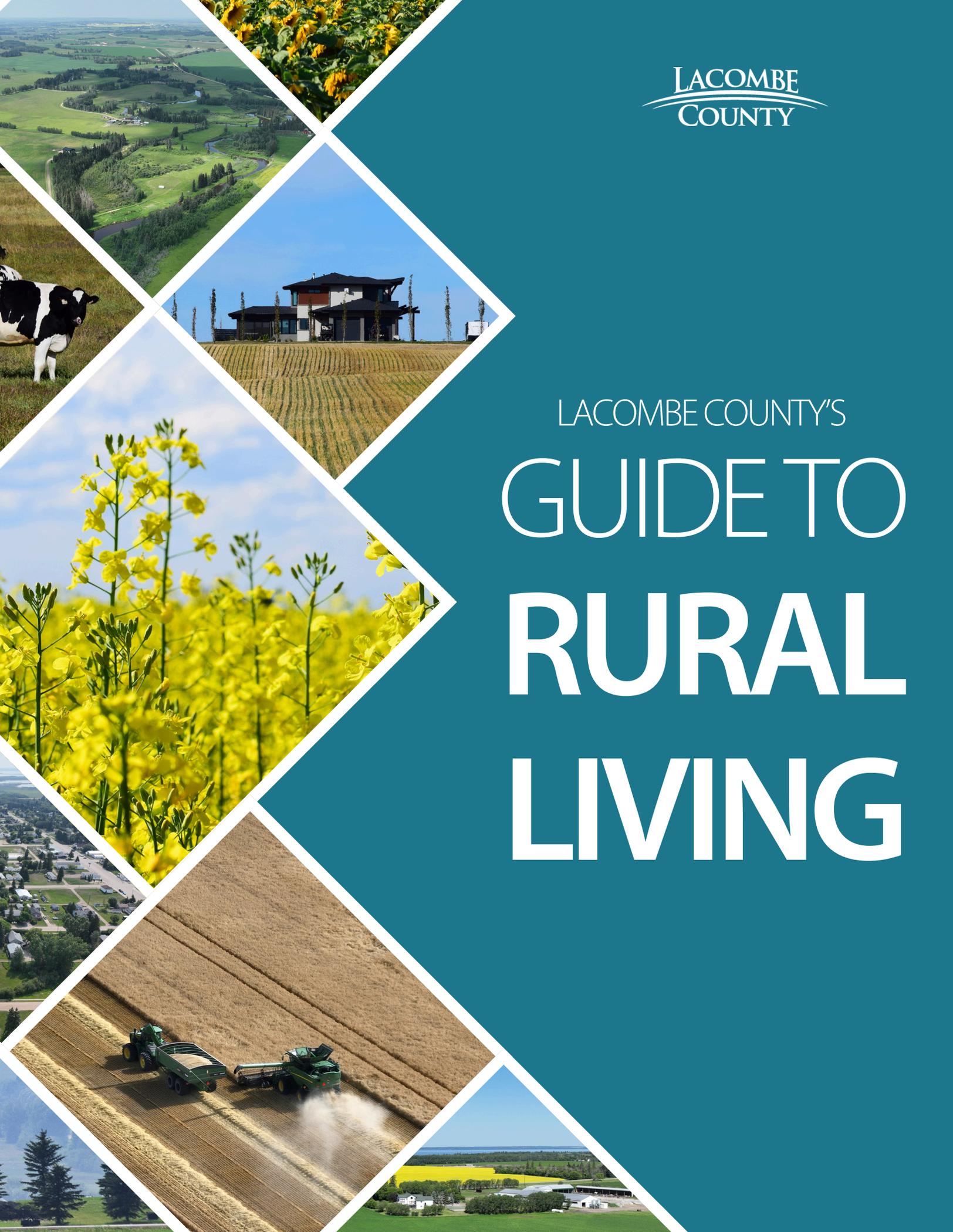


LACOMBE
COUNTY

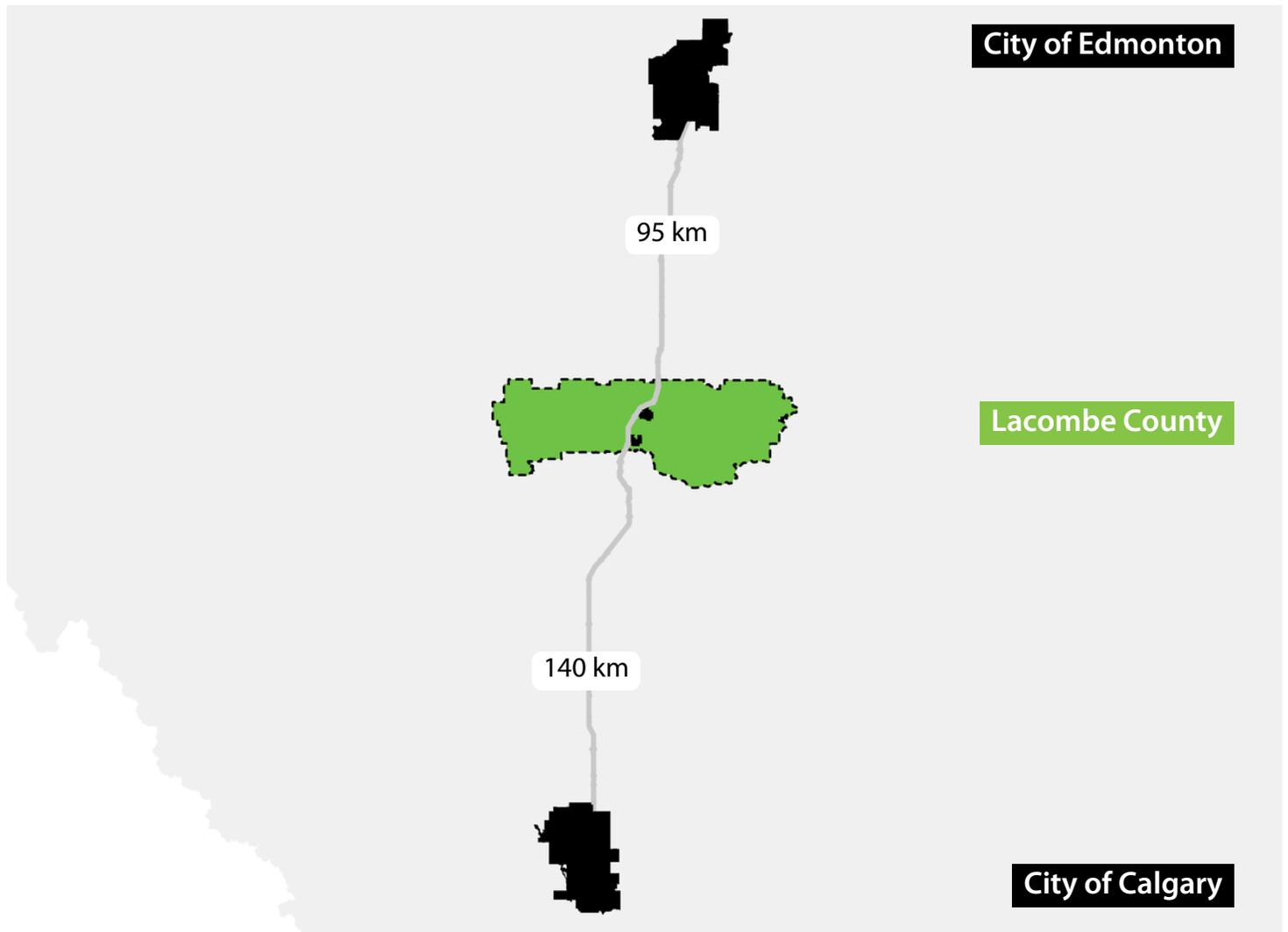
LACOMBE COUNTY'S
GUIDE TO
