

Planning and Development

What is the Issue?

Municipal planning and development responsibilities can influence and have a long lasting effect on lake stewardship. Good quality planning and development, including land use bylaws, other planning documents, and education programs can help enhance and protect the integrity of the natural environment and “health” of the lake.

Background

Council shapes the physical and environmental future of the community through its authority over land-use planning and development control. A councillor must focus on the future of the community as a whole and its relation to neighbouring municipalities, while balancing the current rights, needs, and concerns of property owners and residents.

What Does the Law Say?

The Municipal Government Act and Land Use Bylaws

Under the *Municipal Government Act*, every municipality must have a Land Use Bylaw. This bylaw provides a specific means of implementing the policies that are expressed, in a general way, in the Municipal Development Plan (if one exists). If Council wishes to adopt a direct control district in the land use bylaw, council **must** also adopt a Municipal Development Plan.

The Land Use Bylaw provides for a system of development permits and divides the municipality into land use districts prescribing permitted and discretionary uses for land, buildings, and development standards. Development permits are obtained through the Summer Village administration or Development Officer.

Provincial Land Use Policies

Provincial Land Use Policies (LUPs) provide broad policy direction to municipalities with respect to such matters as the environment and water resources. Municipalities are expected to reflect these policies in their municipal development plans, other statutory plans, and Land Use Bylaws.

Using Bylaws to Protect the Lake

Nuisance bylaws, waste management bylaws, pesticide application bylaws, water conservation bylaws, etc., can assist Summer Village Councils to control and manage a number of human activities that may have adverse affects on aquatic ecosystems.

What Should I Do?

A number of tools exist to assist municipal councils with planning.

Municipal Development Plan

A municipality with a population of 3500 or more **must** adopt a Municipal Development Plan (MDP). It provides a general framework for development within the municipality, and is the official statement of the municipality's policies concerning the desired future pattern of development.

Inter-Municipal Development Plan

Two or more municipalities may adopt an Inter-Municipal Development Plan to address issues of mutual concern with respect to designated lands. The plan may provide for the future use of land, and the manner of and proposals for development, or other matters relating to the area that the councils consider necessary

Area Structure Plans

Council may, by bylaw, adopt an **Area Structure Plan** to provide a framework for subdivision and development for a particular area. The Area Structure Plan will generally describe the sequences of development, proposed land use, population density, and the location of major transportation routes and public utilities.

Area Redevelopment Plan

When an area is undergoing redevelopment, the council may adopt an Area Redevelopment Plan which, in addition to providing guidelines, may result in a redevelopment levy being used to acquire land for park, school, or recreation purposes purposed in the redevelopment area.

Who Can I Contact?

For information on municipal planning and development contact Alberta Municipal Affairs. See their web-site at: <http://www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca>

Are There Any Resources Available?

- **The *Municipal Government Act*** can be ordered from the Alberta Queens Printer at: <http://www.qp@gov.ab.ca> or 780-427-4952 (dial 310-0000 first, for a toll free call).
- **The *Subdivision and Development Regulation*** can be ordered from the Alberta Queens Printer at: <http://www.qp@gov.ab.ca> or 780-427-4952 (dial 310-0000 first, for a toll free call).
- **The *Provincial Land Use Policies*** can be downloaded from the Municipal Affairs web-site at: <http://www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca/ms/pdf/landusepoliciesmga.pdf>
- To order the **Environmental Reference Manual for the Review of Subdivisions in Alberta** from Alberta Environment go to their web-site at: <http://www3.gov.ab.ca/env/info/infocentre/PubDtl.cfm?ID=2320> or find it online at: http://www3.gov.ab.ca/env/info/infocentre/pubs/Environmental_Ref_Manual_Review_of_Subdivisions.pdf
- **Summer Villages at Sylvan Lake: Joint West Sylvan Lake Area Structure Plan – March 14, 2005**
- **Sylvan Lake Management Plan: 2000 Update**
- **Summer Villages at Sylvan Lake: Public Consultation Process: Public Access Study**
- **Summer Villages at Sylvan Lake: Regional Partnership Initiative: Sylvan Lake**

Summer Village Council Plans for the Future

The Summer Village of Norglenwold is located on the south shore of Sylvan Lake, just west of the city of Red Deer. Norglenwold has 267 permanent residents, but many more during the summer. In 1994, Council initiated a Municipal Development Plan (MDP), but ratepayers did not like the draft and the proposed MDP was not accepted. A MDP is a statutory document that provides a general framework for development within the municipality, and is the official statement of the municipality's policies concerning the desired future pattern of development. During the process of the development of a MDP, public input is sought through public meetings.

A MDP can set environmentally responsible guidelines for the municipality. Councillors and the Village Administrator worked on developing the MDP 2000 with significant goals, objectives, and policies to protect both lands within the community and the aquatic environment. They did this in consultation with their residents and Alberta Environment. Council felt that having a MDP with a large environmental component would ensure that landowners, when planning a development, would be sensitive towards preserving environmentally sensitive lands, and implementing mitigating measures for the protection of the lake.

The importance of maintaining the health of the environment and how this contributes to the quality of life for the citizens is an ongoing educational program. A MDP with an environmental focus can help. Norglenwold's MDP 2000 is referred to many times by the municipality, when setting policy, and was also used as an example document by other Summer Villages in the area.