

REPORT NO.: 161-02769-00-07

# ARBORG BIFROST-RIVERTON SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

COMMUNITY ASSET INVENTORY

SEPTEMBER 2017





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COMMUNITY ASSET INVENTORY

**Arborg Bifrost Riverton CDC**

**Confidential**

Project No.: 161-02769-00-07

Date: September 2017

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## 1

## INTRODUCTION

The Community Asset Inventory is one of four documents that support the Arborg Bifrost-Riverton Sustainable Community Action Plan (the Plan). It explores all aspects of life and living in the region that contribute, collectively, to quality-of-life. The range of facilities, amenities, and services span the sustainability spectrum and contribute to the region's social, economic, and environmental sustainability. By identifying the range of community services available in the region, recommendations for improvements and comments on the implications for community sustainability can be made. This allows strategies, initiatives, and actions to be identified to move the region towards a more sustainable way of growing.

# 2 SOCIETY AND CULTURE

## VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATIONS

Volunteer organizations such as Communities in Bloom/Garden Club, Christmas Cheer Board, and the Icelandic National League help foster civic pride, cultural awareness, environmental responsibility and beautification, and community involvement.

## COMMUNITY CHURCHES

Religious organizations for the region include the Lutheran Church, Roman Catholic Church, Immaculate Conception Church, Christian Fellowship Church, Church of the Sacred Heart, Unitarian Church, Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, and the Evangelical Mennonite. There are 17 cemeteries located in the region.

## COMMUNITY CELEBRATIONS

The community's calendar of activities is filled with events spanning a wide range of interests and age groups. Sporting and recreational events include hockey and golf tournaments, curling bonspiels, and skating shows. Family events include farmers' markets, the Arborg Agriculture Society Fair and Rodeo, the Arborg Street Festival, craft sales, and Ukrainian New Year's celebrations.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY:

Cultural celebrations as well as social and recreational events establish a sense of community spirit. The region's history of community celebrations, volunteerism, and faith-based organizations helps build a culture of civic pride and delivers numerous services and events. Volunteerism is important for community sustainability as it builds a collective feeling of belonging and social responsibility. For the region to sustain a high level of community celebrations, services, and events it is important that the region establishes a high rate of community participation among all age groups.



# 3

## PERSONAL AND FAMILY SERVICES

### THE ARBORG AND RIVERTON IMMIGRANT SETTLEMENT SERVICES (ARISS):

ARISS aims to assist new immigrants settling in the region. ARISS offers services and resources free of charge to permanent residents in the region to ease the transition to life in Canada and make initial settlement a rewarding experience for immigrants in the region.

### COMMUNITY LIVING INTERLAKE

Community Living Interlake has an office in Arborg and provides housing, employment and skills training to people living with intellectual disabilities or who have difficulty entering the workforce.

### RIVERTON AND DISTRICT FRIENDSHIP CENTER

The aim of the Riverton Friendship Centre is to provide members of the community with a variety of services to enhance the quality of life for all. Services currently include recreation and leisure programming, a weight training gym, youth programming, a food bank, job placement service, and parent child programs.

### CHILD CARE

Three child care facilities (two of which are provincially licensed) are available in Arborg and one facility in Riverton. The facilities offer child care for children between the ages of two and six and are generally open seven days a week.

### YOUTH SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

**The Bridge Youth Drop-in Centre:** The Bridge Youth Drop-in Centre is operated by Youth for Christ and offers a place for youth grades 7 through 12 to socialize regardless of religious background. The centre is located in Arborg but offers teens in the region an opportunity to spend their free time in a safe environment. The Centre is operated by volunteer board and local administrators.

**Recreation Programming:** The Arborg-Bifrost Parks and Recreation Commission coordinates sports programming for youth in the region. Baseball, figure skating, soccer, swimming lessons, hockey, horse club, rod and gun club, and rodeo club are all offered for a fee which varies by program. Over the summer months, the Arborg-Bifrost Parks and Recreation Commission operates a day camp for children from 6 to 12 years.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY:

Personal and family services are integral for supporting a positive social network in the community. In addition, personal and family services support residents through economic downturns, finding employment, education, and training, or to help ease a transition into community life. The community indicated that the region's current services meet the needs of the community and should ensure that personal and family services continue to support the needs of the community.

# 4 AN AGE FRIENDLY REGION

The population of older adults (55+) is growing in the region. As population's age, communities are faced with unique challenges and opportunities. The Town of Arborg and Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton have made commitments to recognize the value of an age-friendly community and actively embrace age-friendly planning. With this commitment, numerous senior services are offered which include:

## HOUSING

- House of Hope (Arborg): sixteen units of 55+ independent living.
- Mary Thorarinson Estate (Arborg): 16 units each of supportive housing and assisted living.
- Arborg Personal Care Home: 40 beds of assisted living.
- Legion Villa (Arborg): Three units of rental apartments.
- Sunrise Lodge North and South (Arborg): 39 units of rent geared to income with meal programs available.
- Icelandic River Lodge Senior's Residence (Riverton): 30 independent-living units and nine supportive-housing units with rent set to accommodate low-to-moderate income seniors and meal programs available.
- In development: an 80-bed personal care home (PCH) and a 55-plus independent housing facility in Arborg.

