

## **Priorities Committee Meeting\_Jan28\_2020**

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### **STRATEGIC INITIATIVE AND UPDATE**

#### **Land Use Bylaw - Solar collector systems update**

##### **Report Purpose**

To provide an update to Priorities Committee regarding an upcoming proposal to amend the Land Use Bylaw (LUB) to address solar collector systems.

##### **Our Prioritized Strategic Goals**

Goal 2 - Manage, invest and plan for sustainable municipal infrastructure

Goal 4 - Ensure effective stewardship of water, land, air and energy resources

##### **Report**

Policy contained within the Municipal Development Plan Bylaw 20-2017 (MDP) promotes safe, reliable and efficient service delivery by encouraging alternative energy supplies throughout the County.

The LUB currently includes regulation for small-scale personal solar collectors, providing an opportunity for landowners to locate them on a roof or wall of their building as an accessory use. However, solar collector systems come in many forms and scales that are not currently contemplated within the LUB.

In certain circumstances, solar collector systems are provincially regulated through the Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC) based on wattage produced and the intended purpose of providing for either onsite energy production and consumption or selling energy in the marketplace. The conditions outlined within a permit issued by the AUC are not subject to further municipal regulation.

The intended LUB amendments would support additional opportunities for solar collector systems not currently available in LUB regulations and may provide direction on land use items which are not conditioned within an approval from the AUC, where applicable.

As solar collector systems can vary in scale, those not regulated by the AUC may be of a scale that poses impacts to adjacent landowners and the environment. Therefore, it is intended that the County would regulate solar collector system development items such as but not limited to: height, setbacks from property lines and environmental features, protection of agriculture soils, and grading and site coverage within appropriate zoning districts.

The intended amendments include:

- Creating four separate development opportunities for solar collector systems:
  1. Small-scale solar collector systems that are attached to a building as currently contemplated in the LUB
  2. Small-scale free-standing (not attached to a building) solar collector system installations of a limited size for on-site energy production and consumption for rural residential, agriculture, commercial or industrial development in appropriate zoning districts

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3. Large-scale free-standing (not attached to a building) solar collector system installations for on-site energy production and consumption for agriculture, commercial or industrial development in appropriate zoning districts
  4. Large-scale solar collector systems for off-site energy sale in the marketplace; thus, providing the County the ability to address situations which do not require approval from the AUC, or for items that the AUC does not address in their approval process
- Creating new definitions to establish solar collector system uses based on scale, purpose and location
  - Regulation that mitigates the potential impacts to the environment, soils, location and scale of the above opportunities

A public open house was held on November 25, 2019, at the Ardrossan Recreation Complex to provide information to the general public regarding the purpose, proposed uses, definitions, scale and type of solar collector systems being considered. This meeting provided an opportunity for those interested, as well as those potentially impacted by this type of development, to provide their input.

Considering the feedback received from Priorities Committee, it is currently intended that the LUB amendments for solar collector systems will be finalized and a second public meeting will be held to present the intended amendments. Subsequently, the intended LUB amendments will be returned to Priorities Committee for feedback prior to them being forwarded to a Council Public Hearing and decision.

### **Council and Committee History**

September 5, 2017 Council adopted Bylaw 20-2017, a bylaw to adopt a new MDP for Strathcona County.

March 10, 2015 Council adopted Land Use Bylaw 6-2015, with an effective date of May 11, 2015.

### **Other Impacts**

**Policy:** n/a

**Legislative/Legal:** The *Municipal Government Act* provides that Council may, by bylaw, amend the Land Use Bylaw.

**Interdepartmental:** The proposed draft Land Use Bylaw amendment has been circulated to appropriate departments, and comments have been received.

**Master Plan/Framework:** The Municipal Development Plan identifies opportunities for alternative energy supplies.

### **Enclosure**

1 Solar collector systems PowerPoint presentation