

Request for Decision

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| Title | Agribusiness and Agritourism Review Recommendations Implementation - Bylaw 1597/22 - Amendment to Land Use Bylaw 1385/17 – Diversified Agriculture - Second Reading |
| Proposed Motion | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That Council give second reading of Bylaw 1597/22 as amended. 2. That Council schedule a Regular Council Meeting on October 6, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. in Council Chambers for the purpose of holding a second Public Hearing for Bylaw 1597/22. |
| Administrative Recommendation | Administration recommends that Council give second reading of Bylaw 1597/22 as amended, which reflects the Land Use Bylaw-related recommendations of the Agribusiness and Agritourism Review Task Force and the results of the subsequent Public Hearing and administrative review process. It is also recommended that Council schedule a second Public Hearing to receive additional public input as the amendments proposed at second reading are substantive. |
| Previous Council / Committee Direction | <p><u>May 3, 2022 Regular Council Meeting</u> Motion 187/22: That Council give first reading of Bylaw 1597/22.</p> <p><u>April 12, 2022 Regular Council Meeting</u> Motion 130/22: That Council direct Administration to bring forward amendments to the Land Use Bylaw that would enact associated Agribusiness and Agritourism Review Task Force recommendations at the May 3, 2022 Council meeting, for consideration of first reading and scheduling of a Public Hearing.</p> <p><u>March 9, 2021 Regular Council Meeting</u> Motion 118/21: That Council initiate an agribusiness and agritourism review, supported by a community-based Task Force as defined in proposed Bylaw 1538/21.</p> |
| Report | <p><u>Background Information</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sturgeon County has long supported agricultural operators and their success. There is an opportunity with the proposed bylaw amendments to further support operators in diversifying their operations, income streams, and investment certainty through strategic bylaw amendments. While doing so, Sturgeon County would also seek to |

balance the interests of neighbouring properties looking to protect and preserve quality of life.

- On March 9, 2021, Council passed Bylaw 1538/21, which supported an Agribusiness and Agritourism Review to be conducted through a community-based Task Force to assess this important topic.
- This Review was designed, and Task Force mandated, to evaluate and bring forward recommendations to Council related to economic opportunities, regulatory requirements, landowner perspectives, and overall best practices for agribusiness and agritourism.
- The scope of the Agribusiness and Agritourism Review, and the Task Force, was as follows:
 - Evaluate the current state of agribusiness and agritourism in Sturgeon County, including economic impact; any real or perceived barriers to agribusiness or agritourism growth and success; and identify the needs and expectations of Sturgeon County's businesses and landowners;
 - Review local, provincial, and national agribusiness and agritourism regulatory best practices;
 - Investigate and recommend appropriate licensing requirements or regulations related to hosting events on agricultural parcels;
 - Evaluate the real or perceived impacts (positive and negative) that agribusiness and agritourism operations of different types and sizes have on surrounding landowners;
 - Recommend and undertake an engagement and communication strategy with key stakeholders;
 - Produce a "What We Heard" report summarizing the consultation feedback and comments; and
 - Present a Final Report containing the Task Force findings and recommendations on potential regulations and policy for Council consideration.
- On April 12, 2022, the Agribusiness and Agritourism Review Task Force presented its Recommendations Report to Council. County Administration has now taken those recommendations and provided implementation requirements, per Council direction.
- A summary of the status of implementation of the Task Force recommendations are below (for more details on each recommendation see the Final Report in Attachment 2):
 - **Recommendation 1 (Land Use Bylaw Amendments to Facilitate Diversified Agriculture)** – The proposed amendments to the Land Use Bylaw are captured within the next section of this Request for Decision and are provided in Bylaw 1597/22.
 - **Recommendation 2 (Public Communications Plan)** – A public communications plan, with associated implementation and resourcing requirements, would be created. This would be brought forward for Council consideration concurrently with third reading of Bylaw 1597/22, if it proceeds.

- **Recommendation 3 (Temporary Fee Waivers for Existing Operators)** – Council may cancel fees and charges for existing operators. This would be brought forward for Council consideration concurrently with third reading of Bylaw 1597/22, if it proceeds.
- **Recommendation 4 (Ongoing Economic Development Opportunities at Municipal Boards)** – At the May 12, 2022 Governance and Council Services Committee meeting, the Committee advised that it would await approval of Land Use Bylaw amendments prior to approving revised mandate letters for Boards and Committees.
- **Recommendation 5 (Application Matrix Trial)** – Administration will prepare and trial a matrix in the manner described in the Task Force report, for Council consideration before August 2024. The intensity matrix would be designed to assist in determining impacts of proposed development and may require conditions of development. The intensity matrix would also be used to determine a proposal's use between the Intensive Agriculture, Diversified Agriculture, and Agriculture Support Service uses.
- Of note, for those operators who are currently operating non-permitted agritourism operations, this proposed bylaw would provide a pathway to come into Land Use Bylaw compliance. This does not negate the need for operators to ensure building, parking, traffic, and other safety or nuisance related requirements are attended to.

