



ASSETS AND INFRASTRUCTURE STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE REPORT

Title Land Use Bylaw Renewal: Phase Two Project Update

Meeting Date September 4, 2025

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Presented By Ross Kilgour, Senior Community Planner & Genesis Molesky, Community Planner 2

Summary

- The purpose of this report is to update Council on progress with the Land Use Bylaw (LUB) Renewal project.
- In the 2023-2026 Operating Budget, City Council approved initiative C-5.5: Land Use Bylaw Update. This envisages a comprehensive rewrite of the City's Land Use Bylaw.
- The LUB Renewal project is being delivered in four phases. This report is focused on Phase Two, which examined all three parts of the LUB (interpretation, administration, and districts and district rules) **except** social uses (which were the topic of Phase One). A few notable Phase Two topics are residential (with a main focus on potential changes to medium- and high-density districts), commercial, and industrial uses and districts as well as parking requirements.
- On December 10, 2024, Council approved the LUB Renewal Phase Two Public Engagement Plan, which was developed with Council's input.
- From January to July 2025 the project team implemented this plan, delivering extensive public engagement that heard from over 2,600 people.
- Findings from the Phase Two engagement are detailed in the attached 'Phase Two What We Heard Report'.
- Following the 2025 municipal elections, the project team will orient the new Council to the project and seek Council's direction to continue with Phase Three: drafting the new LUB. Phase Four will then involve sharing the draft new LUB with the public and seeking their (and Council's) input on any changes to the draft, before ultimately bringing the finalised new LUB to Council for consideration via a Public Hearing (expected no earlier than Q1 2027).

Recommendation(s)

That the Assets & Infrastructure Standing Policy Committee recommends that Council:

1. Receive the Land Use Bylaw Renewal Phase Two What We Heard Report, as provided in Attachment 1, for information, and
2. Direct Administration to orient the new Council to the project no later than Q1 2026.

Financial

The Land Use Bylaw Renewal project received MRSR one-time funding through budget initiative C-5.5 allocating \$1,165,000 towards the Land Use Bylaw Update. As of July 2025, total spend on the project to date is \$221,441.12. The delivery of Phase Two engagement was funded by this initiative. A new LUB has the potential to streamline land use regulation, reducing the financial burden (in terms of time and fees) on customers and City resources, while unlocking investment potential.

Background and Prior Decisions

The City of Lethbridge LUB regulates the development of land throughout the city. It touches many fundamental aspects of the way the city is laid out, the uses and activities allowed on a parcel, and certain aspects of the design of individual buildings (e.g., maximum height, setbacks). Although LUB 6300 was passed by City Council in 2020, it is the latest of many incremental updates to the LUB that stretch back to 1986.

The Land Use Bylaw Renewal project is the first time in almost 40 years the City has taken a completely fresh and holistic look at the role and function of the LUB. City Council approved the Land Use Bylaw Renewal project as part of the 2023-2026 Operating Budget. This project is an opportunity to address multiple individual issues with the current LUB, while going further with a fundamental rebuilding of the Bylaw to create a document that is more user-friendly, less restrictive, and that shapes the kind of communities in which Lethbridge citizens want to live, visit, and do business today.

The Land Use Bylaw Renewal project is being delivered in four phases:

- Phase One (completed at end of Q1 2024) explored where and how social uses are regulated in the city. This included extensive public engagement on the topic.
- Phase Two—delivered between January and July 2025, and the subject of this submission—examined all three parts of the Land Use Bylaw (interpretation, administration, and districts and district rules) through extensive public engagement; a few notable topics include residential (with a main focus on potential changes to medium- and high-density districts), commercial, and industrial uses and districts as well as parking requirements.
- Phase Three will encompass the writing of a draft new LUB which will reflect the learnings from the previous phases.
- Phase Four will include opportunities for the public and stakeholders to review the proposed new LUB through public engagement events and activities. Phase Four will also involve navigating the Council decision process leading to Council's decision on the proposed new LUB through a Public Hearing(s).

