

**Subject: Athabasca Power Centre – Area Structure Plan Amendment  
Bylaw No. 14/029 and Land Use Bylaw Amendment Bylaw  
No. 14/030**

**APPROVALS:**

Felice Mazzoni, Director  
Elsie Hutton, Executive Director  
Marcel Ulliac, Interim Chief Administrative Officer

**Administrative Recommendations:**

THAT Bylaw No. 14/029, being the Athabasca Power Centre Area Structure Plan, be read a first time; and

THAT Bylaw No. 14/030, being an amendment to Land Use Bylaw No. 99/059, be read a first time; and

THAT the required public hearings be held on Tuesday, August 26, 2014.

**Summary:**

The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo has submitted an application to adopt the Athabasca Power Centre Area Structure Plan (ASP) on a portion of land along the Highway 63 corridor north of Fort McMurray. This ASP is intended to guide the development of a large-format retail shopping centre. To further facilitate the development of such a shopping centre, the Municipality has also proposed to re-designate the same area Shopping Centre Commercial District (C3) from its current Parks and Recreation District (PR) designation.

The authority to amend the Land Use Bylaw and adopt or repeal area structure plans is vested with Council under the *Municipal Government Act*.

**Background:**

The subject lands are currently owned by the Province of Alberta and are anticipated to be sold in the near future. Given the desire for more retail opportunities locally, the Municipality has created an ASP to ensure that the lands function as an attractive and orderly developed major retail destination. Beginning on March 27, 2014, Municipal staff led a three-day design charrette where an outline for the ASP was created. The charrette was attended by a large number of interested residents and developers, who each made valuable contributions to the plan.

**Rationale for Recommendations:**

In 2009, two newly completed studies, the Commercial and Industrial Land Use Study and Business Inventory and Gap Analysis, identified a significant shortage of commercial land and businesses in the region. This shortage was confirmed two years later by residents during public

engagement for the Municipal Development Plan (MDP), where lack of retail opportunities was found to be the most common concern. The MDP, adopted in October 2011, addressed this concern by identifying “New Employment Lands” throughout the region, including the subject lands. Consisting of 29.44 hectares (about 73 acres), the subject lands present a timely opportunity to satisfy demand for large-format retail and assist in making Fort McMurray a more desirable place to live and work.

The adoption of a new ASP to guide the development of the subject lands is critical to ensure that they are developed in a manner which satisfies the region’s need for retailers – in particular, large format or “big box” businesses. The proposed Athabasca Power Centre ASP will provide more effective guidance than the current Highway 63 North ASP since the latter’s policies are highly generalized and would not necessarily result in the form of development being sought. Given that it was adopted in 1999 and development along the highway corridor has changed in recent years, this is an appropriate time to repeal the ASP and begin replacing it with newer statutory documents, beginning with the Athabasca Power Centre ASP. Administration will determine the need for further replacement ASPs covering remaining lands in the corridor.

To more effectively guarantee that the subject lands are developed as a commercial shopping centre, Administration recommends that the Shopping Centre Commercial District (C3) be applied to the site. This district allows for a variety of uses consistent with typical large-format retail developments, including small and large retail stores, restaurants and entertainment venues. Since the Land Use Bylaw is currently being re-written, Planning and Development will further identify appropriate land uses, site provisions, and design guidelines to ensure the objectives identified in the Athabasca Power Centre Area Structure Plan are met.

Administration supports the amendment, repealing, and adoption, and recommends that Bylaw No. 14/029 and No 14/030 be given first reading to allow for the scheduling of a public hearing.

**Attachments:**

1. Bylaw No. 14/029 – Athabasca Power Centre Area Structure Plan
2. Bylaw No. 14/030 – Land Use Bylaw Amendment