**Land Use Bylaw Rewrite**

**Yellowhead County**

# Steering Committee Meeting #1

August 26, 2020

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# Introduction

In early 2020, the project team requested the Yellowhead County Council undertake to gather participants to make up a project Steering Committee who's role is to provide recommendations to the project team, engage with members of the public and provide insight into the history and reasoning behind past decisions. A copy of the **Land Use Bylaw Update Steering Committee Terms of Reference** is attached in Appendix 1.

NOTE: The Steering Committee was initially planning to meet in early May 2020 for preliminary meetings and a tour of the County but this meeting was postponed because of gathering restrictions put in place to slow the spread of COVID-19 in Alberta.

In August 2020, it was determined that it was appropriate to undertake the Steering Committee's first in-person meeting and the group met for an afternoon workshop at the County offices. The workshop had nearly full attendance from the Steering Committee and included attendance from the County Mayor and two councillors as well as the Municipal Planning Intern from the Town of Edson.

# Hot Topics

As participants arrived at the Steering Committee meeting, they were asked to write down any 'hot topics' that were on their minds when they thought about the County's land use bylaw and its operation.

Participant identified several different topics that were generally similar to themes raised in Public Survey #1.

These themes included:
- Wanting an easier to understand document
- Concerns about unpaved roads seeing significant traffic increases
- Finding ways to provide access to privately owned parcels that do not have any existing road access
- Unsightly properties associated with absentee landowners or accumulating non-functioning vehicles
- Allowing sea cans that are sided to look similar to the main building on a property
- Opportunities for temporary land uses
- Reconsidering the rules around subdivision in the east of the County
- Disincentives to landowners when subdividing including paying for road improvements or losing frontage.

# Exercise 1 – Issues and Opportunities

Exercise 1 asked participants to discuss any issues that they felt the land use bylaw rewrite should address and record those discussions at their table. Similar to the Hot Topics above, Steering Committee members tended to identify issues that were consistent with the public survey.

**Issues that were identified included:**
- Land Use Conflicts
- Subdivision/Fragmentation of Agricultural Land
- Barriers to Development (Impacts to infrastructure, concerns from neighbours, developable land supply, road access to sites)
- Managing Home Occupations
- Alignment with provincial standards
- Changing landowner expectations

**In addition, participants also identified potential focus group session topics and key stakeholders including:**
- Home Occupations
- Gravel Extraction
- FireSmart
- Unsightly Properties
- Work Camps

**Specific stakeholders that were identified included:**
- Recreational Landowners
- Builders/Developers
- Alberta Environment and Parks
- Alberta Agricultural and Forestry
- Gravel Operators
- Realtors
- Alberta Transportation/County Infrastructure

# Exercise 2 – Land Use District Consolidation

In Exercise 2, participants were asked to take a printed set of the 43 existing land use districts from the County's current bylaw and to consolidate similar districts and simplify the overall bylaw. In addition, each group took notes about why certain districts were consolidated or not.

**Consolidated Districts:**

## Minor Consolidation - Group 2

Participants in group 2 consolidated the existing 43 districts into a set of 17 consolidated districts.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Recreation Uses – This district is a consolidation of site specific recreation districts including Cougar Rock Recreation, Mercoal and Stonewater Ranch. | 6. Hamlet Residential – This district is a consolidation of common hamlet residential districts as well as the Hinton East specific districts. | 10. Country Residential – This district is a consolidation of the existing country residential districts | 14. Industrial – Combination of Business Commercial/Light Industrial, Rural Industrial and the Light Industrial District. |
| 2. Recreational Use District | 7. Manufactured Home Park | 11. Rural | 15. Environmental Preservation |
| 3. Hamlet Residential - Tourism | 8. Hamlet Commercial – This district is a consolidation of Hamlet General, Hamlet Commercial, Hamlet Industrial and Highway Commercial | 12. Forestry | 16. Hamlet Urban Reserve |
| 4. Resort Recreational (Mountain Park Properties)<br><br>5. Country Residential (Mountain Park Properties) | 9. Public Institutional District | 13. Landfill | 17. Direct Controls (1-4) |

