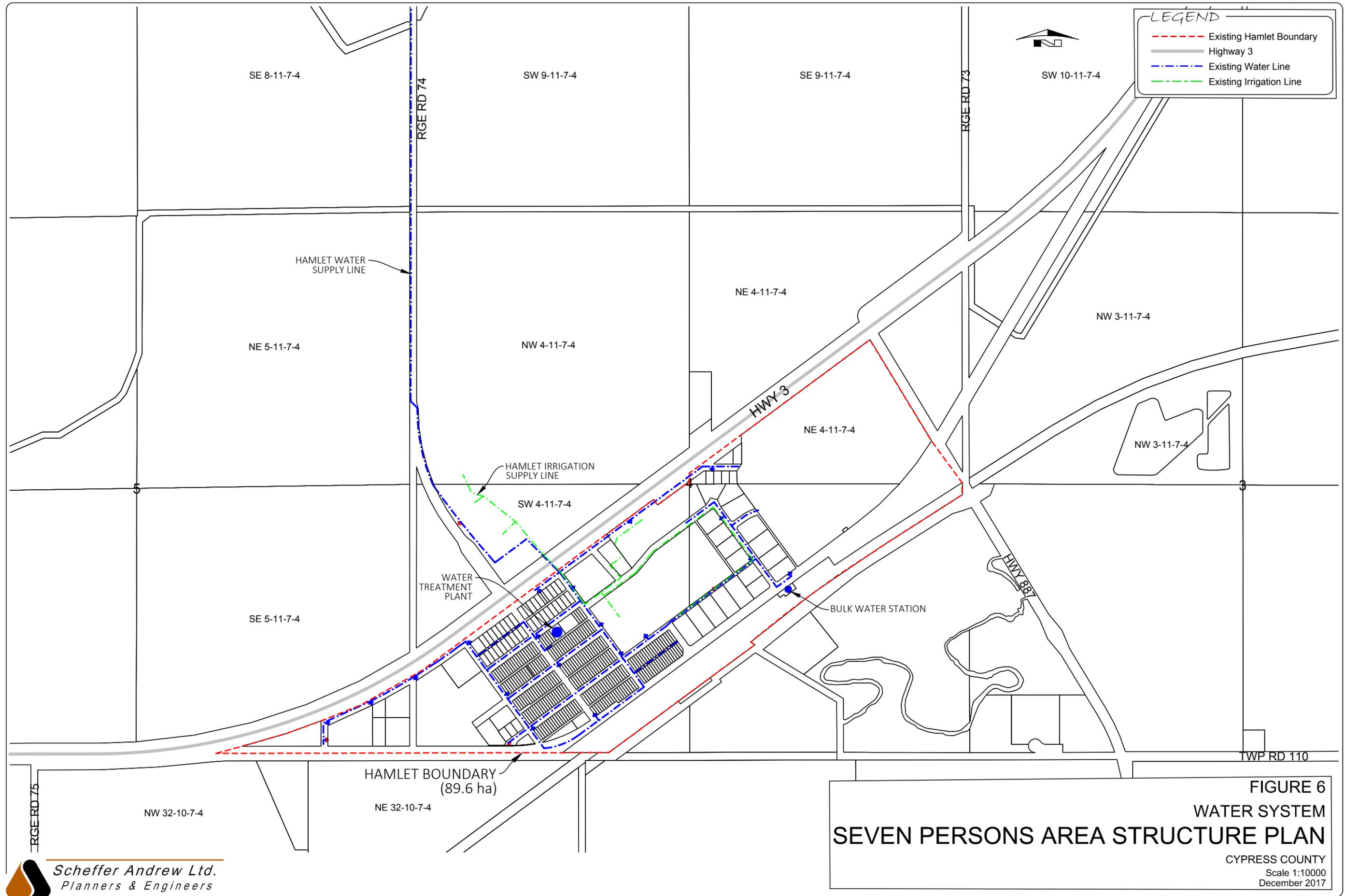
The Hamlet of Seven Persons is currently supplied by water from the City of Medicine Hat through a Water Gate Agreement. Under this agreement, the County receives 480 acre/feet of water of which 320acre/feet is allocated for the West Side Water Co-op and 160acre/feet to Seven Persons. The amount allocated for Seven Person is sufficient to supply a population of 600 people. The water received from the City of Medicine Hat receives re-chlorination at the Seven Person Booster station located at Range Road 63 and Holsom Road and then again at the Seven Persons water plant located adjacent to the Fire Hall. Water is then distributed throughout the Hamlet by a series of 6" water lines (see Figure 6). The current water network will need to be expanded with the development of additional lands; however, the water from Medicine Hat and possibly the booster station should not need to be expanded. However, if future expansion beyond the 600 person capacity is required, the County will need to purchase additional water licenses.

