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**6.1**

**Land Use Bylaw Update 2022**

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**RECOMMENDED MOTION**

That the Community Growth & Infrastructure Standing Committee recommend to Council that the agenda report dated June 13, 2022 entitled "Land Use Bylaw Update 2022" be received as information.

**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report provides general information regarding the Land Use Bylaw (LUB) Update Project that commenced in late 2021.

This report provides the high-level findings of the background technical report, which looked at Land Use Bylaws in Alberta, Ontario, and British Columbia to generate a series of best practices that are proposed to refine our existing Land Use Bylaw document.

## ALIGNMENT TO PRIORITIES IN COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN

This project is an extension of Council strategic priority #1 and #5. As the Municipal Development Plan (MDP) was approved in 2021, the changes within the MDP now need to cascade down to inform the regulations in the Land Use Bylaw that control development within the City of St. Albert, and ensure that the LUB is implementing *Flourish*.

*City of St. Albert Council Strategic Plan 2018-2021 (reapproved in 2021)*

Strategic Priority #1: Growth Policy Framework: Develop a robust policy framework to guide growth. Revise the Municipal Development Plan framework to provide direction to growth needs, annexation positioning, and our role in regional government.

Strategic Priority #5: Housing and Social Well-being: Enhance housing options and social supports. Facilitate an increase in the variety of housing types and provide social supports to respond to changing demographics and accommodate the diverse needs of residents.

*Corporate Business Plan 2021-2022*

Administrative Priority Area #3: Mandated Service Requirements.

Planned Activities: Complete update to the Land Use Bylaw.

## ALIGNMENT TO LEVELS OF SERVICE DELIVERY

*Current Planning Application Processing*

Processing and coordination of the approval of Statutory plans and amendments, subdivision, and condominium applications.

*Development and Building Permit Application Review and Enforcement*

Review and processing of applications for approval and enforcement of the Land Use Bylaw. The service includes review of new development and infill-related infrastructure required to service lands and traffic related data with growth.

## ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL (OR COMMITTEE) DIRECTION OR MANDATORY STATUTORY PROVISION

N/A.

## BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

About the Land Use Bylaw (LUB)

The Land Use Bylaw is part of a policy framework that guides the growth of St. Albert. The Land Use Bylaw is a detailed, technical document that provides regulations and guidance for our development community and the public, and fits into the policy framework as shown in Figure 1.

*Figure 1: Policy Framework*



The LUB is a document that is adopted by City Council, and manages development within the City of St. Albert limits. The LUB covers a wide range of development regulations, including the following:

- Establishing the development permit process, the process for redistricting (rezoning), and LUB text amendments.
- Regulates the size and use of land and buildings.
- Classifies land use districts (zones) and determines minimum development standards for each of these districts.
- Determines the appropriate permitted and discretionary uses for each land use district.

### Project Goals

The current Land Use Bylaw 9/2005 was approved in 2005. Although a significant number of amendments to the LUB have been enacted since, these have generally been done on a one-off basis.

The Land Use Bylaw update is intended to provide a comprehensive review of the document, with a focus on increased efficiency, flexibility, and responsiveness to current conditions. The project is identified within Administrative Priority Area #3 of the City of St. Albert Corporate Business Plan (2021-22).

The goals for this project include the following:

1. Aligning the Land Use Bylaw with our Municipal Development Plan;
2. Updating & modernization of the document; and
3. Creating an accessible, and web-friendly Land Use Bylaw.

### Project Team

In early 2022, a team of consultants was chosen to work on the project, which includes: ISL Engineering and Land Services, Urban Strategies Inc. (USI), and HydeTech Apps. The core team includes staff from the City’s Planning and Development Department, and ISL/USI.

### Project Phases

A five-phase project is planned:

Phase 1: Understanding Your Needs

- Phase 2: Section-By-Section Preparation
- Phase 3: Community Consultation
- Phase 4: Refinement and Adoption
- Phase 5: Post Adoption

Currently, we are in Phase 2 of the project. Stakeholder feedback and input was gathered, and incorporated into the findings of the background technical report in Phase 1. In Phase 2, we are now using the recommendations from the background technical report to refine each section of the Land Use Bylaw.