## ADVOCACY AND PROGRAMMING

- The Arborg Age Friendly Committee.
- The Arborg and District Senior's Resource Council.
- The Arborg Age Friendly Club.
- Riverton Seniors Activity Centre.

## TRANSPORTATION

- The Arborg and District Handi-van.
- The Riverton-Icelandic River Lodge Handi-van.

In addition to the senior services that are listed above, it is important to note the work of the Arborg Seniors Housing Corporation (ASHC). They are stewards of seniors housing for the region and have assisted with the development of the three senior's residence and have plans to construct a larger personal care home and a 55-plus independent living facility. ASHC was established in 2001 as a non-profit subsidiary of the Arborg Bifrost Community Development Corporation (ABCDC). Their volunteer Board of Directors currently consists of 11 people. Arborg has a very active Age Friendly Club and Senior's Resource Council who provide services to older adults and the Arborg & District Ladies Health Auxiliary Inc. raises money to support the seniors care home and purchase items for the hospital.

#### IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY:

Investing in housing, transportation, medical services, and recreation and programming for seniors can encourage seniors to “age-in-place” as well as help attract seniors from neighbouring municipalities. Providing adequate services for seniors is important for the long-term sustainability of the community as seniors are often the foundation of local volunteer organizations and efforts, and support local businesses and shops. It is also very beneficial to seniors in the region to have a central location that provides all their needs rather than having to travel from place-to-place.

# 5

## EDUCATION

### EVERGREEN SCHOOL DIVISION

The Evergreen School Division operates eight schools in the Interlake region. The region covers 2,424 sq. km. and stretches from Chalet Beach in the south to Hecla Island in the north (**Figure 1**). The school community is culturally diverse and, as of September 2016, provides learning opportunities to approximately 1,460 students in eight schools located in four communities; Winnipeg Beach, Gimli, Arborg, and Riverton. In the Plan Area, there are approximately 620 students across four schools which include:

**Arborg Early Middle School:** Arborg Early Middle School teaches students from Kindergarten to Grade 8. There are approximately 270 students from approximately 186 families. Over half of the student population lives outside of Arborg and is bussed to school.

**Arborg Collegiate Institute:** Arborg Collegiate Institute has a student population of approximately 115 students across Grade 9 to Grade 12. The school has a professional staff of 10 full and part-time teachers, five educational assistants, a full-time secretary, librarian, head caretaker and custodians. The Arborg Collegiate Institute has a joint-campus partnership with Riverton Collegiate which provides wider course options to high school students in both communities by giving students an option to take selected courses at either campus. Transportation is provided to students who register in classes at Riverton Collegiate Institute.

**Riverton Early Middle School:** Riverton Early Middle School has a student population of approximately 132 students and 24 staff. The school teaches students from Kindergarten through to Grade 8. The student population is largely made up of youth from Riverton and the surrounding area.

**Riverton Collegiate Institute:** Riverton Collegiate serves grades 8 through 12. The student population is approximately 100 students with 20 staff. Between two and five percent of the student population live outside Riverton and the surrounding area. The school welcomes students from various northern communities and has a close working relationship with various communities and partners including:

- Arborg Collegiate Institute;
- Southeast Tribal Council;
- Bloodvein First Nation;
- Berens River First Nation;
- Poplar River First Nation;
- Frontier School Division;
- Sapatawayak Cree Nation (Pelican Rapids); and
- Kinonjeoshtegon First Nation (Jackhead).