6.2 SANITARY SEWER SYSTEM

The Hamlet of Seven Persons is currently serviced by a sanitary sewer system which includes a series of gravity lines, a lift station, force main and a three cell lagoon. The current system has the capacity to accommodate a population of approximately 600 people.

Figure 7 shows the locations of the 8" sanitary sewer collection lines which services the residences in the Hamlet. Sanitary sewer is collected by these lines which flow by gravity to a sewer lift station in the southerly part of the hamlet. Sewer effluent is then pumped from the lift station via a force main to the Hamlet's lagoons located outside the Hamlet boundary. The sewer effluent is treated in the three cell lagoon before it is released into the Seven Persons Creek, as needed, in accordance with the license from Alberta Environment.

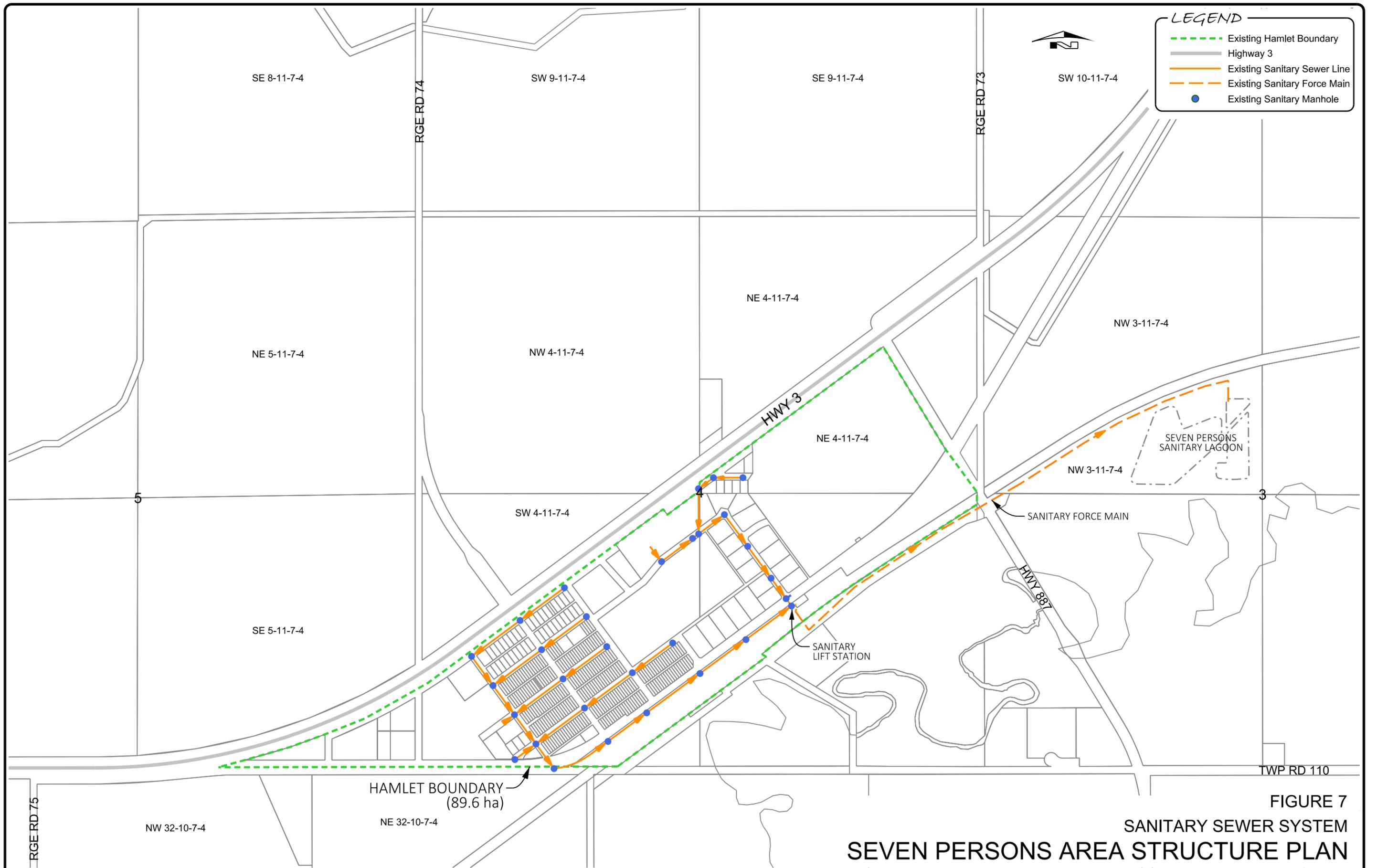
The sanitary sewer system has capacity to accommodate a doubling of the Hamlet's population. Several of the potential residential areas can be serviced by this system. However there are a few lower areas at the east end where servicing with gravity sewers may not be possible due to inadequate frost cover. These areas could potentially be serviced in other ways such as; bringing in fill to raise the ground elevations or by building an additional lift station or by using private lift systems. More detailed engineering will be required at the time these areas are developed.



