Open House – Comments Summary

On June 15th, 2017 from 4:30 pm to 8 pm, administration hosted an open house at Parkland County Centre. The purpose of the open house was to present the results of the proposed land use bylaw and to gather feedback related to Council's May 9, 2017 motion to amend the Land Use Bylaw definition of Outdoor Participant Recreation Services. The results herein reflect comments specifically related to Outdoor Participant Recreation Services. There were 99 attendees (plus 6 that declined to sign in) that signed in, with slightly more than half residing outside of Parkland County (see **Figure 1: Where attendees reside**).

For the purposes for this analysis, the results of the Land Use Bylaw refresh and the proposed amendment to Outdoor Participant Recreation Services were analyzed separately. In addition, some of the attendees provided supplementary documents to support their position on the LUB amendment. One individual provided information supporting Gun Ranges from examples of success stories from the Town of Taber and the City of Saskatoon. Another individual provided exerts from a court decision and a RCMP information pamphlet supporting the motion against Gun Ranges in proximity to residential areas supported.

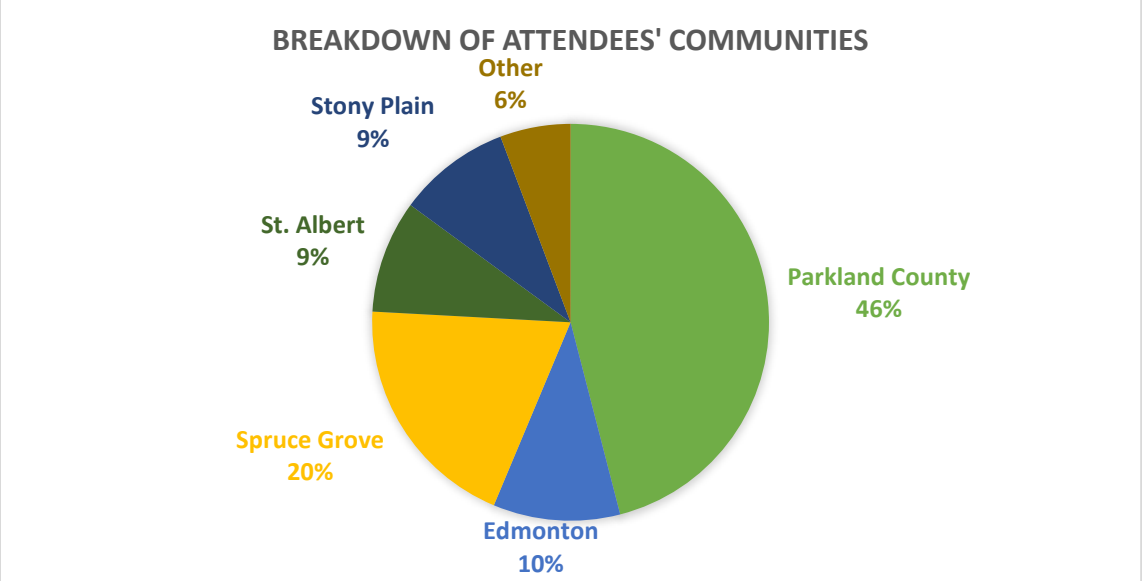

Figure 1: Where attendees reside

Outdoor Participant Recreation Services Amendment – Summary of Comments

The analysis consisted of finding trends from the comment sheets and sticky notes placed on the board. In some cases, it was unclear if respondents were for or against Council's motion. The analysis uncovered themes that were broken down into 3 broad categories: against the motion, for the motion, and other. The following is a summary of the three broad categories and the common themes found:

Against the motion: most common reasons were nostalgia of having a Gun Club in the community for several decades, gun safety (both teaching gun safety and securing locations where guns could be fired), training for law enforcement and competitive shooters, and recreational activities

For the motion: most common reasons were nuisances of hearing gun shots, safety concerns from stray bullets, and possible environmental contamination from lead bullets

Other included comments about County politics, compatibility of adjacent land uses, conflict with neighbours (including the urban – rural interface), and suggestions for mitigation

The following is a list of observations from the qualitative data analysis:

More comments were against (43) than for (11) the motion. Nearly half (31) of the comments were not explicitly clear if they were for or against the amendment, **Figure 2**.

