

## Opposition to Land Use Bylaw Amendment

This letter is to serve as our opposition to the proposed amendment of the Land Use Bylaw regarding the land within **Lot 3, Block 1, Plan 0324168**.

We are the property owners of the quarter section of land west of Range Road 260 that touches the highway (NE 36 54 26 4). We are currently in the process of building our "forever home" which we've been working towards and planning for the last decade. We are looking forward to moving out to the country, getting away from the noise and amenities of the city, and enjoying the nature and tranquility that comes with country living. We have spent a significant amount of time and money securing the land, developing it, and beginning to build our country home.

We oppose the proposed amendment to the Land Use Bylaw concerning Lot 3, Block 1, Plan 0324168 for several reasons, as detailed below:

- **Increased traffic**: The residents of RR 260 were quite happy that Township Road 544 was finally redone this year, which should reduce the amount of traffic that goes North on Range Road 260 (and we believe was one of the motivating factors for the county to carry out the road modifications). We, like many of the other residents, have young children and were very happy at the prospect of reduced traffic - both from a noise, and a safety standpoint. We are looking forward to spending weekends sitting on the deck listening to nature and living in a generally quiet area. Having a church across the road will significantly add to traffic, especially on the weekend, when we're all at home trying to enjoy the quiet. The increased traffic will also add to dust disturbance and road wear. The current estimations of congregation size may seem low, but there are zero guarantees that it won't grow exponentially, especially with the amount of space that the existing shop on the property provides. We anticipate the congregation size will HAVE to grow to be able to afford the cost of the property (currently advertised at \$1.6 million).
- **Increased noise**: People move to the country to 'get away from it all'. They move there for the quiet, for the nature, for the solitude. Having a church facility on 260, though it may be quiet during mass, creates the potential for all kinds of other noise issues - be it the increased road traffic all weekend long, the potential for church parties (as outlined in the proposal, 7 am to 10 pm once a month), or most concerning - the use of the church as a rental hall/facility for events like weddings and other celebrations that will no doubt generate a significant amount of noise (not to mention the potential for patrons, who may be consuming alcohol, to spill out into the surrounding areas). There is nothing in the bylaw amendment that would limit the congregation's use of the land as an event space, nor are there any firm bylaw requirements of how often they can meet on the site as a congregation. Rough hours of operation estimates were provided to the county, but years from now there will be no legal binding to those estimates.

- **Reduced land value:** As mentioned, we own a quarter section of land. As part of our future plans, we hope to subdivide and sell off one or two residential parcels to recoup some of our capital input, as most other farmers/land owners do (within the existing framework of the land use bylaws). As part of the financial math we used to purchase the property, we assumed certain values for the subdivided parcels based on market value in the area. A church, with its increased traffic and noise, will no doubt reduce the value of properties in the area and affect resale. Before purchasing our quarter section we previously owned the 2.47 acre parcel directly across the street from the proposed amendment. This was sold this year, and I can't begin to imagine how unhappy the new owners must be to have this proposal right across the street from them, not to mention the houses directly to the north and south.
- **Existing subdivision bylaws:** The current Land Use Bylaws for Sturgeon County specify that each quarter section may be subdivided into two ~80 acre parcels with two 2.47 acre residential parcels (Section 11.1.3). The purpose of these bylaws, as we understand them, is to make sure that agricultural land in the county is preserved and to limit residential density. In our experience with our own lands, the county is generally (and understandably) very sticky with these rules. These subdivisions have already occurred in the parcel of the proposed amendment. According to the existing bylaws, this parcel should not be allowed to be further subdivided. Allowing the residence on the ~76 acre parcel to be subdivided away from the rest of the agricultural land puts TWO parcels that have a residence on them on that half section, leaving roughly another 73 acre parcel (that, by my understanding of the existing bylaws, can technically also have a future home on it - Section 5.5). Allowing this piece of land to be subdivided and rezoned is contrary to existing bylaws, and sets precedence for future landowners to subdivide/rezone beyond the existing established bylaws, thus impacting the previously mentioned preservation of agricultural land and residential density. We believe that the county has a duty to existing county residents and landowners above all else and that the negative effects on residents in the area outweigh the positives for the potential new landowners. There is little doubt that there are other options available to a potential church that would have less impact on residents in the county, likely in an area already zoned for higher traffic and residential density.

Thank you for hearing our concerns,

Mike and Jaclyn Maat & Family