

The logo for Whitecourt, featuring a stylized 'W' with three horizontal lines above it, is positioned above the text 'Whitecourt' and 'January 2023'. The text is white and set against a green background that is part of a larger graphic design consisting of overlapping blue and green wavy shapes.

Whitecourt  
January 2023

A mountain biker wearing a red shirt, blue shorts, and a blue helmet is performing a wheelie on a dirt trail. The trail is surrounded by tall, thin trees with green foliage. In the background, another biker is visible on a similar trail. The sky is blue with some light clouds.

Town of Whitecourt

**Multi-Stakeholder Workshop  
and Open House #1**

MDP, LUB, and North Flats ASP

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## Introduction

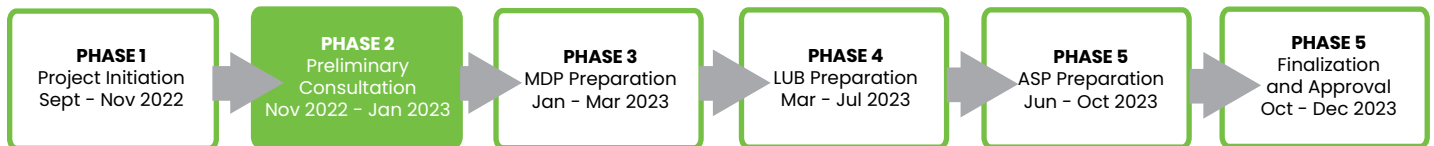
The Town of Whitecourt is undertaking a project to update their Municipal Development Plan (MDP), Land Use Bylaw (LUB) and to draft the new North Flats Area Structure Plan (ASP). The previous MDP was adopted by Council in 2015. With 7 years elapsed, the MDP is being updated in order to reflect current market trends, up-to-date land uses and the annexation of the North Flats Area. The previous LUB was also adopted by Council in 2015. Since then, the document has undergone several amendments which indicate it is due for an update. The North Flats Area was annexed by the Town of Whitecourt in 2020. The North Flats Area Structure plan will establish a future land use vision for this area.

A Multi-Stakeholder Workshop and Open House were hosted to collect feedback on emerging themes, and gather ideas from stakeholders and citizens regarding issues, opportunities, and areas of focus. The Multi-Stakeholder Workshop was held in the afternoon of January 24th at the Forest Interpretive Centre. In the evening of January 24th, the Open House was hosted in a drop-in format at the Allan & Jean Millar Centre.

## Project Timeline

The Multi-Stakeholder Workshop and Open House were organized as part of 'Phase 2 - Preliminary Consultation'. This project phase is intended to create opportunities for engagement with residents and stakeholders aimed at informing the direction of the first drafts of the MDP and LUB.

The next phase of engagement is 'Phase 3 - MDP Preparation'. In this phase, the first and second drafts of the MDP will be prepared based on feedback collected in Phase 2, and through continued engagement.





## Event Details

### Multi-Stakeholder Workshop

The Town of Whitecourt MDP, LUB and North Flats ASP Project Team and Town Staff met with a variety of stakeholders as part of a visioning workshop. The meeting consisted of a presentation paired with small group exercises to discuss emerging themes and areas of focus identified during the earlier phase of engagement. Approximately 14 participants attended the meeting. Participants were selected by Town staff with the goal of representing a variety of stakeholders with unique perspectives. The presentation and exercises focused on the following topics:

#### **Municipal Development Plan:**

- Open Space Connections
- Downtown Character
- Affordable Housing
- Connection to Water
- Future Land Use Concept
- Downtown vs. Highway Commercial

#### **Land Use Bylaw:**

- Industrial Districts
- Accessory buildings
- Parking Policies
- Approval Processes and Timelines

#### **North Flats ASP:**

- Flood Zone
- Wildlife Preservation and Maintaining Natural Areas

### Public Open House

This Open House provided an opportunity for the public to be introduced to the project, learn about the MDP, LUB and North Flats ASP, and provide initial feedback and ideas. The Open House included 10 informational panels highlighting key topics. In total, approximately 40 people attended the event.

The topics discussed at the Multi-Stakeholder Meeting were also introduced for feedback at the Open House.

