

Railway Area Analysis and Policy Report

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For the
Town of Okotoks

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

For several years, the Town has identified the need to undertake a comprehensive study of the lands that are the subject of this paper. This need was confirmed at the time of adoption of the current General Municipal Plan (See Policy 3.5.2(2) - GMP) and the lands in issue were subsequently the subject of a Land Use By-law amendment which designated these lands as Policy Review District. This District is attached in Appendix A. The essence of this District is to protect land from premature incompatible development and subdivision until such time as Council, through a comprehensive study, determines the specific land use or uses that may occur within the area.

The Town of Okotoks' GMP identifies the majority of these lands for future industrial uses. The study area is depicted in Figure 1.

1.2 Study Purpose

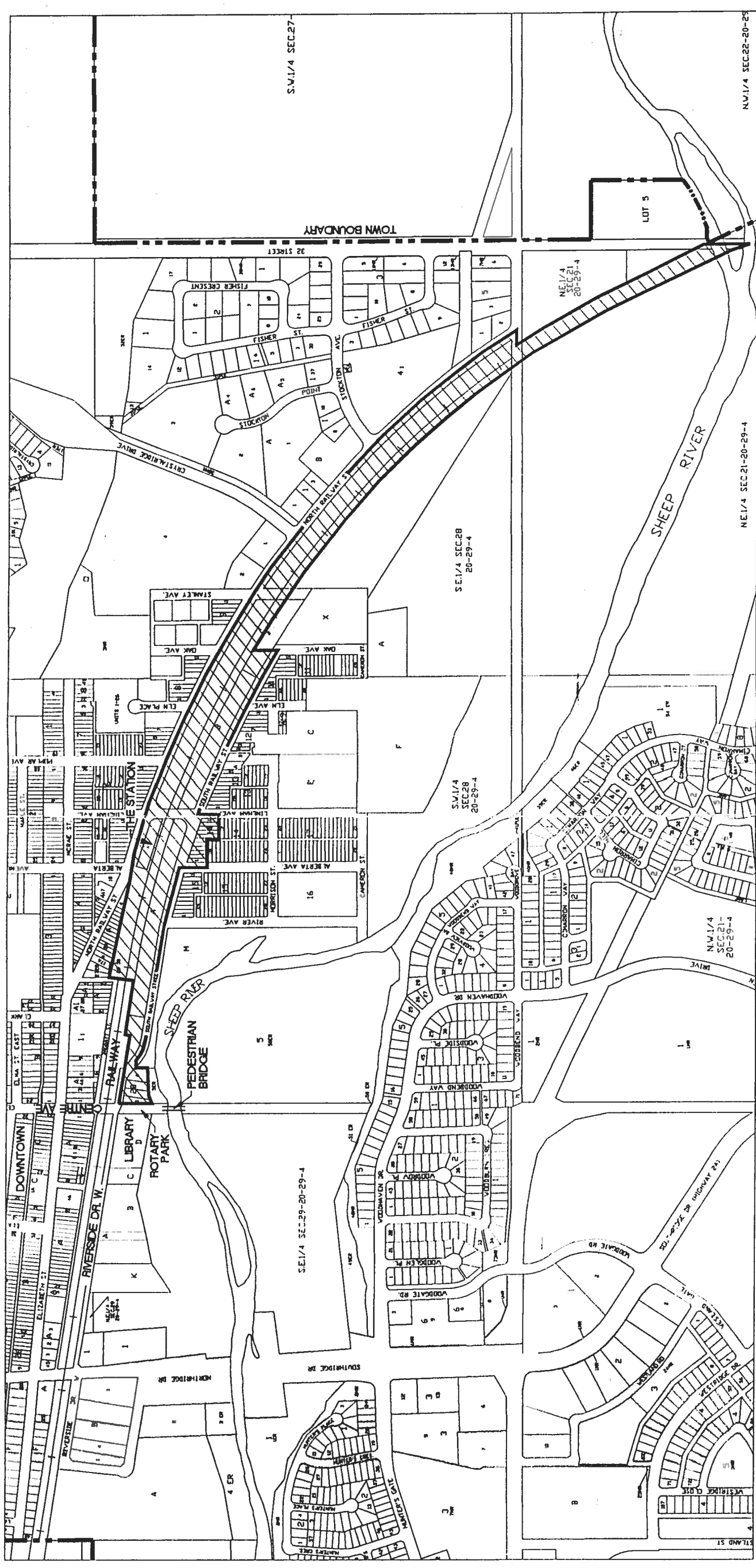
The purpose of this study is to develop a comprehensive land use concept plan and land use policy for the study area which addresses:

- land use compatibility with adjacent developed areas in the Town with special emphasis being given to the protection of environmentally sensitive lands, traffic impacts on residential areas and separation distances from the railway;
- servicing standards for the subject lands with particular attention given to infrastructure needs of the entire Municipality; and
- the desired sequence in which development will occur on these lands and the sequence in which services will be provided.

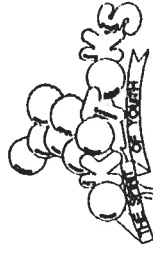
Upon its adoption, this study will provide a framework by which Council can redesignate land to a final land use district and allow development to occur in a logical fashion.

FIGURE 1 STUDY AREA

TOWN OF OKOTOKS



SITE AREA BOUNDARY



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and
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Drafting/Graphics



2.0 DESCRIPTION OF STUDY AREA

2.1 Setting

The study area is linear in shape paralleling the Canadian Pacific mainline that connects north to Calgary and south to Lethbridge. The area lies immediately south and east of the current Okotoks downtown and is generally defined by the railway line to the north and the Sheep River flood plain to the south. Large portions of the study area were at one time part of the railway station grounds. Station grounds were originally owned by the rail company and were a wider portion of rail right-of-way used to accommodate stations and grain elevators.

In spite of their central location, the subject lands seem somewhat detached from the rest of Okotoks because major roads bypass the area, the area is isolated by the river and railway, and a portion of the internal road system has not been upgraded to an urban standard. Only just recently was South Railway Street from Centre Avenue to Lineham Avenue improved.

2.2 Land Use

Land use and the general built form within and surrounding the study area are quite typical of that found adjacent to station grounds in small prairie communities. The railway and station ground development in most cases provided a significant impetus for early community growth. As a result, areas surrounding the station became a logical location for early commercial and agricultural related industrial development. Several older commercial buildings still exist across the street from the Okotoks station, and the station is now used as a community cultural facility. The original residential areas grew out around the station grounds and much of this early residential development abuts the study area. With the advent of the automobile, the commercial core of Okotoks has moved westward and the area surrounding the station ground is no longer the center of retail activity in the Town. The centralization of agriculture related industries such as grain handling coupled with the transition of Okotoks from a rural service centre to a commuter town in a metropolitan area has seen much of the original rural industrial uses also leave the area. As a result, large portions of the study area are vacant or contain low intensity land uses.

It is important to also note that several sites have been used as bulk fuel and fertilizer facilities and may have some contamination. This issue must be resolved prior to redevelopment of these sites. In addition, a significant portion of the study area contains the CPR Railway Right-of-Way.

2.3 Vehicle Circulation

The study area is essentially served by one road: namely South Railway Street. This road parallels the rail line and provides legal access to virtually all of the developable lands within the study area. The study area has only two road connections to the rest of the town due to constraints created by the rail line and Sheep River. The first, South Railway Street, connects west to Centre Avenue and Highway No. 2A, and the second, Lineham Avenue, connects north across the railway to North Railway Street.

Portions of South Railway Street lying west of Lineham Avenue are part of an east/west truck route within the Town. This truck route, identified in the General Municipal Plan (GMP) as an interim route, is necessary to provide truck access to existing industry within the study area and to connect the Okotoks Business Park with Highway No. 2A and No. 7 to the south. When a planned second river crossing is developed near the Okotoks Business Park, a truck route connection can be developed to connect the business park directly to Highways 2A and 7 and portions of the interim east/west truck route may then be downgraded or phased out.

Some consideration has been given in the past to extending South Railway Street eastward to a new and safer railway crossing at Stockton Avenue. Such a road connection would provide an alternate east/west road connection in the central part of Okotoks and would certainly increase the development potential of lands abutting South Railway Street.

2.4 Pedestrian Circulation and Open Space Needs

Much of the lands lying adjacent to the study area near the Sheep River is owned by the Town and is a logical extension to the open space and trail system. Open space corridors will need to be protected within the study area to ensure critical links in the trail system are possible.

In addition, a sidewalk system is desirable within the study area to connect the Oak Avenue residential area lying south of the study area with the rest of Okotoks. This is particularly important given the nature of current truck traffic using this road and potential for increased traffic as development occurs in the study area.

2.5 Site Design

The study area contains approximately 30,000 M² (7.5 acres) of developable land of which approximately 40% is currently occupied by commercial and/or industrial uses. A summary of developable lands is shown in Appendix B. An additional 9,000 M² (2.3 acres) of land abutting the study area may also be developable if incorporated into sites within the study area. The critical site design issue with these lands is the shallow depth (distance from road to rear property lines) of the subject lots. It is incumbent that a very thorough investigation of possible site layouts be undertaken prior to subdivision of the lands.

2.6 Built Form

Despite the isolated nature of the subject area, these lands are visible from the Town's existing and future open space system, North Railway Street, portions of the downtown and residential area both adjacent to the study area and on surrounding escarpments. It is therefore critical that any development that may occur on these lands be designed and constructed to a high standard, is attractive from all vantages and is compatible with surrounding buildings. It may also be appropriate to consider using building facades that compliment and incorporate design elements of historical building forms typical of the area. Examples of original building styles are train stations and grain elevators.