Approved Budget Initiative

In the 2023-2026 Operating Budget, City Council approved initiative C-5.5 allocating \$1,165,000 towards the Land Use Bylaw Update. The stated purpose and justification for this initiative is outlined below:

"A review of the Land Use Bylaw is necessary for several reasons. Firstly, as some regulations are not in alignment with Federal housing goals, the ability for projects within the City to access Federal grant monies is constrained. Secondly, this misalignment has contributed to the slower implementation of the City Council approved Municipal Housing Strategy leading to worse community outcomes. Thirdly, the Land Use Bylaw is a living document and although in the past several years of incremental changes have been incorporated based on typically external drivers, a comprehensive review is required, and resources need to be dedicated in the short term."

This budget initiative provides the overall direction and funding for the LUB Renewal project.

Prior Updates to Council

As part of Phase One, at the [July 6, 2023 Civic Works Standing Policy Committee](#), a project update was provided. Administration presented the four-phase timeline and introduced the project team comprised of staff from Planning & Design, as well as a wider project stakeholder group including staff from other City departments. In addition to the City project team, an engagement consultant was secured to plan and assist with delivery of public engagement throughout the different phases of the project. Lastly, Administration provided an overview of the Project Primer, a public-facing foundational document to introduce the overall project to the public. This update to Council was provided prior to the official launch of the project on August 23, 2023.

As part of Phase One, at the [December 7, 2023 Assets & Infrastructure Standing Policy Committee](#), a progress update was provided. Administration presented the engagement efforts made since the official launch of the project. These efforts spanned pop-ups, organisational meetings, open houses, surveys and workshops. Through these efforts over 800 surveys were completed, there were over 6,000 visits to the Get Involved project webpage, 49 people attended in-person workshops, and staff "met people where they're at" at over 24 locations, reaching hundreds of people. Administration explained how the feedback gathered would be utilized as well as next steps leading to a public hearing of Bylaw 6437 (proposed LUB amendments related to social uses).

To conclude Phase One, the draft Bylaw 6437 was submitted to Council, with first reading scheduled for February 27, 2024. However, at the [February 27, 2024 meeting of City Council](#), Council cancelled the first reading of Bylaw 6437 and directed Administration to roll the proposed changes on social uses into the future new LUB (which is planned to be drafted in Phase Three).

Phase Two engagement was originally planned to begin in April 2024. As a first step, the Phase Two Public Engagement Plan (PEP - see links) was submitted to [Governance SPC for approval on March 28, 2024](#). A motion was passed to delay discussing the PEP until a later date. Following this decision, the project team held discussions with Executive Leadership Team in spring/summer 2024, and then individual meetings with each member of City Council in August

2024. Finally, a strategic session was held with all members of Council to discuss Phase Two engagement on October 8, 2024. The input from these discussions shaped a revised Phase Two PEP, which was approved by Council at the [December 10, 2024 City Council meeting](#).

Engagement

Overall Approach

The LUB is a sprawling, legal document. To help engage residents in an accessible way that speaks to topics they care about, the team identified seven key topics for public engagement:

1. Housing
2. Neighbourhood Commercial
3. Local Businesses & the Economy
4. Downtown
5. Parking
6. Notifications
7. Direct Control Districts

This allowed the project team to connect residents with the topics that mattered most to them. Over many months leading up to the Phase Two engagement launch, the City project team also researched and wrote six 'Decoding papers' covering these topics (see 'links' section at end of report). The purpose of the Decoding papers is to "level the playing field" between staff and residents by providing a deeper understanding of each topic and how the current LUB works in relation to that topic, as well as potential changes for consideration. The Decoding papers were published on the project webpage and made available at engagement events.