## Major Consolidation – Group 1 and 3

Participants in group 1 and 3 consolidated the existing 43 districts into a set of 8 and 7 districts respectively. The districts were not fully in alignment but generally consisted of the following overarching districts:

| Group 1 | Group 3 |
|---|---|
| 1. Recreation – Consolidates all recreation related districts including generic recreation use districts like RU. residential districts with tourism uses like CR(Tourism) and HR(Tourism) and site specific tourism uses like Cougar Rock Recreation, Mountain Park Properties and Stonewater Ranch. | 1. Recreation Use District – Consolidates the Recreation Use District along with the districts from Stonewater Ranch, Mountain Park Properties, Cougar Ridge and Mercoal. |

| Group 1 | Group 3 |
|---|---|
| 2. Residential – This district consolidated all residential districts with subclasses based on the density of future development.<br>Potential groupings were:<br>• Country Residential<br>• Manufactured Home Park<br>• Hamlet Residential | 2. Direct Control Districts – Consolidates the existing named Direct Control districts. |
| 3. Commercial – This district was a consolidation of all commercial districts including Business Commercial/Light Industrial, Hamlet General, Hamlet Commercial and Highway Commercial districts. | 3. Hamlet Residential – Consolidates all existing Hamlet Residential districts and Hamlet Tourism |
| 4. Industrial – This district included all industrial districts including the Landfill and Composting District, Light Industrial, Hamlet Industrial, Rural Industrial, and East River Road (DC2). | 4. Hamlet Business – Consolidates the Hamlet Industrial, Hamlet General, Hamlet Commercial and Public Institutional Districts |
| 5. Undevelopable Areas – This district is a consolidation of districts dealing with undevelopable areas including Environmental Preservation, Hamlet Restricted Development and Robb Flood Plain (DC3). | 5. Country Residential – Consolidate all Country Residential Districts |
| 6. Forestry District – This district was maintained and the HEUF district was combined with it per the latest planning in the Yellowhead County and Hinton Intermunicipal Development Plan. | 6. Rural District – Consolidates the Rural District, Hinton East Rural Residential and Hinton East Urban Fringe |
| 7. Rural District – This district was maintained | 7. Forestry District – Consolidates the Forestry District along with the Landfill and Composting District and Environmental Preservation District |
| 8. Public Uses – This district is a combination of the Public Institutional district and MacKay Pet Cemetery (DC1). | |

In addition to the actual results of the consolidation, the following points were made regarding how and why the different groups made their decisions.

**Reasons to combine the districts:**
- Commonality/Common Sense
- Redundancy
- Elimination – out of date or too specific
- Where risk of consolidation is minimal
- Districts with a similar density could be consolidated
- It could be more important

**Reasons to keep districts separated**
- More different than similar to other areas
- Major types: Rural, Residential, Commercial etc.
- Specific to a particular location

- Consider applying a serviced/unserviced lens as this impacts the form and density of development
- All of this previous work to separate and define individual districts was completed for a reason.
- Potential overlap could result in more development permit decision appeals at the Subdivision and Development Appeal Board.
- This approach tends to benefit landowners but may result in less input from neighbours.

**Principles to consider as the team is updating the bylaw:**
- Removing jargon/acronyms
- Make the bylaw accessible – not internet dependent. The county is still rural and not urban and there is a lack of internet connectivity and speed.
- Simplifying the bylaw provides more opportunities to landowners
- In rural areas, the bylaw could be less restrictive, in urban areas, the bylaw could provide more direction.
- Also need to consider impacts on property values, long-term planning, growth management and supporting industry development including forestry, mining, and oil and gas.

# Exercise 3 – Land Use Patterns

In the final Exercise, participants were asked to identify major land use patterns spanning across the County and attempt to identify how the newly consolidated districts could be laid out across the County.