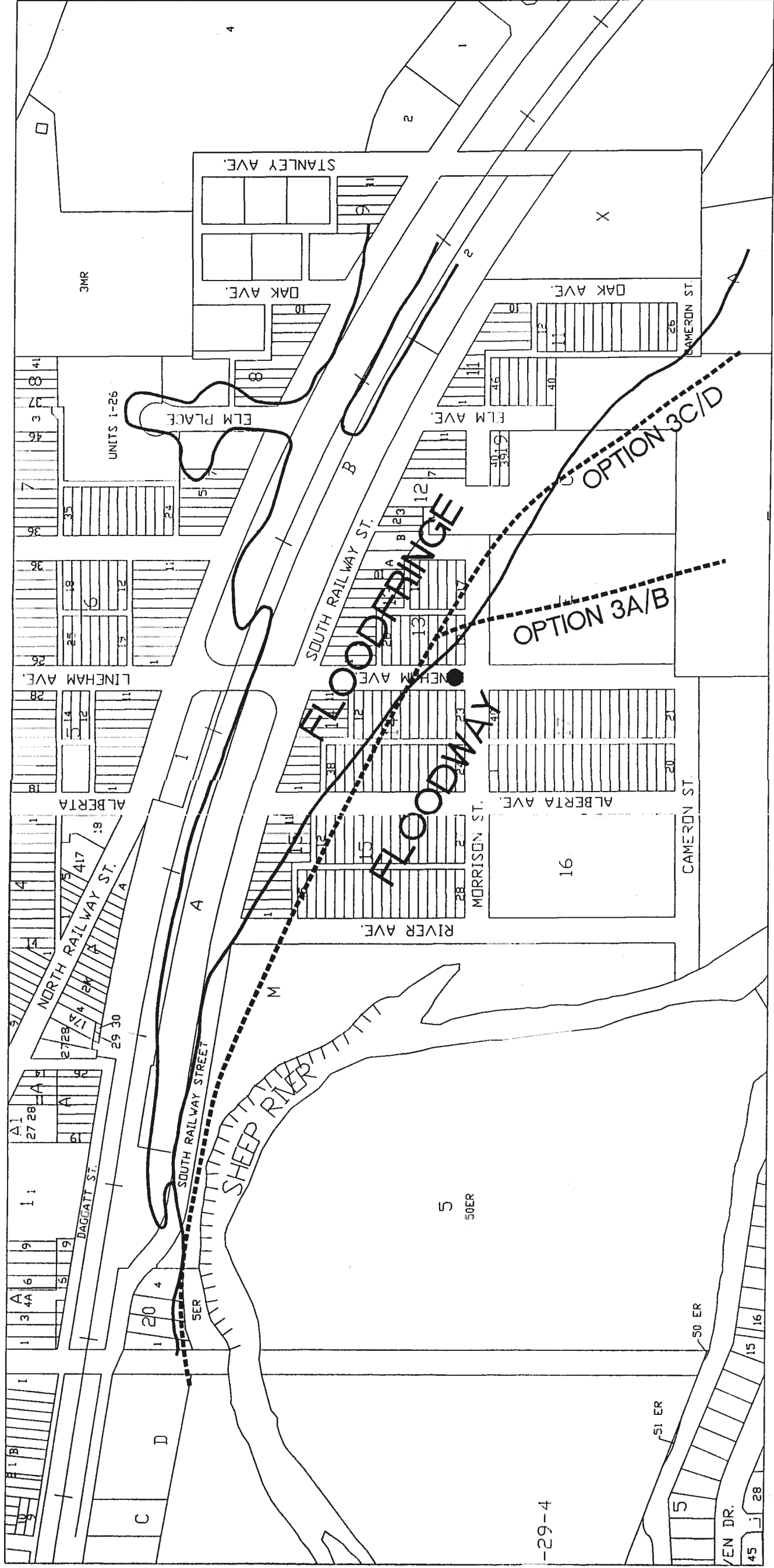
2.7 Sheep River and Flood Plain

The concerns regarding the Sheep River flood plain and its impacts on the study area are based primarily on information arising from the 1988 UMA Flood Mitigation Study, and ongoing input from Alberta Environment. Constraints discussed below are shown in Figure 2.

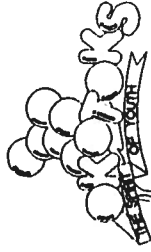
- the study area lies in the 1:100 year flood fringe. A low spot on the railway embankment allows flood water to overflow into the area north of the tracks, and the rate of flow plus the volume of water generated causes flooding along lands running eastward adjacent to the railway embankment as far as the trestle over the Sheep River.
- the study recommended no further residential or commercial activity along South Railway Street until a dyke is constructed. If a dyke is constructed, it is estimated that an increase in flood water levels elsewhere will occur, ranging between 0.25m and 0.35m depending on which of the recommended dykes is constructed. Estimated cost \$472,000 (in 1988 dollars). No dyking requirements are mentioned for commercial and/or industrial uses.
- some rip rap will also be required along the north shore of the Sheep River at Centre Avenue (approximately 380 linear metres). Estimated cost \$201,250 (in 1988 dollars). In addition, some freeboard allowance is required in this location due to water surface super elevation. The amount of freeboard anticipated to be adequate is 0.43m.
- the storm water outfall to the Sheep River south of Lineham Avenue is expected to back up during a 1:100 year flood event. A contingency plan will be required for water that may be forced back up the pipe and into the study area.
- the Town has already experienced a flood of a greater magnitude than a 1:100 event in this century. There is a limit to the amount of protection a dyke will provide the study area.
- any new building in the study area should be certified by a professional engineer with respect to main floor elevation, and site grading. Water resistant material must be used for all below ground construction able to withstand the water pressure from a 1:100 flood event.

FIGURE 2
FLOOD PLAIN
RAILWAY AREA LAND USE
ANALYSIS AND POLICY REVIEW

TOWN OF OKOTOKS



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||||| RIP RAP

----- DYKE

● STORM OUTFALL

2.8 Railway Impacts

The railway will remain for the foreseeable future. This facility generates significant amounts of noise and the Town has concern about the transport of dangerous goods by rail through the community. These factors should be considered when determining future land uses and setbacks.

2.9 Municipal Policy Framework

The Town of Okotoks General Municipal Plan (GMP) identifies developable land within the study area as suitable for industrial uses. However, the Town through adoption of the policy review district in the Land Use Bylaw (LUB) has provided some flexibility to consider other land use options. An amendment to the GMP may be required to facilitate some land use options. The GMP envisions the central business district will expand into residential areas lying north of the study area and west of Poplar Avenue and that other developed areas abutting the study area remain residential.

2.10 Summary of Issues

- the impact that the relative isolation of the subject lands will have on development prospects.
- ensuring that any proposed future uses are compatible with existing adjacent uses particularly residential uses. Key areas of concern are noise, hours of operation, traffic volume, parking, loading/deliveries, visual impacts, flood water impediments, etc.
- determining the most appropriate land uses for flood prone lands.
- identifying the most appropriate flood risk mitigation method for proposed land uses.
- determining uses that are suitable for the shallow lots typical of the study area.
- determine road standards that will be compatible with existing and future uses.
- identifying possible impacts of future land uses on adjacent development and municipal infrastructure.
- identifying the future of the pocket of residential development south of South Railway Street.
- identifying an appropriate built form for this highly visible corridor in central Okotoks.
- ensuring the Town's open space system and environmental sensitive areas are not compromised by development in the study area.
- ensure adequate open spaces are provided in and adjacent to the study area.
- ensure vehicle and pedestrian circulation issues both within the study area and within the Town are addressed.
- addressing any environmental concern regarding previous land uses.

3.0 DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

Several possible scenarios were developed for the subject lands as a part of the report preparation process. Each of these scenarios includes a different land use mix and hence a different potential impact on adjacent developments, the natural environment and the Town as a whole. These scenarios are described in detail in Appendix C of this report.

The "pedestrian oriented commercial/residential mixed use area" scenario was chosen as the preferred option for the following reasons:

- commercial uses mixed with residential uses are probably the highest and best use for lands in close proximity to the Sheep River since these uses can best capitalize on the views and amenities offered by the river and associated open space.
- commercial development would justify installation of a high standard of municipal services.
- this type of commercial and residential development is feasible on shallow lots typical of the area
- this type of commercial and residential development is compatible with the existing road system.
- this type of development is compatible with and complementary to that in the downtown core, adjacent residential uses, and anticipated future development to the north of the study area in the transitional commercial and central business expansion areas.
- commercial uses, particularly those catering to tourists, generally have more interesting facades than standard commercial and industrial development and use higher quality building materials. Commercial use could therefore provide a more visually appealing street scape.
- small scale commercial development, particularly with a mandated residential component, should have less impact on adjacent residential development than other possible uses in terms of truck traffic, deliveries, etc.

- commercial development should bring higher property assessment than industrial uses.

This scenario was more fully developed by Poon McKenzie Architects whose report is attached as Appendix D.

The plan area is divided into three sub-areas, each with differing development potential.

Sub-area 1 is in close proximity to the downtown core and development lands front or back onto the Sheep River and associated open space. These lands present a similar development opportunity as lands along Riverside Drive immediately to the west where tourist oriented uses such as a tea room, sit-down restaurant, and motel have developed.

Sub-area 2 abuts a pocket of single detached residential development, but is not as conducive to continuation of this exclusively residential area due to closer proximity to the railway. In addition, the access road is not a through route, so traffic is light.