RURAL
LIVING



SUCCESS
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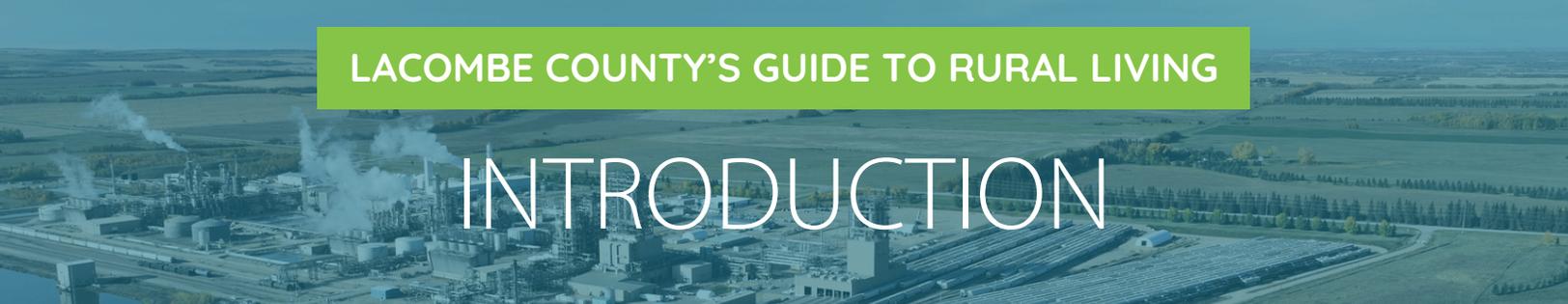
INTRODUCTION