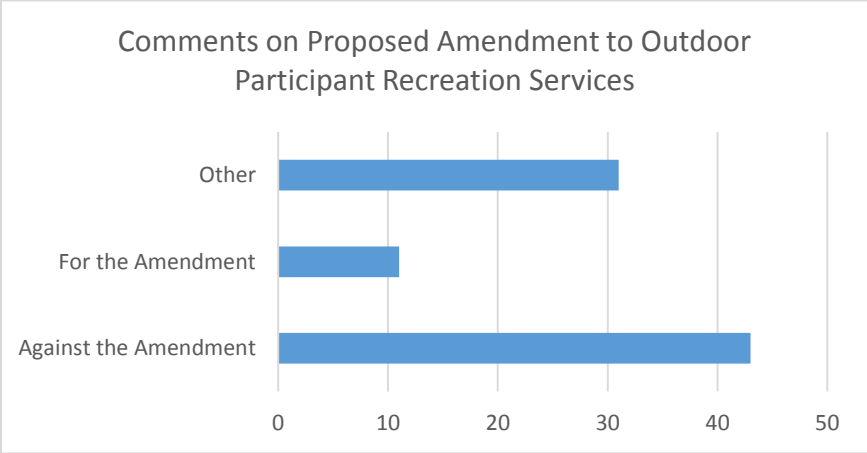

Figure 2: Outdoor Recreation Definition

The following is the unfiltered data from the open house.

Outdoor Participant Recreation Services:

Council Motion of May 9, 2017:

Amendments to exclude outdoor gun ranges – *That Administration be directed to prepare an amendment to the Land Use Bylaw and the accompanying definition section of the bylaw to exclude outdoor gun ranges from the definition of Outdoor Participant Recreation Services within all residential districts.*

Comments:

1. The experiences I had as a child, I would like to share with my own. Keep SGGC open.
2. If council wants to put residential development next to existing outdoor gun ranges, then the County or the development should make an investment in installing and maintaining sound mitigation measures
3. Firearm use must always be allowed in the County. Ranges must be kept open for the safety and training of all new shooters
4. As a new shooter, this is heartbreaking. SGGC provides a safe facility with emergency measures (STARS), mandatory safety meetings & a sense of community for the sport
5. Having the range to go to puts the sighting in & practicing in an environment more desirable then my acreage
6. Shooting ranges users are safe, law abiding people who have chosen to recreate using guns. They are not criminals, nor dangerous
7. Put your houses up for sale and we will buy them
8. Drop the amendment to include gun ranges. Allow the reopening of the Spruce Grove Gun Club
9. If the County wants to shut down an existing range, then the County should pay the range the current value of the structures and improvements. This would give the operating club the funds to develop another area
10. Council 'feels' that outdoor ranges are not compatible with residential developments. In other municipalities, Lethbridge and Kelowna being examples, ranges and residential developments co-exist. Why can't Parkland County find a way for co-existence?
11. Is Council advancing personal agenda's against gun ranges? Do they automatically give anyone who uses the "screams until I get my way" tactic what the complainants want?
12. There are a large number of residents in the County that shoot and hunt. Providing a controlled, certified range is a practical, logical solution to provide a safe place to enjoy the sport. SGGC is the best club range I have attended in the Country. Closing SGGC does a disservice to all residents. Both shooting and non-shooting. Thank you.
13. Closure of a safe CFO approved range only forces law abiding citizens to look elsewhere including using Crown Land. Crown Land is not a safe controlled place to practice or participate in shooting sports.
14. SGGC provides a safe place for law abiding gun owners to enjoy the sport. It also removed a considerable amount of free shooters on private & Crown Land in the area
15. To Council & Administration: please find a solution instead of a win/loose scenario.

