

Bylaw 2025-12 Parkland County Land Use Bylaw**Recommendation:**

1. That Bylaw 2025-12 receive third reading.

Introduction:

Administration has completed the Land Use Bylaw ReDesign Project and is recommending that Bylaw 2025-12 Parkland County Land Use Bylaw receive third reading. The approval of Bylaw 2025-12 will rescind and replace the current Land Use Bylaw (2017-18).

Background:

The Land Use Bylaw (LUB) is Parkland County's primary tool for regulating land use and development to ensure that neighbouring land uses are compatible. The province requires every municipality in Alberta to have a Land Use Bylaw as per the requirements of the Municipal Government Act. The Land Use Bylaw ReDesign proposes adopting a new set of regulations and land use maps, replacing the existing Land Use Bylaw 2017-18.

Land Use Bylaw ReDesign Project

Parkland County's Land Use Bylaw (LUB) ReDesign Project was carried out in two phases. Phase 1: Engagement and Foundational Research, involved an awareness and education campaign throughout the County to inform residents, business owners, and industry leaders about the project. This phase was essential for identifying the key themes related to land use that mattered most to the community. These themes, along with Council's priority outcomes, served as guiding principles throughout the project.

Phase 2: Engagement and Regulation Refinement, concentrated on the development of a refined and rewritten Bylaw Draft following the themes and priorities identified during Phase 1. Throughout this phase, Administration continued to engage with the community through open houses, surveys, focus groups, and Chat with a Planner discussions to ensure the draft regulations reflected the project goals. Administration focused on streamlining regulations, enhancing the document's transparency and clarity, recognizing community and industry trends, and incorporating feedback from the community.

Phase 3: Final Land Use Bylaw and Approvals is the final stage in the project in which the Land Use Bylaw will be presented to Council for consideration and the public for review and comment during the Public Hearing.

As a County-led initiative, the entirety of the Land Use Bylaw ReDesign project, including all writing, community engagement, delivery, and decision-making, was carried out by the County's internal project team.

LUB Changes

The updates to the Land Use Bylaw (LUB) are the result of internal collaboration involving administration, Council, external agencies, industry representatives, community associations, interest groups, and the public. These changes aim to enhance clarity, streamline development regulations, align with new development types, and thoughtfully incorporate community feedback.

Public Consultation and Engagement:

Engagement for the Land Use Bylaw Redesign project was completed in three (3) rounds.

- Round 1: Introduction and Project Kick-off (2023) – Introduce the project
- Round 2: Focused Engagement (Spring/Summer 2024) – Identify concerns and priorities while generating ideas and solutions for regulation development
- Round 3: Draft Land Use Bylaw (Fall 2024) – Engage and provide feedback on the Draft Land Use Bylaw

Further, for internal stakeholder support, the project team circulated any draft regulation to the various County departments for comment and review. This process ensured that regulation changes aligned with other operational priorities.

Throughout the LUB ReDesign, the Project Team recognized the value of public input and hosted many opportunities for engagement through the project phases. In total, the LUB Project included over 500 participants in a range of activities, including:

- 19 Open Houses
- 1 Cross County Roadshow (accounted for in Open House Total)
- 5 Internal Workshops/Reviews
- 6 Focus Groups
- 10 Council Committee Meetings
- 8 Council Workshops
- 30 one-on-one 'Chat with a Planner' discussions
- 3 Community Event Sessions
- 1 Online and physical survey with 90 responses
- 1 Online comment tool for the Draft Land Use Bylaw with 54 comments and over 9500 bylaw views

As part of the writing and engagement process, the Draft Land Use Bylaw underwent a legal review to ensure that the proposed regulations aligned with the rights granted by the MGA and that they were legally defensible. The final version of the Land Use Bylaw incorporates all comments made in the Legal Review.

What We Heard Reports (WWHR) for all components of this project can be found on the project webpage at yourparkland.ca/lub

Analysis:

The Land Use Bylaw is an essential planning tool used by the County to manage land uses and buildings within its boundaries. The Land Use Bylaw also helps achieve the goals and policies outlined in other County documents, such as Area Structure Plans and the Municipal Development Plan, which provide a long-term vision for growth and development. The Bylaw provides certainty to residents, businesses, and visitors in Parkland County about the types and forms of developments that can be expected in the future. Every municipality in Alberta is required to have a Land Use Bylaw, as specified in the Municipal Government Act. Additionally, each municipality must ensure that its Land Use Bylaw complies with Provincial and Federal legislation related to land matters.