Lacombe County is a thriving rural municipality situated on **Treaty 6 Territory and Métis Nation Region 4**, in the heart of Central Alberta. The County is strategically located on the **QEII Highway Corridor** between Edmonton and Calgary, attracting visitors from all over.



INTRODUCTION

The following highlights the important reasons why Lacombe County is an amazing place to live:



Agriculture. Lacombe County is home to a rich agricultural heritage, which is our region's primary economic driver. The County's agricultural community is resilient, innovative, and industrious, resulting in a diverse range of agricultural operations throughout our County, including cropland, pasture, confined feeding operations, greenhouses, horticultural operations, and more. This means agriculture employs a substantial portion of our population.

Nature. Lacombe County is blessed with a canvas-like landscape marked with the presence of lakes, rivers, forests, wetlands, and majestic hills. The County has an inventory of natural areas, parks, and trails where the public is welcome to visit and learn about our local environment. The County is home to three of Central Alberta's renowned recreational lakes - Sylvan Lake, Gull Lake and Buffalo Lake - as well as numerous recreational areas, including golf courses, campgrounds, ski hills, beaches, and agri-tourism establishments.

Thriving Economy. Lacombe County is home to major heavy industrial complexes, such as the Prentiss and Joffre petrochemical complexes, as well as business, industrial, and commercial parks along our major transportation corridors. This makes Lacombe County an attractive place to seek employment opportunities or start a business.

Community. Lacombe County has a vibrant local community, with the presence of local community halls, agricultural societies, and local events within the County and surrounding urban centres.

Proximity to Urban Communities. Lacombe County surrounds six urban municipalities - the City of Lacombe, Town of Blackfalds, Town of Bentley, Town of Eckville, Village of Clive, and Village of Alix. The County is also in close proximity to City of Red Deer, Town of Sylvan Lake, Town of Rimbey, and Town of Bashaw, and other major urban centres. Our location on the QEII Highway Corridor makes for easy access to the cities of Edmonton and Calgary as well.

Noting these factors, Lacombe County is a highly attractive location to live, work, and play. However, there are numerous factors that should be considered before moving to the rural environment. The purpose of this Guide is to educate prospective and existing residents on the considerations of living in Lacombe County.



INTRODUCTION

Play here! Nature's playground.



Work here! Hub of economic activity.



WHERE TO LIVE IN THE COUNTY?

Lacombe County is home to a variety of residential options, depending on what your needs and desires are.

The following describes the major housing areas in the County:

- **Hamlets.** The County is home to six hamlet communities – Rosedale Valley, Morningside, Tees, Mirror, Joffre, and Haynes. Our hamlets are small residential developments clusters interspersed throughout the County, and were initially established as railway communities.
- **Residential Subdivisions.** The County is home to numerous multi-lot residential subdivisions, which includes country residential and lakeshore residential areas. These developments are primarily clustered near the QEII Highway Corridor, Gull Lake, and Sylvan Lake.
- **Recreational Vehicle Resort Area.** The County has two major recreational vehicle resort developments that allow for year-round living in park models. These two areas are located on Gull Lake.
- **Agricultural Area.** Mostly suited for the rural farming crowd, the County's agricultural area continues to be the most common area for housing in our predominantly rural community.

While the considerations outlined in this Guide may be applicable to residents in any of the four abovementioned areas, this Guide is specifically developed for those choosing to reside in the agricultural area of Lacombe County, who may not be familiar with the realities of living in rural Alberta.



WHAT TO CONSIDER?

Business

Business is vibrant in Lacombe County. Local home-based businesses, agricultural businesses, and oil & gas operations are some of the many industries that operate in Lacombe County. The operations of these industries may affect your life in the County. It is important to consider where such operations are located and how they will affect you prior to deciding to locate to the County.