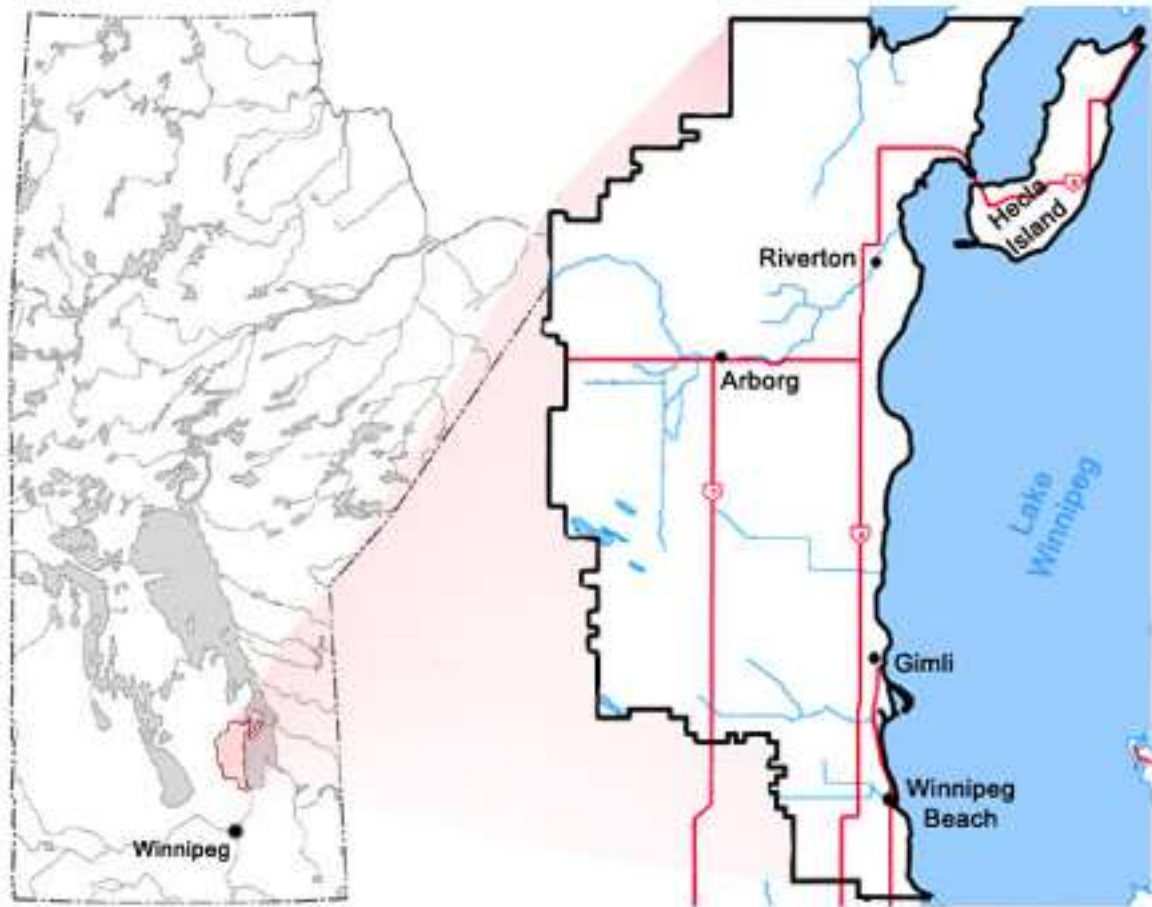


Figure 5-1 Evergreen School District Catchment Area

## ADULT EDUCATION

**Post-Secondary Education:** The region has a strong relationship with Red River College and Assiniboine Community College. Both colleges have learning locations in the Interlake region and have offered training programs in Arborg. To help meet the demand for additional health care professionals, the Arborg Bifrost-Riverton arranged for training programs to be offered in Arborg. Arborg hosted the Health Care Aide Certificate Program through Red River College as well as the Practical Nursing diploma through Assiniboine Community College.

**Interlake Adult Learning Association Inc. (IALA):** Located in Gimli, the IALA supports adult literacy, adult learning, adult language, family literacy, workplace training and English additional language instruction for the Interlake region. In addition, supervisory supports to the Settlement Services office for the Arborg/Riverton area are provided.

## LIBRARY SERVICES

**Riverton Evergreen Regional Library:** The Riverton library is located in the Riverton Municipal Office. There are three public computers, free internet, and a scanner for scan-to-print and scan-to-email services. DVD rentals are also available.

**Arborg Evergreen Regional Library:** The former CPR Railway Station is the home of the Arborg Evergreen Regional Library. The building was declared a heritage site and restored to its original condition and now provides a space for the local library. The library offers programming including story hour for children three to six year olds and a summer reading program over July and August for school-aged children. Computers with access to high speed internet are also available.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY:

The local schools and region enjoy a close and productive relationship. This relationship is important because maintaining a high quality educational program is important for community sustainability. Access to high quality education is a major factor in community choice, contributing to both attracting and retaining families. Additionally, educational attainment is critical for long-term community sustainability as it is an indicator of the knowledge and skills individuals have that allow them to participate effectively in society and the economy. The educational opportunities available in Arborg Bifrost-Riverton provide community members with options to attain a high school level education and recently some opportunities for post-secondary education which is good, but we have heard that there is a lack of skilled labour to support the manufacturing sector in the region.

