

theme overview (Land)

why is this theme important?

Globally, the population is increasing exponentially while the amount of available land on the earth remains fixed. The challenges of how and where to accommodate the growing population is being felt all over the world as communities struggle with providing housing, servicing larger centres, and securing land for valuable resources (such as food, water, energy, etc.) that can provide for the increasing demands.

By optimizing the economic, social and ecological impact of buildings and infrastructure, land is used more efficiently. Innovative development standards, such as “green” infrastructure and buildings or natural drainage systems, can result in lower impact solutions that cost municipalities, residents and businesses much less over the long term.

why is land important to emerald hills urban village?

Alberta is not confronted with the challenges of a limited land base as directly as other communities in Canada. As a result, like many communities in Alberta, sprawling, low-density development is common in Strathcona County. According to the Community Profile for Strathcona County, the majority (85%) of the housing inventory within Strathcona County is categorized as single detached dwellings. However, this type of development can not continue to be sustained by the County as the population increases dramatically.

Currently, Sherwood Park has a capacity of approximately 75,000 people. By 2026, it is estimated that the total population of Strathcona County will be over 135,000. As a result of this population growth, the Sherwood Park Urban Service Area is “projected to be fully built out 2017”. As stated in the Municipal Development Plan, this will “increase pressure on not only the rural forms of living, but also for the community to continue to provide further opportunities for urban forms of development over the next several years.”

The efficient use of land in Strathcona County is critical with continuing growth pressures and the significant portion of relatively intact forest and wetlands within the county which need conservation. The development of the Emerald Hills Urban Village presents an opportunity to be a model for efficient land use by creating a compact development, mixing uses, reducing infrastructure footprints and aiding in habitat conservation.

how can emerald hills urban village impact on this theme?

The Emerald Hills Urban Village (EHUV) site presents an opportunity for a strategic land use design which knits buildings and spaces together in an efficient, coherent, and walkable pattern. Incorporating the following goals and strategies into the EHUV site plan can help reduce the amount of land necessary for a thriving and sustainable community.

summary table of goals and strategies for land

goals	charrette process strategy
Achieve compact development.	Concentrate higher density at the centre of the Village, lowering densities toward the edges.
	Design a strong presence at the edges of the Village.
	Increase commercial density over time.
Reduce footprint of transportation infrastructure.	Keep surface parking and road widths to a minimum.
	Restrict vehicular access through the Village.
Provide a diversity of land uses.	Organize a mix of land uses around a central Village “heart”, blending and layering others into the overall greenspace network.
	Connect a range of uses with a greenway network.
	Provide strong connections to land uses adjacent to the Village.
	Layer multiple purposes into buildings and infrastructure.
	Integrate work opportunities into residential buildings, and residential opportunities into commercial buildings.
	Provide a range of residential types and tenures.

theme overview (Natural Habitat)

why is this theme important?

As development paves over natural vegetation, insects, amphibians, birds, and animals are displaced. Their ability to feed themselves, find shelter, and move throughout the landscape is greatly reduced. Preserving biodiversity and natural habitats will ensure the protection of resources including air, water, soil and vegetation; all of which function together to sustain the health of a community. Biologically diverse natural areas create stable ecological systems which in turn moderate larger systems like temperature and climate, and provide us with an enduring supply of food, clean water and air.

Connectivity between habitat areas is key to sustaining them. Trails and greenways can play a key role in enhancing the natural habitat network within the site by increasing the usability of existing open space and natural resources, connecting wildlife habitat, and enhancing opportunities for passive forms of recreation such as walking and cycling for residents.

why is natural habitat important to emerald hills urban village?

The Edmonton region lies within the “Central Prairie Parkland” subregion. Species in and around this area include foxes, coyotes, skunks and deer, birds, butterflies, dragonflies, and associated wetland species such as reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates. Much of Strathcona County lies within the boundaries of the Beaver Hills Moraine, which supports a variety of important environmental features and animal species, including important wildlife corridors.

