

The following is a summary of the Major Issues, Trends and a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) identified by the RM Council on February 21, 2008.

### **Major Concerns And Issues**

- there is pressure in every Division for both isolated non-farm residential (NFR) development (includes NFR proposals on the first lot out of the Quarter & on existing, full Quarters) and also higher density NFR clusters. The “creeping” intensity of both types at certain locations can reduce road lifespans in areas where traffic volumes aren’t yet an issue. It may also require Council to re-examine the Road Classes and Standards as part of their usual Capital Works planning process.
- many new sites don’t have good quality potable water.
- Council may need to specify mandatory location criteria for all NFR sites (e.g. must be on an existing “good quality” road (as defined in OCP & ZB) or the applicant must pay all costs of required road upgrades, dust control as determined by Council, instead of limiting such subdivisions to poor quality Ag. land as defined by the Canada Land Inventory (CLI). This shouldn’t mean that any new location criteria for NFR uses will threaten/increase land use conflict with non-ILO livestock operations
- for truck traffic, both weight & volume are issues, including use of RM roads as shortcuts between Highways (e.g. Exit A is used to bypass Regina between Nos. 11 & 1). Traffic increases related to urban lagoons & landfills (esp. in the case of Regina Beach) also deteriorates RM roads, without much chance of cost recovery for upgrades. Also, grain hauling to Terminals at Balgonie & Southey is more difficult & costly, since there aren’t direct routes available.
- increased need for Provincial ILO regulation to avoid nuisance & odour complaints, since these issues are not regulated by the Province.
- all new residential, commercial & industrial development must pay for all required services.
- increased potential for land use conflict between agriculture and new NFR uses.
- expected annexation proposals from Regina beach may not be in the RM’s best interests.
- increased non-farm uses of all types leads to costly private & municipal costs for noxious weed control (esp. leafy spurge, scentless camomile & baby’s breath).

### **Trends**

- downloading of responsibilities and over-regulation by senior governments is still continuing.
- the population of nearby Urbans and the RM is getting increasingly younger.
- higher truck volume & heavier weights on rural roads, haul period is now year-round, greater demand for dust control from residents.
- higher volume traffic also means the traditional sub-base construction and width of most RM roads is inadequate & road lifespan is shorter due to changing traffic patterns.
- greater employment diversification on farms (both home occupations & off-farm jobs).
- fewer but larger farms.
- more agricultural land rental - absentee land owners.
- there is an unprecedented spike in demand for new NFR subdivisions of all types.
- increasing level of urban/rural co-operation with area Towns, (fire protection, recreation, health etc.).

The following SWOT analysis will be used to refine and update the RM’s land use and development policies in the new Official Community Plan. The analysis will also be useful in building the basic rationale for the planning tools and regulations in the new Zoning Bylaw.

### **Strengths**

- proximity to Regina (education, health services, labour force) means more commuters & off-farm jobs.
- 4 highways (including Nos. 20 & 54, which handle mostly recreational and commuter traffic) in the RM
- high assessment due both to having prime agricultural land & a lot of residential development.

- the scenic views & peaceful atmosphere of the Qu'Appelle & Long Lake are high-value assets.
- diversified assessment is also due to the varied landforms (valleyland attracts residential & cattle grazing activities, tableland is good for grain).
- Wascana Trails, 3 golf courses, the TransCanada Trail, the Big Valley site & a Church Camp all add to the seasonal outdoor attractions in the RM.
- west side of RM is close to the Buffalo Pound water pipeline.
- membership in SARM (it's role as a strong lobby group) is valuable to RM.
- RM residents have a good record of volunteerism.
- the RM has a more balanced demographic range than most rural areas (i.e. with older populations).

### **Weaknesses**

- high commuter and truck traffic means local roads must be widened or rebuilt more frequently now.
- slope and soil problems in the Qu'Appelle Valley make it costly to install services and roads.
- potential for increased weed problems as more land is taken out of agriculture.
- the poor condition of Old Hwy. 11, the location of ASL pits in the northeast area & indirect grain-haul routes increases traffic on RM roads.
- RM has only a 10-15 year supply of gravel left, so trucking & road costs will only get higher.
- there is only poor-quality potable groundwater available in many areas.
- competition between multiple land uses drives up land prices throughout the RM.

### **Opportunities**

- recent election promises by the new Provincial Government may help fund RM's infrastructure projects.
- proximity to Regina may offer a chance to attract further commercial & industrial uses (e.g. land along Hwy. 11 requiring only low, or minimal services for specific uses).
- opportunities exist to redefine what land is "suitable" for residential development.
- the existing OCP has restrictive Policies for environmental protection, endangered species, agric. land quality, all of which should be revisited.
- potential exists for good co-operation with other RMs (e.g. on road networks to grain terminals)
- RM can also cooperate with Urbans (e.g. on rec. facilities, Bylaw enforcement, economic development, Regina's/Buena Vista's/Regina Beache's landfill impacts, water, sewage etc.)
- there may be good aquifer potential for non-potable water for industrial use (needs to be researched)

### **Threats**

- continued high farm income could mean larger farms since new technology can be more affordable & used more effectively
- higher road maintenance/more upgrades needed due to changing type/volume/routing of traffic
- demand for NFR development, more widely-dispersed ag. land rental & accommodating larger farm equipment also increases RM road costs
- demand for urban-style infrastructure can increase RM costs
- education tax at local level inhibits R.M. tax options
- increased demand by newly-arrived NFR landowners for urban services which are not required by Provincial legislation to be supplied by RMs
- decrease/shortfall in Federal & Provincial grants means higher property taxes or RM budget reductions
- downloading (e.g. higher policing costs, required "partnering" for Hwy repair, more regulations & costs tied to Grant Programs) all lead to higher RM costs