LEGEND

- - - Existing Hamlet Boundary
- Highway 3
- - - Existing Water Line
- - - Existing Irrigation Line

FIGURE 6
WATER SYSTEM
SEVEN PERSONS AREA STRUCTURE PLAN
 CYPRESS COUNTY
 Scale 1:10000
 December 2017



LEGEND

- - - Existing Hamlet Boundary
- Highway 3
- Existing Sanitary Sewer Line
- - - Existing Sanitary Force Main
- Existing Sanitary Manhole



FIGURE 7
SANITARY SEWER SYSTEM
SEVEN PERSONS AREA STRUCTURE PLAN

CYPRESS COUNTY
 Scale 1:10000
 December 2017



6.3 STORM WATER MANAGEMENT

Storm water within the hamlet is currently handled by ditches along the roads, which for the most part appears to be working adequately. There is no plan to install a piped system in the hamlet. However, there are a few areas that are problem areas due to shallow ground cover which need to be addressed at the time of development. Alberta Transportation has indicated that highway ditches may not be used for storm water management unless a Storm Water Management Plan has been endorsed by both Alberta Transportation and Alberta Environment.

6.4 Flood Potential

In the Province of Alberta, it is standard practice to identify and restrict new development in areas subject of flooding from a 1:100 year event. Based on current information, it does not appear that areas within the Hamlet of Seven Persons fall within the Seven Persons Creek 1:100 year flood zones and therefore, no restrictions need to be considered at this time. However it should be noted that the Province has commissioned a study to update and river hazards and produce new flood inundation and flood hazard maps for a number of creeks and rivers, including Seven Persons Creek. These studies may compel revisions to this Area Structure Plan. More information about the Alberta Flood Hazard Identification Program may be found at www.floodhazard.alberta.ca.

Cypress County has been advised that some areas of the Hamlet may be impacted in the event of a failure or breach of upstream dam infrastructure, (Seven Persons Creek Dam and the Murray Reservoir Dam). Since these events are considered more than 1:100 year events, no development restrictions are being considered at this time as these events fall more in the realm of emergency management.

6.5 SERVICING STANDARDS

In accordance with Cypress County's Construction Standards and Design Guidelines, all future residential developments are to be serviced with water and sanitary sewer as well as paved roads with curb and gutter as well as storm sewer where ever practical. Depending on the nature of industrial and commercial developments, some of these standards may also apply. These Construction Standards and Design Guidelines will be implemented at the subdivision and development stage and will require servicing agreements as per the current County policies in place at the time of application.