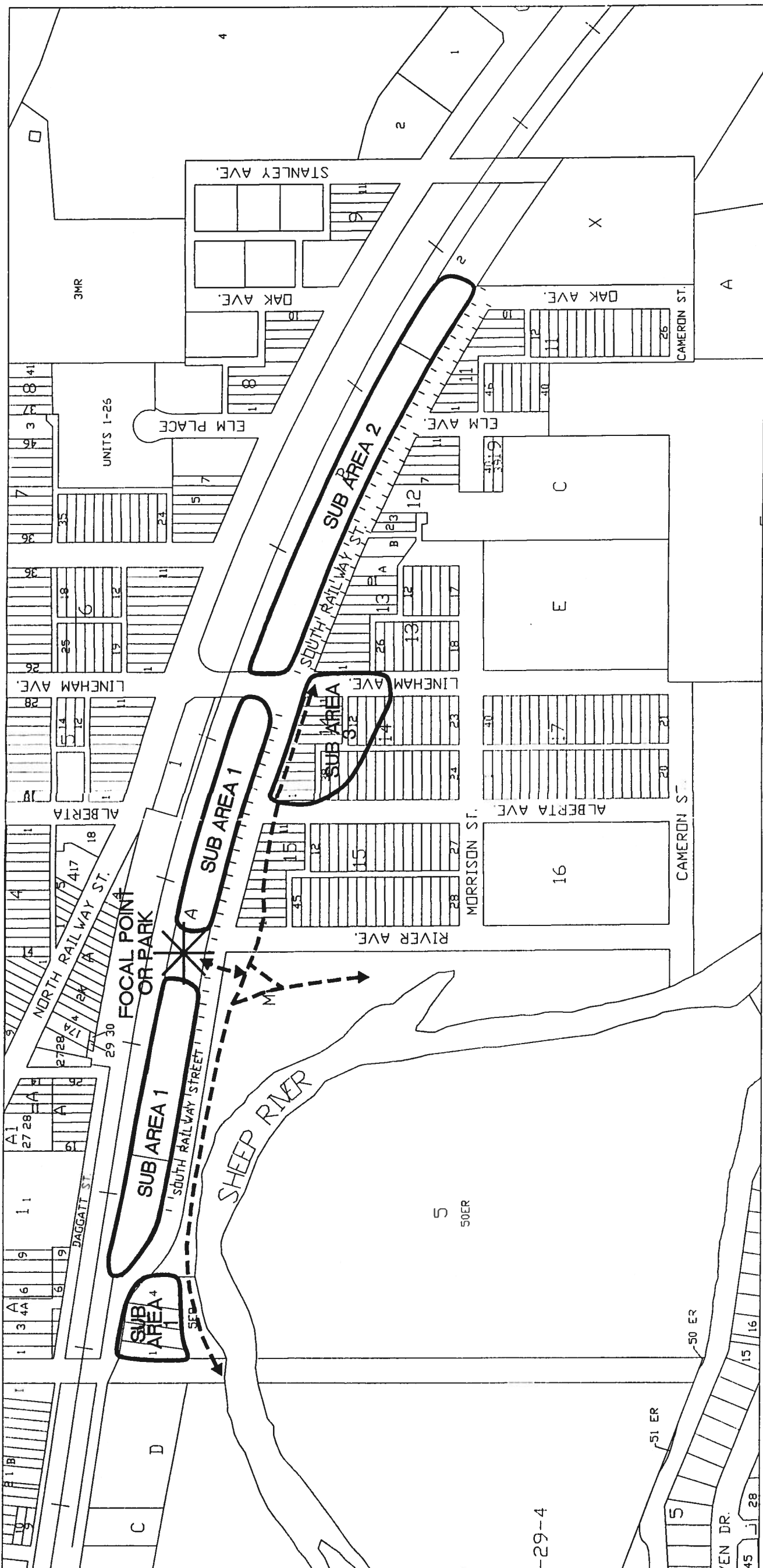
Sub-area 3 is a pocket of land which directly abuts the Sheep River open space system. It is located on the same side of the street as existing residential development and is setback somewhat from the railway.

The development concept is shown in Figure 3.

The majority of developable land in the study area is held by one party (Blocks A and B, Plan 8410463). Given this tenure situation, it is recognized that a single developer may wish to develop these lands under a comprehensive plan and such a development plan may vary somewhat from the "mixed use" scenario described above. The current owner has in fact made some representations to the Town along these lines. This potential is recognized and the policies contained in this plan are therefore designed to accommodate such a proposal. However, given the uncertainty this situation creates, the Town will not designate Blocks A and B with a land use bylaw district until the developer has submitted a comprehensive development plan satisfactory to the Town for all of Blocks A and B.

FIGURE 3
DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT
RAILWAY AREA LAND USE
ANALYSIS AND POLICY REVIEW

TOWN OF OKOTOKS



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..... PARALLEL PARKING
----- PATHWAY



4.0 DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

4.1 Objectives

- (a) *Ensure that the Central Business District is maintained as the retail, office and service focus of Okotoks.*
- (b) *Utilize the study area as a downtown expansion area.*
- (c) *Restrict automobile oriented uses in the study area.*
- (d) *Encourage the development of tourist oriented facilities in the study area.*
- (e) *Promote mixed use developments which maximize the use of lands adjacent to the Sheep River with its various amenities.*
- (f) *Ensure that a variety of dwelling types are provided in Okotoks to maintain a balanced and stable population structure.*
- (g) *Provide parks and recreation facilities to serve the study area and Okotoks.*
- (h) *Provide for pedestrian pathway connections to adjacent areas and ensure provision of a high quality pedestrian oriented environment for commercial activities.*
- (i) *To ensure the orderly and economic extension of utility systems.*
- (j) *Discourage parking in the front yards of new developments to maintain a pedestrian focus.*
- (k) *Landscape parking lots with particular attention given to screening parking areas adjacent to sidewalks.*
- (l) *Encourage consistent high quality development throughout the study area including building facades, signage, landscaping, and accessory buildings.*
- (m) *Encourage a unifying architectural motif reflecting Okotoks' heritage with emphasis on high quality building materials.*
- (n) *Encourage commercial structures which are sited, designed and scaled to minimize impacts on scenic views.*

4.2 Definitions

Auto Oriented Commercial Use means a commercial activity serving the motorist which require a location that provides good visibility and accessibility along major thoroughfares. These uses, in most cases, generate a lot of vehicle movement. Without restricting the generality of the foregoing, an auto oriented commercial use may include: service stations; motels; drive-in restaurants; convenience food stores; and vehicle repair shops.

Built Form means the external shape and structural elements of individual buildings and site improvements, and the relationships of individual buildings to the general shape and structure of other buildings in the area.

General Municipal Plan (GMP) means the Okotoks General Municipal Plan Bylaw No. 27/90 adopted by Council pursuant to Planning Legislation.

Home Enterprise means the use of a building or unit within a building for both a commercial use and a primary residence. This use category is to be restricted to buildings which are residential in character from the external and may include single detached units and semi-detached units. Residential and commercial activity may occupy the same floor in this use category.

Land Use Bylaw (LUB) means the Okotoks Land Use Bylaw No. 1/80 including all amending bylaws adopted by Council pursuant to Planning Legislation.

Pedestrian Oriented Commercial Use means a small scale commercial activity providing a direct retail or service function to the final consumer that is oriented toward the sidewalk and pedestrian traffic through use of ground floor display windows and inviting ground floor entrances. Such uses are land intensive and gravitate toward the downtown core to benefit from similar uses which generate pedestrian traffic. Without restricting the generality of the foregoing, a pedestrian oriented commercial use may include: a retail store; an entertainment facility; an eating or drinking establishment, and a personal service shop, all subject to the Land Use Bylaw.

Reserves (Cash in Lieu and Land) means land or cash provided at the time of subdivision by a developer pursuant to the Planning Act for the purpose of providing public lands and facilities to service the subdivision area.

Small Scale means floor areas less than 500 m² when referring to commercial uses and buildings.

Tourist Oriented Commercial Use means a commercial activity which generates a significant amount of its business from tourists. Without restricting the generality of the foregoing, a tourist oriented commercial use may include: a speciality food or clothing boutique; a bed and breakfast; an art studio or gallery; a gift shop; a restaurant; and a cappuccino bar, all subject to the Land Use Bylaw.

4.3 Land Use

4.3.1 General Land Use Policies

- (a) *Subdivision and development must not occur until remedial action to clean up contaminated soil has been completed and the land is suitable for urban land uses to the satisfaction of the Town of Okotoks in consultation with Alberta Environment.*
- (b) *Subdivision and development of Blocks A and B Plan 8410463 should not occur until a comprehensive development proposal for these blocks has been prepared by the developer and adopted by Council. The concept should address municipal goals and objectives for the area as outlined in this report and reference design guidelines shown in Appendix D.*
- (c) *Subdivision and development must not occur until the developer has provided a comprehensive geotechnical study in accordance with Section 9.12.0 of the LUB to determine the feasibility of permitting development in the flood plain and determining appropriate flood risk mitigation measures.*
- (d) *Incremental subdivision and development in the study area should be phased to*
 - *ensure that new commercial development is not fragmented but is contiguous with existing commercial development; and*
 - *ensure that required infrastructure is in place to service development.*
- (e) *The CPR Railway Right-of-Way should be designated with a land use district that precludes uses other than as a railway.*

4.3.2 Sub-Area 1 - Land Use Policies

- (a) *Ground floor space should be preserved for small scale pedestrian oriented commercial uses which serve the needs of Okotoks and area residents and tourists.*

The purpose of this policy is to achieve a concentrated pedestrian oriented commercial area, similar to that found in successful small town CBD's. This policy will assist in retaining the CBD as Okotoks' primary commercial focus, to enhance its potential as a tourist destination point and capitalize on existing character and historical buildings. Intrusion of uses which generate low pedestrian traffic and/or offer little interest to casual shoppers should be discouraged at street level. Urban Design and Built Form policies of this Plan encourage building and site design which will also contribute to and enhance the pedestrian environment.

This area is appropriate for this type of commercial use because:

- the area has reasonable pedestrian access to the existing retail and service core;
- the area is close to the geographic centre of the existing core; and
- land can easily be fragmented into smaller parcels and therefore, easily be developed;

Large scale commercial uses that would attract tourists and residents from the region around Okotoks may also be considered appropriate if such a proposal is supported by a comprehensive development plan.

- (b) *Tourist oriented commercial uses should be encouraged as a primary focus of this area.*

The intent of this policy, which encourages a cluster of tourist related shops, is to create a tourist destination and maximize spin-off benefits these type of business can realize from each other.

This area is appropriate for this type of commercial use because:

- the area is essentially undeveloped allowing for a comprehensively planned commercial area;

- the area is in close proximity to similar developments on Riverside Drive;
- the area has good access to Highway No. 2A; and
- the area is adjacent to the Sheep River and open space system.

4.3.3 Sub-Area 2 - Land Use Policy

- a) *This area should be preserved for home enterprises and small scale pedestrian oriented commercial uses.*

The intent of this policy is to allow the development of low density housing units which include a small commercial space at the front of the building for use by the owner of the housing unit. This type of use is compatible with residential uses across the street and is a housing option that would be appropriate for empty nesters or single individuals who wish to operate a small centrally located business in their home. In addition, small scale commercial shops without a residence are encouraged.