The different pattern areas identified by the groups were:
1. Eastern Agricultural Area
2. Resource industries in the rural north and southeast
3. Clusters of business nodes along Highway 16
4. Town of Edson Urban Fringe/Town of Hinton Urban Fringe
5. Clusters of country residential around existing urban areas
6. Western Foothills/Mountains Region
7. Seasonal recreation areas in the rural southwest
8. High tourism potential area west of Hinton
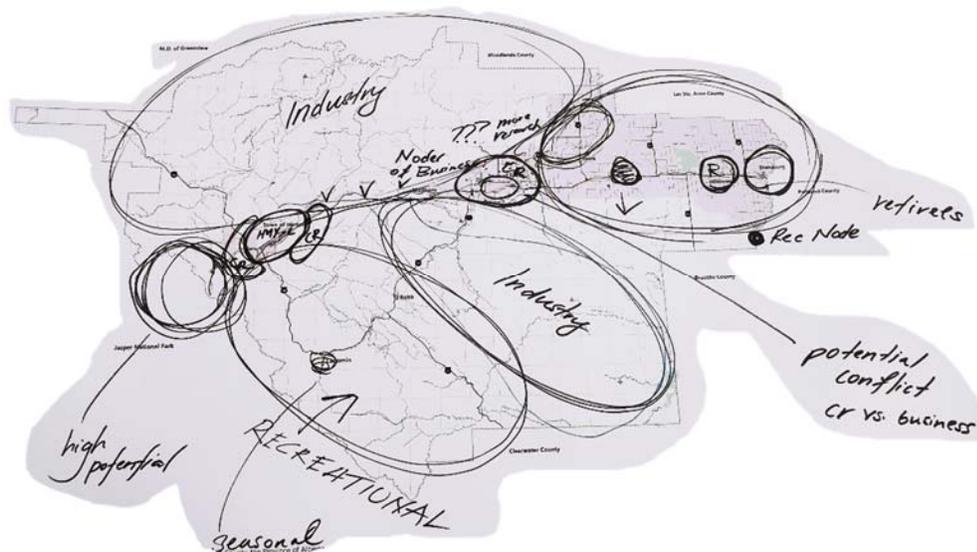
**Engagement Event Feedback**

At the end of the event, participants were asked to complete a short survey about their experience at the Steering Committee Meeting to provide feedback to the project team. Those results are detailed below:

Generally, participants felt that they understood the engagement process and how their input would be used (97.5% strong agreed), that their voice was heard (95% strongly agreed) and that they were treated with fairness and respect at the event (95% strongly agreed).

In the open comments, Steering Committee members wrote that they appreciated the flow and design of the activities. That the groups worked well together and appreciated having people with different opinions in the group. They also were grateful for the information that was presented and how there were staff on hand to answer specific questions or provide other details to the groups.

# Conclusions

### Focus Groups

The Steering Committee identified the following topics that may be the subject of interest for the proposed focus group's.

- Home Occupations
- Gravel Extraction
- FireSmart
- Unsightly Properties
- Work Camps

The project team will be reviewing input received from the Steering Committee and the public survey prior to identifying the specific topics for each focus group.

### Consolidated Districts

The Steering Committee identified potential principles that could be used to decide when to consolidate districts. These principles included reviewing the districts for commonalities or redundancies, considering the impacts of development as opposed to specific land uses as well as seeking to simplify the land use framework in the County.

In addition to considering these principles, the project team will be considering the specific consolidations proposed by the Steering Committee to identify a preferred consolidation scenario that will serve as the basis for simplifying the land use bylaw moving forward.

# Appendix 1 – Steering Committee Terms of Reference

# Land Use Bylaw Update Steering Committee
Terms of Reference

## Committee Objective
To identify public concerns related to the update of the Yellowhead County Land Use Bylaw and provide the project team (including municipal staff and project consultants) with suggestions related to key decisions relevant to the update.

## Committee Roles
1. Receive progress reports from the consultant (Green Space Alliance) and County staff.
2. Provide input or make recommendations on changes or other required actions related to goals and objectives of the Land Use Bylaw update.
3. Make recommendations as to where emphasis and priorities lie relative to the Land Use Bylaw update.
4. Make recommendations to the project team regarding the general plan, findings and regulations of the Land Use Bylaw.
5. Engage other members of the business community, general public or stakeholders where practical to help solicit input regarding proposed recommendations for the project team that may be advanced to Council.
6. Inform the consulting team of history, issues and opportunities relative to the unique process of development in Yellowhead County including but not limited to availability of land, geotechnical constraints, servicing, setbacks, nuisance sites and application process.

## Meeting Frequency
As required. Time and location to be determined.

## Membership
The Committee consists of nine (10) members: 2 members of County Council, County Mayor, 4 members at large, 2 business owners. Members of the project team (municipal staff and consultant) will also participate, provide administrative support to the Committee and record meeting notes. Other members of County administration may be invited to participate on an as needed basis.

## Council Representatives Role
1. To bring forward areas of interest from County Council and members of the public.
2. To report the actions of the committee to County Council.

## Reporting
Reports are made to County Council via:
1. Reports from the project team through meeting notes or other documentation.
2. Council Representatives can report to Council during the "Councillor Reports" item at Regular Council Meetings.