Background Technical Report and Proposed Recommendations

The consultant has conducted background research of the LUBs of other municipalities within Alberta and other provinces, to determine current best practices that can be incorporated into the LUB update. A high-level summary of proposed recommendations for improvement is listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Proposed LUB Changes

MDP Policy Guidance	Proposed Change	Rationale
N/A	Proposed re-organization of the document.	One goal of the project was to provide a user-friendly and accessible Land Use Bylaw. There are proposed changes to the layout that will make navigating the document and finding the relevant content easier. It is expected that there will be one single document when finished. Right now, on our website the document is divided into twenty (20) separate PDF's. There will also be simplification to districts and definitions.
Green Environment	Include a district for valued and protected environmental features	Right now, the designation on most sensitive environmental features is Public Park (P) District. This proposal would create a second district for more sensitive areas, such as the White Spruce Forest, or along the Sturgeon River or Carrot Creek, where only passive recreation and conservation are encouraged.
Green Environment	Ensure that environmental impact is considered in discretionary uses.	St. Albert may consider clearly indicating that potential off-site environmental impacts are a consideration of the Development Authority in their review of applications for discretionary uses, complementing environmental considerations by other City departments such as Engineering and Environment.

Green Environment	Strengthen tree preservation and planting requirements.	St. Albert's urban tree canopy is a highly valued asset, that is frequently referenced by the public as a valued quality-of-life factor. Any proposed LUB changes would be compliant with the new Engineering Standards, which also provides direction concerning trees & planting.
Robust Economy	Allow low-impact industrial and employment uses in more areas of the city.	One of St. Albert's 2021 strategic priorities, as well as a principle of the MDP, is to expand opportunities for employment and economic growth in the city. A critical strategy to support this priority will be to increase the available supply of land for industrial and other employment uses within the City. If a use does not produce any noise, heat, glare, dust, smoke, fumes, odours, vibration, or other external impacts, it could be appropriate in a mixed-use or commercial area.
Robust Economy	Expand on existing regulations to encourage home-based business and entrepreneurship.	Economic development in St. Albert can also be supported by small-scale, locally based businesses, including home-based businesses. With an increasing number of people working from home and staying within their neighbourhoods during the COVID-19 pandemic, there is growing awareness of the potential for a range of work to take place within traditionally residential neighbourhoods. We plan on expanding on our current set of home occupation regulations, while ensuring they meet a set of performance standards to mitigate neighbourhood impacts.
Housing Options	Consolidate and simplify residential districts for clarity and flexibility and allow a greater range of housing types in all communities.	Many Land Use Bylaws in Alberta are moving in the direction of simplicity by reducing the number of districts within a LUB. St. Albert also has some underutilized Land Use Districts that could be consolidated with other districts to simplify the Bylaw and allow a more diverse range of housing options.

<p>Mobility Choices</p>	<p>Apply block size standards to support active transportation</p>	<p>The current urban fabric of St. Albert is characterized by long segments of street, with a low number of intersections per hectare. The MDP's principles and policies strongly support development that encourages walking and cycling for everyday transportation. A well-established measure for supporting increased active transportation is small block sizes, which typically reduce travel distances and times while increasing route options for pedestrians, cyclists, and other non-motorized travel.</p>
<p>Mobility Choices</p>	<p>Right-size parking requirements</p>	<p>Reviewing and right-sizing parking requirements for St. Albert requires consideration of the local context. As a City with many commuters to Edmonton and other surrounding communities, and regional transit not yet established, most St. Albert residents will still require a car for day-to-day travel. Administration may consider a targeted approach to reducing parking requirements to support local businesses, residents, and developers.</p>
<p>Sustainable Growth</p>	<p>Encourage the development of more complete, walkable neighbourhoods</p>	<p>St. Albert's MDP emphasizes development of complete neighbourhoods where most daily needs can be comfortably met in a short walk (500 - 800 metres). This has the benefit of better community health outcomes, reduced carbon emissions, higher quality of life and convenience. The MDP includes policies to enable neighbourhood-oriented services and commercial uses within low-density neighbourhood areas, redevelopment of commercial sites within neighbourhoods into mixed use sites, and mixed-use nodes at key locations as part of the City's urban structure.</p>
<p>Sustainable Growth</p>	<p>Link zoning to transit.</p>	<p>St. Albert's MDP directs the greatest mix of uses and highest densities to the Trail Corridor Areas along St. Albert Trail, to support the planned expansion of rapid transit from Edmonton into the City. Today, these areas are largely dominated by single-use commercial areas, but over time they are planned to include residential and office uses. Appropriate districting (zoning) near rapid transit supports major investments in public infrastructure and contributes to less automobile-reliant communities.</p>

Great Places	Design mixed-use, civic and commercial districts for people, not cars.	The importance of people-focused urban design is recognized in the MDP. Streetscape policies include direction that development be oriented towards public streets, include active uses at grade, and minimize blank walls and parking areas beside public streets.
Resilient Infrastructure	Support and enable the adoption of renewable energy sources.	This is part of the City's response to climate change. The proposal is to accommodate and encourage renewable energy technologies, both in residential and industrial settings within the LUB. We do currently have some regulations, such as section 6.24 on solar collectors. The goal would be to build and expand on what we have.
Resilient Infrastructure	Align land use bylaw and engineering standards to enable and encourage green infrastructure.	The new Municipal Engineering Standards were approved for use in November 2021. This action item will ensure that any changes that were made while writing the new Municipal Engineering Standards are supported by the regulations in the Land Use Bylaw.
Community Well-being	Remove regulatory barriers to supportive housing models.	St. Albert could consider consolidating definitions regarding supportive and group homes under one definition and distinguish the use primarily by land use impacts, not users. The City may also consider expanding the areas in which such uses are permitted, recognizing them as a compatible residential/institutional-type use.
Community Well-being	Support food security, availability, and entrepreneurship through urban agriculture.	Expand on the work already completed with hens & bees initiatives. St. Albert could consider a clear, flexible definition for community-oriented food uses and permit this use broadly in most land use districts.
Cultural Richness	Expand the existing Downtown District and update the applicable regulations to reflect the policies and guidelines of the DARP.	MDP Map 3 shows a broader area of downtown than is reflected in the current Downtown (DT) District in the LUB. This action item can align the boundaries of what is considered downtown between the documents and ensure the LUB regulations are also consistent with the intent of DARP.

## STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATIONS OR ENGAGEMENT

Two online stakeholder workshops were held on April 5, 2022, with stakeholders from other government agencies, community groups, the business & development community, and City staff.

The proposed reorganization, and improvement initiatives were presented, and followed up with a question-and-answer session between all parties. Response to the proposal was generally positive.

The public did not attend these preliminary stakeholder events. The public will be invited to comment once a draft of the revised Land Use Bylaw is written. The expected timeline for this is August or September 2022. There will be several opportunities for public engagement throughout this process, including open houses, virtual open houses, a community pop-up, and online surveys. These will be advertised on the Cultivate the Conversation webpage at: [conversation.stalbert.ca](http://conversation.stalbert.ca). The project webpage features a Q&A function, so members of the public can submit questions or feedback on the webpage directly.

As reconciliation is a priority for the City of St. Albert, there will be respectful consideration of First Nations and Metis concerns to obtain their unique voice and perspective.

## IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

### Financial:

This project was approved by a previous Council for the 2021 budget, in fall of 2020, under Capital Charter No. PLAN-005. The project is currently within the allotted budget.

### Legal / Risk:

None at this time.

### Program or Service:

None at this time.

### Organizational:

None at this time.

## ALTERNATIVES AND IMPLICATIONS CONSIDERED

If the CGISC does not wish to accept this report as information only, the following alternatives could be considered:

1. CGISC may choose to direct Administration to proceed with only some or none of the proposed Land Use Bylaw changes (in Table 1) or may provide specific alternative direction for Administration to incorporate.
2. CGISC may choose to not direct Administration at this time.

Report Date: June 13, 2022

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