4.3.4 Sub-Area 3 - Land Use Policy

- a) *This area should be preserved for higher density residential development.*

The intent of this policy is to take advantage of the proximity of these lands to the Sheep River which affords interesting vistas and amenities for residents. In addition, a higher density housing form can more easily be designed to integrate into a flood plain situation than low density housing forms.

A commercial use that is shown to be integral to a comprehensively planned development of Block A to the north may also be considered for sub-area 3.

4.4 Urban Design and Built Form

4.4.1 Pedestrian and Vehicle Circulation

(a) *A public sidewalk system should be developed for the purpose of ensuring an attractive pedestrian environment. The system should, among other things, include the following:*

- *removal of overhead utility lines or, if removal is not feasible, screening of utility lines from view of the pedestrian;*
- *encourage a user friendly pedestrian environment which provides physical and psychological separation from traffic and improves the functionality and appearance of the sidewalk through the use of:*
 - *public art;*
 - *pedestrian scale lighting;*
 - *benches, waste receptacles and other appropriate street furniture;*
 - *trees and other appropriate vegetation;*
 - *crosswalks with priority given to pedestrians rather than vehicles;*
 - *adequate space for anticipated pedestrian volumes;*
 - *on-street parking;*
 - *appropriate design for handicapped users;*
 - *meeting areas; and*
 - *preservation and enhancement of sight lines down streets.*

The purpose of this policy is to develop a successful high quality pedestrian environment. It is recognized that, in addition to physical improvements to public areas, a high concentration of retail and food service uses etc. is required to generate sufficient interest for pedestrian traffic. A successful pedestrian oriented commercial area cannot be sustained over a large area because of limits to demand for pedestrian oriented commercial use, limits to the distance shoppers are willing to walk and climatic constraints. Policies in Section 4.4.4 are designed to ensure development on private land is compatible with public improvements.

(b) *A pathway system should be developed which includes:*

- *a pathway connection in the vicinity of the south bank of the Sheep River from Rotary Park to Lineham Avenue;*
- *linkages to the existing CBD, footbridge and sidewalk systems on Centre Avenue and Lineham Avenue.*

4.4.2 Parks and Open Spaces

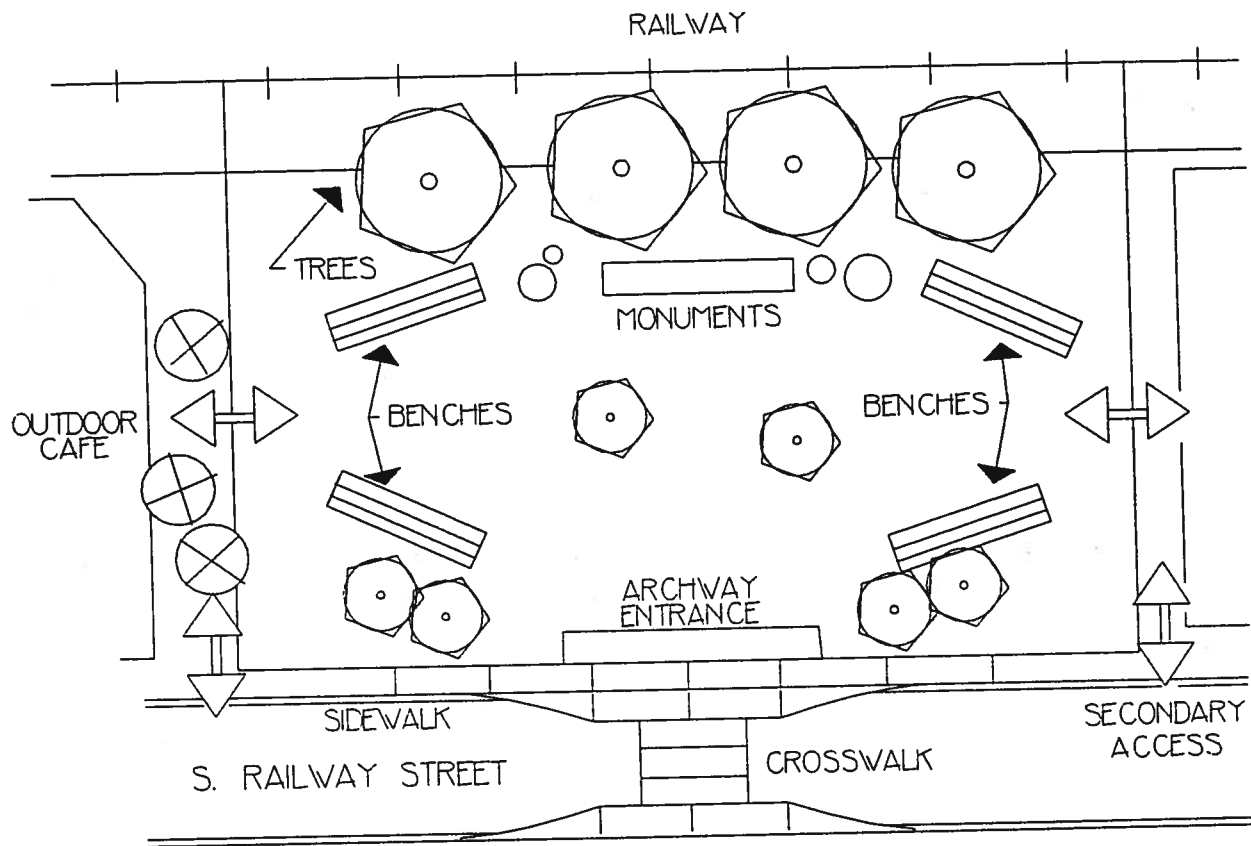
a) *Development of one or more open space focal points or squares in sub-area 1 is encouraged.*

An example of a focal point (square) is shown in Figure 4. A village green such as this could be used for public assembly, official ceremonies, an outdoor market, special events, etc. It provides a sense of destination to shoppers and provides the community with a sense of place.

Parks may be obtained through reserve requirements when subdivision occurs.

TOWN OF OKOTOKS

FIGURE 4
FOCAL POINT CONCEPT
RAILWAY AREA LAND USE
ANALYSIS AND POLICY REVIEW



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4.4.3 Parking

- (a) *Off-street parking required for development will, where feasible and appropriate, be encouraged to be located at the rear of sites. Shared accesses between commercial sites are encouraged.*
- (b) *Prior to subdivision and development of sites, a comprehensive parking plan should be required for the area which incorporates the following design criteria:*
 - *all parking requirements of the parent site(s) to be provided in consolidated parking areas;*
 - *parking areas to be shared among commercial businesses, irrespective of ultimate tenure patterns;*
 - *a minimum of 5% of parking areas to be landscaped;*
 - *pedestrian circulation to be accommodated on internal sidewalks separate from vehicle circulation areas;*
 - *direct pedestrian links to be provided to commercial areas for which parking is provided;*
 - *walking distances between parking areas and all commercial space to meet generally accepted standards;*
 - *parking areas to be screened and separated from South Railway Street and Elizabeth Street North Railway Street;*
 - *any landscaping and screening to be designed to ensure natural surveillance is maintained for crime prevention.*
- (c) *Parallel on-street parking should be incorporated into the north side of South Railway Street from the s-curve to Lineham Avenue and on both sides of South Railway Street east of Lineham Avenue.*
- (d) *If the approving authority determines that full provision of parking requirements on-site will jeopardize development of an attractive street scape and a continuous pedestrian environment, it may deem that up to 25% of the parking requirement is provided by on-street parking located on South Railway Street.*

4.4.4 Design Standards

- (a) *When reviewing applications for development in the plan area, the guidelines in Appendix D must be considered in conjunction with other relevant policies of this report and the Okotoks Land Use Bylaw.*

The guidelines provided in Appendix D are designed to reference local forms and materials of Okotoks' original commercial and residential buildings.

The intent of this policy is to incorporate a turn of the century small town motif in this part of the downtown as exhibited in buildings listed below:

- private residence - 50 McRae Street
- Town Office - 14 McRae Street
- private residence - 4 Elma Street East
- Rainbows End - 2 Elma Street West
- Vision Quest - 25 Elma Street West
- private residence - 33 Elma Street West
- St. James Catholic Church - Northridge Drive
- Ginger Tea Room - 43 Riverside Drive
- Country Creamery - 35 Riverside Drive
- Charles Dixon Law Office - 126 Elizabeth Street
- Touchstone Real Estate Ltd. - 134 Elizabeth Street
- The Old Country Store - 64 North Railway Street
- La Colombe - 52 North Railway Street
- The Station - 53 North Railway Street

- (b) *Front yard setbacks within the study area should not exceed 3 m.*
- (c) *Gaps between buildings are discouraged. In instances where a gap between buildings is shown to be essential, the gap should be kept as narrow as possible.*
- (d) *Design guidelines prepared in conjunction with a comprehensive plan for Blocks A and B, Plan 8410463 should, upon approval by Council, form part of the design guidelines in Appendix D. If a conflict occurs within the guidelines as a result of an approved comprehensive plan, the comprehensive plan guidelines are deemed to supercede the original guidelines. Guidelines developed under a comprehensive plan shall only be applied to Blocks A and B.*

4.5 Utilities

- (a) *When reviewing and deciding upon development and subdivision proposals Council or its approving authorities should ensure that municipal utilities (e.g.: water, sanitary and storm sewers) are designed to meet appropriate engineering standards and satisfy the following criteria:*
- *water supply, treatment and distribution facilities must be designed to meet projected consumption and fire-flow requirements;*
 - *sanitary sewage collection and treatment facilities must be designed to meet peak demand requirements and to minimize maintenance and capital costs;*
 - *the Town's storm water collection and disposal system is upgraded and/or expanded as required; and*
 - *the provision of these facilities are comprehensively planned to meet anticipated growth and demand requirements of the Town.*
- (b) *The developer will be responsible for any costs arising from provision or necessary upgrading of utility lines and associated facilities to service the development area.*
- (c) *Off-site levies or acreage assessments to recover the costs of providing major public utilities will be imposed by the Town as a condition in respect to land that is to be redeveloped or subdivided, and which has not been previously subject to an off-site levy. These levies will be assessed on a gross acreage basis, pursuant to the relevant sections of the Municipal Government act, and in accordance with the Town's adopted off-site levy schedules.*

5.0 IMPLEMENTATION

Amendments to the General Municipal Land and Land Use Bylaw are required to implement recommendations of this report. However, since the report provides significant latitude to the owner of Blocks A and B, Plan 8410463 to develop a proposal that could vary from the development scenario favored in the report, final land use bylaw districts should not be applied to Blocks A and B. The following amendments are recommended upon final adoption of this report by Council.