Recommended Land Use Bylaw Amendments (Recommendation 1)

- In response to the Task Force's Recommendation 1, Administration prepared draft Land Use Bylaw amendments that reflect the recommendation while also ensuring functionality of the Land Use Bylaw (LUB) as a whole.
- As such, the following amendments, supporting the Task Force recommendations, were included in Bylaw 1597/22, which was given first reading at the May 3, 2022 Council Meeting:
 - Create a Diversified Agriculture use to be placed within the AG – Agriculture district as a permitted use.
 - Diversified Agriculture means an agricultural use that brings additional traffic or impacts to the parcel than activities anticipated in the Extensive livestock or Extensive and Intensive agriculture uses. Typical activities include value-added agricultural processing, retail sales of agricultural products and products complementary and accessory to the agricultural use, and allows for commercial experiences related to the enjoyment, education, or activities and events related to farming or farm life. This use does not include home-based business, visitor accommodation, intensive agriculture, event venue, agriculture support services, Cannabis Production and Distribution, or Cannabis Retail Sales.
 - Modify the definitions of Intensive Agriculture and Agriculture Support Service to ensure the distinction between the new Diversified Agriculture use.

- Create regulations for Diversified Agriculture and Agriculture Support Service.
- Create a new district AG 2 – Agriculture 2 district to provide an option to support agriculture developments that are a greater impact and intensity than typical uses under the AG - Agriculture district.
- Create an Event venue use to be placed within the AG – Agriculture district as a discretionary use and within the AG 2 – Agriculture 2 as a permitted use.
- Add Community Building as a permitted use to commercial districts C1, C2, and C3 as permitted uses and to AP (Airport Support District) as a discretionary use.
- Modify the definitions of Community Building, Recreation Facility – indoor, Religious assembly, and Resort to better delineate due to the inclusion of Event Venues.
- Create regulations for Event Venues and Community Buildings.
- Additional proposed changes to the Land Use Bylaw, including:
 - Add / modify terminology for Value Added Agricultural Processing, Campsite, Guest unit, and Event;
 - Add / modify parking regulations;
 - Clerical change to Industrial uses; and
- In response to the public comments from the June 14, 2022 Public Hearing, Administration is recommending the following proposed amendments since first reading, as shown in Attachment 1:
 - Remove the recreational vehicle restriction from the *visitor accommodation* regulations to better clarify within the bylaw the intent of the recommendations.
 - Modify the inclusion of Event Venues within the AG 2 – Agriculture 2 to be a discretionary use instead of a permitted use and remove the inclusion of Event Venue use from the AG – Agriculture district.
 - Modify the proposed Diversified Agriculture definition to bring greater clarity by adding the words “but does not include events that are not primarily agricultural in nature, such as weddings, retreats, ceremonies, and corporate events” to the definition.
- Councillor Comeau was absent from the June 14, 2022 Public Hearing; therefore, in accordance with section 184(a) of the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA), he must abstain from voting on subsequent readings of Bylaws 1597/22.

External Communication

- The review has spanned over a year. Review information has been included on the County’s website, social media, and print advertisements.

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Task Force developed and presented a communications and engagement plan to Council for approval, which guided its engagement efforts. Engagement occurred throughout the review with a variety of stakeholders – operators, landowners, experts, and the public – to allow for input related to agribusiness and agritourism. • Initial engagement included an online survey to provide awareness about the review and collect input on agribusiness and agritourism practices. Respondents were specifically asked to reflect on land use compatibility and issues such as noise, odour, traffic, and parking. Respondents were also asked to provide ideas on solutions to overcome obstacles relating to agritourism and agribusiness. • When initial definitions and core criteria were developed, a second survey was provided to agritourism and agribusiness operators and area property owners. Information was mailed to 384 properties (36 agribusiness / event operators and 348 adjacent landowners), of which 39 responded to the survey. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The mailout also included an invitation for those who wanted to make a presentation to the Task Force. Fifteen people took advantage of the opportunity and either sent in their submissions or presented to the Task Force on January 20, 2022. • The June 14, 2022 Public Hearing for this Bylaw was advertised in the <i>Morinville Free Press</i> and <i>Redwater Review</i> for two consecutive weeks (June 1 and June 8, 2022) in accordance with the advertising requirements detailed within section 606 of the <i>Municipal Government Act</i> (MGA). • At Council’s request during the Public Hearing, Administration contacted the County’s Economic Development Advisory Board (EDAB) and Agricultural Service Board (ASB) for comment on the proposed amendments. Both Boards had overall support for the proposed amendments, as noted in Attachments 3 and 4. <p><u>Relevant Policy/Legislation/Practices</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bylaw 1538/21 – Agribusiness and Agritourism Review Task Force Bylaw • Agribusiness and Agritourism Review Task Force Final Recommendations Report • Sturgeon County Strategic Plan • Sturgeon County Land Use Bylaw • Sturgeon County Economic Development Strategy |
| Implication of Administrative Recommendation | <p><u>Strategic Alignment</u></p> <p>Planned Growth – Task Force recommendations are meant to provide future focused planning and investment certainty for those in agribusiness and agritourism industries. Sturgeon County will continue to be a low cost, internationally competitive location to conduct business.</p> <p>Collaborative Governance – Having community members engaged in the Task Force showcases a collaborative and transparent approach to governance while still providing for Council authority and decision-making. Resident engagement in policy formation was a key facet of the process.</p> |