## 6

## TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

A population's training and education can be linked to employment as well as whether or not the labour-force is attractive to business and industry. In 2015, a Regional Economic Analysis Process (REAP) Report for the Town of Arborg and Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton was conducted. Individual data on education was not available for Arborg and Bifrost-Riverton, but information for Census Division #18 was presented in the REAP Report which includes Arborg, Armstrong, Bifrost-Riverton, Coldwell, Eriksdale, Fisher, Gimli, Grahamdale, Siglunes, St. Laurent, and Winnipeg Beach. **Table 1** compares the Statistics Canada 2011 National Household Survey for Census Division #18 and the Province of Manitoba.

**Table 6-1 2011 Educational Attainment Ages 25-64**

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT – HIGHEST CERTIFICATE, DIPLOMA, OR DEGREE (AGES 25-64)	PERCENT SHARE OF POPULATION	
	CENSUS DIVISION #18	MANITOBA
University certificate, diploma or degree	15%	27%
College or other non-university certificate or diploma	18%	19%
Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma	11%	11%
High school certificate or equivalent	28%	26%
No certificate, diploma, or degree	28%	17%

The REAP Report states that:

- This region has a higher proportion of people with no certificate, diploma or degree and high school certificate; the same percentage of people with apprenticeship or trades certificate; and a lower proportion with college or university certificate than the provincial averages.
- This region may be attractive to industries looking for an unskilled labour force and those needing people with skilled trades training, but less attractive to those businesses requiring post-secondary level education.
- In the future, however, in order to continue to build on innovation and entrepreneurial activity, the region may consider a move to attract more highly trained professionals in an effort to diversify the economy and labour pool.

In reference to jobs, the report indicates that over half of the region's 2,593 jobs are in agriculture (478), healthcare (379), retail (337), and manufacturing (232). Healthcare, agriculture, construction, and scientific and technical jobs have seen the largest gain in the region while the largest job losses have been in wholesale, manufacturing and mining, and transportation. In addition, a high percentage of self-employment (74%) exists in the region.

Over the last five years, the number of immigrants settling in Arborg Bifrost-Riverton has increased as a result of employment opportunities in health care, the agriculture industry, and manufacturing

industry. A 2014 report produced by the Rural Development Institute cited an average of 21 immigrants per year from 2008 to 2013, with 42 as the highest number of immigrants in 2010 and 6 as the lowest in 2011.

### CONNECTING ABORIGINALS TO MANUFACTURING – CAM ARBORG

Connecting Aboriginals to Manufacturing (CAM) Arborg is a partnership between the ABCDC, Peguis First Nation, Fisher River Cree Nation, Bifrost Manufacturers, the University of Winnipeg, and Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology (MITT). The program aims at increasing the supply of skilled workers needed across Manitoba's manufacturing sector. Over the next 10 years it is expected that 25% of all new workforce entrants will be Aboriginal. CAM's goal is to help connect the needs of these new entrants to the needs of manufacturers by supporting Aboriginal learners in acquiring skills to support employment goals in manufacturing.

Fourteen workers were trained under CAM in Arborg. Training for employees is considered holistic in that it includes basic skills like numeracy and literacy, direct job-related training geared to working on machinery and reading blueprints, and social supports such as counseling, help finding homes and life-skills training.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY:

Training and education is critical to attract and sustain business and industry. An opportunity exists to develop a regional training centre. This training centre can work with local businesses, post-secondary institutions, and training providers to help identify and meet training needs for the region. Local training opportunities provide community residents an opportunity to study closer to home with the intent of encouraging graduates to stay and work in the region.

The region has a lower proportion of the population with a college or university certificate than provincial averages and therefore may be attractive to industries looking for an unskilled labour force but less attractive to those businesses requiring post-secondary level of education. The region may consider a move to attract more highly trained professionals in an effort to diversify the economy and labour pool. In addition, self-employed entrepreneurs may provide employment and business expansion opportunities.



# 7

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The region's economy has primarily relied on agriculture but is experiencing growth in manufacturing and processing as well as tourism. Arborg Bifrost-Riverton has unique economic strengths and competitive advantages and with the assistance of economic development, local chamber of commerce, and provincial programs, the region is harnessing opportunities to diversify its economy.

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES

Both regional and provincial economic development agencies and initiatives contribute to the economy of Arborg Bifrost-Riverton. Mandates of these agencies are outlined below, along with some of the initiatives they have undertaken for the direct or indirect benefit of the region.

The ABCDC and Riverton-Bifrost Community Development Corporation supports and assists existing businesses, identifies economic gaps and supports the development of the area's infrastructure needs. Collaboration and partnerships with other organizations is a key driver in mobilizing resources, facilitating projects, and fostering economic growth for the region.

Recent activity of the ABCDC includes funding a REAP Report which identifies unique economic strengths and competitive advantages, working with partners to fill the shortage of affordable housing in Arborg, and advocating for investments into its infrastructure.

### CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Two Chambers of Commerce exist in the region, the Arborg Chamber of Commerce and the Riverton Chamber of Commerce. The Chambers of Commerce strengthens existing businesses and encourages new businesses by serving their members through events, networking, lobbying, and other activities.

### GROWING OPPORTUNITIES

Growing Opportunities (GO) is an initiative of Manitoba Agriculture. GO works with producers, industry groups, municipalities and businesses to deliver valuable information and advice that support farmers, rural business and rural communities. Their services include business development, community development, rural leadership, farm production and many other areas of interest to entrepreneurs.

### HOMETOWN MANITOBA

Hometown Manitoba is part of the province's Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI). It provides funds for rural and northern community projects that enhance main street public meeting places, main street enhancements of building exteriors, as well as community greening initiatives and tree planting.

### COMMUNITY FUTURES EAST INTERLAKE

Community Futures East Interlake provides community development assistance, small business counselling and small business loans. Community Futures is a community-based economic renewal program funded by the Government of Canada with the objective to help rural Canadians start or expand a business and to help sustain and improve communities and their local economies.

### BIFROST AGRICULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE COOPERATIVE (BASIC)

BASIC brings together area producers, businesses, and different levels of government to work towards a coordinated approach for a long-term plan for drainage improvements. Their current initiative is working with the Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton on planning and implementing a local dredging and ditch improvement program. In addition, the development of a long-term water management and flood mitigation plan for Bifrost-Riverton in conjunction with surrounding municipalities, Eastern Interlake Conservation District, Provincial and Federal governments is underway.

### OKNO BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

The Okno area is located approximately 16 km north of Arborg and is home to several manufacturers and other businesses. In 2010, the largest seven businesses accounted for a total of \$66 million in annual revenues and employment of 344 people. The Okno Business Association is currently advocating for infrastructure improvements to local highways and roads. Recently, the lack of paved roads in the area has influenced manufacturers and businesses to relocate outside of the Okno region and out of the Province.

### ENTREPRENEURS WITH DISABILITIES

The Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program offers business services to people with disabilities or health conditions in rural Manitoba. This program provides one-to-one business consultation, access to business information and resources, assistance with business plans and business loans up to \$150,000.

### DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVE PROGRAM

Both the Town of Arborg and the Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton offer an incentive program to encourage development and spur economic growth. The program is focused on reducing the amount of property tax for a determined number of years based on the type of development.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY:

Strong rural communities are vital to economic growth in Manitoba. Supporting economic development agencies and initiatives in the area provide community members, especially young people, access to expertise, funding, and a future of economic opportunities.

In addition to economic development agencies, municipal infrastructure is important to support the economy. Currently, improvements of highways and roads to the Okno industrial are needed to retain and allow for expansion of industry.

Achieving a sustainable community means emphasizing a sustainable economy and employment options. Arborg Bifrost-Riverton benefits from having a diversified economy but improvements are needed to maintain this. Infrastructure improvements of highways and roads are needed to both retain and allow for the expansion of industry. In addition, investments in housing and training are necessary to support local employers.

## 8

## PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

As a result of continual efforts to attract and retain a diversified economy, development and community investments are occurring in the region. Land is available for both urban and rural development, portions of which are serviced by sewer, water and roads. There are agencies that exist to both attract development and also to regulate development to ensure that development occurs in a sustainable manner.

### PLANNING

**Eastern Interlake Planning District (EIPD):** The EIPD provides building, development, and planning services to the Arborg Bifrost-Riverton Region. Under planning and development, the EIPD is responsible for administering the EIPD Development Plan and the zoning by-laws for each municipality with an adopted by-law within their jurisdiction.

The Development Plan contains medium to long-term goals and objectives regarding land use and defines policies to help ensure land use compatibility and sustainability. The most recent Development Plan By-law was passed in 2011. The Manitoba Planning Act stipulates that a detailed review of development plans must occur within five years after the development plan by-law is passed which means that the EIPD Development Plan should be reviewed.

Within the EIPD, The Municipality of Bifrost, Village of Riverton, and Town of Arborg each have their own Zoning By-law. Zoning By-laws are more specific than the development plan and help to implement the objectives and policies in the development plan. The Zoning By-law ensures that provisions regarding land use and development standards are in conformity with the policies of the Development Plan.

**Community and Regional Planning:** The Interlake Community and Regional Planning Branch Office is located in Selkirk and provides professional and technical services to Arborg Bifrost-Riverton. Planning staff help coordinate inter-departmental review of development plan by-laws and zoning by-laws, make recommendations on development applications, and provide support to planning boards, among other tasks.