1. Amendment of Figure 4.1 of the General Municipal Plan designating developable lands in the study area for commercial uses.

2. Amendment of Section 8.3.1 (Land Use Map) of the land use bylaw to
 - (a) designate the railway right of way as Restricted Development District (RD)
 - (b) with the exception of Blocks A and B, and Lots 9-11, Block 14 Plan 1650E, designate all developable land as Direct Control District (DC).

Upon finalization of a comprehensive development plan for Blocks A and B, an appropriate land use district can be applied to Blocks A and B.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The intent of this report is to provide developers with a relatively specific framework for development of lands in the study area. At the same time, it is flexible enough to allow a variety of land uses and invites developers to prepare a detailed plan in regard to architecture, landscaping and other design elements.

APPENDIX A

SECTION 29.0.0

**POLICY REVIEW DISTRICT (PR)
LAND USE RULES**

(29-92)

29.1.0

PURPOSE AND INTENT

29.1.1

The purpose and intent of this District is to protect land from premature incompatible development and subdivision until such time as Council determines the specific land use or uses that may occur within the area, taking into account such matters as growth, road requirements, serviceability and future development land requirements of the Municipality. Ultimate land uses and land use regulations will be determined through a Concept Plan adopted by Council with input from landowners and the public.

29.2.0

**LIST OF PERMITTED AND
DISCRETIONARY USES**

29.2.1

Permitted Uses

Public Parks

29.2.2

Discretionary Uses

Existing uses and buildings may be allowed to have limited expansions or additions.

29.3.0

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

29.3.1

- (a) All sites abutting a residential district shall be screened from the view of the residential district to the satisfaction of the Development Officer or Municipal Planning Commission.
 - (b) All storage of materials, products, or equipment shall be screened to the satisfaction of the Development Officer or Municipal Planning Commission.
-

APPENDIX B
SUMMARY OF DEVELOPABLE LANDS

Lot	Block	Plan	Size (M ²)	Frontage (M ²)	Depth (M ²)	Reserve Required
2		9310993	5010	72	± 30	
Pt B		8410463	6380	277	± 30	X
Pt A		8410463	12600	386	± 30	X
1		7811611	607	14.87	± 55	
2		7811611	728	15.1	± 50	
3		7811611	688	15.9	± 45	
4		7811611	870	23	± 33	
1-8 (plus lane)	14	1650E	2267	61	varies	
9-11	14	1650E	784	22.86	varies	
Pt	15	1650E	6650		varies	
Pt M		1227J				
Pt Rail R of W		8410463	2600	105	varies	

APPENDIX C

POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENT SCENARIOS

Several general land use development options that appear viable for the study area were reviewed during the preparation of this report. These are described below. Many of the issues identified in Section 2.10 apply to any land use option that may occur and will have to be fully addressed prior to development of these lands.

1. Pedestrian Oriented Commercial/Residential Mixed Use Area

This option would involved development of a specialized commercial area with potential for residential uses on upper floors. This strategy should probably include a tourist emphasis. Suggested uses are listed below:

- eating or drinking establishments
- bed and breakfast accommodations
- boutique retail stores
- business support services
- dwelling accommodations
- household service shops
- offices
- personal service shops
- tea houses

The anticipated strategy is to encourage traditional downtown commercial buildings in the west part of the study area and buildings with a residential character in the east part of the study area. It may be necessary to mandate a residential component in all or parts of the study area to retain the residential character of the area. This approach is similar to that which has been taken in Eau Claire in the City of Calgary albeit at a small scale.

Advantages

- specialized commercial uses mixed with residential uses are probably the highest and best use for lands in close proximity to the Sheep River since these uses can best capitalize on the views and amenities offered by the river and associated open space.
-

- commercial development would justify installation of a high standard of municipal services.
- this type of commercial and residential development is feasible on shallow lots typical of the area.
- this type of commercial and residential development is compatible with the existing road system.
- this type of development is compatible with and complementary to that in the downtown core, adjacent residential uses, and anticipated future development to the north of the study area in the transitional commercial and central business expansion areas.
- specialized commercial uses, particularly those catering to tourists, generally have more interesting facades than standard commercial and industrial development and use higher quality building materials. Commercial use could therefore provide a more visually appealing street scape.
- small scale commercial development, particularly with a mandated residential component, should have less impact on adjacent residential development than other possible uses in terms of truck traffic, deliveries, etc.
- commercial development should bring higher property assessment than industrial uses.

Disadvantages and Concerns

- commercial uses tend to generate higher traffic volumes than industrial uses and could therefore have an impact on Riverside Drive in particular, but also North Railway Street and Centre Avenue.
 - a higher level of flood mitigation appears to be required for commercial uses as opposed to industrial uses.
 - there will be design constraints and extra cost with residential development in close proximity to the railway.
-

2. Downtown Fringe Commercial

This option would involve incremental development of auto oriented commercial uses that require a central location, but are not feasible in the core because of large land requirements and possible conflict with pedestrian oriented retail uses. Some pedestrian oriented uses would be considered in the extreme west part of the study area abutting the CBD. Suggested uses are listed blow:

- business support services
- gaming establishments (Bingo)
- garden centre
- household service shops
- veterinarian clinic
- commercial schools
- car washing establishments
- recreational vehicle dealerships
- automobile dealerships
- agricultural related businesses
- retail store - warehouses

The anticipated strategy would be to develop sites near Lineham Avenue and Centre Avenue first. Once a commercial presence is established in this area, the remaining lands would be developed.

Advantages

- commercial development would justify installation of a relatively high standard of municipal services
 - commercial development is compatible with and complementary to that in the downtown core and anticipated future development to the north of the study area in the transitional commercial and central business expansion areas.
 - commercial buildings generally have more interesting facades than industrial development and use higher quality building materials. Commercial use could therefore provide a more visually appealing street scape.
-

- commercial development should have less impact on adjacent residential development than industrial uses.
- commercial development should bring higher property assessment than industrial uses.

Disadvantages and Concerns

- commercial uses tend to generate higher traffic volumes than industrial uses and could therefore have an impact on Riverside Drive in particular, but also North Railway Street and Centre Avenue.
 - commercial development may create more pressure to redevelop the Oak Avenue residential pocket than specialized commercial or industrial development.
 - it may be difficult to attract commercial uses to the area because of low traffic volumes and the isolated nature of the area when compared to for example South Ridge Drive.
 - a higher level of flood mitigation appears to be required for commercial uses as opposed to industrial uses.
-

3. Light Industrial

This option would involve development of industrial uses that carry out their operations such that no nuisance is created or apparent outside an enclosed building or enclosed area. Suggested uses are listed below:

- business support services
- auction rooms
- industrial service shops
- small manufacturing plants
- household service shops
- auto body and paint shops
- warehousing
- recycling depot
- storage yards including self storage facilities

Advantages

- industrial development tends to generate lower traffic volumes than commercial uses and therefore have less impact on adjacent municipal roads.
- it should be less difficult to attract industrial uses as opposed to commercial uses to this relatively isolated area.

Disadvantages

- impacts on adjacent uses are usually higher with industrial uses and it may be difficult to ensure these impacts are minimized in the long term.
 - industrial buildings may not be as aesthetically pleasing as commercial buildings and would in all probability include higher amounts of outside storage.
 - industrial development may further isolate the Oak Avenue residential area.
-

4. Single Comprehensive Planned Development

This option would involve development of a single industrial and/or commercial complex. This option is viable because the majority of the land is owned by one party and the Town is also a significant land owner in the vicinity of the study area.

Advantages

- it should be easier to address aesthetic and site design consideration for the purpose of minimizing impacts on adjacent uses.
- there may be opportunity to shift the more intense portions of the development away from adjacent residential uses.
- it should be easier to achieve a development that is compatible with the built form of the area.
- property assessment values would probably be the highest of all alternatives.

Disadvantages and Concerns

- it may be difficult to find a single developer to initiate a significant project such as this although a single complex could be developed in several stages.
-

APPENDIX D

**Proposed Land - Use Scenario
For South Railway Street
Town of Okotoks**

August 1995

Prepared By
POON McKENZIE ARCHITECTS

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6. CONCLUSION

SOUTH RAILWAY STREET, OKOTOKS, ALBERTA

Land Use Scenario

Our File: 95.62 (2.5)

August 18, 1995

The Town of Okotoks is a unique blend of Alberta's historical past and its thriving future. The Town's historical roots are best displayed in the elegant 1800's architecture prevalent along Elma Street. This street embodies the expression and identity of early Okotoks.

The surrounding new developments, both residential and commercial, are indicative of the prosperity and vitality of new growth in Okotoks.

The focus of this sturdy, South Railway Street, has the potential to develop into an area that affirms the historic charm of early Okotoks, and the exciting energy of present day Okotoks.

