

DISCUSSION

1. The Project

The project has three components:

- an amendment to the Municipal Development Plan (MDP) to amend Map 2: Land Use Concept Map to re-district approximately 8.1 ha (20.0 ac) in the southwest corner of SE33-52-26-W4M from Fringe to Industrial/ Commercial;
- an amendment to the Acheson Industrial Area Structure Plan (ASP) to amend Map 4.1: Land Use Concept Map to re-district approximately 8.1 ha (20.0 ac) in the southwest corner of SE33-52-26-W4M from Open Area/Agricultural to Commercial/Industrial and to place all of SE33-52-26-W4M within Stage 1C development; and
- an amendment to the Land Use Bylaw (LUB) to amend Land Use District Map 9 and Map 9A to re-district approximately 8.1 ha (20.0 ac) in the southwest corner of SE33-52-26-W4M from the AGR – Agricultural Restricted District to the BI – Business Industrial District and approximately 24.2 ha (60.0 ac) in the southeast corner of SE33-52-26-W4M from the IRD - Industrial Reserve District to the BI – Business Industrial District.

2. Site and Previous Approvals

The quarter section is located immediately west of Highway 60, one half mile south of Parkland Highway (16A) in Zone 5 of the Acheson Industrial Park. Glowing Embers Campground and RV Storage is located immediately north of the subject quarter section. The site was historically used for extensive agricultural activities prior to 2008. The topography of the site is varied.

A previous landowner received approval from the County's Subdivision Authority in 2008 to develop sixteen lots on the north portion of the quarter section, but did not complete the project after commencing the installation of deep underground utilities. Remington Development Corporation has since completed the purchase of the quarter section and is applying for the necessary amendments prior to submitting a subdivision application to complete the proposed twenty-three lot single-phased development on the entire quarter section.

ANALYSIS:

Compliance with Capital Region Growth Plan and Approved County Plans

1. Municipal Development Plan

Approximately 8.1 ha (20.0 ac) of land in the southwest corner of the quarter section remains districted as Fringe in the MDP; the remainder of the quarter section is already districted Industrial/Commercial. Fringe areas are generally used in land use planning to recognize joint planning regions between municipalities; however, fringe can also be used to identify buffer areas. As in this case, the Fringe designation was used as a buffer (i.e. keep out incompatible uses) to identify the full build out extent of the Acheson Industrial Park as defined in the Acheson ASP (1997). The 8.1 ha of land was also currently districted Fringe as it was perceived, in 1997, to be outside the limits of cost-efficient water and sanitary sewer servicing. Bylaw No. 36-2011 is requesting a change from Fringe to Industrial/Commercial to permit consideration of a future 23 lot subdivision on the entire quarter section, including the 8.1 ha currently districted as Fringe.

SE 33-52-26-W4M, including the 8.1 ha in the southwest corner, contains primarily Class 2 Agricultural Soils under the Canada Land Inventory (CLI) rating system. In comparison, the same lands have a weighted Farmland Assessment Rating of 65.26% as utilized by the Alberta Government as determined under the Farmland Assessment Manual. This rating places these lands in the second highest category described as containing "good to very good arable" agricultural lands. However, the majority of the quarter section has already been identified and districted for industrial/commercial development leaving the remaining 8.1 ha of land difficult to use for agricultural activities. Furthermore, the entire

quarter section was stripped of topsoil in 2008 and taken out of agricultural production. The development of SE 33-52-26-W4M is consistent with Section 5 of the County's MDP where new industrial and commercial development will be directed to locate in appropriate existing identified and established industrial areas, including Acheson.

Bylaw 36-2011 has been referred to the Capital Region Board for approval under the Regional Evaluation Framework. The Capital Region Board (CRB) approval should be received on or before March 19, 2012. Council can consider giving this Bylaw third reading after CRB approval. Administration is of the opinion that Bylaw 36-2011 and development of SE 33-52-26-W4M is consistent with the land use policies of Priority Growth Area 'A' under the Capital Region Growth Plan to grow employment in the Acheson area where existing infrastructure can be logically and efficiently extended.