16. Spruce Grove has been operating considerably longer than developers have been investing for profit in the area. It's a choice to live near a gun range, just as a highway or mall or gravel pit
17. I moved close the Range 25 years ago because I'm involved in the shooting sports. I also lead a junior Forest Wardens Youth Group where we take the children to the Spruce Grove Gun Club to teach them responsible safe use of firearms. Don't close the Ranges!!
18. The County should provide a new shooting facility, rezoning after the shooting range was there, some considerations should be made to SGGC. New land for range from County.
19. Gun Ranges are needed not only to teach and enjoy shooting safely, but to attack thousands of people who spend money in the County. You will lose Achilsen and coal plant eventually and attractions will keep the County from being a "have not County"
20. Environmental assessments for water and land use
21. Loss of training facility for Swiss citizens
22. Range has been there for years, it should be maintained
23. Individuals have no right to dictate how others recreate!
24. This bylaw is only 15 years late. With Atim Creek Restructure Plan the SGGC should have been relocated
25. Council needs to clarify what a 'firearm' is, then look to see if the definition could be used to shut down other recreation uses, e.g. paintball, archery ranges, air gun range
26. Is a training facility for law enforcement & others a recreational use?
27. Residents of Parkland County deserve a safe educational place to shoot. This bylaw amendment directly affects the SGGC and should not move forward
28. Re Gun Range: County & Developers of acreages must reimburse gun club for relocation. County and land developers gain the money with acreages
29. Excluding outdoor gun range from one community would not be a big deal, however, if we let it happen, it would spread over the whole Province like a virus. Eventually, this sport will be gone for ever. Please think over!!
30. Government employees used to be able to train here. They now train at facilities further away and more expensive. This costs the tax payer more and is the detrimental to Provincial employees time with their family
31. Please stop the Gun Club from destroying the peace and endangering our lives for their sport!
32. Gun ranges are an essential part of recreation hand guns, long rifles need a safe space. Without a gun in close proximity people may have a tendency to use unauthorized spaces that are unsafe
33. Loss of tourism dollars for multiple shooting disciplines
34. No gun clubs on producing dairy farms, lead contamination
35. Loss of gun club = lots of unhappy, law-abiding gun owners = retribution in the upcoming election
36. Shooting in an important professional sport like any other. Even more important to provide safe training facilities for hunters and youth alike. Far better than people shooting on open land or acreages
37. Revise bylaw to exclude outdoor gun ranges within core residential zoning
38. If you are moving next to a shooting range, you should know what to expect. When you trip on a rock, do you blame the rock for being there?

39. Gun Clubs are run by safe, responsible law abiding citizens. They are always finding ways to improve safety and are accommodating to local home owner complaints. Cutting these clubs out makes no logical sense.
40. The county of Parkland is responsible for its actions. They are the reason dwellings exist near the range. They should help relocate the range within the County.
41. Closing gun clubs will cause unsafe shooting with in controls
42. Please keep the range open. Our family values having a safe place to teach our children firearm safety. This bylaw would force shooting families to spend their money out of County.
43. The ostracism of gun owners from participating in a legal recreational activity within Parkland County unacceptable. We deserve equal opportunity to pursue and practice our interests
44. Please don't close the Ranges as it is a safe place to discharge firearms
45. Do not close the ranges. Do not change the laws. Remember this is an elections year!!
46. A safe, controlled gun range is far safer than everyone moving to Crown or friend land in the area without being able to control who comes around the corner.

Long form comments:

1. Outdoor Gun Ranges are the safest place to shoot in Parkland County. Excluding them from acceptable recreation activities in country Residential is wrong. I do not support the motion to exclude Gun Ranges from Country Residential zoned lands.
2. I purchased my Country Residential property approximately 10 years ago. I was going to build and settle in that area until I found out that it was in a safety zone and a backstop for the Gun Range stray bullets. I have paid taxes for years but I can't build there because my neighbour's house and shop are getting hit by stray bullets. When the Gun Club was operating I could not have my family over and I had limited use of my land because I would not walk onto the land when they were shooting. This has cost me so much time, money and aggravation. Please stop the Gun Club from destroying the peach and endangering our lives for their sport.
3. The proposed bylaw amendment fails the test of government – Legislation must be fair and equitable. One way to make this unnecessary bylaw equitable would be to "grandfather" Spruce Grove & Wabamun Gun Clubs. Be as creative as you need to be to get this grandfathering in place.
4. If noise is a problem, list to a ski doo, or quads & smells – bar cows, farming, hunting
5. Gun Range allows safe use of firearms rather than uncontrolled shooting off roads. This as much a recreation facility as Golf Course. Ranges should be grandfathered. Gun range existed prior to acreages. I have been a member since 1976.
6. Why are no County Council present for this open house?
7. Shooting sports are internationally recognized and consists of a wide variety of activities ranging from skeet to pistol. This County consists of a great number of law abiding firearms owners who enjoy. Why the hell is the County against property organized and responsible shooting clubs are you that eager to be voted out? Having access to a proper firearms range is smart consideration. Without this, you get people shooting in a controlled environment instead of shooting off of access roads and trespassing on private land.