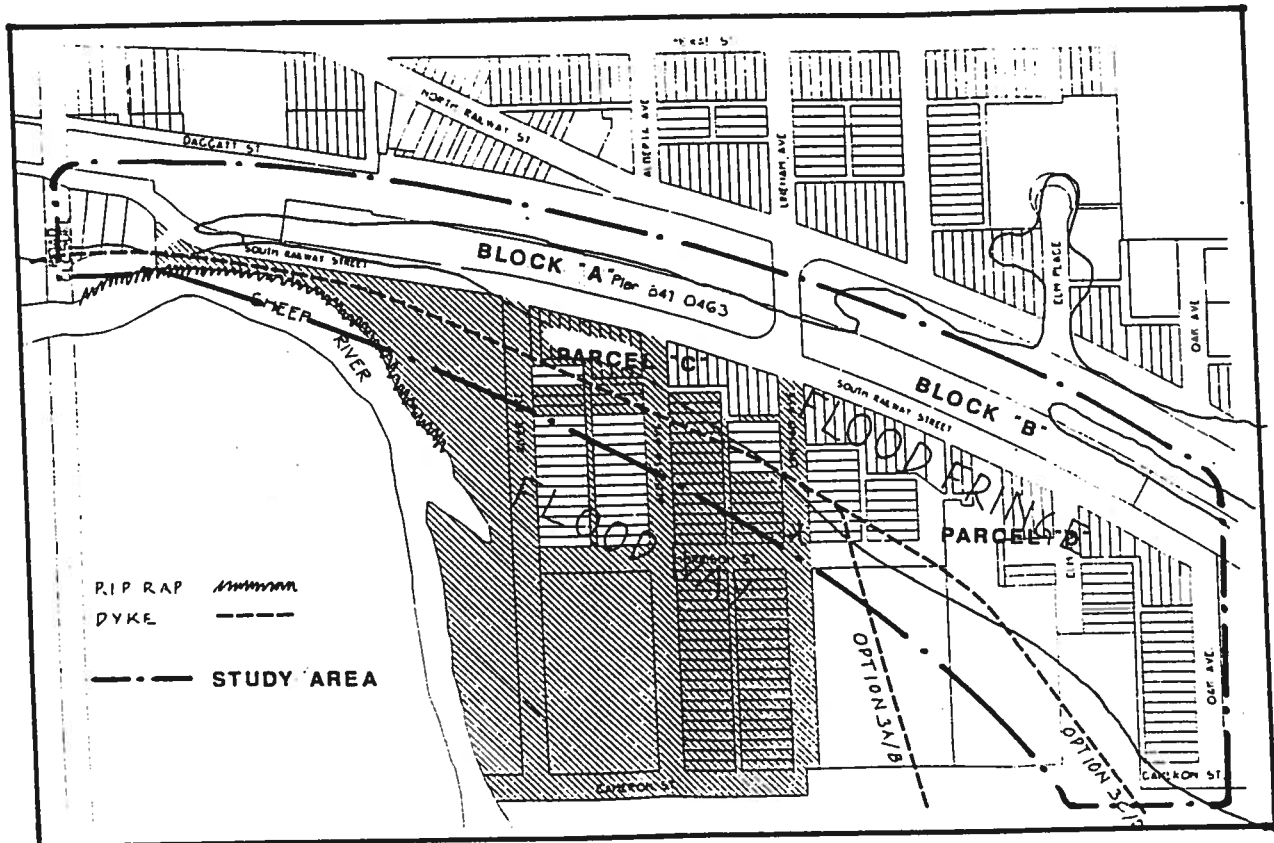
The following Land Use Scenario is an effort to stimulate ideas and dialogue, of how development along South Railway Street could play a pivotal role in the future "identity" of the Town of Okotoks.

The Site

The area in question, is all the land on the north and south sides of South Railway Street. The study area is roughly bounded by Centre Avenue to the west, the railroad tracks to the north, the Sheep River floodway to the west and south, and Oak Avenue to the east.

The two main physical factors that help to characterize this site, are the railroad tracks to the north and the Sheep River to the south.

There are four distinctive development parcels that become apparent upon analysis of this study area. (Refer to map)



The following is point summary of the physical characteristics and adjacencies of the four parcels:

1. Block "A":
 - close to Rotary Park and Town Library
 - narrow site, bounded by railroad tracks to north
 - west end overlooks Sheep River
 - close proximity to central business district and commercial developments on Riverside Drive.
2. Block "B":
 - narrow site, railroad tracks to north
 - parallels North Railway Street commercial area.
 - faces existing low-density residential across South Railway Street
 - located east of Lineham Avenue, less vehicular traffic at this end of South Railway

3. Parcel "C":

- adjacent to Rotary Park development, Sheep River access, and Town Library
- Sheep River immediately adjacent to the west
- Floodway borders this area, to the south
- adjacent existing low-density residential to east

4. Parcel "D":

- existing low-density residential development
- floodway borders this area, to the south
- east of Lineham Avenue, more remote area of South Railway
- "deepest" of four development parcels (in north - south direction)

An analysis of the area descriptions, and immediate adjacencies, suggests a possible Land Use scenario for this area that takes advantage of the positive aspects of the site, and attempts to mitigate the negatives.

The following is a possible Land Use scenario for the study area:

1. Block "A":

The proximity of this area to the Centre Avenue and the central business district, makes it ideal as a downtown fringe mixed use area or "transitional commercial" district" (TC), as per the Okotoks Land Use By- Law.

A mixed use commercial/residential zone is functionally compatible with the higher traffic areas of the CBD, and the close proximity to the north bordering railroad tracks.

2. Block "B":

This area has similar physical properties to the adjoining parcel "Block A". However, its location east of Lineham Avenue should generate less vehicular traffic at this end of South Railway.

The uses in this area should be similar in character to the "heritage mixed use district" (H-MU). Thereby, mandating a predominantly residential component, with an allowance for certain specialized commercial uses.

3. Parcel "C":

This area is envisioned, because of its proximity to the Rotary Park, as a higher density residential zone, or "residential medium-density multi-unit district" (R-3), as per the Okotoks Land Use By-law.

This parcel would be an ideal complement to both the recreational activity of the adjoining Rotary Park and the proposed commercial/residential mixed use proposed for "Block A".

The narrow area between Centre Avenue and River Avenue, should be established as an restricted development district" (RD), to create a riverside promenade, and maintain access to the Sheep River Park system.

4. Parcel "D":

This area already has established patterns of low-density single family residential, which should be maintained.

The larger, relatively secluded, nature of this development area lends itself to either a "residential planned lot district" (R-1A) or "residential small lot district" (R-1X), from the Okotoks Land Use By-law.

Both of these uses would slightly increase the density of this parcel, making servicing and infra structure upgrades in this area, more viable.

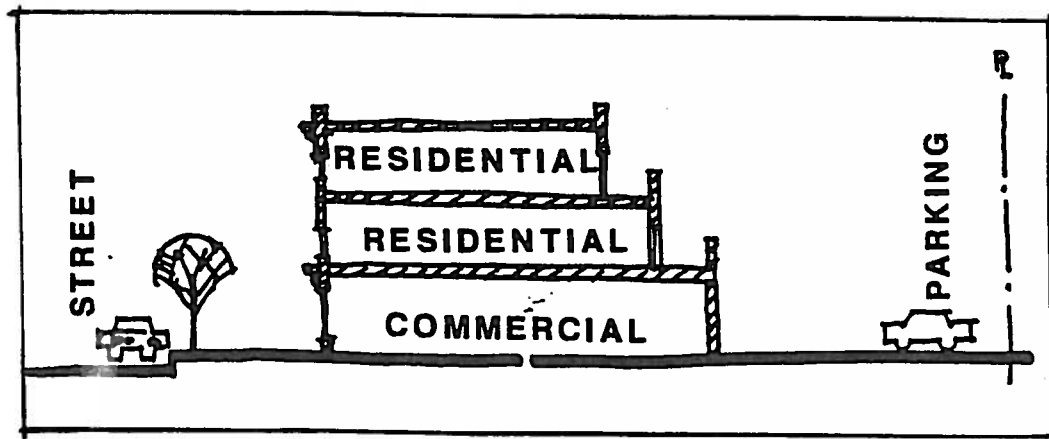
The Form of Development

The physical form that this development should take, is the result of reconciling the physical properties of the respective sites, the functional considerations of the different uses, and the "heritage", historic charm of existing town development.

1. Objective:
Block "A" - Residential/Commercial Development
Implementation:

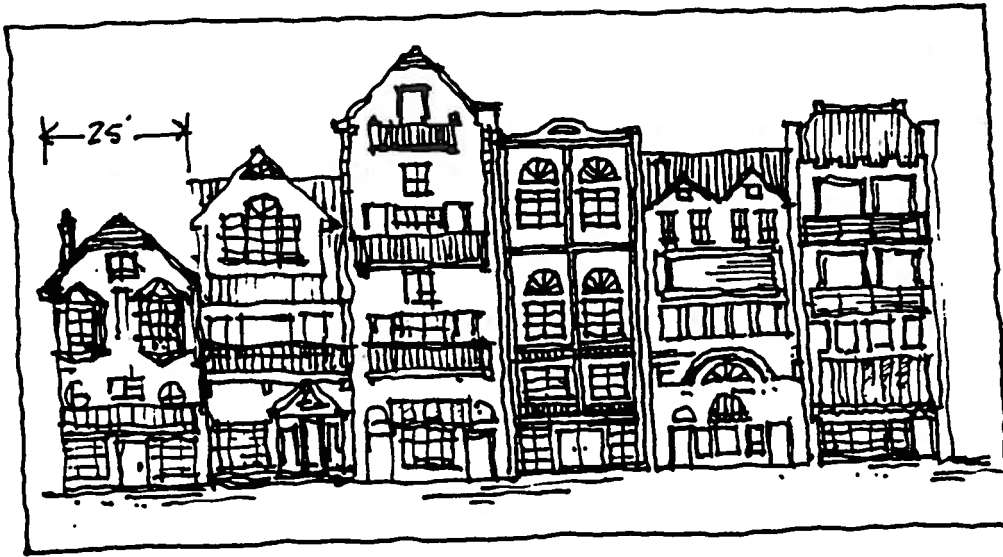
Use

- reinforce small scale and variety
- create diversity, develop an order without monotony
- encourage a mix of uses which enhance both daytime and night-time activity, but do not negatively affect proposed residential development
- all development should have a commercial component at grade
- upper floors of all developments in this area should have a residential and/or working studio component, either accessible directly off the street or by the rear parking lane.