Agriculture

Agriculture is the backbone of Lacombe County and rural Alberta. Our agricultural industry feeds Canada and the world. **As a resident of the County, it is important to respect the agricultural industry and recognize that agricultural operations are a normal part of rural living.** By moving to rural Lacombe County, you are choosing to live near land and facilities that farmers rely on for their livelihoods.

- **Normal agricultural operations.** Many types of agricultural operations may affect you from time to time. Farmers often need to work long hours, especially during seeding and harvesting time. This can cause some noise, odour, and dust. While these activities may cause inconvenience to some, they are vital to Lacombe County's economy. Lacombe County's Municipal Development Plan supports farmers with policies that support their right to continue normal operations. The County's Agricultural Guide provides a vision for agriculture in the County and supports farmers with policies and programs that directly support agriculture and land-use planning in agricultural areas.
- **Animals.** Many farms in the County raise livestock or fowl, including but not limited to cattle, horses, bison, sheep, goats, pigs, or poultry. There are odours associated with this, especially as it relates to the management of the manure. Most operators are conscious of the problems associated with manure handling, but be aware that this is also a necessary operation in Lacombe County. Most manure will either be injected or incorporated within 48 hours to reduce these problems.
- **Chemical spraying.** Agricultural operators in the County need to spray fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, or other chemicals on their fields at certain times of the year. The County may also use some of these agents in our maintenance operations.

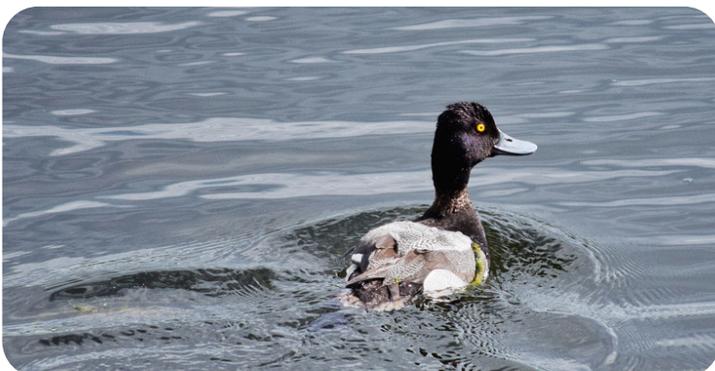
WHAT TO CONSIDER?

Agriculture

- **Equipment.** Farmers in Lacombe County use large machinery for seeding, spraying, and harvest, as well as tractors and trailers required to transport materials between areas. Farmers will sometimes need to use gravel and paved roads as a part of this work. If you see slow-moving equipment on the road, please be patient, slow down, and pass with caution.
- **Weeds.** In Alberta, landowners are both responsible for and required by law to control plants designated as weeds under the Weed Control Act. Rural municipalities enforce the Act as a means of preventing the spread of weeds that can have serious implications to agricultural production and our local ecosystems. Weed management should be considered by landowners as a part of regular property maintenance. For more information on weeds, contact the Community Services Department at 403-782-8959.

Environment

- **Climate.** Alberta has a harsh climate, which includes prolonged periods of extreme cold, intense snowfall, thunderstorms, hail storms, severe wind, or prolonged periods of drought. The impacts of these climate stressors are felt heavily in the rural environment, where urban services are not found. Rural property owners need to consider the logistics of snow removal on their property, as well as how extreme storms or wind could impact their buildings. Further, periods of drought can lead to reduced forage pasture for animals. All of these factors need to be considered when living in rural Alberta.
- **Wildlife.** Lacombe County is home to an abundance of wildlife species which requires residents to exercise care and caution while driving or using their property. Common large wildlife species in our area include mule and white-tailed deer, moose, coyotes, foxes, and even elk.



WHAT TO CONSIDER?

Services

There are many services in urban areas that are not readily available in rural Alberta, requiring the landowner to arrange for separate, independent systems to take care of their household needs.