Phase Two of the LUB Renewal project was split into two distinct sub-phases of engagement delivery, with a pause between:

Phase	Dates	Purpose
Phase 2A Engagement	Jan-Apr 2025	Gathering residents' input on key LUB topics, whether these key topics are considered issues by the community, and the amount of change the community would support to address these topics.
Engagement Pause	Apr-May 2025	The project team held a series of 12 intensive internal workshops to review findings from Phase 2A engagement, produce draft recommended changes to the LUB on key topics, and check these potential changes against existing conditions in the city to identify any issues. Based on these recommended changes, Phase 2B engagement materials were then produced.
Phase 2B Engagement	Jun-Jul 2025	Presenting the public with the proposed changes to the LUB on the key topics defined above. This round sought to verify the extent to which the proposed changes align with the community's opinion, and to ensure that the project is

		progressing down the correct path of renewal for the community.
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Engagement Methods

As detailed in section 2 of the attached 'Phase Two What We Heard Report' (WWHR), a range of engagement methods were used. This provided residents and organisations with options to have their voice heard in a way that worked for them. A 'Phase Two Engagement Guide' was produced to assist residents in choosing an engagement activity that worked for them (see links). The engagement activities align with the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) levels of engagement as shown below:

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
Participants	706	2,185	448	0	Reserved for Council

A brief overview of the methods used, numbers of participants and IAP2 engagement level for each is provided below:

Engagement Method	Engagement Activities	Participants	IAP2 Engagement Level
2x Online informational videos	2	468 views	Inform
6x Decoding papers (see links)	6	238 downloads	Inform
Online Surveys:	3		Consult
Phase Two Survey #1: "What is Important to You?" (Jan 21 – Feb 18, 2025)		516	
Phase Two Survey #2: "What Path do you Want to Take?" (Mar 12 – Apr 2, 2025)		248	
Phase Two Survey #3: "What Changes Do You Support?" (Jun 6 – Jul 4, 2025)		488	
Pop-Up Engagement	17	933	Consult

In-Person Workshops (Mar & Jun, 2025)	6	85	Involve
Organization Presentations/Meetings	20	281	Involve
2x Open Houses (see links) & 1x Virtual Open House (Feb & Jun, 2025)	3	82	Involve
Totals	57	3,339	

Communications

As detailed in section 4 of the attached WWHR, the engagement opportunities were extensively promoted to residents and organisations. A summary is provided below:

Communications Method	Reach
Ads sent out with every physical & e-mailed City utility bill, to virtually every address in Lethbridge	41,273 addresses
Project webpage	8,800 visits
4 downloadable online engagement documents: • Project Primer • Phase 2 Engagement Guide • Phase 2 Public Engagement Plan • Phase 2A WWHR	586 downloads: • 76 downloads • 319 downloads • 71 downloads • 120 downloads
3 social media ads	200,739 impressions
9 official City of Lethbridge social media posts	12,850 reach
260 radio advertisements	215,599 audience reach
3 digital signs at 3 locations for 3 days	Unknown
3 public service announcements issued to media	35 online/print/radio articles
2 newspaper ads	~20,000 readers
1 full-page newspaper advertorial	~20,000 readers
5 email newsletters	1,583 recipients (cumulative)
6 A-frame advertisements in 6 locations	Unknown

Findings

A detailed overview of the engagement findings is provided in the WWHR, section 5. An overview of the contents of section 5 is provided below:

Section	Pages	Subject and Content
5.1	16-25	Survey #1: What is Important to You? Respondents identified issues of importance within the scope of the LUB, such as what housing types they need, what daily needs they want convenient access to, what they would like to be able to do downtown,