Building Form

- building form determines the character of a shopping area or street
- the main factor in determining a "village" environment is scale
- "village" environments are characterized by small humanly scaled development
- create a shopping street, that in terms of building massing is comfortable to the pedestrian
- development should maintain a pattern of small lot development (25'-0")
- if larger developments occur they should be designed to look like a series of smaller buildings.



Window Types

- long horizontal strip windows, at upper floors, are not in keeping with the traditional "small town" character
- windows that are separate and distinct are more consistent with a traditional "feel"
- continuous, large display windows at the ground floor of each building is encouraged, to create visual interest for pedestrians, and more attractive for retail tenants



Roofs and Cornice Lines

- to reinforce the small scale village character, encourage commercial buildings with sloped roofs, or varied cornice lines

- the use of dormers in sloped roofs reduces the apparent height of buildings
- awnings or projecting arcades further help to reconcile building scale with the pedestrian environment



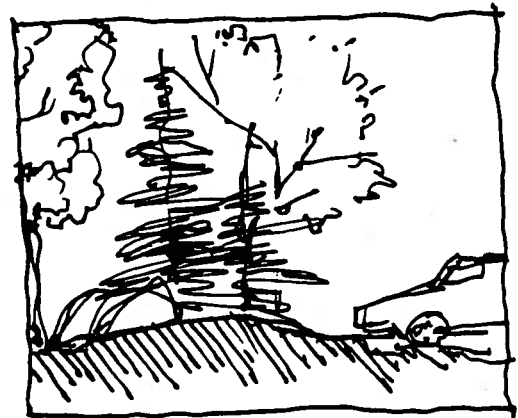
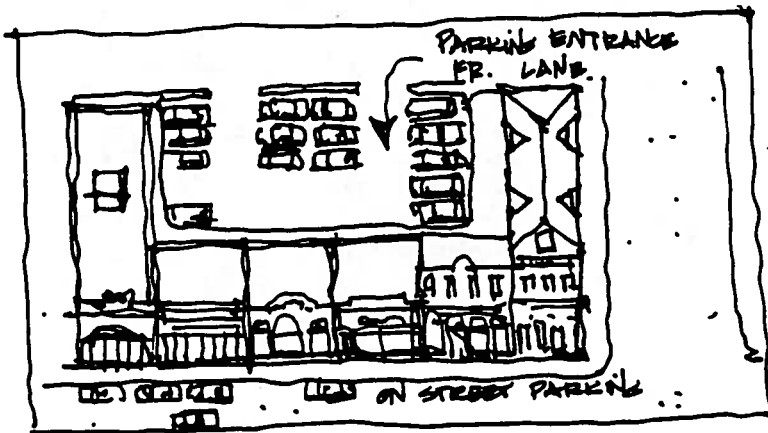
Materials

- suggested building materials are traditional materials such as:
 - brick
 - stone
 - sand finish stucco
 - lap siding
 - or equivalents of the above
- types of materials and material colors should be consistent with adjoining developments
- mixing of two or more types of material should be encouraged

Parking

- on street parking acts as a buffer for pedestrians and provides short term parking that shoppers appreciate
- curb parking should be limited to the north side of South Railway Street, adjacent to the shopping area
- provision for additional commercial and residential parking can be accommodated at the rear of the developments
- rear lane parking could be accessed at various intervals by the creation of mid-block parks
- rear lane parking areas will also act as a buffer for properties that back onto the railroad tracks

- parking areas at the rear of the buildings will provide a level of separation from the railroad tracks for the residential units
- parking areas at rear of buildings should be planned and landscaped so as to maximize this buffer zone from the railroad track, berms and heavy planting (such as coniferous trees), should alleviate some sound problems
- sound impact studies should be carried out, and recommendations of these should be incorporated into the redevelopment of this parcel



2. Objective:
Block "B" - Lower Density Residential/Commercial Development
Implementation:

Use

- reinforce the residential character of this area of the development
- setbacks should be farther from the street (15' feet), to accommodate "front yards" or patios
- individual businesses should be housed in separate "buildings" with small sideyards and backyards, for use as outdoor display spaces or eating areas
- development use should encourage work at home service and retail type businesses

Building Form

- building form in this area will determine the more low-key, residential character of this end of South Railway
- exclusive use of sloped roof forms in this area is encouraged to maintain a residential feel
- development lot parcels of up to a maximum of 50 feet in width should be allowed
- the possibility should also exist to group more than one business use in one building
- building height should not exceed 2-storays, but may include a loft within a sloped roof
- any development of more than 25 feet should have facade articulations, such as gables, porches, turrets etc.

- Front facing entrances, porches, and verandas should also be encouraged

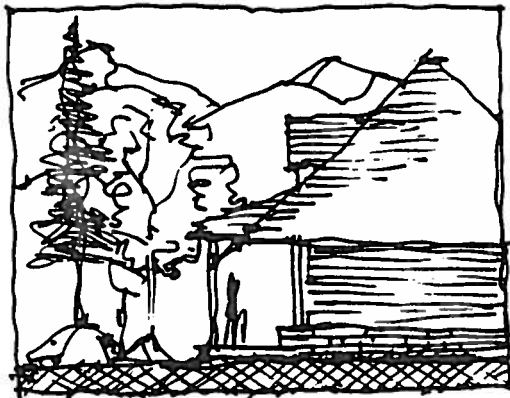


Window Types

- windows of a small scale, that are consistent with a traditional residential style
- strip windows of any kind should be discouraged
- bay windows, french doors, and leaded glass can also add traditional touches to a building

Roofs

- sloped roofs are to be encouraged in this block
- low slopes (less than 4:12) or shed roofs when used as the predominant roof form, are not in keeping with the traditional character envisioned for this area
- the use of dormers, turrets, or gables to articulate roof forms should be encouraged

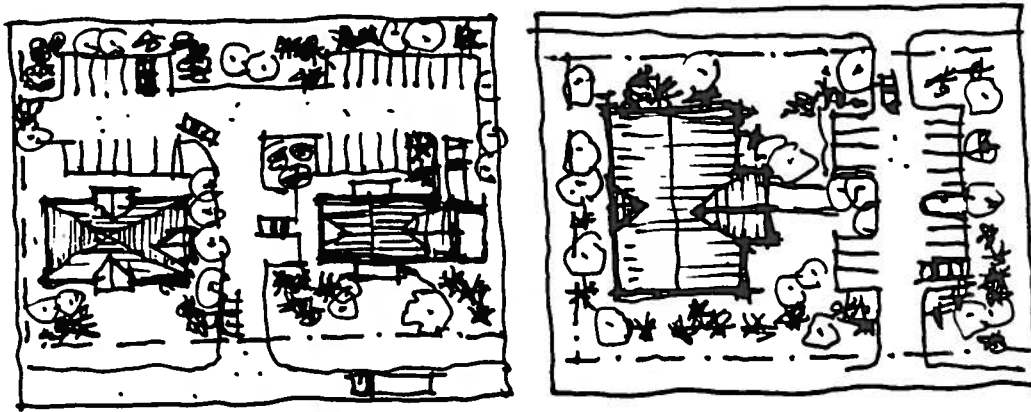


Materials

- traditional residential materials should be encouraged
 - narrow lap siding
 - brick
 - wood wall shingles
 - brushed stucco

Parking

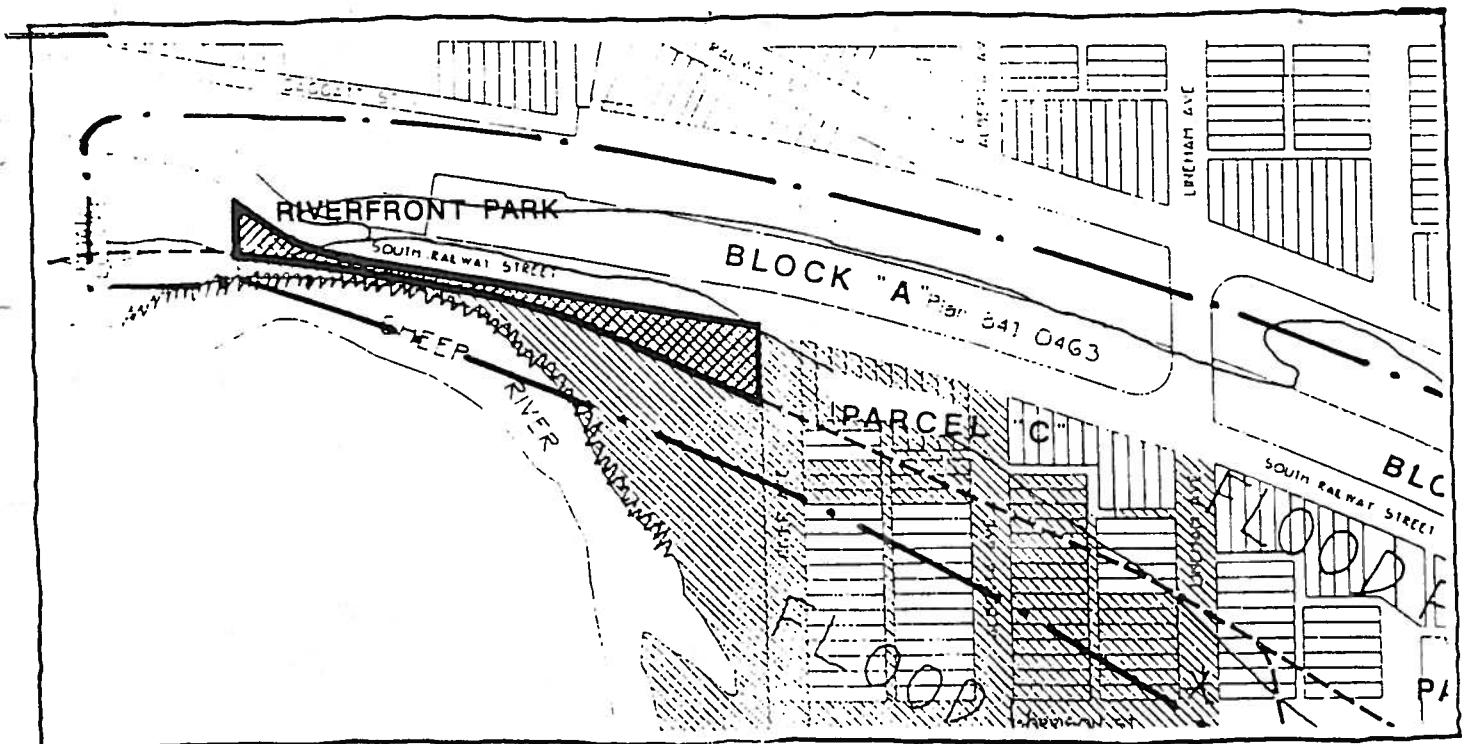
- on street parallel or diagonal parking is acceptable
- curb parking should be provided at the rear of the development sites, in a similar manner to block "A", as a buffer to the railroad tracks. (See sketch?)