7 IMPLEMENTATION

7.1 PHASES

Considering all the factors which may influence the growth and development of the Hamlet of Seven Persons at this time, future development phases fall into 2 categories:

Short Term:

There appears to be sufficient lands within the Hamlet boundary to accommodate all future development for the foreseeable future. The available lands should be sufficient to accommodate a doubling of the hamlet's population at which time growth would be approaching the limits of the water and sanitary sewer systems.

Long Term:

The largest single factor influencing the Hamlet's long term plans will be Alberta Transportation's Plan to twin Highway 3. At the time twinning takes place, there will be changes in access to the Hamlet which will then impact the transportation patterns of Seven Persons.

Since details of how or when this twinning will take place are unknown at this time, it is not possible to accurately predict the future impacts. Once this twinning takes place, it may be necessary to re-examine some of the land use proposals. It should be kept in mind that one of the County's priorities is to minimize the impact on irrigated agricultural land. Since this scenario is likely 20 or more years away, it is considered to be long term and when it happens, it would be appropriate to review and update this plan accordingly.

7.2 LAND USES

The Hamlet of Seven Persons is currently divided into the following eight land use districts: two Residential (Hamlet & Hamlet Single Family); two Commercial (Commercial & Highway); two Industrial (Hamlet & Light); Public Service and General Agricultural. These districts should be sufficient to accommodate most future developments.

It is the intention of this plan that Agricultural Lands in the Hamlet and surrounding area remain in agricultural production until they are required for other more appropriate uses. The County's preference is to keep irrigated land under production as much as possible. However, consideration may be given towards land use re-classification of non-agricultural uses based on its location. The agricultural land outside the Hamlet and south of Highway 3 maybe considered for light industrial, while the area east and adjacent to Highway 887, north of the railway tracks, maybe considered appropriate for commercial uses. As previously stated, there is a considerable amount of land within the current Hamlet boundary to accommodate future residential growth. However, the land north of Highway 3 may be best suited for a combination of residential and commercial uses in the future.



Seven Persons Area Structure Plan

More detailed studies will likely have to be submitted to address utility servicing, sanitary sewer collection, storm water management, proper access, and other requirements for any of these areas outside of the Hamlet. Consideration may be given to expand the Hamlet's boundary for the purposes of providing services and/or to accommodate a specific area of development.

In the event that a development proposal does not fit any of these districts, a new or amended district could be considered.

7.3 LAND USE BYLAW AMENDMENTS

There are several areas of potential development that have a land use designation different than what could be proposed. Before development can occur, the properties will need to be designated to a more appropriate land use district. The changing of the land use designation needs to be done as part of any subdivision or development proposal. The County may also consider developments not envisioned in this plan as long as they are compatible with future Hamlet expansion.

7.4 PLAN REVIEW

The Seven Person Area Structure Plan has tried to take into account as many current factors as possible which may impact the community, others such as the Highway Twinning may present issues which cannot be foreseen at this time. As noted, this plan is a "guide" and can and should be reviewed and amended periodically as the future unfolds. It is recommended that a review of this Plan should be undertaken every five years, and at the time when the Highway 3 Twinning actually takes place.

"The only thing that is constant is change". The purpose of this plan is to "provide a framework to guide future growth and land uses in an orderly and economical manner which supports the aspirations of the land owners, the community, the County and other major stakeholders." Seven Persons is recognized and supported by the County in its endeavors to be a friendly, safe, enjoyable and prosperous community.

Cypress County Council has recently examined the uniqueness of each hamlet and has identified Seven Persons as one of the hamlets it wishes to promote. Ultimately, this plan aims to serve as a part of a strategy to adapt successfully to future change as it comes.



APPENDIX A – Highway 3 Overall Recommended Plan

Note:

“The Highway 3:16 Future Twinning Study West of Seven Persons to Range Road 63 – Final Report #R-1112, prepared by Stantec Consulting Ltd., dated November 16, 2013 has been endorsed by Alberta Transportation”.