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| | <p>Organizational Excellence – The Task Force’s report is designed to position the municipality well into the future, to proactively respond to opportunities and challenges.</p> <p><u>Organizational:</u> Providing more intensive uses of agricultural lands may increase volumes of both permit applications and complaints which may require additional staff resources over time.</p> <p><u>Financial:</u> Allowing more intensive uses of agricultural lands may trigger increased impacts to transportation and utility networks. These impacts would require case-by-case consideration.</p> |
| Alternatives Considered | Council could choose not to support these amendments to the Land Use Bylaw. |
| Implications of Alternatives | <p><u>Strategic Alignment</u> Planned Growth – Choosing not to support clarity on event venue and agritourism related uses could result in continued investment and neighbour uncertainty within the County. Choosing to amend the recommendations would require a case-by-case analysis of the impacts.</p> <p>Collaborative Governance – Rejection of the Task Force’s recommendations would be seen as misaligned with collaborative decision making.</p> <p><u>Organizational</u> Additional time and effort from Sturgeon County Administration enforcing uses and activities not currently defined or regulated in the Land Use Bylaw.</p> <p><u>Financial</u> Potential for increased enforcement of non-compliant uses, incurring both legal and other related costs.</p> |
| Follow up Action | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Schedule an additional Public Hearing with respect to the Bylaw (Planning & Development Services, September 2022). 2. Bring forward other recommendation implementation matters for consideration concurrent with Land Use Bylaw amendment finalization (Planning & Development Services, October 2022). |
| Attachment(s) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attachment 1: Bylaw 1597/22 - Redlined 2. Attachment 2: Agribusiness and Agritourism Review Task Force Final Recommendations Report 3. Attachment 3: Economic Development Advisory Board Letter of Support 4. Attachment 4: Agricultural Service Board Letter of Support |
| Report Reviewed by: | <p>Bonnie McInnis, Manager, Planning & Development Services</p> <p>Travis Peter, General Manager, Development & Strategic Services</p> <p>Reegan McCullough, County Commissioner – CAO</p> |

Strategic Alignment Checklist

Vision: *Offering a rich tapestry of historical, cultural, and natural experiences, Sturgeon County is a municipality that honours its rural roots and cultivates desirable communities. Uniquely situated to provide world-class agricultural, energy, and business investment opportunities, the County prioritizes responsible stewardship and dreaming big.*

Guiding Principles: Collaboration | Accountability | Flexibility | Excellence | Safety | Future Readiness | Affordability | Innovation

| Community Outcome | Not consistent | Consistent | N/A |
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| Planned Growth | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internationally competitive to attract, grow and sustain diverse businesses; tenacious focus on new growth and innovation | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modern broadband and digital capabilities | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low cost, minimal red-tape regulations | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reliable and effective infrastructure planning; comprehensive land use and infrastructure planning | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Thriving Communities | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beautiful, surprising places with high standards; integrated natural spaces & trail systems; healthy and resilient | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging cultural, historical, and civic amenities; strong community identity and pride | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safe, welcoming, and diverse communities; small community feel and personal connection; commitment to high quality of life | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Environmental Stewardship | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean air, land, and water; Carbon neutral municipal practices; circular economy opportunities | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conservation of natural areas and agricultural lands; enhanced greening and biodiversity; safekeeping ecosystems | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable development; partnerships with industry and others to drive emission reductions | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Collaborative Governance | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predictable and stable external relationships; volunteer partnerships | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meaningful connections with Indigenous communities | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing community consultation and engagement; transparent and action-oriented decision making based on sound rationale | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respectful and informed debate; clear and supportive governance processes | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Operational Excellence | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaged and effective people – Council, Admin and Volunteers; continuous learning and improvement mindset; nimble and bold, with strong leadership | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality cost-effective service delivery; robust procurement and operational practices and policies; asset management and performance measurement; careful debt and reserve stewardship; long-term financial planning and sustainability | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future focused thinking to proactively respond to emerging opportunities and challenges | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternative revenue generation and service delivery models integrated strategic and business planning | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |