



ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Topic: Bylaw 2020-11 to amend Land Use Bylaw (2017-18) Amendment Project for Wellness Centres

Introduction:

Administration is proposing Bylaw 2020-11 to amend Land Use Bylaw (2017-18) in order to support holistic health and wellness developments across Parkland County. The proposed Bylaw will add “Wellness Centre” as a new land use, specify which districts it will be allowed in, and outline specific use regulations and application requirements.

Background Information:

Parkland County has recently seen an increased demand from residents and the business community to support holistic health and wellness opportunities (“wellness centres”). These include, but are not limited to, group yoga practices, meditation and spa retreats, outdoor and indoor pools, and complementary activities such as outdoor eating areas.

The County’s Land Use Bylaw currently does not define this type of land use or provide specific regulations for wellness centres. As such, they are being captured under existing land uses that often do not consider their unique needs or features. To address this gap, Administration undertook an amendment to the Municipal Development Plan (2017-14) in 2019 to support recreation and tourism uses in more widespread areas of the County including in rural residential areas. To implement the above MDP amendment, Administration is proposing to also amend the Land Use Bylaw to enable “Wellness Centre” type developments across a range of land use districts.

The amended Land Use Bylaw, if approved by Council, will streamline the development permit process for developers interested in wellness centre development, provide transparency in how an application is evaluated, and support overall economic diversification initiatives across rural Parkland County.

On August 25, 2020, Council gave first reading to Bylaw 2020-11 and set a Public Hearing date of September 22, 2020 at 9:30 am via teleconference.

Analysis:

Background Research Summary

To inform the proposed amendment, Administration has undertaken a review of the existing Land Use Bylaw, existing wellness centre type developments across Alberta, and other municipalities’ land use planning documents. The detailed findings of this best practices review are shown in **Attachment 7 – Background Report**.

Public Engagement

In accordance with the provincial health requirements, public engagement for this amendment was conducted via a virtual open house webpage that ran from July 15, 2020, for one (1) week. Two (2) virtually staffed open house sessions were also scheduled on July 15 and 16 to directly engage with members of the public.

Newspaper, County website and social media advertisements ran prior to the virtual open house commencement. Industry and business stakeholders, such as developers of Nordic-style spas across Canada, were also notified and encouraged to attend the virtual open house.

Overall, there were 157 unique visitors to the virtual open house and four (4) written submissions via the website. The responses expressed concerns related to environmental sensitivities, servicing, and locating wellness centres in residential subdivisions and agricultural lands (see **Attachment 8 – What We Heard Report**).

The submitted feedback was considered and incorporated into the proposed Land Use Bylaw amendment.

Proposed Amendment:

Based on the findings of the best practices research and public engagement, Administration proposes that “Wellness Centres” be allowed in several agricultural and residential districts of the County, including AGG – Agricultural General District and CR – Country Residential District. This is generally due to 1) the increasing demand in these areas for wellness centre type developments, and 2) the unique nature of most wellness centres, which are typically low impact and incorporate well into the surrounding natural environment.

Additionally, it was determined that Wellness Centres may be reasonably appropriate as a Permitted Use in agricultural and residential districts, so long as they meet specific criteria such as not being in close proximity to multi-parcel residential subdivisions and having an approved Master Site Development Plan.

The amendment therefore directs that a Wellness Centre use can be either Permitted or Discretionary Use in certain districts, depending on whether it meets the criteria set out in the Fundamental Use Provisions under each district.

The proposed definition for Wellness Centre is also drafted to minimize potential land use conflict, including the exclusion of overnight accommodation and medical treatment type activities under Wellness Centre use, and from being located within multi-parcel residential subdivisions.

The specific use regulations and application requirements for Wellness Centre are also drafted to ensure land use compatibility, the suitability of subject lands for this type of development, and compliance with applicable legislation and regulations.

The proposed Land Use Bylaw amendment is shown as red font in **Attachment 6 – Land Use Bylaw with Redlined Amendment**.

Public Consultation:

Notice of the September 22 Public Hearing was advertised in the local newspapers for two weeks, as per the requirements of the *Municipal Government Act*. Administration has received no written submissions or registered speakers as of the date of this Report.

Policy Framework Review:

This Land Use Bylaw amendment project is supported by several Pillars found in the County’s Long-Term Strategic Plan “2040 and Beyond”, related to strategic economic diversification, complete communities, and respected environment.

This project is also supported by the County's *Municipal Development Plan* (2017-14), which was amended in 2019 to support recreation and tourism in more widespread areas of the County including in rural residential areas.

The relevant sections of the Long-Term Strategic Plan and the Municipal Development Plan are outlined in **Attachment 7 – Background Report**.

Recommendation:

Upon closing the Public Hearing, Administration recommends Council give second and third readings to Bylaw 2020-11 to amend Land Use Bylaw 2017-18 to include a new use and regulations for Wellness Centres.

Attachments:

- Attachment 1: Chair's Notes
- Attachment 2: Written Submissions for Public Hearing
- Attachment 3: List of Speakers for Public Hearing
- Attachment 5: Proposed Bylaw 2020-11
- Attachment 6: Land Use Bylaw with Redlined Amendment
- Attachment 7: Background Report – PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED ON AUG 25
- Attachment 8: What We Heard Report – PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED ON AUG 25
- Attachment 9: Administration's PowerPoint Presentation

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