

Mixed land use and recreation & tourism development in residential areas

Purpose:

The research factsheet explores the following:

- supporting mixed land uses in the County's residential areas to encourage the creation of rural "complete communities"; and,
- expanding the potential for recreation and tourism developments to be located in the County's residential areas.

Parkland County Strategic Plan – Rural Complete Communities

Parkland County Strategic Plan supports the development of "complete communities" under Strategic Plan Pillar # 1 – Complete Communities. Key elements of a complete community as defined in the MDP include:

- providing a range of housing options
- easy access to jobs (i.e. economic opportunities)
- local amenities, services and community facilities

The County's approach to rural "complete communities" is reinforced in the Edmonton Metropolitan Growth Plan which identifies key components of "complete communities" as *"... housing suitable for all ages and income levels, and (the provision of) easy access to jobs, local amenities, services, community facilities and access to multi-modal transportation"* (Edmonton Region Growth Plan, pg. 100).

The County's MDP has adequately protected lands for future residential development (MDP Figure 7 – Development Concept), however the plan has not supported a mix of land uses within its residential areas. A mix of land uses – including a "blend" or "combination" of residential, commercial / industrial, institutional and recreational uses is a key component of establishing complete communities by ensuring various uses are accessible and in close proximity to residents, regardless of ability levels or mobility constraints.

Mixed land uses and the MDP

MDP Bylaw 2017-14 supports a broad range of mixed land uses and value added business in Hamlets, the Rural Agriculture Area, and Prime Recreation & Tourism areas. Mixed land uses are not explicitly supported in MDP designated residential areas. Supporting a greater mix of land uses in the County's residential areas would provide a wider range of community amenities and greater access to economic and employment opportunities for the County and its residents.

The MDP also places emphasis on recreation and tourism developments in the County. Recreation developments benefit the County by:

- providing greater community and societal benefits (improve resident quality of life)
- providing local and regional employment opportunities
- increases county economic benefits (assessment and taxation, tourism)

Recreation and tourism in residential areas

Statutory plans including MDP Bylaw 2017-14 and County ASP's need to allow for a greater mix of recreation and tourism developments in the County's residential areas. By supporting greater opportunities for recreation and tourism in residential areas, the County will:

- support the "mix use" of residential areas and rural complete communities;
- provide for better access for recreational and tourism uses (both indoor and outdoor) for both local and regional residents;
- provide better (and closer) economic and employment opportunities for local residents; and,
- support greater quality of life amenities for residents of all abilities (facilities are closer) and support community resilience (community facilities and economic opportunities are interspersed throughout the County)

Future MDP policy changes however, need to preserve the overall character of existing residential areas and not limit the long-term development of residential areas. Any future policy changes need to address the following:

- future recreation and tourism developments could be supported in residential areas where developments compliment the residential "build-out" of the area while also providing a local community and economic benefit;
- site servicing (if required) is developed to County standards and does not have a detrimental impact on adjacent residential areas;
- recreation and tourism developments may typically be planned / designed around a natural feature. Where such developments may be located in environmentally sensitive areas (i.e. High Priority Landscapes), developments shall comply with all existing County (MDP) policies, LUB regulations and applicable provincial and federal policies and regulations.

Recreation and tourism in residential areas should only be supported where community and economic benefits have been demonstrated and where developments do not have a deleterious impact on existing and future residential development, environmental areas and other land uses.

Other Benefits: accessibility and "ageing in place"

Better access to amenities (facilities and services) benefits residents by allowing compatible uses to develop closer to resident homes. When residents are closer to amenities, it makes it easier to walk, cycle, and drive to the services used on a day-to-day basis –versus having to drive into larger urban centres to access these facilities and services. This improves quality of life for people of all ages and abilities. For residents who drive to these amenities, it may also reduce the resources they spend using their vehicles and free up more time and money for the things they enjoy.

Ageing in place benefits residents because they are able to stay longer in the communities they are familiar with while they age. Ageing in place means residents can delay moving out of their own homes for as long as possible while their needs change. By staying in their own homes longer, it makes it easier for aging residents to maintain connections with friends and family and retain access to important community and social connections. Improving our designated residential areas by encouraging a greater “mix of land uses” will improve resident accessibility to needed amenities and improve the opportunity for “ageing in place”.

MDP amendments: future considerations – expanding the definition of recreation

The MDP definition of recreation in the MDP captures “active recreation” (biking, walking etc.) and not “leisure” activities which are more passive in nature but still support community well being. Recreation and Leisure – as an inclusive term can be seen as:

“...forms of expression or activity whose elements are as often physical in nature as they are intellectual, social, artistic or spiritual and provide individuals with benefits, such as freedom of choice, creativity, satisfaction, enjoyment and increased pleasure and happiness”.ⁱ

Incorporating “leisure” into the County’s understanding of “recreation, leisure and tourism” would capture a more comprehensive understanding of active and passive activities. Both active and passive activities improve quality of life while capturing potential (future) economic and employment opportunities. Passive developments may include uses such as libraries, cultural facilities (museums, nature centres), social gathering areas, bookstores and coffee shops in residential areas.

