



Direct Control Amendment Item: Residential and Business

Electoral Division: 2

File: PL20240006 / Hamlet of Harmony

Date:	October 8, 2024
Presenter:	Bernice Leyeza, Planner 2
Department:	Planning

REPORT SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to assess proposed amendments to Direct Control Bylaw C-6688-2008 (DC-129) relating to development within the Hamlet of Harmony; amendments include:

- the definition of Secondary Suites and their exemption from a Development Permit;
- increased maximum height limits for multi-dwelling, mixed-use, and commercial units;
- a reduction in front yard setback for some development cells;
- a change in how parking stall requirements are assessed in some development cells;
- a reduction in the maintenance access easement width for zero lot line properties; and
- an increase in the maximum floor area for Retail Food Stores.

The proposal also seeks to add various land uses and text corrections within the Harmony Plan Area.

The application was evaluated in accordance with the Municipal Development Plan (County Plan), Harmony Conceptual Scheme, and Direct Control Bylaw C-6688-2008 (DC-129). Overall, the application was found to align with the policies of the County Plan, Harmony Conceptual Scheme, and DC-129. Furthermore, the proposed amendments align with the overall intent and vision for the Harmony plan area, preserving the community’s character without negatively impacting the existing and intended amenities.

Administration does not have any concerns with the majority of the proposed amendments; however, at this time Administration recommends that Council amends the proposed bylaw to only exempt Secondary Suites that are located within the primary dwelling from requiring a development permit, as detached suites require a more rigorous review process and may have off-site impacts that should be considered during the development permit process.

ADMINISTRATION’S RECOMMENDATION

THAT Bylaw C-8574-2024 be given first reading, as amended.

THAT Bylaw C-8574-2024 be given second reading, as amended.

THAT Bylaw C-8574-2024 be considered for third reading, as amended.

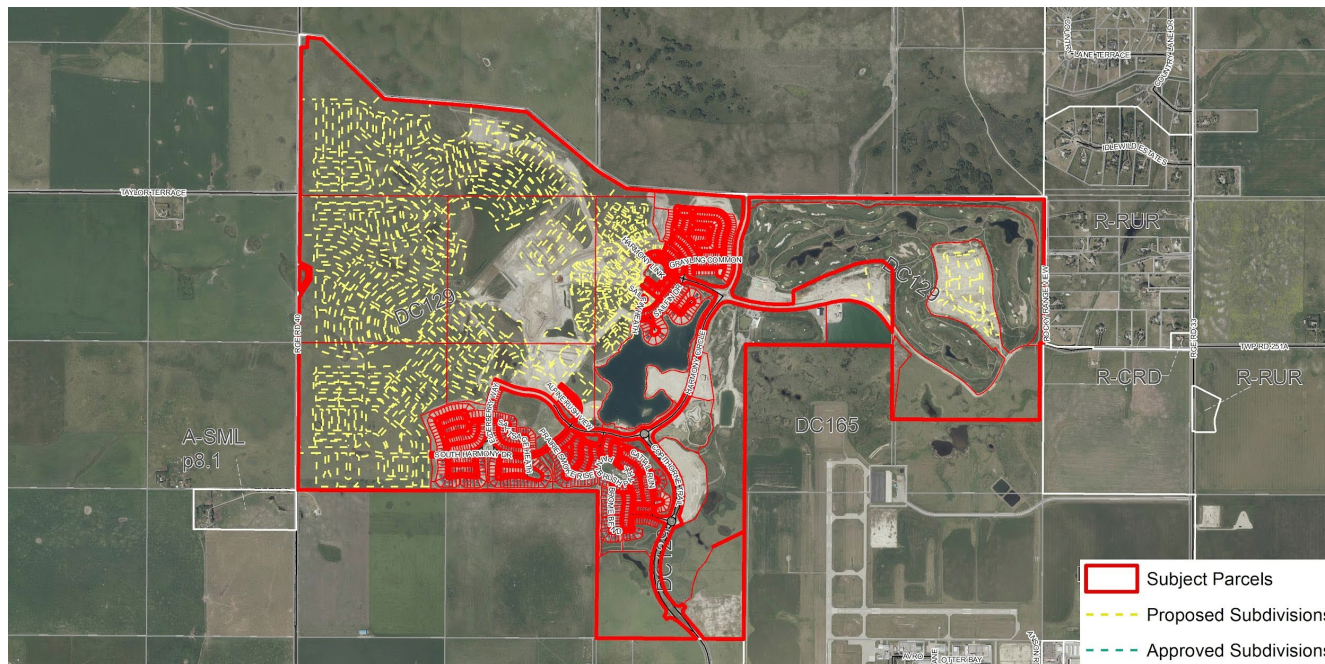
THAT Bylaw C-8574-2024 be given third and final reading, as amended.