8. Re Open this Gun Range! The Spruce Grove Gun Club meets and exceeds all federal requirements. This facility is beneficial to all. I am from Boyle, AB working in Edmonton, This facility is beneficial to me as a civilian and also beneficial (even more so) for my employment as a Sheriff. We always used to shoot here our yearly qualifying is easier to complete at this range. The Spruce Grove Gun Club allows use alternative choices to the more expensive and less available city ranges. Sheriffs can train here during the week and therefore, can train less expensively and without sacrificing weekends with their families. By utilizing the Spruce Grove Gun Club Sheriffs & civilians give revenue to this area that is otherwise lost to lesser facilities. Provincial Government training funds are being wasted on training facilities that do not complement working days (Mon – Friday). As a civilian gun enthusiast & a government employee I support the reopening of the Spruce Grove Gun Club.
9. How much responsibility does this Council have for County finances. This is a perfect opportunity for a class action lawsuit to bankrupt the County. The Counties actions and decisions have opened it up to liability. The county taxpayers will be left with the bill.
10. It is a relief to finally see the County step up for the residents As mentioned before this should have been done in 2002 when Atim Creek was rezoned. There is info out there the SGGC has come up with a creative way to still shoot on Surrey Farms as guest shooters. Reality is Surrey Farms already has a range. It is on their property, they pay the taxes for the area that was utilized so in my opinion it is theirs. This Club was allowed to use it. Do Surrey Farms want the liability as luck would run out & someone would get hit. Hopefully, something will be built into this new bylaw to address future concerns, i.e. Wabamun to ensure should the time come, there is a plan in place. Also the bylaw should read in areas zoned as "country residential" & areas adjacent to
11. I am a National Team Shooter in Olympic Rifle and shoot Internationally representing Canada. I live 2 km from SGGC for almost 30 years. I am now ____ at relocating out of the County to be able to train. I am not comfortable with all the shooting tailing patch that is not in a safe, controlled environment.
12. Do not open the range!! Unless the County would like to continue the fight with tax paying residents. We pay thousands of dollars in taxes and the Gun Club pays zero dollars. They are not an economic benefit to the County. They do not add to the community. They do not enhance the enjoyment of my property or those near me. I am the closest home to the range and my property enjoyment has gone up exponentially since the closure. The County has already spent $200k plus on this issue and its time to stop! We pay hundreds of thousands of dollars in taxes to enjoy our properties – Shenfield's pay farm taxes and the squatters pay nothing!
13. The frustration of the biased and unfair situation that the SGGC has been put in over the past few years has gotten to the point of anger for me. The SGGC is proven safe & well within its legal noise limits. Finally, SGGC won their court cases and suddenly the county comes up with another way to attempt to shut them down! I am a land owner & taxpayer in Parkland County and am appalled by the constant disrespect being shown to the shooting sports. The subdivisions now surrounding the club are in no danger and if they didn't want to live next door to a gun range they shouldn't have moved there. If the county doesn't want the SGGC there they should have to pay to move them to a location in comparable

distance from Spruce Grove where such happenings can be guaranteed to not occur again. I think excluding gun ranges is a bad idea. The people who use them are law abiding, responsible gun owners who have the right to practice their sport in a safe location that they pay for and maintain.

