

Priorities Committee Meeting_Sep12_2023

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE AND UPDATE

Land Use Bylaw Refresh

Report Purpose

To provide the Priorities Committee information regarding the Land Use Bylaw refresh project including an update on the project scope, work completed and proposed next steps.

Our Strategic Goals

Goal 4 - Municipal Excellence

Goal 4 Priority - Optimal use of resources that meets the community's needs

Report

Existing Land Use Bylaw

Land Use Bylaw 6-2015 was adopted by Council on March 10, 2015, and became effective on May 11, 2015.

The *Municipal Government Act* requires that every municipality pass a Land Use Bylaw. The purpose of a Land Use Bylaw is to regulate and control the use and development of land and buildings, ensuring that development aligns with the County's overall vision.

The Land Use Bylaw strives to ensure compatibility between adjacent properties by:

- establishing land use districts
- defining land uses and identifying where they can occur
- providing regulations for specific and general uses
- providing for how and to whom notices of a development permit are given

The height of buildings, setbacks from property boundaries, parking on private property, the number of dwelling units permitted on a parcel and signage on commercial sites are all examples of items regulated by the Land Use Bylaw.

Land Use Bylaws are 'living' documents. Where amendments are necessary to a specific district or to accommodate a specific use or project, amendments are brought to Council allowing for a timely review and decision.

Although our Land Use Bylaw receives ongoing review and scrutiny, it is prudent to periodically complete a holistic review ensuring its organization is still appropriate, and to identify improvements. The organization and structure of a bylaw play a large role in ensuring it can be easily understood by all affected. The use of plain language ensures regulations in the Land Use Bylaw are clear and concise without sacrificing the necessary precision in setting out rights and obligations.

Land Use Bylaw refresh

The County's Land Use Bylaw refresh project has been ongoing, the objective being to complete a holistic review with the goal of increasing the clarity and consistency of the content, modernizing terms, and improving the ease of use and look of the document. This project is part of the Planning and Development Services' (PDS) overall efforts at red tape reduction aiming to improve understanding of regulations and how they affect residents, property, and business owners, and ultimately making it more user friendly and accessible for all audiences.

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The Land Use Bylaw refresh does not propose nor intend to affect the current zoning of any property or to introduce or remove regulations that alter what is currently allowed. The refresh is intended to create a Land Use Bylaw that is more intuitive to use, utilizes plain language, removes redundancy, and utilizes formatting and organization that makes it easier to incorporate future amendments.

Interactive website

A key component of the Land Use Bylaw refresh has been to identify improvements to the public interface with the Land Use Bylaw. Currently, the Land Use Bylaw is organized on the County website in the form of 25 PDF files, making it cumbersome to cross-reference sections or to find definitions of terms making it difficult for readers to navigate without assistance. To improve user experience, PDS has been working with Information Technology Services (ITS) and Communications in developing a new interactive public-facing website for the Land Use Bylaw, with improved functionality including pop-up definitions for terms, easy links for cross-section references, and higher quality presentation.

Next steps

Ultimately, the updated Land Use Bylaw document will be presented to Council for approval through a Public Hearing process. The Public Hearing will be advertised in the newspaper and on the County website prior to its scheduled date.

This update, as outlined above, is not meant to alter specific regulations. Given the size of the document and the updates throughout, an itemized list of the proposed modifications will be included in the Council package for the future public hearing.

Enclosure 1 to this report includes further information on the project and the nature of the proposed changes.

Council and Committee History

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

Other Impacts

Policy: n/a

Financial/Budget: n/a

Legislative/Legal: Section 640 of the *Municipal Government Act* requires that every municipality pass a Land Use Bylaw.

Interdepartmental: Legislative and Legal Services has been involved in the preparation of the Land Use Bylaw refresh document. PDS is also working with ITS and Communications to develop a new interactive website for the Land Use Bylaw.

Master Plan/Framework: n/a

Communication Plan

The future public hearing for the Land Use Bylaw refresh will be advertised in the newspaper in accordance with the *Municipal Government Act* as well as on the County website.

Enclosure

1 Land Use Bylaw refresh presentation