



AGENDA ITEM

STETTLER COUNTY

BUFFALO LAKE SOUTH SHORE AREA STRUCTURE PLAN

and Bylaw Amendments 1651/21

March 13, 2021

BACKGROUND

The County has been circulated a copy of Stettler County's draft Buffalo Lake South Shore Area Structure Plan (BLSSASP) for comment as well as some amendments to their Land Use Bylaw, which influence the BLSSASP. The plan is intended to replace the current Buffalo Lake South Shore Intermunicipal Development Plan (BLSSIDP), which the County of Stettler plans to exit. This document is a product of the ongoing dispute resolution process that the Summer Villages' of Rochon Sands and White Sands and the County of Stettler have been engaged in. The biggest difference between the two plans is that the BLSSASP focuses solely on lands within the County of Stettler and allows for greater utilization of their allotted development units. The plan is required to be consistent with the policies of the Buffalo Lake Intermunicipal Development Plan (BLIDP). It can be more detailed, and more restrictive, but may not be less restrictive.

The BLIDP has identified a number of "growth nodes" around the lake where future development may take place. Each node is allocated a number of development units which were calculated by considering the boating capacity of the lake as well as "lifestyle densities". These numbers are further broken down by municipality. Stettler County has been allocated 2,969 development units in their portion of the South Shore Growth Node. As far as the BLIDP is concerned, each municipality may distribute their units as they see fit; however, a "Growth Node Plan" must be developed in order to outline their plans for the area. The BLSSASP (and formerly the BLSSIDP) function as a Growth Node Plan. The BLIDP also dictates that the average density across the growth node should be approximately 0.9 development units per gross acre.

The BLSSASP does note a discrepancy between the allocated units and the 0.9 units / acre. They have done more accurate mapping of the area and if the available acres in their plan area are divided by the average density (0.9 units/acre) they end up with 2,728 units instead of the 2,969 units which have been allocated in the BLIDP. In order to address this

discrepancy, the County of Stettler has committed to the lower number in order to ensure consistency with a more ridged interpretation of the BLIDP policies. They do indicate that they would be interested in allocating the outstanding 254 development units at a future date, once the interpretation of the average density can be raised at a future BLIDP committee meeting.

The allocation of development units within the BLSSASP has been further broken into three areas. Council may be interested that *Allocation Area C* has been given a total of 783 new units. This area includes the Paradise Shores lands. Interestingly a policy has been created which requires that 50% of the development units in both Allocation Areas B & C are used to accommodate detached dwellings. The BLSSASP has adopted the same definition of a “development unit” as the BLIDP to ensure consistency when calculating these units. Another policy of note is the fact that the plan has included a 10% holdback on the utilization of development units in order to accommodate additional units on a lot in the future (eg: secondary suites).

The Stettler County Land Use Bylaw amendment, Bylaw 1651/21 was also circulated to Lacombe County for comment. It has been included in this report as it does influence the BLSSASP and the available unit types that Stettler County may choose to utilize. The bylaw proposes to add “Hotel”, “Motel”, “Hostel”, and “Special Dwelling Unit” as discretionary uses within the “Recreational Facility” Land Use District. A “Special Dwelling Unit” is defined as a yurt or similar type and quality of canvas covered structure or other specialized structure that is not a Detached Dwelling, a Duplex, a Manufactured Home, a Recreational Vehicle, a Recreational Vehicle - Park Model Recreational Unit or any other dwelling unit type listed elsewhere in this bylaw. As long as the definition of a development unit is consistent with the definition in the BLIDP the utilization of these units is compatible with the intent of the BLIDP. This means that each hotel, motel, or hostel room would count for one development unit. The “Special Dwelling Unit” is not listed in the Development Unit definition in the BLIDP (or the BLSSIDP) so this would need to be reviewed by the municipalities that are party to the Buffalo Lake Intermunicipal Development Plan to determine if they should be counted or not.

ANALYSIS

Staff have conducted a review of the documents referred based on conformance with policies within the BLIDP. The proposed plan and LUB amendment are consistent with the policies in the Buffalo Lake Intermunicipal Development Plan. While staff appreciate the conservative interpretation of the lower number of units permitted in Stettler County’s portion of the South Shore Growth Node, it is staffs interpretation that Stettler County should be able to access the full number of units which has been allocated to them. The 0.9 units/acre is meant to be an approximate density, to ensure an equitable distribution of the units across the growth node, not to be used to calculate available units. That said, the final decision on the matter should be discussed at a future BLIDP committee meeting. This future BLIDP committee meeting should also include a discussion on the inclusion or exclusion of the “Special Dwelling Units” when calculating Development units.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that Council authorize staff to send a letter to Stettler County indicating that Lacombe County has no objection to the Draft BLSSASP or Bylaw 1651/21.

PREPARED BY: Peter Duke, Planner / Development Officer



REVIEWED BY: Dale Freitag, Director of Planning Services



REVIEWED BY: Tim Timmons, County Manager