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BACKGROUND

Location (Attachment A)

Located within Harmony, approximately 3.22 kilometres (2 miles) north of Township Road 250, and on the east side of Range Road 40.



Site Context (Attachment B)

On October 7, 2008, Council approved Bylaw C-6688-2008 (DC-129), establishing the Direct Control District for the Harmony Plan area. Between May 2017 and November 2022, several amendments were made to DC-129 to align it with the evolving development.

On February 13, 2024, Council approved amendments to Direct Control District (DC-129), granting the Development Authority the ability to consider variance requests for minimum property line setbacks up to 25% of the required distance. Additionally, for Lots 18 through 24, Block 30, Plan 1911856, within NW-08-25-03-W05M, the minimum dwelling setback from the south property line is now 4.5 meters (14.76 feet), and the minimum setback for attached decks is 2.5 meters (8.20 feet).

Intermunicipal and Agency Circulation (Attachment C)

The application was circulated to all necessary intermunicipal neighbours, internal and external agencies. Alberta Transportation and Economic Corridors has provided no concerns on the proposed amendments.

Landowner Circulation (Attachment D)

The application was circulated to 843 adjacent landowners in accordance with the *Municipal Government Act* and County Policy C-327 (Circulation and Notification Standards); a total of five (5) letters were received where one (1) letter of support and four (4) letters of opposition. The opposition letters mainly concern the proposed front yard reduction in the Village Residential – 2 Cell. The Applicant addressed these concerns by submitting minor amendments to their application, which were subsequently sent to the landowners who had initially opposed during the first circulation.

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ANALYSIS

DC-129 Harmony Proposed Amendments

Secondary Suites

The proposal to exempt Secondary Suites from requiring a Development Permit (Section 3.2.0) aims to streamline the approval process for builders and residents in Hamlet of Harmony (“Harmony”). If all Bylaw requirements are met, this change will allow development to proceed without a development permit for qualifying parcels. A development permit would still be needed for any deviations from the Bylaw.

The proposed amendments to the Secondary Suites definition (13.21.0) aim to align with Bylaw C-4841-97, providing clarity on baseline requirements and limiting the scale of Secondary Suites compared to principal dwellings. The proposed amendment addresses the potential for larger lots in Harmony to incorporate secondary suites by increasing the maximum habitable area to 111.5 m² (1,200 ft²), a 20.0% increase from the current 93 m² (1,000 ft²). These changes are constrained by maximum site coverage and the percentage of habitable area relative to the principal dwelling, ensuring secondary suites remain appropriately scaled.

Administration recommends that the proposed exemption for Secondary Suites apply only to secondary suites that are located within the primary dwelling, as Secondary Suites outside of the primary dwelling, the design, appearance, and impacts of the building is best managed through a development permit process.

Detached suites require a more rigorous review process and may have off-site impacts that should be considered during the review of the development permit.

Parking and Loading Needs Assessment (3.0.0)

The VC-1 Development Cell in Harmony uses a Parking Needs Assessment for commercial parking, differing from the standard Land Use Bylaw C-4841-97 requirements cited elsewhere in the Direct Control Bylaw. This proposed method ensures efficient land use and prevents excess parking. The proposal suggests expanding this approach to all commercial uses in Harmony by updating Section 3.0.0 and including more districts. This would allow all commercial parcels to propose parking needs according to an assessment rather than prescribed thresholds, enhancing land use efficiency and community adaptability.

VC-1 Amendments (5.5.0)

The proposed amendments to the VC-1 involve adjusting the maximum height for Dwelling, Multi-Family, Mixed-Use, Commercial, and Residential buildings to 20.0 m (65.6 ft), aligning with the approved height for Hotels. This change supports the design of these buildings up to six (6) storeys, a 17.7% increase from the current 17.0 m (55.8 ft) limit.

New Land Uses in Employment Campus Development Cell (E-1) (6.2.0)

As interest in new commercial developments in Harmony grows, the Applicant proposes adding several new land uses to the E-1 Development Cell to expand business opportunities and enhance residents’ quality of life. The proposed additions include a Cannabis Retail Store, Car Wash, Distillery, Farmers Market, Local Grocery Store, and Local Shopping Centre. These uses will complement existing services in the VC-1 Development Cell and provide diverse, convenient business opportunities.