## Multi-Stakeholder Workshop Feedback

Detailed feedback from the Multi-Stakeholder Meeting is captured in the table below. Feedback was collected during group discussions on chart paper, on reference maps, and in reference packages provided to participants.

Topic	Feedback
<b>Municipal Development Plan</b>	
Open Space Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve general connectivity of trails and create a full loop system</li> <li>• Create trail connection around North Flats connecting to Mink Creek Road</li> <li>• Improve lighting on trails</li> <li>• Create safe trail connection across Highway 43</li> </ul>
Downtown Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create downtown character that is unique to Whitecourt</li> <li>• Ensure that character remains up-to-date</li> <li>• Consider ways in which character can extend out of Downtown to the highway and town entrances</li> <li>• Consider narrowing the 'Stone and Wood' theme</li> <li>• Create a narrative with the Mill as an anchor</li> <li>• Consider beautification which incorporates flowers and banners</li> <li>• Collaborate with Downtown Business Association and Chamber of Commerce</li> </ul>
Affordable Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on providing a mix of housing options including temporary housing, seniors housing, and accessible housing.</li> <li>• Normalize affordable housing</li> <li>• Create connections between affordable housing and transit</li> <li>• Partner with non-profit organizations and provincial programs</li> </ul>
Conneccion to Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create connections to the water at the natural lulls of the Athabasca River (north of the North Flats area)</li> <li>• Provide wayfinding features</li> <li>• Create connections to the river that are linked with Rotary Park</li> </ul>
Future Land Use Concept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that traffic circulation (especially to Rotary Park) routes people through Downtown</li> <li>• Consider possibilities for community garden/composting facilities</li> <li>• Activate public space for pop-up commercial opportunities</li> </ul>
<b>Land Use Bylaw</b>	
Industrial Districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider flood risks for Industrial Areas adjacent to the rivers</li> <li>• Review policy related to street design to address issues of missing sidewalks and adequate lighting in Industrial areas</li> </ul>
Accessory Buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review/increase site coverage regulations</li> </ul>
Parking Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure efficient parking policy related to parking at schools</li> <li>• Assess approach to parking Downtown at peak time and days, such as during the farmers' market</li> <li>• Ensure parking remains free</li> </ul>
<b>North Flats ASP</b>	
Flood Zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to scale development to flood risk</li> </ul>
Wildlife Preservation and Maintaining Natural Areas	No comments
<b>Other Topics Identified</b>	
Landscaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review approach to Industrial landscaping requirements regarding regulations and enforcement</li> </ul>



## Open House Feedback

Participants were asked to provide input on the open house panels using sticky notes, and on the comment sheets provided. The feedback received during the Open House is captured in the table below.

Topic	Feedback
<b>Municipal Development Plan</b>	
Open Space Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the general connectivity of trails</li> <li>• Create better trail connections from the Valley to Centennial Park</li> <li>• Explore opportunities to provide more cross-country skiing trails</li> <li>• Repurpose snowmobile trails in the summer</li> </ul>
Downtown Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore how we support business such as clothing stores, boutique businesses, and small businesses Downtown</li> <li>• Promote walkability</li> <li>• Pursue solutions related to the perception of vacant buildings</li> <li>• Assess possible solutions to issues related to aging infrastructure</li> <li>• Find ways to draw people in from the highway</li> </ul>
Affordable Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce barriers for affordable housing</li> <li>• Explore the repurposing of existing buildings</li> <li>• Combine affordable housing strategy with approach to transit</li> <li>• Ensure affordable housing is geared toward quality of life and fostering community</li> </ul>
Connecion to Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create walking trails that connect to the river</li> <li>• Provide day use areas, barbeque areas, and picnic areas near the water</li> <li>• Create connections which are sensitive to flood risks</li> <li>• Provide self guided educational elements such as plaques placed along trails</li> </ul>
Future Land Use Concept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase accessibility of services near residential areas</li> </ul>
<b>Land Use Bylaw</b>	
Industrial Districts	No comments
Accessory Buildings	No comments
Parking Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore solutions to parking issues next to existing and new schools: congestion, conflict with residential parking, no pick-up spots</li> </ul>
<b>North Flats ASP</b>	
Flood Zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider flood risks related to the existing golf course and future trails</li> </ul>
Wildlife Preservation and Maintaining Natural Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain recreational uses in the North Flats Area</li> </ul>
<b>Other Topics Identified</b>	
Landscaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow for permeable driveways in residential areas</li> <li>• Consider landscaping standards which promote different types of vegetation, edible planting gardens, flowers</li> </ul>
Community Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider opportunities for community garden/compost facilities</li> <li>• Consider allowing opportunities for greenhouses, recycling facilities</li> </ul>