### DEVELOPMENT

**Commercial:** New commercial development for the region includes:

- Westshore Marine is moving and expanding their operation to the old Co-op Building Supply store and storage yards in Arborg on Hwy 68 at Main Street.
- Mazergroup is moving from their location in Arborg at St. Phillips Drive to Highway 68.
- Enns Brothers is planning for an expansion at their current location in Arborg.
- A local doctor is planning to build a new private clinic near 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and William Street in Arborg.
- An “arts centre” (yoga, dance, etc.) is being planned for Arborg.

**Housing:** In 2014, Arborg Bifrost-Riverton was the 7<sup>th</sup> fastest growing community in Manitoba. This growth is largely the result of job opportunities in the manufacturing sector and health care sector,

especially relating to seniors, which are bringing employees to the region. This growth has resulted in a regional housing shortage.

Local developers have been trying to keep up with demand by building rental apartments, duplexes, and single-family homes, as well as rezoning and subdividing land for residential development. Access to sewer and water infrastructure has been a challenge for development in outlying areas. Sewer and water extensions are quite costly and often require the developer to pay for the installation. Developers can recover the costs by adding the fees to the lots but the initial investment requires financial capital.

According to a 2014 real estate overview, after ten years of rising housing costs and fast sales in Arborg Bifrost-Riverton, the market is levelling off. Houses listed between \$70,000 and \$100,000 sold the quickest compared to houses listed at \$150,000-175,000 which sell but more slowly. Houses listed at \$200,000 and up were very slow to sell.

While housing of all types (i.e., single-family, multi-family) and tenure (i.e., rental, mortgaged, co-operative) are desired, the following housing types are higher in demand:

- Senior housing.
- Worker housing.
- Affordable housing.
- Housing to meet needs of immigrants.

A housing needs assessment identified a 150 unit housing shortage. This number was identified before the announcement of the personal care home (PCH) expansion, which is estimated to bring in a 120 workers requiring housing.

**Cottage Development:** There is no current cottage development initiative for the region, however lakeshore and lake view cottages are available along the shores of the Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton. There have been discussions about pursuing a cottage development and land owned by the Municipality may be suitable for cottage lot development.

#### ICELANDIC RIVER COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Formed in 2010, the Icelandic fund is dedicated to improving the quality of life of those living in Arborg Bifrost-Riverton. The Foundation invests donations in a permanent fund and each year the investment income is used to support the betterment of the community. Funds may be directed towards health care, education, seniors' or children's services, recreation, the environment, culture and heritage or another cause.

#### IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY:

Proper planning is important for communities to decide the future course of their growth and development and ensure that citizens are involved in the decision making. Sound planning will balance private and public interests and help communities manage change, avoid land use conflicts and respond to future challenges. It involves managing land uses and deciding where best to develop homes, parks, agriculture and industry, and where things should be left in their natural state. Land use planning is an essential part of building healthy, prosperous and sustainable communities.

In terms of planning and development, it appears that the appropriate land uses and zoning are in place to support sustainable growth in the area. However, there is a need for housing, especially to support the local economy to attract and maintain employees.

## 9

## HEALTH CARE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

### HEALTH FACILITIES

Health services in the Arborg Bifrost-Riverton region are provided by the Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority. Local health facilities include:

- Arborg & District Health Centre: a 14-bed facility with full laboratory and x-ray services and 24-hour emergency department. Longer term health care is available in its attached 40-bed Personal Care Home;
- Arborg Community Health Office: offers public health, mental health, and home care services;
- Arborg Support Centre: offers mental health support programs; and
- Riverton Intervention Centre.

Family doctor appointments can be made at the Arborg Medical Clinic and Riverton Community Health Centre. Appointments can also be made with a Nurse Practitioner in Riverton.

The following private health services are available in the region:

- Arborg Dental Centre (Arborg);
- Koster Denture Clinic (Arborg);
- Oakley Vision Centre (Arborg);
- Quarry Physiotherapy (Arborg);
- Sabine's Reflexology (Arborg);
- Interlake Chiropractic Centre (Riverton); and
- Riverside Massage (Riverton).

Ambulance services are provided in Arborg and Riverton by Interlake Eastern Regional Health Authority (IERHA).

- There is one, two-bay ambulance garage in Arborg with two ambulances, one of which is staffed (the second ambulance is a spare). Ambulance service in Arborg extends from Boundary Road (boundary with RM of Armstrong) to Broad Valley (near Fisher Branch) and halfway to Eriksdale and halfway to Riverton.
- The Riverton ambulance garage has one ambulance bay and one ambulance. Ambulance service in Riverton includes Pine Dock to Boundary Road.
- Each service has four full-time staff and there are two on at a time in each location and services are shared between Riverton and Arborg.

## FIRE DEPARTMENT

The region is served by two volunteer fire departments. Both departments respond to and mitigate emergencies involving the rescue of persons, incidents of fire, unplanned releases of dangerous goods, and pre-hospital emergency medical incidents.