- **Potable water.** Aside from some of our hamlet or residential communities, municipal water lines do not exist in rural areas. In these areas, most residents rely on private water wells or water tanks that require water to be trucked in.
- **Sewer system.** Aside from some of our hamlet or residential communities, municipal wastewater lines will not be available at your property. In rural areas, most residents rely on private wastewater holding tanks or septic fields for sewage disposal. It is the landowner's responsibility to ensure that their septic system meets provincial Safety Codes standards.
- **Other utilities.** As with urban areas, franchise utilities such as electricity, natural gas, and telecommunications are provided by independent service providers. You will need to contact the local service provider in the area to set up servicing.
- **Garbage disposal.** There is no municipal roadside garbage pickup in the County as there would be in an urban area. The Lacombe Regional Waste Services Commission is an organization comprised of eight members, including the County and all towns and villages within our boundaries, that has the mandate to dispose of most types of solid waste.
 - Household garbage is collected at five sites situated throughout the County and hauled to a regional landfill north of Bashaw. Check the Lacombe Regional Waste Services Commission (LRWSC) website - <http://www.lrwsc.ca/> - for the locations and hours of operation for the various sites. The Prentiss Site, located east and south of Lacombe, is the main site and offers many options for waste disposal - but there is a disposal fee for most solid waste products except household garbage. Please phone ahead to confirm the applicable charges - Prentiss Site - (403) 782-5300 or email at admin@lrwsc.ca.
 - Several companies provide garbage pickup services for residents in the County. A list of these companies is provided on the LRWSC website.

WHAT TO CONSIDER?

Operations

Lacombe County has a large and skilled Operations Department that takes care of the County's infrastructure and assets, including, but not limited to the County's paved roads, gravel roads, ditches, culverts, bridges, gravel pits, parks and natural areas, and trail networks. Our Operations Department has a team of skilled and qualified labourers, trades people, and administrative staff, equipped with the necessary machinery and materials, to provide a high level of maintenance to the County's infrastructure.

Nonetheless, there are some important considerations regarding infrastructure in a rural setting that you should consider:

- **Paved roads.** Lacombe County has an extensive paved road system, which are maintained by our Operations Department. The County's paved roads include municipal main roads, municipal roads, and internal subdivision roads.
- **Road maintenance.** Maintenance of gravel roads is often a concern of people new to rural living. Graders will maintain roads approximately once every 2 to 3 weeks in the summer, while snow plowing can take up to 3 or 4 days after a snow event, depending on the amount of the snowfall. Appropriate vehicles are required for rural living, as a small car may not be adequate for every day of the year.
- **Dust.** If you live on a gravel road or use a gravel road for daily commuting, dust will be a normal part of life. Lacombe County has a policy that subsidizes dust control for our rural residents. The County's dust control program provides ratepayers with the option of calcium chloride dust control in front of residences. Calcium chloride is applied for a cost per lineal metre. The County provides a subsidized rate whereby residents pay for 1/3 of the cost for dust control up to 200 lineal metres. Lengths greater than 200 metres are available, however, residents are required to pay 100% of the cost for amounts over 200 metres. The dust control products are only guaranteed for one full season. An application accompanied with payment must be received by the County by May 15. See the County website for current dust control rates or call our Operations Department at 403-782-8567.
- **Numbered Highways.** The County contains numerous numbered provincial highways. Please note that provincial (numbered) highways are **not** within Lacombe County's jurisdiction and are managed by Alberta Transportation and Economic Corridors. Alberta Transportation and Economic Corridors contracts Mainroad Alberta Contracting LP (1-877-875-3263) to maintain provincial highways in Lacombe County.

WHAT TO CONSIDER?

Property Assessment

Lacombe County Assessment Services prepares an assessment for all properties in Lacombe County as a basis to equitably collect the revenues necessary to provide municipal infrastructure and services to our citizens. Assessments are prepared as required by the Municipal Government Act.

- **Data Collection.** Assessors collect information about properties in the County to ensure assessment records are accurate. Data may be collected by survey, phone interview, orthographic photography, physical inspections, and/or outside sources (e.g. Development/Safety Code Permits). Accurate information about the property is necessary to estimate the assessed value. Lacombe County appreciates your cooperation in the data collection process. Physical inspections are completed during weekdays (M-F) 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Our Assessors carry identification and will present it upon request.
- **Valuation Standard.** Assessed values are meant to be an estimate of the market value of the property for Residential and Non-Residential property. Farmland is assessed on a regulated rate as required by Regulation.

If you have any questions or concerns about assessment, please contact Assessment Services at 403-782-6601.



PRIOR TO PURCHASING PROPERTY

What is the topographical, geological, and hydrological condition of the land?

Our landscape in Lacombe County is dotted with wetlands, watercourses, low-lying areas, and environmentally sensitive pockets. This must be taken into account before you decide to purchase a property.

Check if the property has low areas or steep terrain that could be flood-prone or pose slope stability hazards for buildings. If the property is immediately next to a river, it is recommended you determine the extent of the floodplain. If you are planning to build on the property, ensure that there is a safe building site that is away from any flood, fire, or ground stability risk areas.