While no species or habitat of ecological significance can currently be identified on the site, any loss of land to development fragments the overall regional ecosystem and lessens the ability of any species to survive in an urban context. For this reason, planning and design should maximize the amount of green space and should strive to incorporate high quality, connected habitat areas which support a diverse variety of native species.

Designing quality natural habitat areas also supports the desire in Strathcona County to provide parks and recreational areas for its residents. From young to old, there is a need for a diverse range and variety of parks and recreational opportunities in both urban and rural areas of the County. It is important when developing parks and recreational areas, to ensure that they complement the surrounding land uses and the environment.

how can emerald hills urban village impact on this theme?

Incorporating a variety of natural habitat restoration and conservation strategies into community building from the very beginning can create an interconnected green network that supports the long term diversity of plant and animal species. A successful long-range planning strategy involves integrating priority habitat areas and linkages to create a “spatial habitat network” that informs land use configurations.

Emerald Hills Urban Village has an opportunity to create a natural habitat design that can act as a model for future developments in the region.

summary table of goals and strategies for natural habitat

goals	charrette process strategy
Create multi-functional green spaces with significant ecological value.	Layer and blend a palette of native vegetation throughout the Village.
Maintain connectivity between, and access to, natural habitat areas and greenspace.	Provide green corridors that link habitat areas and greenspace within and beyond the Village.

theme overview (Water)

why is this theme important?

Water can be considered from three perspectives: as a natural system, as a human need, and as infrastructure.

Even within Canada where water is seemingly plentiful, the potential supply of water is certainly finite. As more water is withdrawn from the ground for consumption, less water becomes available to recharge the wells, irrigation ditches, and the sensitive ecosystems of creeks, rivers, and wetlands.

Canadians in major urban city centres are among the largest water consumers in the world and although the country has a plentiful supply, these supplies are feeling the stresses of population growth, an increased standard of living, urbanization, and the uncertain impacts of climate change. These major stress factors will likely increase water demands and decrease available water supplies in the future. Climate change impact studies, for example, suggest that the trends of earlier snowmelt runoffs, lower precipitation with warmer, wetter winters and longer, hotter and drier summers will soon become the norm.

Water supply and quality is impacted by conventional engineering systems which contain and pipe water underground, and release it into treatment facilities and larger waterbodies. Creative, contextual designs combined with financial incentives can assist in developing low-impact designs for water infrastructure that balance the natural hydrological cycle, minimizing long term costs and sustaining this resource.

why is water important to emerald hills urban village?

Strathcona County is located within the Beaver Hills sub-watershed, which is part of the much larger North Saskatchewan Watershed. The community purchases its water from Epcor, which withdraws it from the North Saskatchewan River. Recent water data suggests that the supply from the North Saskatchewan may be diminishing in supply. For example, the natural volume of water in the North Saskatchewan River at Edmonton during the 2006 summer was the 12th lowest level on record.

From a municipal standpoint, designing and planning for water conservation makes financial sense. By reducing water demand and wastewater generation, it is possible for municipalities to defer expensive capital investment projects for water supply and wastewater treatment infrastructure.

Strathcona County has committed to being part of Alberta's Water for Life Strategy. The Water for Life Strategy has outlined strategies committed to protecting the quality and quantity of Alberta's water resources including the maintenance of a safe, secure drinking water supply, a healthy aquatic ecosystem, and a reliable quality water supply for a sustainable economy.

how can emerald hills urban village impact on this theme?

The Emerald Hills Urban Village has an opportunity to be a leader in water resource management through the incorporation of stormwater strategies that improve infiltration rates with water efficient technologies and a soft path approach to water management.

summary table of goals and strategies for water

goals	charrette process strategy
Maintain health of aquatic ecosystem.	Infiltrate stormwater runoff within or adjacent to the Village. Use natural habitat and landscape to intercept, absorb and restore quality of stormwater runoff.
Reduce the demand for potable water resources.	Design in conformance with standardized green building rating protocols.
Minimize lifecycle costs of water infrastructure.	Use wastewater as a resource.

theme overview (Carbon)

why is this theme important?