**The Arborg Bifrost Fire Department (ABFD)** is a volunteer force of approximately 26 members. The department's equipment includes one pumper truck, one pumper/tanker truck, one rescue unit with Jaws of Life and command post, one wild fire unit (4x4 truck), one trailer with ATV for winter-rescue, and one grass-fire rescue unit. The area covered by the ABFD as follows: PR 326 at Okno, to Silver in the south, to 2 mile west of Highway 8 in the east, to Mile Marker 0 North in the west (approximately 16 km west of Arborg).

**The Riverton-Bifrost Fire Department** is a volunteer force of approximately 11 members. The department's equipment currently meets their needs and includes one pumper truck, one tanker truck, one equipment van, a 4x4 bush truck, and ATV for brushfires. The Riverton-Bifrost Fire Department responds to calls within the boundaries of the Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton, with the exception of where the Arborg Bifrost Fire Department responds. The Riverton-Bifrost Fire Department also has a contract to cover Grindstone Point and Hecla.

## RCMP

The Arborg RCMP detachment offers administrative services such as criminal record checks and document verification, as well as responds to reports of disturbance, crime and firearm enquiries. The detachment has a staff of four Constables, one Corporal, and one Detachment Services Assistant. Equipment includes two RCMP cars and one pick-up truck. The Arborg Detachment covers the region from Pine Dock, Matheson Island, and Black Island in the north, to approximately 15 km west of Arborg, approximately 5 km south of Silver, and the eastern boundary of Lake Winnipeg.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY:

Health care and emergency services are necessary to support a population of the area and greater region. Maintaining and improving these services are imperative to support growth in the area and the overall social sustainability.

# 10 RETAIL AND COMMERCIAL SERVICES

With a service area of approximately 26,000 people in the winter months and 40,000 in the summer months, Arborg Bifrost-Riverton serves as the business and agricultural service centre for the Interlake. Within the region, Arborg serves as the retail and commercial centre. Arborg's retail and commercial services include the Co-op Grocery store, Home Hardware and building centre, Arborg Pharmacy, The Bargain Shop, and Smitty's Furniture and Appliance. Other services include restaurants (the Arborg Hotel, Bar and Restaurant, Golden Lake, Chicken Chef, and Arborg Bakery), an auto repair shop, gas bars, car dealerships, hair salons, financial institutions, Canada Post Office, an insurance agency, and some home-based repairmen and construction contractors. Retail and commercial services are also available in Riverton and include the Riverton Co-op Food Store, a second hand store, restaurants, pharmacy, convenience store, Canada Post Office, and an auto repair shop. Collectively, the stores and services provide a range of merchandise and services required by an average household on a day-to-day basis.

A recent retail needs assessment conducted by the Arborg-Bifrost CDC indicates that opportunities exist for clothing, shoes, restaurants, tea house/café, and a crafts/hobby store.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

The ability of a region to support retail space depends upon many factors, including the quality of the shopping experience, the variety and appeal of available merchandise, price competitiveness, and the regions proximity to larger centres with better shopping options. These factors combine to either encourage residents to support their local merchants, or encourage them to shop elsewhere. Not meeting the shopping needs of residents' impacts the quality of life of residents, and their attitudes toward their community – as evidenced in the youth survey. The region should build on the efforts of the ABCDC to attract a clothing store, shoe store, or possibly help finance a local merchant or entrepreneur who see opportunities for improving the town's retail environment.

Supporting local businesses is the major way for residents to have a direct and positive impact on a town's economy. Increased local spending encourages new businesses to open up and existing businesses to broaden their inventories or possibly expand, hiring more staff in the process. However, a healthy retail sector can be viewed as a partnership between residents and the business community, and businesses must do what they can to stem the flow the dollars outside the community, by responding to the retail needs of the residents and giving them less reason, either by choice or necessity, to shop in larger centres to which they often travel.

# 11 PARKS AND RECREATION

Arborg Bifrost Riverton offers numerous recreation, leisure, and sport facilities and programming. Activities and events are tailored to meet a diverse range of interests and needs. Programming includes the Age Friendly Club, baseball, church choirs, 4H, figure skating, fitness club, high school sports, hockey, horse club, rod and gun club, rodeo club, soccer, summer day camp, swim program, Ukrainian dancing and more.

## WALKING TRAILS

Community walking paths are located in both Arborg and Riverton. The Icelandic River Trail in Arborg follows the north shore of the Icelandic River. At approximately 700m in length, the town has plans to extend the path. Two bridges, one on each side of the community, will be installed to allow pedestrians cross the Icelandic River. In addition, a marked community walking path is located in Arborg and on the old rail bed in Riverton.

