

# **WHAT WE HEARD REPORT**

Land Use Bylaw Review Project:  
Commercial Business Workshop

**Wednesday August 15, 2018**



## **ABOUT THE PROJECT**

Cochrane is one of the fastest growing municipalities in Alberta and has experienced considerable growth and development over the past decade. This rapid growth has presented Cochrane with new and diverse development trends with an ever-increasing level of complexity.

Cochrane's Land Use Bylaw is the municipality's primary tool to regulate this increasing growth and development, and to control and regulate how all land is used and developed in the community. The Land Use Bylaw is arguably one of Cochrane's most important documents, and has far reaching implications for how the community is shaped.

Cochrane's current Land Use Bylaw was adopted in 2004. Town Administration has initiated a comprehensive review and re-write to ensure it remains current and effective in regulating land uses and development within the Town. It is important that the land use bylaw meets the land use and development needs of its citizens and reflects Cochrane's unique character and natural landscape. Community involvement and participation in the Land Use Bylaw Review Project is integral to its success.

The Land Use Bylaw Review Project has involved the community through a variety of means, including a public survey, and numerous engagement events. Among these events were two public workshops held on the evenings of June 13 and June 14. The first workshop was oriented toward Cochrane business owners, and the second toward residents in general. This document provides an overview of the workshop process, and the comments received at the **commercial** workshop.

## **WORKSHOP OVERVIEW**

On the evening of June 13, 2018, a public workshop was held with Cochrane residents and business owners to provide comments on various topics related to the Land Use Bylaw. The event was advertised on the Town of Cochrane website, through social media, and by email, and a total of 12 participants were present.

The workshop was conducted through a group discussion, led by planning staff members. Participants were asked to comment on several topics, including parking, landscaping, signage, and land use.

All comments were recorded, and participants also had the opportunity to write down any additional comments they had. The following provides an overview of all comments received.

## COMMENTS RECEIVED

### Land Use

- The Provincial Building doesn't fit in the Historic Downtown
- Old Canadian Tire used as a warehouse
- Cochrane Search and Rescue uses old Canadian Tire parking lot
- Not being able to have a certain business in a desired area because of the existing land use designation

### Landscaping

- Landscaping takes up space in the downtown (not enough sidewalk)
  - No consultation with businesses about what landscaping is going in
- Like the benches and trees in the downtown, but not the mulch
- Landscaping in the Quarry looks nice
- Need to enforce green scaping
  - Need more in parking lot to provide cover, so it is not a large black/concrete space
- Good amount of landscaping in the Save On parking lot
- Current amount of landscaping in parking lots is good as is – don't decrease, but don't increase too much
- It is important to have green in parking lots
- In general, people need to be kept up to date about what regulations are in place and how they function
  - Make it understandable for people

### Signage

- Regulations not applied consistently across businesses, and for the Town
- Want digital/lit signs
  - Want to see the use of digital signs evolve in the way they have in Calgary
  - Add movement to digital signs
  - Have arrived at a good amount of light for digital signs
- Problem with signs being allowed in front of other businesses
- Need to establish where A-frame signs can/should be located on property
- Should have signs directing people to local businesses downtown
- There is a disconnect between what is done by the Town, and what is required of other businesses
- Who is enforcing to maintain equal standards/application of regulations
- In reference to arguments that digital signs are not energy efficient- gooseneck lighting uses more amps than a backlit sign
- Backlit signs should be allowed everywhere with certain guidelines and restrictions

## **Parking: Number of Stalls**

- If there wasn't a parking problem would take up stalls for a temporary patio (in spring/summer)
- RCMP parking on-street during court days (4-8 hours/day)
- Moved out of downtown due to issues with parking
- Vehicle frustration
- Implement 3-hour parking in the downtown
- Sign installations need to happen in the early hours, or late at night
- Concerns about pedestrian safety
- Need a public parking facility outside the downtown
- For Cochrane to stay Cochrane, the parking problem needs fixing now
- Grand Avenue parking always full
- Parking lots in The Quarry are never full
- Store employees are parking in primary spots
- Street parking used by employees
- Patrons using parking in lots that they are not visiting
  - Can business owners put up signage for private parking?
  - OR 20-minute parking?
- Consistency of applications
- Parking availability different during day hours and evening hours
- Would like to see more mixed uses of retail/restaurants to balance downtown
- Should look at bike parking
- Downtown is so busy that it is not comfortable to drive through with all the pedestrians
- Need more parking options downtown to keep it vibrant

## **Parking: Cash in Lieu**

- Would rather see parking meters than pay \$20,000 per stall
- Having to pay for stalls is a non-starter for small businesses
- Only practical for large chain restaurants/ big box stores/ in Calgary
- Lost customers to The Quarry due to the availability of parking
- A healthy community is one that caters to different customer bases
- If the Town wants a vibrant downtown, it needs to support small businesses by providing parking
- Cash-in-lieu isn't going to help things in the short term anyways (could take years for enough money to accrue to do anything with), and no guarantee that the parking created with the cash is going to help your business directly
- Was cash-in-lieu provided in Pioneers Square to allow 3 restaurants?
- Need more options for cash-in-lieu → this system could work if administered differently

## **Parking: Lot Design**

- No space to properly back in-out of a spot
- Residents not wanting to go to Historic Downtown because of vehicle/pedestrian access
  - Becoming a place solely for tourists
- Why not have a public parking lot outside the downtown to then be able to walk in
  - Town should take the lead
  - 3 hours max
  - Include public restrooms
- ASEP/WCB/OHSA policy about employee parking being a certain distance away from a business?
- Phoenix
  - Goodyear/ Litchfield Park Bylaws
  - Large, wide parking stalls
  - Feels like there is room for people