- Stormwater flows through most low areas at some time or another. If you build in these low areas, you may be subject to flooding.
- If you fill in the low areas, you may be unintentionally relocating the flood waters that could cause problems for others and lead to alterations to wetlands or water courses. This type of action requires special approvals from Alberta Environment and Protected Areas. Altering a watercourse or waterbody without approval is a violation of the provincial Water Act and/or the Public Lands Act and could lead to penalties and legal issues.

What is the surrounding land use context? Are there any surrounding land uses (eg. farming operations, oil & gas operations, businesses, or future development proposals) that could impact you?

Before purchasing land in the County, it is important to assess the surrounding agricultural operations and existing businesses in the area and determine how they may impact your use and enjoyment of the property.

If the property you are purchasing is in a residential subdivision, it may be located adjacent to the County's reserve lands. The purpose of the reserve land is to keep the land in its natural state. Be sure to check if there are any encroachments or other issues from the subject property onto the reserve, because these encroachments are unauthorized and subject to removal.

It is important to note that surrounding properties may not remain as they are today. You can check with Planning Services to find out if there is an Area Structure Plan for the area, how neighbouring properties are currently zoned, and what future developments may be in the planning stages.

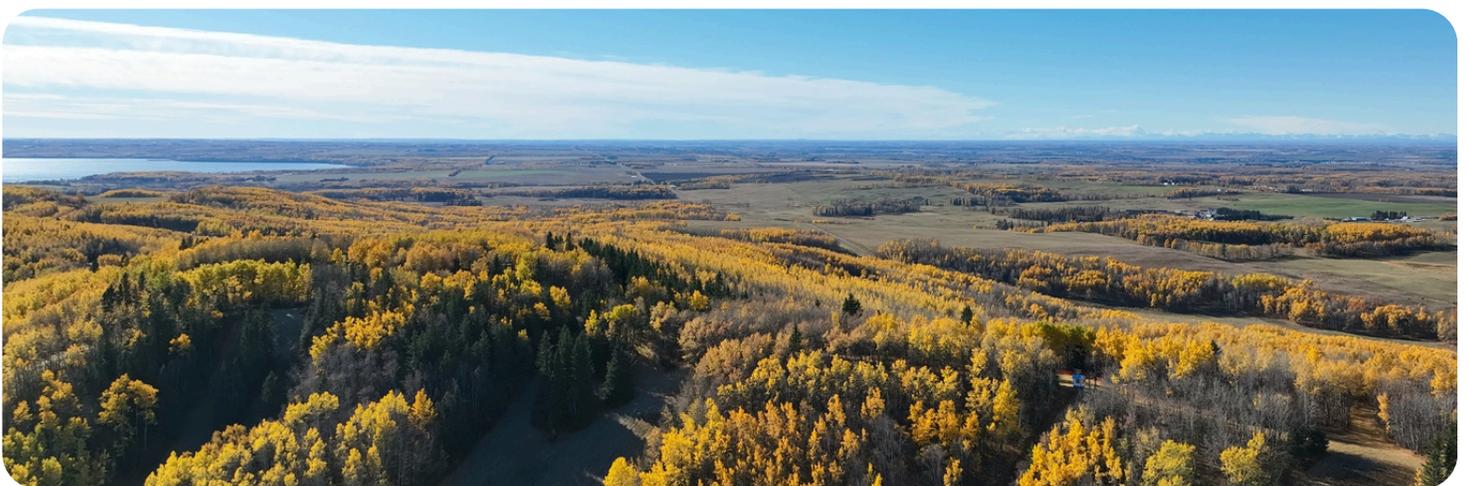
WHAT TO CONSIDER?

Property Taxes

Once property assessments are complete the municipal, education, and seniors lodging tax rates can be determined. Property taxes are calculated by multiplying the municipal tax rate for each property class by the property assessment for each class, then a combined property assessment and tax notice is sent to each property owner in the County.

If you have recently purchased a property or your mailing address has recently changed please contact the County to ensure a correct mailing address. Some of the mailing addresses indicated on a Certificate of Title are incorrect and may result in your inability to receive your notice the property assessment and tax notice. Notification of mailing of the notices is also posted in the County News and on the Website; you are responsible for ensuring correct contact information.