Increased levels of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere from burning fossil fuels have been linked to climate change and global warming. As a result, global temperatures are predicted to rise to unprecedented and unsustainable ranges over the next century. The impacts of this climate change are wide and varied.

Heating, cooling, lighting and other power demands of our buildings all represent significant sources of carbon dioxide emissions. This is in part related to the amount of energy being consumed, and in part to the source from which energy is derived. Thus, any sustainable urban neighbourhood must consider where energy is coming from, and how much energy from fossil fuels is being used.

why is carbon important to emerald hills urban village?

Alberta has the highest greenhouse gas emissions of all of the provinces, and it is expected that emissions will rise by as much as 50% by 2050. Carbon dioxide emissions from human actions have been linked to rising global temperatures. Global climate change will affect different areas in different ways. For Alberta, the most likely

climate change scenario as estimated by Climate Change Central is increased occurrences of drought. Drier conditions will be detrimental to food production, lead to an increase in forest fires, and an increase in air-borne particulate matter. The health implications of drought episodes will be an increase in respiratory disorders, as well as mental distress in the farming community.

Alberta's energy is predominately derived from natural gas and petroleum, with lesser amounts coming from hydro, biomass, and coal. Of all the energy consumed in Alberta, the commercial and residential sectors accounts for.

how can emerald hills urban village impact on this theme?

There are two basic methods to reduce the carbon footprint associated with the development: reduce energy consumption through demand side management practices, and source new supplies of energy based on non-fossil fuel sources through supply side management practices. The Strathcona County Municipal Development Plan outlines several policies that explicitly deal with these methods.

summary table of goals and strategies for carbon

goals	charrette process strategy
Design urban form to optimize energy efficiency of buildings and infrastructure.	<p>Orient buildings and infrastructure to facilitate solar, daylighting, and natural ventilation design.</p> <p>Design building massing to minimize energy demand.</p> <p>Utilize landscaping techniques that reduce energy demand in buildings and manage heat island effect.</p>
Incorporate renewable energy sources and a community energy system.	Design buildings, site and community energy system (ces) to permit addition of renewable energy technologies in the future.
Ensure the use of green building practices for envelope and mechanical design.	Design in conformance with standardized green building rating protocols.

theme overview (Transport)

why is this theme important?

Continuous automobile use creates pollution, promotes obesity, deteriorates the safety and quality of streetscapes, and fragments the community. Land use characteristics can significantly influence the travel patterns of a community and can moderate the use of automobiles. Neighbourhoods with medium- to high-densities, mixed land uses, interconnected street networks, a strong local employment base, and viable connections to transit can minimize automobile use and encourage walking, bicycling, and using public transit. Communities that are designed to encourage these alternative forms of transportation can significantly reduce average household greenhouse gas emissions and can dramatically improve physical activity and public health levels. A large body of research has shown that by locating activities close together, automobile dependence is reduced and alternative forms of transportation are encouraged. One study, for example, found that doubling urban density in North American cities can result in a 25% to 30% reduction in vehicle kilometres travelled (VKT)¹.

Likewise, studies have also shown that if retail shops are within 90m (300 feet) from residential units, people are more likely to commute by transit, foot or bicycle.²

why is transport important to emerald hills urban village?

Strathcona County will strive to accommodate the movement of people and commodities in a safe, economical, efficient and environmentally responsible manner. As growth in the County continues, pressure on the transportation system will continue to increase. Strathcona County will continue to ensure all transportation uses such as trails, public transportation, rail, air and pedestrian walkways that are interconnected.

Improving the trail system in both the Sherwood Park Urban and Rural Service Areas will continue to provide more pedestrian friendly routes throughout the County and provide more opportunities for residents to interact.

how can emerald hills urban village impact on this theme?

