

**Discussion Paper on Potential Development of
Parkland County Municipal Reserve Land - Acheson Industrial Area, Zone 1**
March 18, 2014

The Acheson Business Association is about to turn 10 years old and over that decade it and its Members have seen tremendous growth in the Acheson Industrial Area. As well, over that last decade, the Acheson Business Association (ABA) have been involved in many discussions, regarding all aspects of the Acheson Industrial Area (Acheson), not the least of which being the Parkland County - Acheson Industrial Area, Municipal Reserve Land located in Zone 1 (MRL-Z1).

On more than one occasion, the ABA has spoken to various Parkland County officials and has appeared before council on this very subject. Several ideas, concepts and suggestions have been put forth regarding the potential use and allocation of the MRL-Z1. One tremendous idea from 2008 has come to fruition with the completion of the new fire hall located in the north east corner of the MRL-Z1.

It's been said that "if you're not growing you are dying", well Acheson is very much alive. In fact Acheson is growing at such a rate that current services and infrastructure can barely sustain it. Acheson has seen new buildings, new businesses and new industries like no other Industrial Area in Parkland County or Western Canada for that fact. Along with the new steel and concrete have come new employees as well. According to recent studies it is estimated that the employee population of Acheson may well be nearing 11,000 – that is close to 500% growth over the last decade, and it is not slowing down.

We all know things change... it is how they change that will make the difference in the future growth potential of Acheson.

Alberta Venture has consistently ranked Parkland County in the top ten Alberta places to do business and in 2013 they moved that rank to #1. Parkland County is also recognized on a world level, being named as one of the "Smart 21 Intelligent Communities of the World" for 2014 by the New York-based Intelligent Community Forum. Yes, Parkland County is a jewel within the Province of Alberta and Acheson is the "industrial jewel" of Parkland County.

New development in Acheson accounts for close to 50% of all new development throughout all of Parkland County, "industrial and residential combined". The Acheson Industrial Area contributes a large portion to the tax base within Parkland County.

All the above being said, and recognizing that Economic Development is a main focus of Parkland County, we (the ABA) would like to extend our observations, assessments and suggestions of the current state of the MRL-Z1 and what could further be done with this area to best address the concerns of not only the businesses of Acheson but as well, the surrounding communities and developments which are affected by change to the MRL-Z1 area, such as

- Osborne Acres
- Wagner Natural Area
- Parkland Big Lake
- Parkland Village

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Based on the collective suggestions of our membership, and with respect to all other stakeholders we suggest the MRL-Z1 area should not be left undeveloped, nor should it be portioned off for commercial developments, it should be positively developed to embrace the current environment with a focus on enhancing the future potential that is dormant.

For example; parts of the southern area of the MRL Z1 could be devoted to outdoor sports such as baseball diamonds, and soccer fields and/or an outdoor skating rink. These facilities of course need some form of shelter, perhaps small bleachers, a maintenance shed and parking.

For the northern area of the site, it makes sense to develop more structurally, and perhaps first, with a multi-purpose building that could be constructed ideally with substantial parking and space for a transit terminal. The structure could house a dividable meeting hall and/or gymnasium, perhaps a kitchen space to facilitate catering for meetings and other functions. The list of potential use for this main structure is endless and would need a proper evaluation to discover the most appropriate ones, not to mention the task of setting a priority of completion order.

Process challenges aside and in keeping with the discussion nature of this paper we offer the following as a good starting list:

- An interpretation center for the Wagner Natural Area
- Administrations offices
- Maintenance facilities
- Kitchen space to facilitate catering for meetings and other functions
- A restaurant or convenience store
- Postal facilities
- Possible new business incubation facilities

Potential occupancy of the new structure is far-reaching but immediately apparent could be an outreach office of Parkland County, Admin offices of the ABA, and perhaps an open meeting area or boardroom that could be shared by many of the regions associations such as;

- Wagner Natural Area Society
- Osborne Acres Association
- Parkland Big Lake Community Association

Just to name a few.

We envision the MRL-Z1 area as a focus area for the Acheson Industrial Area and adjacent communities. An area that can be used by all current citizens, businesses and community, an area to attract the eye of new business and an area that befits the future growth of the "Industrial Jewel of Alberta", the Acheson Industrial Area.

Respectfully submitted by the Acheson Business Association, the purpose of the paper is to partner with Parkland County with the forward thinking and planning required to positively shaping the growth of MRL-Z1 area. With this in mind the ABA would extend its further efforts to assist in discovery, planning and guidance however it best fits within the structure of Parkland County.

In closing, we thank you for your attention and allowing us the opportunity to share our thoughts on this subject. We welcome your feedback and appreciate your advice on the future process of this discussion.

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