NOTE: Expanding the definition of recreation to include leisure activities requires additional review by Administration. These considerations will be addressed in future MDP updates.

Current examples in Parkland County

“Recreation & tourism” developments currently exist in the County’s CR-Country Residential districted areas in the County’s Land Use Bylaw (LUB). Proposed amendments to the MDP would align MDP policies to LUB regulations that already support recreation and tourism opportunities.

Name	Existing activity & location	LUB district	MDP Prime Rec Area	Land area	Description of development (eg. buildings, activities, ownership)
River Lodge Retreat	Retreat/Spa	ANC	No	22.12 ha	4 buildings resembling residences with 5-6 smaller accessory buildings
Carmelite Development	Spiritual Retreat	CR	Great Waters	14.52 ha	Retreat centre, parking facility
*Corn Maze	Recreation/Corn Maze	CR	Devon Dunes		Corn Field, out buildings
Devonian Botanic Gardens	Visitor attraction, education, research site	PC	Devon Dunes	31.66 ha	Gardens, gift shop, restaurant <i>NOTE: exempt from County permitting process</i>
*Killerney Farms	Horseback Riding	CR	Devon Dunes	16.19 ha	Residence
*Blarney Stone	Horseback Riding	CR	Devon Dunes	16.19 ha	Residence Outbuildings
Blueberry Hall	Community Hall	CR	Great Waters	1.42 ha	Ball diamond, playground
Clymont Hall	Community Hall	CR	Devon Dunes	8.11 ha	Outdoor rink, playground, ball diamond
Graminia Hall	Community Hall	CR	Devon Dunes	0.40 ha	Playground
Hycrest Place	Community Hall	CR	Great Waters	7.88	Playground, outdoor rink
Muir Lake	Community Hall	CR	No	2.33 ha	Ball diamonds
Rosenthal	Community Hall	CR	No	0.81 ha	Hall only
Woodbend Hall	Community Hall	CR	Devon Dunes	0.91 + 1.42 ha	Playground, ball diamond, soccer pitch (2 adjacent parcels)
Westland Park	Community Hall	CR	No	10.59 ha	Outdoor rink
Camp He Ho Ha	Recreation summer camp	PR	Wabamun/ Pembina	38.81 ha	Surface parking, residence buildings, assembly halls, pier

NOTE: Community Halls are recreational assets with tourism potential. Existing hall MDP designations and LUB districting should be reviewed in the future updates of both documents to ensure documents are consistent.

Current policy and regulatory framework in Parkland County

- **Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board (EMRB)**
 - Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan is silent on recreation and leisure developments in designated residential areas.
 - Growth Plan supports the development of Complete Communities.
- **MDP Bylaw 2017-14**
 - MDP Bylaw 2017-14 does not explicitly support a mix of land uses in the County's designated residential areas
 - MDP Bylaw 2017-14 does not support recreation and tourism development in the County's designated residential areas.
 - MDP Bylaw 2017-14 is limited in its current definition of "recreation & tourism" developments (does not capture the "leisure" aspect).
- **County ASP's**
 - Residential ASP's do not explicitly support mixed-land uses in the County's residential areas.
- **LUB regulations**
 - Permitted and Discretionary land uses in the majority of LUB residential districts allow for a greater "mix" of land uses than what is currently supported in the MDP. Proposed amendment would bring the MDP more "in line" with current LUB regulations.

Recommended changes

- **Edmonton Metropolitan Region Board (EMRB)**
 - Any proposed MDP amendments which do not change the overall size, principal use, or intent of existing designated or districted residential areas does not need to be referred to the EMRB.
- **MDP Bylaw 2017-14**
 - Amendments to MDP Section 7.0 – Rural Communities & Housing to support mix of land uses in MDP designated residential areas.
 - Amendments to MDP Section 8.0 - Recreation & Tourism Development to support recreational and tourism type opportunities in MDP designated residential areas.
 - Future amendments to MDP (not contemplated at this time):
 - Section 8.0 - Recreation & Tourism Development to expand recreation and tourism development to include the concept of "leisure" type developments.

- Adding a definition for “Recreation and Leisure” in the MDP with examples, and a review of community hall designations in the MDP.
- **County ASP’s**
 - Future amendments to County ASP’s:
 - Future amendments to County ASP’s should be considered as a means to promote a greater mix of compatible land uses in designated residential areas.
- **LUB regulations**
 - No current amendments proposed at this time.

ⁱ Lamanes, Trina (2019).