		and what information they would like to receive about development proposals in their area.
5.2	26-32	Pop-up Events Responses Respondents provided feedback via sticky notes on poster boards, giving input on topics including what could make the LUB better, what housing types they'd like to see more of, how housing affordability could be improved, and other thoughts on the project. Attendees at pop-up events were given postcards directing them to the project website and online surveys to allow them to give more detailed input.
5.3	33-34	Community Organization Meetings The project team met with 20 organizations during phase 2. While many meetings resulted in more general discussion and the project team answering questions, some attendees gave specific feedback which is summarized here. Topics include light pollution concerns, modular housing, secondary suites, park space, parking requirements and housing barriers.
5.4	35-39	Open House #1: What Solutions Should the City Pursue? The first open house asked similar questions to the first survey, with attendees giving input on topics including housing, business, downtown, parking and notifications.
5.5	40-59	Survey #2: What Path do You Want to Take? The second survey asked more specific questions, like what types of housing respondents are comfortable with having in their neighbourhood, how any negative impacts can be reduced, which amenities they'd like to see in their neighbourhood and where, how development downtown should be regulated, how regulations can change to benefit businesses, to what extent property/business owners should be trusted to know how much parking they need, and for what types of application should people be notified and how.
5.6	60-71	Survey #3: What Changes do You Support? The third survey asked respondents to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the project team's proposed recommended changes for the new LUB. This section provides data on the responses.
5.7	72-78	Open House #2: What Changes Does the Community Approve? The second open house (including both the in-person event and the online virtual open house) asked simplified versions of the questions in survey #3, i.e., about whether attendees agreed or disagreed with the project team's proposed recommended changes for the new LUB. As feedback was via sticky notes on boards, the feedback in this section is more qualitative versus the quantitative data in section 5.6 for survey #3.

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Next Steps

Phase Two of the LUB Renewal project is now complete. Following the 2025 municipal elections, the project team will orient the new Council to the project and seek Council's direction to continue with Phase Three: drafting the new LUB. This phase is expected to take approximately a year.

Phase Four will then involve sharing the draft new LUB with the public and seeking their (and Council's) input on any changes to the draft, before ultimately bringing the finalised new LUB to Council for consideration via a Public Hearing (expected no earlier than Q1 2027).

Recommendation and Option(s) Analysis

It is recommended that A&ISPC recommends that Council receive the Land Use Bylaw Renewal Phase Two What We Heard Report for information and direct Administration to orient the new Council to the project no later than Q1 2026.

- *Community/Citizen*

Social – The LUB Renewal project has great potential to tackle some of the community's big issues, such as housing affordability and choice. Phase Two delivered transparent and exceptional public engagement which related people's concerns and aspirations to the LUB.

Economic – One of the opportunities with the new LUB is to design land use districts, use definitions and processes that make it easier to attract, grow and adapt a business in Lethbridge.

Environmental – The project has the potential to contribute to sustainable development by making it easier for people to build more land- and resource-efficient types of development.

- *Risk*

A range of risks, potential engagement barriers, and management strategies were identified and explored in section 2 of the Phase Two PEP (see links below, pages 7-9). The project team is committed to being prepared and keeping Council informed if any substantial risks materialize in a way that affects the overall project delivery.

- *Implementation and Communication Plan*

The project team are working closely with the City's Communications department to ensure consistent and transparent project communications with the public and media. For phase two, communications were carried out as outlined in the above report and detailed in the attached WWHR.

Attachment(s)

1. Land Use Bylaw Renewal Phase Two What We Heard Report
2. Land Use Bylaw Renewal Phase Two What We Heard Report – Summary Version

Link(s)

1. [Project webpage](#)
2. Phase Two 'Decoding' Papers:
 - a. [Decoding Direct Control Districts](#)
 - b. [Decoding Downtown](#)
 - c. [Decoding Housing](#)
 - d. [Decoding Local Businesses & the Economy](#)
 - e. [Decoding Notification](#)
 - f. [Decoding Parking](#)
3. [Phase Two Public Engagement Plan](#)
4. [Phase Two Engagement Guide](#)
5. [Phase 2A Open House Panels \(Feb 11, 2025\)](#)
6. [Phase 2B Open House Panels \(Jun 18, 2025\)](#)

Approvals**A/Department**

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