



City Council Report

April 14, 2026

Infrastructure Services-2026-0009

Public Hearing – Land Use, Road Closure, Statutory Plan.

Bylaw 6523 – Amendment To Bylaw 6265 – Municipal Development Plan

Name Kurt Fisher, Community Planner

Department Infrastructure Services

Application Number

Applicant Information Planning & Design Department

Summary

The purpose of the proposed amendment to the Municipal Development Plan is to align with recent changes in provincial legislation regarding how reserve land is taken and registered for future school sites. When a new school is being planned, the “school site” refers to both the School Building Envelope (which includes only the school building itself, the parking lot, and the school playground), and the remaining land that is usually used for associated purposes such as sports fields for the community and/or school use.

The proposed amendments update our policies for reserve land for new school building envelopes to ensure that the land required for a school building meets provincial requirements.

Recommendation(s)

1. *Consider first reading to Bylaw 6523;*
2. *Direct Administration to schedule a Public Hearing on Bylaw 6523 and provide required Notice;*
3. *Forward this report and Bylaw 6523 to the May 12, 2026 Public Hearing, directing Administration to add the Presentation; and*
4. *Consider this report and the presentation for the Public Hearing for Bylaw 6523; and*
5. *Consider this report, presentation, any discussions, and public submissions made at the Public Hearing, and Bylaw 6523 at Second and Third Reading.*

Background

The City of Lethbridge has worked closely in the past with school authorities to understand their needs for any new school sites and has worked with landowners/developers to set aside land when there is a need for land for a new school, in accordance with the MGA, and policies in our MDP which govern how reserve land is to be taken and held for new school sites. The City and the school authorities are working on a Joint Use Planning Agreement (the Lethbridge School Reserves Agreement), in accordance with the requirements in the MGA, that governs in greater detail how these lands will be identified, and held in reserve until a school is funded/needed in the future. This agreement is required to be in place by June 2026.

The general process for identifying land for a new school site is currently as follows:

- First the school authority will notify the City of their needs for a new school site, at which time the City will work with landowners, developers and the school authority to find land for an appropriate site. This land is then dedicated to the City (through the subdivision process) as Municipal Reserve (MR) and held until the school authority has an approved school project and funding from the Province.
- When the school authority has received funding for a new school, it will notify the City, and work with City administration to determine how much of the MR land they need for their school building envelope (this includes only the school building itself, the parking lot, and the school playground).
- Once this is determined the City will designate (through the subdivision process) the portion of the reserve land that is needed only for the school building envelope as School Reserve (SR). This land would then be titled in the school authority's name only. The remainder of the reserve land would be designated as either Municipal and School Reserve (MSR) and titled jointly between the school authority and the City, or remain only as Municipal Reserve (MR) and titled only to the City.

However, amendments in 2025 to the *Education Act* changed the ownership structure for the land for new school buildings. Now, land for any new school projects will be owned by the Government of Alberta, not the school authority.

While the province looks to take ownership of new school sites, it is in the community's best interest that the City try to retain ownership and control of the remaining reserve land that is not needed for the school or its complementary uses. This requires an update to MDP policies regarding how the City takes reserve land for any future school sites.

Application Analysis

The application is being made by the Planning & Design Department. The purpose of the proposed Municipal Development Plan amendment is to amend the City's policies regarding reserve land for future school sites to ensure the MDP is consistent with the Education Act. Should Council approve this MDP amendment, The Lethbridge School Reserves Agreement with the school authorities will also be amended by administration, to be consistent.

Due to the infrequent nature of new school sites being required, this MDP amendment is being brought to Council before a new school site is needed to ensure its policies are current when a new school site is required in the future.

The proposed amendment has been reviewed by City staff, including Recreation and Culture, Parks and departments within Infrastructure Services, and no issues have been identified.

Policy Considerations

The Education Act now requires that :

- o *"An owner's interest in the new school real property that is required for the completion of an approved new school project transfers, in accordance with subsections (2) to (4), to the Crown" (Section 187.1(1))*

This proposed Municipal Development Plan amendment will amend the MDP Appendix B, Section 1.5(2) by requiring any land for a new school building envelope to be transferred to the Government of Alberta in accordance with the requirement in the Education Act.

The Municipal Government Act (MGA) section 671(2) states how Municipal Reserves (MR), School Reserves (SR), or Municipal and School Reserves (MSR) can be used:

- o *"Municipal reserve, school reserve or municipal and school reserve may be used by a municipality or school board or by them jointly only for any or all of the following purposes: (a) a public park; (b) a public recreation area; (c) school board purposes; (d) to separate areas of land that are used for different purposes."*

The proposed Municipal Development Plan amendment will ensure the City continues to comply with this MGA requirement, while also clarifying which type of reserve land will be used and when. The Municipal Development Plan (MDP) Policy 104 currently requires that MR, SR, and MSR be used in the provision of reserve land for new school sites. The proposed amendment would amend the wording of this Policy to allow the MSR to be used as an option. The proposal would also amend the MDP's Municipal & School Reserve Objectives (Appendix B, Section 4.1) by removing reference to working with school boards to meet the needs of the community and would transfer this to the objectives for Municipal Reserve (MR) (MDP Appendix B, Section 2.1). This would ensure the highest likelihood that any reserve land that is not used for School Reserve (SR) is to remain

held as Municipal Reserve (MR) to be used for the needs of the community. The Municipal Reserve (MR) land will continue to be held in the City's name only as allowed under the MGA (671(2)).

Community Consultations

n/a

Decision Options

This section will provide Council with an overview of the options before them regarding the Application. This information is for Council's consideration throughout the deliberative and statutory process regarding this matter.

1. At First Reading:
 1. Approve First Reading of Bylaw 6523.

2. At the Public Hearing:
 1. Hold and Close the Public Hearing for Bylaw 6523; or
 2. Recess the Public Hearing for Bylaw 6523; to a Future Meeting to gather more information, or for further consideration. *This may require re-advertising. A date for reconvening of the meeting should be determined at the time of the recess to facilitate re-advertising. (This is contemplated during or after the Public hearing before the Public hearing is declared Closed)*

3. At Second and Third Reading:
 1. Postponement of the Second and Third Reading for Bylaw 6523 until a future City Council meeting. This does not require re-advertising; or
 2. Provide Second and Third Reading to Bylaw 6523 as presented (i.e. Approve the Bylaw); or
 3. Provide Second and Third Reading to Bylaw 6523 as amended. (i.e. Approve the Bylaw with changes) *(Note: Any change to the bylaw, may require re-advertising for an additional Public Hearing); or*
 4. Defeat or Refuse Bylaw 6523 as presented.

Attachment(s)

1. Bylaw 6523

Link(s)

1. [South Saskatchewan Regional Plan](#)
2. [Municipal Development Plan](#)