Emerald Hills Urban Village has a unique opportunity to create an interconnected and fine grained multi-modal community, which is walkable, safe, and vibrant. Such a community gives residents the option of not requiring a vehicle to access basic goods and services or employment opportunities. This can promote better health, economic savings, and a safer, more tightly-knit community.

summary table of goals and strategies for transport

goal	charrette process strategy
Ensure multiple transportation choices are available	Provide safe and vibrant designated walking and cycling corridors.
	Minimize car access through the Village.
Ensure effectiveness of multi-modal transportation system	Reduce the distance of residences and employment locations to a range of non-automobile transportation choices.
	Incorporate a density and mix sufficient to ensure viability of public transit.
	Create an interconnected network of streets and corridors.

1. Holtzclaw, Dr. John. Using Residential Patterns and Transit to Decrease Auto Dependence and Costs. Natural Resources Defence Council. June 1994.

2. Cervano, Robert. Mixed Land Uses and Commuting. Transportation Research A 30(5): 361-77. 1996.

theme overview (Food)

why is this theme important?

Conventional food production and distribution can make a significant negative impact on the environment. This impact includes the cost of transportation, which is a staggering consumer of energy. Foods from the grocery store typically have traveled between 2,500 and 4,000 kilometers¹. A diet based on these imported foods can require four times more energy and generate four times more greenhouse gases than the same diet based on local production². Supporting locally grown food products can reduce the carbon footprint associated with transportation.

Support for local food production also ensures a sustained agricultural base in the community, which provides fresh, seasonal food, promotes the local economy and provides employment to residents. Opportunities for local food production and distribution include edible landscaping, community or allotment gardens, educational gardens and farms, local farms both within and around the community, community kitchens and micro-processing facilities, farmers' markets, and food buying clubs.

Local agricultural systems can also support municipal infrastructure. Organic wastes account for 25 to 40 percent of municipal waste streams, and often end up emitting the greenhouse gas methane from landfills³. An off-site windrow system or an on-site in-vessel composter can recover and use these wastes to amend soils in agricultural production.

why is food important to emerald hills urban village?

As acknowledged in the Strathcona County Municipal Development Plan, "Farming communities are facing many difficult challenges, which in turn threaten the future of agriculture not only in Strathcona County, but throughout the Country. The cost of such things as fuel, fertilizer, chemicals, equipment as well as the cost of living, have steadily been outstripping the return on the commodities that farmers produce."

"Agriculture contributes greatly not only from an economic perspective, but it adds significantly to the social, environmental, and aesthetic character of the community. Agriculture is and should continue to be an important part of the diversity that is Strathcona..."

how can emerald hills urban village impact on this theme?

Food production and distribution is a global industry that sustainable developments can engage locally. Design and programming strategies can create the spatial framework to support some amount of local food production and processing. Economic and social programs can support nearby farm operations and food processors. Once in place, this framework also provides the capacity for a community to respond to future changes in the food and transportation economy, and to take further steps towards sustainability.

summary table of goals and strategies for food

goal	charrette process strategy
Promote community-based food production.	Layer visible and accessible food production spaces throughout the Village.

¹ Halweil, B. Home Grown. Thomas Prugh, Editor. World-Watch Paper, 163. November 2002.

² Ibid.

³ Recycling Council of BC, Organics Working Group. The Dirt on Composting in British Columbia. April 2002.

theme overview (Materials)

why is this theme important?

Forty percent of the raw materials entering the world economy are used for building and construction activities. These materials are produced from non-renewable resources, converted through energy intensive processes and transported over long distances. The increasing demand for housing and construction worldwide is therefore a clear threat to the dwindling supply of the resources and the impacts of transporting materials are felt everywhere – even on the local roads where movement of goods are clogging roads.

Buildings are not typically designed to survive and adapt the fast pace of change in our urban environments. They are demolished because they become functionally, economically or technologically obsolete. This contributes large quantities of waste to landfills and it is wasteful of the precious resources.

why are materials important to emerald hills urban village?