14. I am member of the Spruce Grove Gun Club. It is a great sport for the young and old. We need gun clubs to teach the new generations safety and gun use, and a place for people to participate in the sport. This Club is 43 years old and has run the club under proper federal laws. We do not believe you can change a property that has been running again for 43 years. It if cannot continue at the location it is currently in then the County must provide a new location for this gun sport. You must follow the laws as the club has and do the right thing for a group of citizens to continue their hobbies/sport/passion.
15. I am a member of both Spruce Grove Gun Club and Wabamum Gun Club, plus my family owns ½ section of land off Langley Road where we've hunted for over 60 years. To us this proposed ban of shooting ranges is a big mistake; a disservice to citizens who join and do organized target practice. It has greatly affected (closure) a large number of law abiding citizens and land enforcement. It is causing people to be to areas where safety is questioned some former SGGC members. Now target shoot on the Jackpine Grazing Reserve. I'm sure others are migrating all over this is a terrible regressive step. This will (closures) will satisfy some people who shouldn't have built near a gun range, but will negatively affect the whole County.
16. People buying cheap land shouldn't be able to complain and close to an existing facility. Parkland needs a safe & controlled space for shooting. We don't want residents to have to worry about quadins, liking or other outdoor recreation and coming around the corner upon someone shooting targets. Outdoor gun ranges need to be allowed.
17. Where are the counsellors?
18. Where are the counsellors?
19. Bed and Breakfast: is this with other present. Can they rent as a party house or a business for nights and weekend? Rey
20. Where are the counselors, whats the point, we can't ask you questions. Bad politics.
21. Spruce Grove Gun Range is by far the safest gun range I have been a member of. This community needs a safe place to learn about gun safety. No Range = to kids and adults to carry on shooting in less safe area and uncontrolled.
22. Professional controlled shooting ranges are far safer than people shooting on their own lands uncontrolled. Take away facilities or making it harder opens temptation. Provide the facilities and promote safe training and use will pay off in the long run. Target shooting in an International sport, it should be supported. Shooting directly into a hill is as safe as it gets.
23. There are two articles I left with Jasmine as examples of the Gun Community and the Municipal Government working together to maintain shooting ranges in Alberta and Saskatchewan.
24. When a taxpayer says he is leaving the county, the correct response is not "fantastic", You're either not listening to the constituents or you're bad at being a councillor
25. Just admit it: you have not done the planning properly! The shooting range has been there long before any house went up there. And houses should never be allowed that close to a

shooting range. The loss of the shooting range is both a loss to the gun owners, and a loss to the County. And the supporters of the range with make their wrath felt in the by-election this fall.

26. Pay to relocate SGGC to another parcel of land within the County. Council members should not be on the Subdivision and Development Appeal Board. It's a conflict of interest disguised as a 'good mix'
27. So where exactly are all the councillors for this very important open house? County admin people can only say so much – the councillors need to be asked some very tough questions. Shameful!
28. I understand the request to change, what I don't understand is the political nonsense that has taken place to create the situation in which a few people can dictate law changes. Regardless, if it is a gun range or something else, it is a politically charged process that should not be allowed. You cannot use the offices to deny something that has been in place without incident for over 40 years, just because people have decided to build around a facility they don't want (NIMBY). Are you prepared to reimburse the members for the cost of material and maintenance they have to spend in adm to comply with your requests when you have no intention of allowing the permit to proceed?
29. Do not amend the bylaw. Outdoor gun range specifically SGGC is a benefit to the community. It is a safe facility.
30. The County have the responsibility of land use since day 1. The sport of shooting was going since 1991 that I know of and has been a major sport facility in training – safety of all firearms for generation past and present. The outdoor sport of shooting is a big part of any community across the country. If Parkland sees fit to close this facility of 40 years in the community then maybe some help to relocate is the County's responsibility. And yes I am a member of this outdoor sport facility.
31. There should be no gun ranges in areas where there is residential. It has been so nice to live without the constant gun shots during the daylight hours. Locate It in an area that is far removed from residences. Far away!
32. Outdoor Gun Ranges should not exist on lands zone core country residential. Reasons for this are 1: Safety, one cannot be 100% sure bullets will never leave the Range; 2: Noise, gunshots are an 'impulse' type of noise and are disturbing by nature and are an annoyance to the property owners.
33. The County is in control of all development. SGGC was in operation in 1971. I was a member then. The County allowed all existing residences to build down range. As it stands today, I see that this has gone so far out of hand, that lets face it we have to move. Let see the County free up some land in the reclaimed area around Wabamun and help us relocate and rebuild.
34. Shooting is an Olympic sport for over 126 years. I train six days a week five hours a day for Olympic rifle. Does the County support sport?
35. Please don't let the gun club start up again. As a nearby resident of 25 years, the noise and stray bullets have driven us insane. Been fighting this for 4-5 years and won 3 court cases. Cost lots of time and money! The county has made many mistakes over the years – time to change the bylaw. The gun club doesn't belong in a residential area.

36. I say you have no right to close the gun club after 34 years. Where are people supposed to go to train, etc. I saw leave the Gun Club alone.
37. Please consider hunting, pests, waterfowl, big game and also gun clubs. These are sports!
38. I came here tonight to find out if your proposed land use bylaw changes affected the Wabamun Gun Clubs, but I was unable to get an answer from any of the Parkland Council representatives. This is very disappointing and a total waste of my time.
39. I need a safe place to shoot my firearms along with my children. Whichever bylaw will allow the continued use of the Spruce Grove shooting range is what I want.