## PUBLIC BEACHES AND CAMPGROUNDS

There are three public beaches and two campgrounds in the region. Gull Harbour Campground and Sunset Beach is located 56 km north east of Riverton and features two beaches, 214 campsites (unserviced and serviced), tennis courts, an amphitheater, and covered wood lot. The nearby Gull Harbour Marina provides fuel and concessions. Located on the west shore of Lake Winnipeg, Hnaua Provincial Park has a small campground and beach. North of Riverton, the Riverton Sand Islands consist of three small islands extending between Riverton and Hecla Island. During low water years, the closest island is connected to the mainland by a sandbar. Visitors will see Ring-billed Gulls, Common Terns, and Piping Plovers.

## WINTER RECREATION

Winter recreation activities include skating, cross-country skiing, and ice fishing, and snowmobiling. A skating rink and skating path is cleared on the Icelandic river in Arborg and tobogganing is popular on the Icelandic River bank. The Arborg Nordic Ski Club has a membership of approximately 22 skiers. The club coordinates ski outings to local trails, and instruction in skiing techniques and waxing.

The Interlake Snow Trackers are the active snowmobile club for the region. The club is a not for profit recreational club and maintains approximately 600 km of snowmobile trails around Arborg, Hecla and Riverton. The club also owns and maintains seven warm up shelters in the region. Sno-passes are required to ride the Interlake Snow Trackers trails. The fees from the sno-passes help fund trail grooming and maintenance.

## ARBORG-BIFROST PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

The Arborg-Bifrost Parks and Recreation Commission maintains facilities for recreational activities and assists in the coordination of events and programs in the community. Facilities include the Aquatic Centre, Arborg and District Arena, Community Centre, and the curling rink. The Aquatic Centre is an outdoor facility, open from the beginning of June to the September long weekend. The curling rink and arena is open from October to March and the community centre is open year round. The arena and community centre is available for weddings, socials, and conferences, serving as a community hub for



social events. Active participation of volunteers and financial grants and donations help support the region's recreation facilities.

#### IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY

Parks and recreation are one of the major contributing factors to the social well-being of a community and its overall sustainability. The area currently provides ample opportunities to enjoy parks and recreation which also can offer economic opportunities. The area also has further potential to grow recreation tourism.

# 12 TOURISM AND HERITAGE

Tourists are drawn to the Arborg Bifrost-Riverton region for its natural beauty, cultural and historic sites, and amenities. Year round visitors enjoy camping, hiking, snowmobiling, and ice-fishing.

## INTERLAKE TOURISM ASSOCIATION

The Interlake Tourism Association (ITA) is a non-profit membership driven organization with a vision of making Manitoba's Interlake a tourism destination of choice. ITA assists in marketing and promoting the Interlake region and its members, enhance and build regional memberships and strengths, and provide training and networking opportunities for members.

## THE ICELANDIC RIVER HERITAGE SITES GROUP

The Icelandic River Heritage Sites Group is responsible for historical preservation and restoration in the Arborg Bifrost Riverton region. Icelandic River Heritage Sites Inc. was formed on Oct. 22, 2006, (the 131st anniversary of the landing of the first Icelandic settlers on Willow Point) as a non-profit organization of volunteers dedicated to making this unique heritage more visible and accessible for present and future generations.

## RIVERTON TRANSPORTATION AND HERITAGE CENTRE

The Riverton Transportation and Heritage Centre was established in 2000, to preserve and share Riverton's transportation and community heritage. Riverton was not only the end of the rail line but also served as an important centre for boat, air, and road transportation. The restored CPR Station and its grounds displays the history of Riverton and surrounding community through artifacts, photos, and stories.

## ARBORG & DISTRICT MULTICULTURAL HERITAGE VILLAGE

Established in 1999, the Arborg Heritage is a popular tourist attraction showcasing the history of the region. To date 14 buildings have been moved on site and are open to the public to tour during seasonal hours. Approximately 1000 people tour the Village each year, which includes school groups, tour groups, and local and international tourists. The grounds offer travelers, 22 electrically serviced campsites, picnic tables and fire pits. In 2015, the Arborg & District Multicultural Heritage Village received the Manitoba Star Attraction Designation.

## ARBORG & DISTRICT AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY

The Arborg and District Agricultural Society was established in 1924, and celebrates the agricultural history of the region. The Arborg and District Agricultural Society coordinates Arborg's annual Fair and Rodeo. The Fair and Rodeo is a two day event with horse shows, cowboy competitions, and local crafts and baked goods.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY

Heritage is an important part of the social, cultural, economic, and environmental sustainability of communities. This area has a very unique heritage and has opportunities to attract tourism through its historical sites and recreation opportunities. However, there is no one promoting Bifrost-Riverton or Arborg in any concerted way. Interlake Tourism Association does some promotion of the whole Interlake but nothing specific to the Municipality.