Building materials are not all created equal. Depending on which materials are selected, the overall building or development can encourage sustainable harvesting practices, support local manufacturing companies, reduce the overall carbon dioxide emissions of the product, or create the conditions for a healthy indoor environment. As Emerald Hills is a greenfield development, the environmental impact of the overall development is very much tied to careful material selection.

how can emerald hills urban village impact on this theme?

Using recycled, reclaimed, renewable, local, and low environmental impact materials for development can significantly lower construction costs, and reduce the need for costly material disposal. It will also reduce waste sent to landfills thereby conserving water, land and air resources. Materials with low-toxicity qualifications can ensure the health and well-being of citizens.

summary table of goals and strategies for materials

goals	charrette process strategy
Ensure the use of green neighbourhood and building practices.	Design in conformance with standardized green building rating protocols.
Reduce the amount of materials used overall.	Design compact buildings.

theme overview (Waste)

why is this theme important?

Waste can fall into many different categories including (but not limited to) waste heat, construction waste, and municipal solid waste (MSW). All of them have a negative impact on both human health and the health of ecosystems, including water and air quality.

The construction industry is the largest user of natural resources, and the largest producer of waste.¹ Through jobsite recycling initiatives, it is possible to divert almost 100% of construction waste sent to landfills. Not only is recycling prudent from a resource conservation standpoint, it can also save the contractor money through the reduction of landfill tipping fees. The best way to reduce the amount of waste generated, and subsequently the amount of resources required, is to think of waste as a resource. This requires shifting from a linear cradle to grave approach, into a circular cradle to cradle pathway.

why is waste important to emerald hills urban village?

Albertans have the lowest recycling rates in the country, and only recycle or reuse 17% of their waste.² Strathcona County has had better performance than the provincial average through involving the community in curbside recycling programs for yard waste and newspapers.

Through these measures and the composting strategy, Strathcona County recently reached a 50% reduction in waste target.³

Maintaining this aggressive stance on waste reduction will increase the lifespan of the Clover Bar Landfill into the future, which will delay costly and contentious landfill upgrades. Moreover, increasing opportunities for recycling and using reclaimed materials can create an opportunity for revenue from recyclables, and waste reduction will preserve land and reduce air and water pollution.

how can emerald hills urban village impact on this theme?

Opportunities for waste reduction lie in thinking of waste as a resource rather than as an end state. Typically, this is thought of as the “three R’s”: reducing, reusing, and recycling. While most methods of achieving improved waste management approaches are pertinent following planning and design of a site, there are some important aspects that can be embedded into Emerald Hills Urban Village from the outset. These include demonstrating leadership in terms of construction waste management, and through ensuring that the infrastructure is put in place to help residents to reduce the amount of waste that they produce.

summary table of goals and strategies for waste

goal	charrette process strategy
Ensure the use of green neighbourhood and building waste management practices.	Design in conformance with standardized green neighbourhood and building rating protocols.

1. Busby, P. Sustainable Design Fundamentals for Buildings, page 21. 2001.

2. One Planet Living. Emerald Hills Urban Village Inception Report. 2006.

3. Strathcona County, Waste Collection and Recycling Department. 2005.

theme overview (Economy)

why is this theme important?

Developing a strong local economy is an important component of a sustainable community. Such communities must support a diverse mix of local economic opportunities and growth appropriate to the local demographic and to anticipated future needs. It is also important that such communities actively promote those aspects of the local economy that support a long term sustainable vision. This requires that the definition of “economic success” include principles of social and environmental sustainability, in addition to economic sustainability.

The local economy, in the form of employment-related land uses, provides the locational opportunities to businesses, institutions, organizations and service providers, which in turn provide employment opportunities to residents. Industrial, civic, and commercial entities provide a diverse mix of job opportunities, while also providing goods and services to the residents of a community. For sustainable communities, achieving the right locations for (and amounts of) commercial, industrial, or civic land uses, achieving the right mix of commercial types within commercial land uses, and achieving the successful integration of multiple uses, is key.

why is culture important to emerald hills urban village?