2. Acheson Industrial Area Structure Plan

Bylaw 37-2011 is requesting a change of the same 8.1 ha of land identified above from Open Area/Agricultural to Commercial/Industrial as depicted on Map 4.1: Land Use Concept Plan within the Acheson Industrial ASP. The amendment also requests that all of SE 33-52-26-W4M be considered as part of Stage 1C development on the staging plan, as also identified on Map 4.1.

The Applicant has provided satisfactory evidence that the additional 8.1 ha of current agriculture land in the southwest corner can now be readily serviced in an efficient and cost-effective manner with the rest of the quarter section via a gravity sanitary sewer main to the Zone 5 Sanitary Sewer Lift Station constructed in 2009. Water service is located along Range Road 264 approximately 800 metres (1/2 mile) from the quarter section's western boundary.

The amendment application is consistent with Policy 4.2.4(1) of the ASP which identifies that agricultural areas may be considered for additional serviced industrial/commercial development if it can be shown that these areas are inside the limits of cost-efficient water and sewer servicing.

Policy 4.2.4(2) identifies that open/agricultural areas in the ASP are also *"used to define separation distances [buffers] between future industrial/commercial land uses ... and other non-compatible land uses such as residential areas"*. A review of adjacent quarter sections (NW28, NE 28, and SE 33-52-26-W4M) identifies that no current residential uses exist, only extensive agricultural activities. Therefore, converting the 8.1 ha of agricultural land into Commercial/Industrial at this time should have little or no impact on existing residential uses in the southwest portion of the Acheson ASP area as the closest residences are located more than 800 metres (1/2 mile) away.

Further, the proposed Bylaw amendment is also consistent with the larger re-write of the entire Acheson ASP currently being drafted by the County that will be brought forward to Council for consideration sometime in the first or second quarter of 2012.

3. Land Use Bylaw

Map 9 and 9A in the Land Use Bylaw identify a total of three (3) separate zonings on the quarter section. The northerly 32.4 ha (80.0 ac) immediately adjacent to Glowing Embers is already districted BI – Business Industrial and is immediately available for industrial/commercial development. Again, the southwest 8.1 ha (20.0 ac) is districted separately from the lands to the north and east and falls under the AGR – Agricultural Restricted District, which is a similar to the situation in the MDP and ASP as discussed above. The remaining approximately 24.3 ha (60.0 ac) in the southeast corner of the quarter section is located within the IRD – Industrial Reserve District and is intended for future commercial/industrial development.

In 2008, a previous owner received County approval to develop sixteen lots on the northern portion of the subject lands for commercial/industrial use. When a development permit application is submitted to the County, the proposed development shall be required to reduce potential impacts for those adjacent land owners. As some industrial uses may have an impact on Glowing Embers Campground from the future industrial/commercial lots to the south, appropriate screening, landscaping, and setback requirements will have to be included as part of the application for the development permit. Therefore, subject to Council's approval to the change of zoning as requested under Bylaw 36-2011 (Amendment to MDP) and Bylaw 37-2011 (Amendment to Acheson ASP), Administration supports the consideration of Bylaw 38-2011 and the requested LUB amendments.

JUSTIFICATION

Administration supports Bylaws 36-2011, 37-2011, and 38-2011 and recommends that, after hearing public input through the public hearing process and depending on that input, Council give second reading to the three requested amendments. The proposed development of SE 33-53-26-W4M in its entirety for industrial/commercial development is consistent with the Capital Region Growth Plan, Municipal Development Plan, and other Approved Plans by the County. The development at this location in Zone 5 of Acheson is practical as existing infrastructure can be logically and efficiently extended and will open the remainder of Zone 5 for development given the new access point to Highway 60.

Written by: Stephen Fegyverneki, Christina Kortmeyer, Janna Widmer
February 14, 2012