- **Property Taxes.** Tax payments are payable to Lacombe County no later than August 31. For more information on how to pay, please visit the County's website or contact us at 403-782-6601.
- **Tax Installment Payment Plan (TIPP).** If you would prefer to pay your property taxes in monthly instalments instead of one payment in August, you can sign up for the TIPP program. For more information, please visit the County website or contact us at 403-782-6601.
- **Penalties.** Property owners who miss the tax payment deadline will have a 6% penalty applied on September 1 on the outstanding taxes owing. An additional 10% penalty will be added on December 1 for all taxes remaining unpaid after November 30.



PRIOR TO PURCHASING PROPERTY

Due diligence is critical when deciding to purchase a property. Prior to purchasing property in Lacombe County, it is important that you do your research on the land itself. Here are important factors to consider:

What is your intended use of the property? Agricultural, residential, or business-related?

Before you proceed to purchase a property, it is important to consider the zoning of that property and whether what you would like to do with the property can be done within that parcel. It is best to contact Planning Services prior to purchasing the property to inquire about the zoning and whether your intended development is possible at that location. There may be parcels of land that are not suitable for your proposed use; therefore, it is always advisable to check with our office.

Are you planning to build a residence or other buildings on the property?

A new dwelling, including a single detached dwelling, moved-in residence, mobile home, or manufactured home, requires a development permit from the County. Please contact Planning Services to learn about the permit process and any applicable regulations.

Are you planning to start a business on the property?

Most non-agricultural businesses require a development permit from the County. If you are planning to start a business on the property, we recommend contacting Planning Services to determine if the property is suitable for the proposed business and to inquire about the permit process and any applicable regulations.

Compliance reports.

A Compliance Report is a legal document issued by the County, confirming that development (siting and use of buildings) on a property meets the regulations of the County's Land Use Bylaw. Compliance Reports are increasingly being requested in connection with the purchase or sale of a property as the lender or buyer wants to know if the development on the property conforms to the County's Land Use Bylaw. The Compliance Report will tell them that everything is in order, or that a compliance or other encroachment problem exists.

PRIOR TO PURCHASING PROPERTY

If a non-conformance is discovered, the County will describe the nature of it within the Compliance Report, and it may be that the landowner needs to take corrective action. The County advises that if a non-conformance is found, you should contact Planning Services staff at the earliest opportunity to discuss corrective measures.

A Compliance Report is not a substitute for legal advice. If there are any issues or questions regarding compliance, you should review these matters with a lawyer with relevant expertise.

OTHER FACTORS

Here are other factors to consider before purchasing a property.

Check the Title of the Property

With your lawyer, check for any **easements, caveats, encumbrances, or covenants** that may be registered on the title and determine how this will affect your property.

For example, some properties in the County have an Environmental Reserve Easement registered on title, which requires the area covered under the agreement to be left in its natural state. While the land remains private, there may be additional restrictions within the easement area. A review of the Environmental Reserve Easement agreement is necessary to understand the landowner's obligations.

Some easements may require you to allow for the construction of roads, power lines, water lines, sewer lines, etc., across your land. Check these issues carefully by obtaining an up-to-date title and compliance report for the property.

Some subdivisions have covenants that limit the use of the property. It is important to obtain a copy of the covenants (or confirm that there are none) and make sure that you can live with those rules. Also, a lack of covenants can cause problems between neighbours. Lacombe County becomes involved in the enforcement of only those covenants that are registered in the name of the County.



PRIOR TO PURCHASING PROPERTY

Only after studying the abovementioned information is it recommended that one should proceed with purchasing property.

For more information or for assistance on any of the points mentioned above, please contact Planning Services at 403-782-8389 or planning@lacombecounty.com.



CONTACTING THE COUNTY

GENERAL CONTACTS

Administration Phone:	(403) 782-6601
Administration Fax:	(403) 782-3820
E-mail:	info@lacombecounty.com
After Hours Emergency Answering Service	(403) 357-1210
Public Works Shop	(403) 782-3567
Public Works Fax	(403) 782-5356

COUNCIL

John Ireland	Division 1	403-392-3981
Brenda Knight	Division 2	403-788-2168 (h) / 403-550-2168 (c)
Mark Visscher	Division 3	403-350-4709
Dwayne West	Division 4	403-660-2328
Roger Van Haren	Division 5	403-896-9931
Allan Wilson	Division 6	403-748-2374 (h) / 403-506-3735 (c)
Dana Kreil	Division 7	403-746-3607 (h) / 403-358-9400 (c)

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION

Tim Timmons, County Manager	403-782-6601
Michael Minchin, Director of Corporate Services	403-782-6601
Bill Cade, Director of Operations	403-782-8379
Cajun Paradis, Director of Planning Services	403-782-8389
Dion Burlock, Director of Community Services	403-782-8959

Resident concerns or questions can be addressed by phoning (403) 782-6601 or by sending an email to info@lacombecounty.com.