Commercial development in Strathcona County, as in much of North America, can be characterized by some recent trends. The occurrence of big box and large format retail chain stores have increased substantially. There

are a number of concerns created by large format retail, including land use and servicing costs, environmental costs, and negative impacts on local economy and community character. Development patterns associated with large format retail strongly favour vehicle use, with commercial uses located at the periphery of communities. This makes it difficult for local residents to meet their daily needs through alternative transportation options, and removes the opportunity for commercial uses to contribute to the creation of a community “heart” or centre. Strathcona County intends for the creation of its “urban villages” to begin to address this issue. The County projects that as demographics change, communities continue to grow in size, and the cost of living increases, there will be the need to return to smaller scale, accessible commercial uses.

how can emerald hills urban village impact on this theme?

Emerald Hills Urban Village has an opportunity to incorporate mixed use development, including some smaller scale commercial uses that contribute to the Village heart. Through flexible zoning residential, commercial, institutional and other uses can be mixed, thus ensuring that jobs and services will be closer to the people who need them. As community economics and demographics change over time, flexible zoning allows the uses and their locations within a community to best adapt to current conditions.

summary table of goals and strategies for economy

goal	charrette process strategy
Ensure a diverse mix of economic opportunities, including local economic development.	Distribute a range of economic opportunities for a range of different income and skill levels throughout the Village.

theme overview (Well-being)

why is this theme important?

Well-being describes the quality of life of a population. There are many components to well-being, including both concrete aspects such as access to goods and services, and more qualitative aspects such as health and happiness.

Our physical surroundings influence our well-being by setting the framework in which we interact with other people and the natural world, where we get access to services and jobs, and so on. Issues relating to well-being are profoundly affected by factors ranging from the stress and difficulties of commuting, to the presence or absence of natural areas and greenspace.

Without greenspace and walkable/active transit-oriented neighbourhoods, the health and well-being of citizens is compromised. Greenspace helps limit the impacts of urban sprawl on wildlife as well as on air and water quality. Neighbourhood walkability tends to reduce the prevalence of obesity by making it easier for people to lead active lifestyles. Together, these elements enhance the aesthetic value of the neighbourhood, provide opportunities for recreation, community interaction and make the neighbourhood more people friendly.

why is well-being important to emerald hills urban village?

Within Strathcona County, citizens have expressed the need to have resources and areas within the neighbourhoods to support and facilitate the well-being of the community.¹ They would like their neighbourhoods to “provide a broad range of services and facilities that allow them the opportunity to lead a healthy lifestyle.”² The County also believes that it is the municipality that is in the best position to create the necessary infrastructure to support the social well-being of its citizens.³

Strathcona County citizens also recognize the necessity of the less concrete aspects of well-being and have expressed the desire to “create a safe, caring and respectful community.”⁴

how can emerald hills urban village impact on this theme?

The well-being of a community is influenced by its design features. People’s quality of life, especially their health, has suffered as a result living in car-dependent communities. By incorporating design strategies that are welcoming and safe into the Emerald Hills Urban Village, people will be drawn to spend more time in public spaces and will also use active forms of transportation.

summary table of goals and strategies for well-being

goal	charrette process strategy
Provide access to sufficient public gathering spaces.	Incorporate a large central public open space as the ‘heart’ of the Village.
	Integrate structured and unstructured social and recreational amenities throughout the Village.
	Provide strong linkages between the Village and surrounding neighbourhoods.
Design a vibrant public realm that promotes social interaction.	Orient buildings to allow for “eyes on the street”.
	Preserve views and sightlines within and through the Village.
	Incorporate spaces and features that are inviting and memorable.

1. Strathcona County Municipal Development Plan. 2006.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

theme overview (Equity)

why is this theme important?

The aim of equity is a fair distribution of resources within society to reduce the gap between the advantaged and disadvantaged. This is hard to achieve because of many diverging interests. Development historically has separated different cultures, classes, and even age groups. This has resulted in the creation of distinctly different spaces within communities: wealthy areas with a lot of services and amenities, and poorer areas with insufficient services and amenities, or groups of older people being separated from younger generations and basic amenities.

