

MUNICIPAL LAND PURCHASE AND DEVELOPMENT

A step-by-step guide to purchasing and developing municipally-owned land



Overview

This guide outlines the typical process for purchasing land from the Municipality with the intent of development. This is a general overview. Specific steps may vary depending on the nature of the proposed development.



Public Involvement Opportunities

Depending on the purchase proposal and development plans, there may be several stages that include opportunities for public involvement. These opportunities help ensure community concerns are heard and assessed.

Guided by legislation, the Municipality is committed to transparency by informing and engaging the public throughout the process - through advertisements, available documentation, public meetings, and appeal mechanisms.

The Acquisition Process

Step 1: Offer to Purchase

The process begins with the submission of a formal offer to purchase the land. This offer should include all relevant details, such as the proposed purchase price, intended use, and any initial conditions. The offer is reviewed by several administrative departments for input before it proceeds to Council.

● Why Early Stages Aren't Public

Council reviews land offers during an In-Camera (closed to the public) session to protect the personal privacy and business interests of applicants, as well as the Municipality's economic position. No final decisions are made at this point. Council's role is to determine whether the land is available and suitable for sale. If an offer moves forward and requires rezoning, public input becomes a required and formal part of the process, including advertising, hearings, and opportunities for appeal.

Step 2: Council Review

During the In-Camera review, Council evaluates whether the offer aligns with municipal priorities, strategic goals, and long-term community needs. Some properties are not available for sale because they are critical to municipal operations or planned future uses. If an offer cannot be pursued, the process concludes here to prevent unnecessary delays for all parties.

Step 2(a): Public Advertisement for Below-Market Sale

If the land sale is proposed at a price below market value (assessed value), the sale must be advertised publicly. This advertisement serves to inform the community and offer opportunities for public input.



Step 2(a)(1): Public Petition Process

Upon advertisement of the proposed sale of a municipal property below market value, the public is given the chance to express their views through a petition process. This allows community members to voice support or opposition to the sale, ensuring transparency and community involvement in municipal decisions.

Offer Acceptance and Conditions

Step 3: Offer Response

Council may respond to the offer in one of three ways:

- Acceptance: The offer is accepted as is.
- Declined: The offer is rejected.
- Counter Offer: A revised offer is presented to the buyer.

It's important to note that accepting an offer does not guarantee the sale will proceed. Most offers are conditional—commonly on rezoning, which involves a public hearing. During this process, Council considers public feedback and the overall benefit to the community. Even with an accepted offer, Council has full authority to deny a rezoning application and retain the land.

In some cases, particularly for road allowance sales, additional approvals are required from the Province of Alberta. Additional approvals are also needed if the land is part of a municipal reserve designation. These extra steps can extend the timeline and add further conditions before a sale can be finalized.

Rezoning and Bylaw Amendment Applications

Step 4: Zoning Change Application

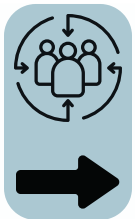
The proposed buyer formally applies for a zoning change through a bylaw amendment request. This application requires conceptual plans for the proposed development and justification for the zoning change.

Step 5: First Reading

The proposed bylaw goes before Council for its first reading. Typically Council approves the first reading to provide fair opportunity to the applicant and to start the public advertising and public hearing process.

Step 5(a): Publication for Public Review

With the first reading of the proposed bylaw amendment, the municipal council ensures transparency and public engagement by publishing the proposed amendment and any supporting documents in Council package.



This package is made accessible to the public, allowing community members to review the details of the proposed changes and any accompanying justifications or concept plans.

The council package serves as an essential resource for residents, providing the opportunity to:

- Understand the Rationale: Gain insight into the reasons behind the proposed zoning change and how it aligns with municipal objectives.
- Review Supporting Documents: Examine any submitted and relevant conceptual plans.
- Prepare for Public Input: Equip themselves with the necessary information to participate meaningfully in the public hearing later in the process and provide informed feedback.

Public Consultation and Hearing

Step 6: Public Advertisement & Affected Landowner Notifications

The bylaw is advertised in a local newspaper and the Municipal website for a minimum of two weeks

plus five days prior to a public hearing. This advertisement along with notices mailed to any affected landowners, informs the public about the proposed zoning change and the upcoming hearing.



Step 7: Public Input

During the advertising period, affected individuals have the opportunity to:

- Review the proposed bylaw and supporting documents at the Municipal office.
- Submit documentation supporting or opposing the bylaw.
- Attend the public hearing (electronically or in person) to speak for a maximum of five minutes.

Step 8: Second and Third Readings

Following the public hearing, Council typically conducts the second and third readings of the bylaw on the same day, unless changes have been requested. If the bylaw passes third reading, the zoning change is approved.

Development Permit and Appeals

Step 9: Development Permit Application

With the zoning change approved, the owner applies for a development permit. This permit authorizes the specific development proposed for the land.

Step 10: Development Authority Decision

The Development Authority has a legislated timeframe (40 days) to review the development permit application and make a decision once a completed application is received.

Step 11: Refusal Options

If the application is refused, the applicant has options:

- Appeal to the appropriate appeal board.
- Resubmit a modified application that resolves the reason(s) for refusal.
- Resubmit the same application after a waiting period of six months.

Step 12: Approval Notification and Appeals

If the permit is approved, a Development Permit Notification will be issued. This will include several standard conditions including things like completion time, site plan adherence as well as any additional conditions that the Development Authority deems necessary.



If the proposed development requires a variance or is considered a discretionary use, adjacent landowners and members of the public who claim to be affected by an approval, have the opportunity to appeal the decision.

Planning Your Project

Navigating this process requires careful planning, communication, and adherence to municipal and provincial regulations. Meeting early with the development team can be key to navigating the complexities of municipal land development.

Booking an Appointment with the Development Team

To discuss your proposal in further detail and ensure a thorough understanding of all requirements and expectations, it is advisable to book an appointment with the municipal development team. This meeting provides an opportunity to:

- Clarify any questions regarding the application process or specific requirements.
- Receive guidance on aligning the proposal with municipal strategic goals and community needs.
- Discuss potential challenges and strategies for addressing them.
- Obtain feedback on the proposal to enhance its chances of approval.

To schedule an appointment, please click [here](#). Be prepared to provide a brief overview of your proposal and any specific topics you wish to discuss during the meeting. Engaging with the development team early in the process can be invaluable in navigating the complexities of municipal land development.

Navigating Municipal Land Purchase