Retail Food Store Floor Area (6.4.2)

A minor increase in the allowable floor area for a Retail Food Store is proposed to align with contemporary development practices and industry standards. The amendment seeks to set the allowable floor area at 3,902 m² (42,000 ft²), 20.0% increase from the current 3,251 m² (35,000 ft²).

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VR-1 and VR-2 Notes and Superscript (8.5.1 & 9.5.1)

Note d. Minimum Front yard Setback for Garage Oriented Perpendicular to Street

- Note *d.* permits a reduced front yard setback for Front Access Single Detached dwellings with a Lot Frontage exceeding 24.0m, reducing it from 9.0 m to 6.1 m when garage doors are perpendicular to the street. A minor adjustment is proposed to align this with the 6.00m setbacks in VR-1 and VR-2. Additionally, a grammatical correction in Section 9.5.1 note *d.* (VR-2) is proposed by removing the phrase “doors do not face the street” to match with Section 8.5.1 (VR-1).

Note e. Requirements for Dwellings Utilizing Both Dual Front and Rear Access

- Some lots in Harmony can accommodate both front and rear access, allowing for a ‘drive-through’ garage scenario. This type of product has not been implemented in Stages 1 and 2, nor are there plans for dual access. Existing development controls in the DC-129 Bylaw and Harmony architectural controls ensure appropriate design for such access. Therefore, note *e.*, which pertains to the Building Grade plan for lots with both front and rear access, is deemed redundant and proposed for deletion to enhance the clarity of the DC-129 Bylaw.

Removal of Several Superscript References within Tables 1 and 2 in Section 8.5.1 and 9.5.1

- Tables 1 and 2 in Sections 8.5.1 and 9.5.1 contain incorrect superscript references, misdirecting readers to notes for different situations. For instance, Front Access Single Detached dwellings should reference note *d.* instead of note *e.* These errors are proposed to be corrected in the updated Bylaw.

VR-2 Front Yard Setback Reduction (9.5.1)

The setback within the VR-2 Development Cell has been adjusted from 6.0m to 4.5m (a 33.3% decrease) for irregularly shaped lots less than 18.3m (60.0 ft) wide. To address residents’ concerns, a definition for irregular-shaped lots has been added in Section 9.5.1: “Where the front yard width is less than 60% of the rear yard width and considered an irregular shaped lot along a concave curve, the front yard setback is reduced to a minimum of 4.5 metres.” This adjustment ensures the setback reduction is specific to these lots, enhancing building placement efficiency.

VR-3 and VR-4 Zero Lot Line Easement (10.4.0 & 11.4.0)

The VR-3 and VR-4 Development Cells in Harmony feature ‘zero lot line’ single-detached dwellings, allowing these structures to be built close to the property line with an easement for access. A proposed reduction of the easement at 1.8 m (6.0 ft), a decrease of 25.0% from the current 2.4m (7.9 ft). This aims to provide flexibility for residents and builders.

Administrative Errors

The DC-129 (March 2024) contains various grammatical, spelling, formatting, and numbering errors. Highlighted in yellow for Administration’s review are notable errors, with missing punctuation or revised text in green (see Attachment G for the redlined version). Additional editorial review items include inconsistencies in capitalization and italicization, non-uniform list formatting, outdated Provincial agency references, inconsistent tab spacing, missing or misnumbered sections, and text justification issues.

Policy Review (Attachment E)

The proposed amendments are consistent with the overarching policies of the County Plan, the Harmony Conceptual Scheme, and Direct Control Bylaw C-6688-2008 (DC-129).

The County Plan supports the development of the Hamlet of Harmony as a full-service community in accordance with the Conceptual Scheme. The proposed amendments to the conceptual scheme retain the mixed-use development concept. The application proposes an amendment to the DC-129 District to which the Harmony Conceptual Scheme guides development. The changes to the Direct Control District are consistent with the relevant policies in the Conceptual Scheme.

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COMMUNICATIONS / ENGAGEMENT

Consultation was conducted in accordance with statutory requirements and County Policy C-327.

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

No financial implications identified at this time.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

This report is a statutory obligation under the *Municipal Government Act*.

ALTERNATE DIRECTION

No alternative options have been identified for Council’s consideration.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A: Map Set
- Attachment B: Application Information
- Attachment C: Application Referral Responses
- Attachment D: Public Submissions
- Attachment E: Policy Review
- Attachment F: Draft Bylaw C-8574-2024 and Schedule A
- Attachment G: Bylaw C-8574-2024 Redline

APPROVALS

Manager:	Dominic Kazmierczak
Executive Director/Director:	Matt Boscariol
Acting Chief Administrative Officer:	Byron Riemann