Traditionally, the majority of housing stock in many new municipalities is single-family detached. These dwellings are unsuitable for many residents, particularly those in the fast-growing over-fifty age demographic. A mix of housing types, both owned and rented, allows residents to live affordably in the same community throughout their lives. Good neighbourhood design fully recognizes current and future demographic trends, especially aging populations, empty nesters, single-parent families and smaller, non-traditional households. A mix of housing types also helps accommodate lower income residents (including students and fixed-income seniors), allowing access to local jobs, amenities and medical services.

why is equity important to emerald hills urban village?

In 2001, Strathcona County's population had a 41% higher household income, had 8% less visible minorities, and had 10% more married couples than the province. Housing was also less affordable than the rest of the province, with both rental and housing ownership costs higher than the provincial average (16% and 11% higher, respectively). There was also significantly less rental property available in Strathcona County (8% of private households) in comparison to the provincial average (34% of private households). These pose challenges for ensuring that Strathcona remains a diverse, mixed community that attracts and sustains people from all walks of life.

The draft Municipal Development Plan aims to offset the above trends by "promoting sensitive intensification of existing neighbourhoods, not only to increase densities and therefore efficiencies in terms of delivering services, but also to provide a wider range of housing choices." The intention is to provide and make accessible all necessary housing types, land uses, programs and services to provide for a safe, healthy and sustainable community.

how can emerald hills urban village impact on this theme?

By addressing issues of equity with strategic design methods, Emerald Hills Urban Village has an opportunity to become an inclusive, affordable, balanced, and culturally diverse community where people of all ages and a range of income levels feel at home.

summary table of goals and strategies for equity

goals	charrette process strategy
Enable people from a range of economic levels, ages, and abilities to reside in the same community.	Distribute a diversity of housing options throughout the Village.
Allow for adaptability to changing life circumstances.	Design housing and commercial spaces to be adaptable and flexible.

theme overview (Culture)

why is this theme important?

Culture and heritage can be defined by the character of a place. "Communities with a strong character and identity are more attractive as places for living, commerce and leisure, provide opportunities for a richer range of experiences, and generally offer a higher quality of life than other locales."¹ By avoiding suburban sprawl, big box stores, highway strip development and an overall "sameness" characteristic of many communities², the character, culture, and heritage of a place has the opportunity to thrive, and this can in turn create a shared sense of pride, ownership and stewardship within community members.

why is culture important to emerald hills urban village?

While the land outside of Sherwood Park has historically been dominated by agriculture³, this is beginning to change. Within Strathcona County, rural "character", and thereby cultural heritage continues to change as well, as land is subdivided for acreages and other developments⁴. The context of any new development provides the backdrop against which the community grows. Acknowledging the diversity of this

context throughout design is important as it can instill a powerful sense of place in members of the community which then promotes social inclusiveness, awareness and stewardship to create a safe, vibrant, and unique place to live, work, play and visit.

how can emerald hills urban village impact on this theme?

When spaces and opportunities are identified and designed for cultural activities at the onset of a community-building process, cultural expression and social inclusivity can be created and sustained.

Emerald Hills Urban Village has an opportunity to create a community plan which will facilitate community identify and ongoing participation. Through contextual and integrated building and neighbourhood design, a foundation will be created for public programming opportunities that engage residents and promote community cohesiveness and identity.

summary table of goals and strategies for culture

goals	charrette process strategy
Create a unique and strong sense of identity for the Village.	Provide welcoming gateways into the Village that support a strong identity.
	Incorporate public and local art into public and semi-public spaces.
	Animate the ground plane of the Village.
Celebrate the local cultural and natural identity and heritage.	Reference the natural, cultural and historic features of the site in urban design, buildings, and public art.

1. Cam Campbell. 2006. Character Foundation Research Bulletin. Smart Growth on the Ground.

2. Ibid

3. Dr. Brad Stelfox et al. n/d. Looking Ahead: Possible Future Land Use in Strathcona County.

4. Ibid