3. Objective:
Parcel "C" - Medium Density Residential
Implementation:

Use

- this parcel is divided into three areas, the parcel west of River Avenue which should continue the Centre Avenue Plaza development and be designated as a river front park promenade. (See plan)
- in addition at the western - most edge of parcel "C" are four privately owned lots, immediately adjacent to the centre avenue plaza. This parcel would be ideal as a west-end anchor for this parcel with a commercial development, such as a restaurant
- the second area, east of River Avenue would be best suited for medium density residential development
- the medium density development should orient itself such that there is minimal negative impact on the commercial/residential proposed to the north, as relates to sun angles, and massing
- any developments to occur in this area should be designed in a manner compatible with the proposed adjoining commercial and residential
- the traditional, "village", character of this area is particularly important to integrate in this type of development
 - articulated facades, ground oriented main entries, sloped roofs
- there should be no commercial component in this area of development



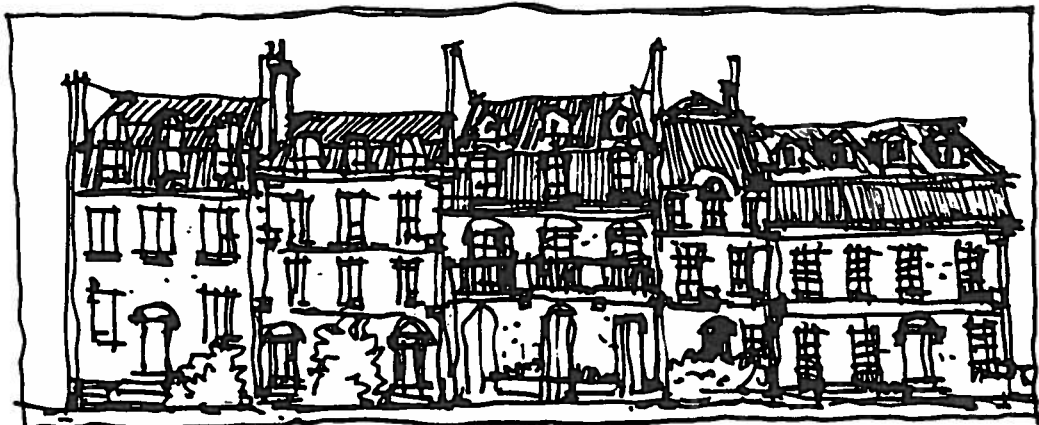
Building Form

- scale and perceived scale are very important in how larger sized developments impact on a development area of this nature
- encourage incorporation of traditional details and forms in new building design
- developments which step down in scale at the South Railway Street side should be encouraged
- as in the adjacent commercial development, these larger scale buildings should be articulated by changes along the facade in materials, cornice lines, window types, and variations in building line



Window Types

- windows of a small scale, that are separate, and consistent with a traditional residential character
- french doors, balconies, and bay windows can give scale to the building elevations



Roofs and Cornice Lines

- in keeping with the residential nature of this area of the development, the pre-dominant roof form should be sloped
- roof slopes of 8:12 or more should be encouraged
- the use of domers in sloping roofs reduces the apparent storey-height of the building
- sloped roofs can enhance the small scale nature of a street

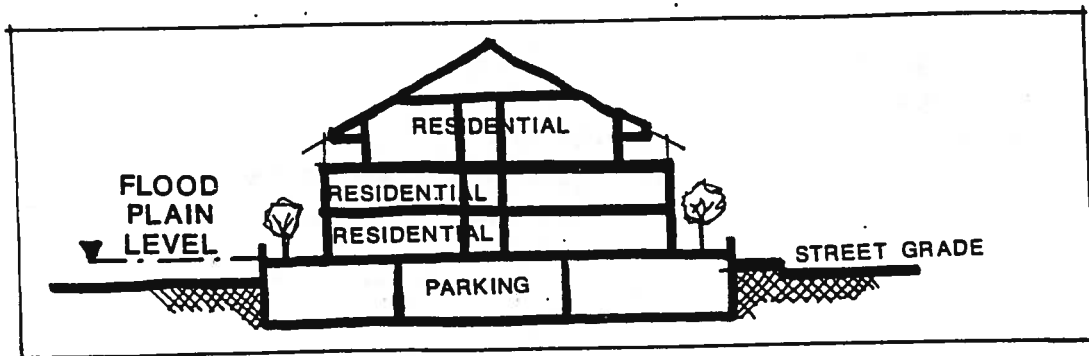


Materials

- suggested building materials are:
 - brick
 - stone
 - sand finish stucco
 - narrow lapsiding
 - or equivalent of the above

Parking

- curb side parking should be discouraged on this side of South Railway
- residential parking should be limited to parcels behind buildings or below/partially below grade structured parking
- the notion of partially below grade parking should be encouraged for this parcel
- the benefits of this type of parking are numerous:
 - it would raise the main floor level above the flood plane (See sketch)
 - the landscaped decks afforded by these types of developments would create a buffer between the commercial traffic/activity, and provide a private secure area for residents to enjoy
 - not the least of these benefits, is the fact that all vehicular parking would be out of sight



4. Objective:
Parcel "D" - Low Density Residential
Implementation:

Use

- uses in this area should be limited to the existing pattern of low density residential
- existing structures in good repair should be conserved
- while structures in poor repair should be rehabilitated or replaced
- it is proposed that a revised subdivision of existing properties be undertaken to slightly increase density
- new development or redevelopment should be designed so as to be unintrusive and blend into existing development
- new development should also be designed and detailed to enhance the "historic village" feel
- minimum front and side yard requirements should be adopted as per the Okotoks Land Use By-law
- to maintain the charming, pedestrian oriented nature of the existing development, it is suggested to design roadways with no sidewalks or curbs
- included in the subdivision design should be rear lanes to eliminate the need for front drive garages, which should be discouraged
- this parcel of the site is densely vegetated, every attempt should be made in any new development to maintain existing vegetation



Building Form

- the theme of the "village" environment should be continued in the residential development
- sloped roofs are to be encouraged in this area of the development
- detailing of new buildings should be in keeping with the style and character of older established building types in the town
- the principle entry to every dwelling should be visible from the street
- entry porches and verandas should be encouraged
- wide trims, brackets, and ornamental detailing should be encouraged (Sketch)



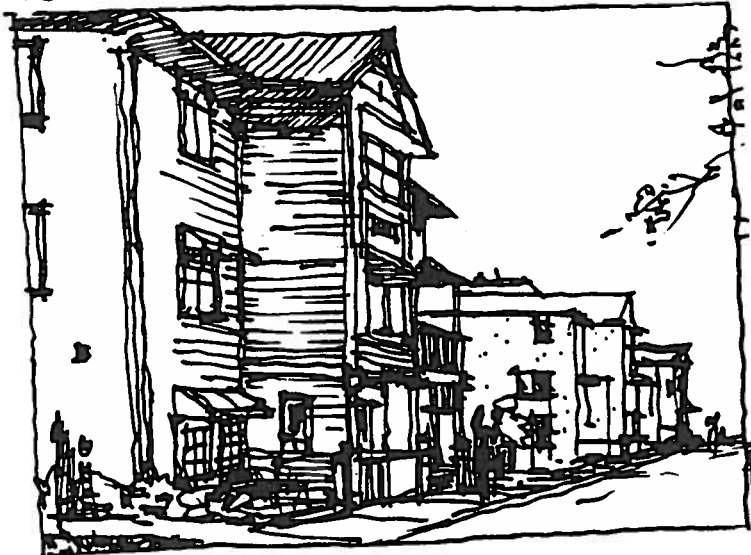
Window Types

- window types should be of a small scale, and consistent with a traditional residential character
- bay windows, french doors (instead of sliding patio doors) can enhance the character and traditional feel of a building
- wherever possible the use of windows with multiple panes should be encouraged
- the use of wide expanses of continuous glazing should be avoided



Roofs and Cornice Lines

- shallow slope roofs (less than 8:12) should be avoided
- use of secondary roofs to highlight architectural elements, such as porches, front entries, and bay windows should be encouraged
- corner lots should have roof forms that acknowledge and enhance the street on both sides.
- use of dormers, gables, and turrets to articulate larger roof forms is encouraged



Materials

- suggested building materials should be consistent with the historical or traditional character of this development
- wherever possible natural materials such as wood siding, instead of synthetic materials, (such as vinyl or aluminum siding) should be encouraged
- other traditional materials such as brick, stucco, or wood shakes should be used
- combinations of several material types on one building are encouraged

Parking

- on street parking should be discouraged
- front access driveways should be avoided
- small, graveled, parking areas, at rear lane, should be encouraged for visitor parking, and multi-car families
- rear parking areas should be screened with wood fences and landscaping

Conclusion

This area study for South Railway Street, is an attempt to stimulate discussion, and reflection, about the opportunities presented by development in this area.

This study has not attempted to be prescriptive about the nature of future development on this site, but rather descriptive about the possibilities of this site.

The opportunity and potential of this site are inherent in its location, adjacent to the CBD, the Rotary Park Plaza, and the Sheep River.

Additionally, because this study area is essentially undeveloped, the opportunity is here to establish a careful and considerate planning strategy, that maximizes the potential of this site.

Finally it is hoped, that the ideas presented in this study establish a starting point, and a direction in implementation and adoption of specific guidelines, by the Town of Okotoks, to steer the course of development in the South Railway Street area.