To support good planning practices, Land Use Bylaws should be frequently reviewed and updated to respond to changing conditions to continue meeting the evolving needs of municipalities and their residents.

The last substantive Land Use Bylaw update in Parkland County was completed in 2009. With the last consolidation of amendments occurring in 2017. Further, in 2021, The Village of Wabamun joined Parkland County, bringing an additional Land Use Bylaw to be considered for development decisions. This regulatory context made a comprehensive update to the Parkland County Land Use Bylaw necessary to :

- Align definitions and regulations between the Wabamun Land Use Bylaw and the Parkland County Land Use Bylaw, reducing conflicts between regulations and the County's strategic direction.
- Address new development types not contemplated in Bylaw 2017-18 by adding new use classes. For example, Event Venues, Agri-Tourism, and Speciality Manufacturing. Addressing this gap provides clarity and certainty for approvals with these new development types.
- Consolidate similar Land Use Districts and Use Classes to reduce complexity and provide greater flexibility.
- Modernize site design regulations, such as landscaping and parking, to balance costs and maintain flexibility
- Align the Land Use Bylaw with County Policy to ensure consistent decision-making
- Utilize plain language to create a document that is easier to understand and use for applicants.

The proposed Land Use Bylaw 2025 aims to address these opportunities by carefully introducing new definitions and regulations. The new bylaw consolidates similar uses and districts, aligns regulations with current industry practices and community preferences, and employs clear and consistent language throughout the document. Additionally, icons and graphics have been developed and incorporated to enhance usability and understanding.

Circulation

In accordance with the requirements of the Municipal Government Act and County Policy, Administration circulated the proposed bylaw to relevant agencies and adjacent municipalities between March 25 2025 and April 17, 2025. Internal circulation occurred prior to first reading. In total, Administration received 2 external written responses.

During circulation, Administration identified minor grammatical changes which were necessary to update prior to submission for third reading of Bylaw 2025.12. Administration has included a redline of the changes proposed as a part of the agenda package at second reading and the public hearing. Council moved the amended motion to support these changes after the closure of the public hearing on April 22, 2025.

Public Hearing

A public hearing for Bylaw 2025-12 occurred on April 22, 2025. Council passed Bylaw 2025-12 with minor amendments to address feedback and grammatical changes.

Policy Framework Review:

The policy frameworks relevant to the consideration of the proposed Land Use Bylaw are as follows:

1. The newly adopted Municipal Development Plan has been considered throughout the writing process to ensure alignment of regulations with the overall vision for the County's future. As such, regulations have been crafted to ensure alignment between the proposed Land Use Bylaw and the Municipal Development Plan.
2. The County's Area Structure Plans were considered when crafting new regulations to ensure that the buildout of these areas of interest are aligned with Council-approved Statutory Plans.
3. Parkland County Strategic Plan 2022-2025: The following policy statements within the current Parkland County Strategic Plan support the proposed Land Use Bylaw:

Pillar A: Complete Communities

- A1 - To ensure that County infrastructure meets the needs of residents, businesses, and industry

- A2 - To create a sense of belonging and well-being by enriching our communities with relevant amenities.

Pillar B: Economic Diversification

- B1 - To explore strategies that encourage new businesses to locate in Parkland County, with strategic emphasis on Acheson and the Wabamun area.
- B2- To add emphasis to recreation and rural tourism to diversify the County's economic opportunities.
- B3 - To attract diversified energy investment in Parkland County
- B4 - To support existing and new businesses in Parkland County with a focus on micro and small businesses.

Pillar C: Respect Environment and Agriculture

- C2 - To recognize the importance of preserving prime agricultural land available for production
- C3 - To support our agricultural community.

Pillar D: Responsible Leadership

- D1 - To ensure that County Council is supported by a robust and current framework of bylaws, policies, and plans.
- D2 - To strive for organizational excellence in delivering County services and programs to residents, businesses, and community groups.

Conclusion

Administration recommends that Council give Bylaw 2025-12 third reading as it is in alignment with Parkland County's Strategic Plan 2022-2025.

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