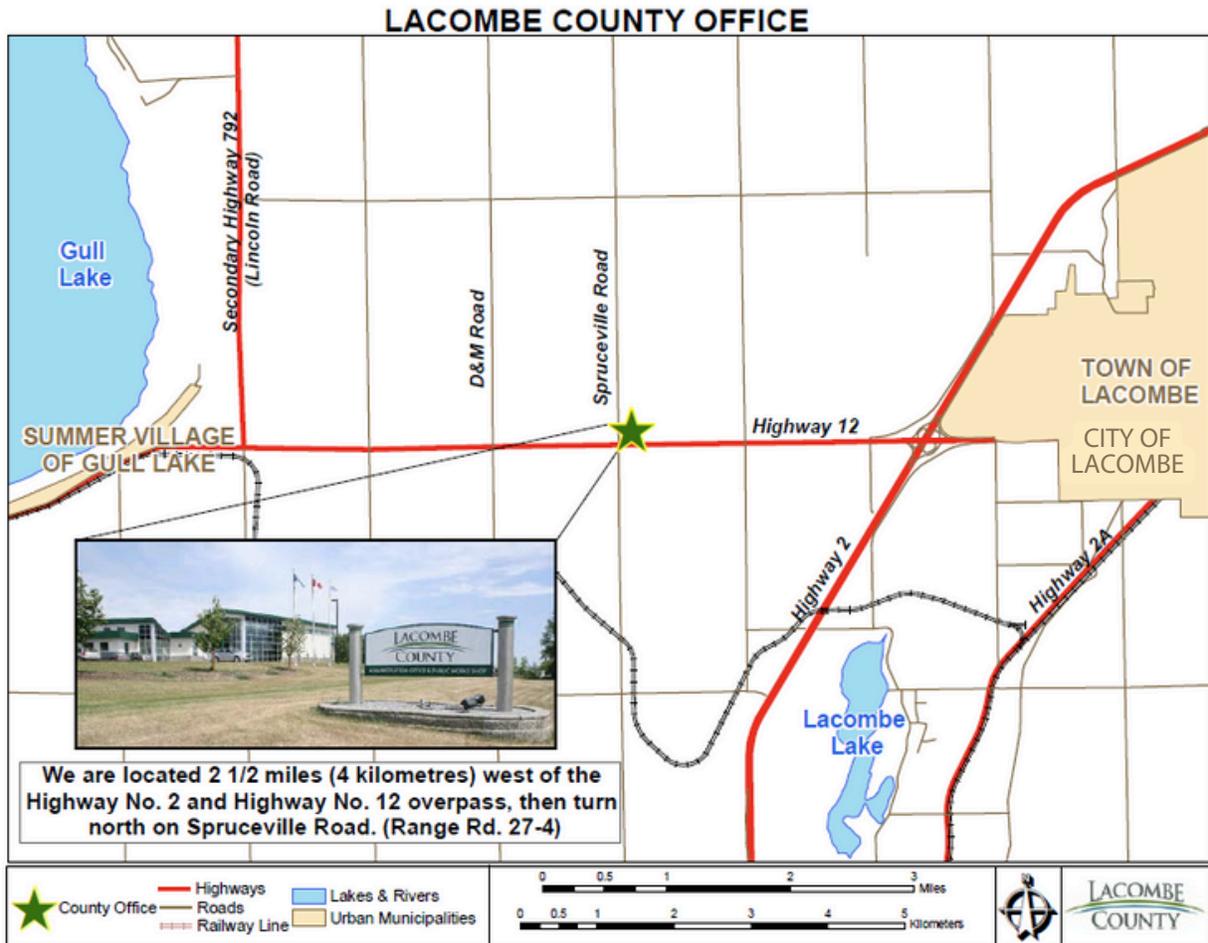
CONTACTING THE COUNTY

OFFICE LOCATION

We are located 2.5 miles (4 kilometres) west of the QE2 and Highway 12 overpass. Turn north on Spruceville Road (Range Rd. 27-4).

Mailing Address: Lacombe County, RR 3, Lacombe, AB T4L 2N3

Rural Address: 40403 RGE RD 274



The County Administration office is open Monday to Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

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