## Town Vision

At both the Multi-Stakeholder Workshop and the Open House participants were given 'vision sheets' which provided the existing town 'vision' as written in the Municipal Development Plan, as well as space to provide keywords to help guide the updated town vision.

Below are the key ideas taken from this activity:

- Recreation areas should reflect the needs of the community.
- Downtown development should be focused around the Main Street.
- Create a community that has character. When you drive through town you should feel welcomed.
- Create a narrative through architectural controls and Downtown vitalization.
- Lean into opportunities for small businesses. Consider that different types of businesses will have different needs.
- Allocate more land for industrial uses.
- Create opportunity for thriving industrial and commercial business.
- Develop assets related to the Athabasca River for recreational opportunities such as canoeing and kayaking.

## Conclusions

Given the level of feedback provided on the 'emerging themes' discussed in this report, the project team will be continuing to evaluate solutions and direction related to these themes, and incorporate citizens' and stakeholders' feedback into the first drafts of the Municipal Development Plan and Land Use Bylaw.

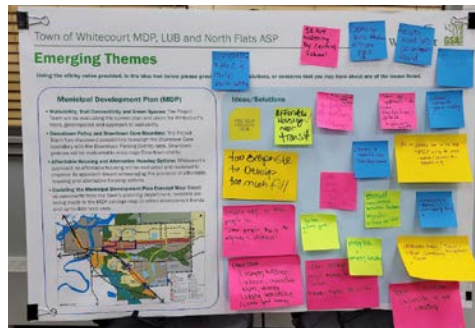
Moving forward, the project team will continue to provide opportunities for engagement as drafts of the MDP, LUB and North Flats ASP documents are in development. The project is now moving into 'Phase 3 – MDP Preparation'. During this phase, the first draft of the updated MDP will be developed, the second Advisory Committee Meeting will be held, and a second Open House will be hosted.





# Appendix

## Open House Feedback Panels



## Examples of Multi-Stakeholder Workshop Notes

- Need to keep character updated
- When you come into whitecourt doesn't welcome you, let you know where you are - starts at Entrances
- Building along highway road character
- Town that into should invest in character uniqueness
- LFC brings nature & wood into it helps Downtown/Highway - Heart Vision - Worker Developers - needs to all match
- Vitalization - Stone Wood is very General
- 3 different flavours - Marrow Vision
- 5 or 6 materials, 5 or 6 clays, 3 or 4 materials
- River
- River has natural LULU, connection to river, something can deal w flooding
- Community Density focus on existing Areas rather than new ideas
- North Flats - high risk Area - insurance

Industrial - hilltop No street lights  
 - City  
 - Street lights  
 - River  
 - Complex Street  
 - Large Structures  
 - Redundant other materials

Industrial -> parking, open road

LUB  
 Accessory Buildings:  
 - increase site coverage  
 - to Permision Split.  
 - Ratio principal + Accessory

- Industrial Landscaping Requirements

Industrial districts:  
 - Lighting

Downtown Vitalization goal -> Make it Exclusive to Downtown

- x of wood/stone -> Signage/Mural Strategy

- \$ 10000 -> Beautification + Flowers + benches

- Downtown Business Activation - Chamber of Commerce work with

- Develop food trucks - \$ Arts & Culture

- trail system connect through downtown

- times + room -> ??

- Tax by volume

- 1 day - lak pilot

Trails - Red systems

- In general it is sufficient

- Maintenance - commercial

- Fire smart - was good

- Extend the trail net to the sports

- off lease dog park

- more impaved. make cross country

- show show & cross country

## Examples of Vision Sheets

