



PLANNING

TO: Council
DATE: September 27, 2022 **DIVISION:** 5
TIME: Afternoon Appointment
FILE: 08410002 **APPLICATION:** PL20210124
SUBJECT: Redesignation Item: Direct Control District for Solar Farm

APPLICATION: To redesignate the subject ± 35.30 hectare (± 87.52 acre) parcel, being the remainder of the north half of fractional Section 10-28-29-W04M, from Agricultural, General District (A-GEN) to Direct Control District (DC) to allow for the future subdivision of one ± 17.81 hectare (± 44.01 acre) parcel and the future development of a Solar Farm, Electric Vehicle Charging Station, Electric Storage System, and Electronic Data Processing on that parcel, thereby leaving a ± 17.49 hectare (± 43.22 acre) DC District parcel. The proposed balance parcel would also have the same uses of Solar Farm, Electric Vehicle Charging Station, and Data Processing uses available.

GENERAL LOCATION: Located approximately 3.2 kilometres (1.99 miles) southeast of the town of Crossfield, on the southeast junction of Highway 2 and Highway 72 (Township Road 282).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Council gave first reading to Bylaw C-8287-2022 on May 10, 2022. The subject parcel is currently cultivated; no structures or other development is occurring.

The application proposes to redesignate the subject lands to Direct Control to allow for the development of a Solar Farm, Electric Vehicle Charging Station and a Data Processing operation on the northern proposed parcel. The application proposes to redesignate the entire subject parcel because the proposed southern parcel would not meet the minimum parcel size of the current Agricultural, General Land Use District (A-GEN).

The application is located outside of an area structure plan; as such, the application was evaluated against the policies and regulations of the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan, Calgary Metropolitan Region Growth Plan, the Municipal Development Plan (County Plan), and the Land Use Bylaw.

The proposed Direct Control District would allow for the proposed uses on both northern and southern parcels; if approved, this would allow for two separate operations to occur in close proximity without the benefit of higher planning policy and strategies being formulated through the adoption of an area structure plan.

The application is partially consistent with the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan; however, it is inconsistent with the relevant policies of the Regional Growth Plan and Municipal Development Plan (County Plan), and the regulations of the Land Use Bylaw.

The subject parcel could be considered a Rural Employment Area within the Regional Growth Plan and is generally within the overall location of an identified future Regional Business Centre area within the County Plan; however, the application is premature to the adoption of an Area Structure Plan under both the Regional Growth Plan and the County Plan.

Further, the application of the Direct Control District on the proposed southern parcel to reduce the minimum parcel size of the A-GEN land use district is not an appropriate use, as it allows for an increase in the potential scale of future development outside of an area structure plan.

Administration Resources

Logan Cox, Planning & Development Services



ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION: Administration recommends refusal in accordance with Option # 2.

OPTIONS:

- Option # 1: Motion #1 THAT Bylaw C-8287-2022 be given second reading.
- Motion #2 THAT Bylaw C-8287-2022 be given third and final reading.
- Option # 2: THAT application PL20210124 be refused.

AIR PHOTO & DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT:



APPLICATION EVALUATION:

The application was evaluated based on the technical reports submitted with the application and the applicable policies and regulations.

APPLICABLE POLICY AND REGULATIONS:

- *Municipal Government Act*;
- South Saskatchewan Regional Plan
- Regional Growth Plan
- Municipal Development Plan (County Plan);
- Land Use Bylaw; and
- County Servicing Standards.

TECHNICAL REPORTS SUBMITTED:

- Stormwater Management Concept, InfraCor, November, 2021



POLICY ANALYSIS:

South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (SSRP)

The SSRP speaks to the preservation of Agricultural land (Strategy 1.1) by reducing the fragmentation and conversion of agricultural land. It seeks to maintain large agricultural areas, as well as smaller parcels being used for value-added agricultural support services.

In the SSRP's Implementation Plan, the objective to support the responsible development of the region's renewable industry is highlighted as a means to support Alberta's commitment to greener energy production and economic development. Strategy 1.9 of the plan calls for policies to be put into the plan to promote and remove barriers to new investments in renewable energy.

The SSRP notes in Strategy 1.10 that the region has a natural advantage for renewables such as wind, solar, bio, and hydroelectric energy, and speaks to investing in the development, demonstration, and deployment of renewable and alternative energy technologies targeted to improve Alberta's overall energy efficiency.

Regional Growth Plan (RGP)

The application would be classified within a Rural Employment Area under the Regional Growth Plan; this area is characterized by a variety of lower density, lower service industrial or commercial land uses and may include uses such as food, business, and fuel station services to serve a local population or the travelling public.

The application aligns with the intent of the Rural Employment Area and meets the location requirements under Policy 3.1.6.2.

The application partially aligns with Policy 3.1.7.1, which allows for resource extraction and energy development outside of Preferred Growth Areas. The proposed Solar Farm use would align with this policy of the RGP; the proposed Electric Vehicle Charging Station, and Data Processing uses would not align with this policy of the RGP and are required to be located in a Preferred Growth Area in accordance with this Plan.

Further, the application does not conform to Policy 3.1.6.3, which requires that Rural Employment Areas be planned through an Area Structure Plan (ASP); the ASP is to identify how the development protects the function of regional transportation infrastructure and provides water, wastewater and/or Stormwater servicing.

Municipal Development Plan (County Plan)

The application is located within the vicinity of an identified Regional Business Centre southeast of the Town of Crossfield, as shown on Map 1-Managing Growth. This aligns with Policy 14.2 directing business development to locate in the identified business areas.

The application does not align with Policy 14.4, which requires a business area to have an adopted Area Structure Plan. The application does not align with Policy 14.7 of the County Plan, which requires new Regional Business Centres to only be developed if they are able to demonstrate the need for the new a business area based on eight criteria within subpoints of this policy. Further, the application does not align with Policy 14.8 of the County Plan, which directs new commercial development to existing regional business centres and to ensure they comply with the relevant ASP for those areas.

Land Use Bylaw

The proposed Direct Control District (DC) is based on the Agricultural, General District (A-GEN) and would allow for the construction of a Solar Farm, Electric Vehicle Charging Station, Electric Storage System, and Electronic Data Processing. Section 299 of the Land Use Bylaw C-8000-2020 requires that the Solar Farm use can only be considered on a parcel that has been designated Direct Control.

**ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS:**Transportation

Access to the subject parcel is from Range Road 293, which is the service road along the east side of Highway 2 and runs along the west, northwest, and north property lines of the subject parcel. Alberta Transportation has noted the future subdivision and development of this parcel would not meet Section 14 and 15 of the Subdivision and Development Regulation; however, they are willing to provide a waiver and allow the Subdivision Authority to grant a variance to these sections subject to their approval of a Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA), a report outlining the potential for reflection and glare from the proposed solar facility, and a Roadside Development Permit.

Servicing

The application proposes water and sewer servicing through the use of holding tanks to accommodate the future rest area ancillary to the electric vehicle charging station. Further review of the proposed servicing would be a requirement of future subdivision and development permit applications.

Fire Suppression

The applicant proposes to use stormwater collection facilities to provide for their fire suppression needs and proposes that this can be further considered at the Development Permit stage. The County's Fire Services noted the proposed fire suppression method would have to meet Section 4 of the Fire Hydrant Water Suppression Bylaw C-7259-2013. This section notes that a plan and specifications for a private water system need to be completed by a professional engineer in alignment with the National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) Standards and submitted to the County for approval.

Scope

The proposed Direct Control District (DC) allows for the proposed Solar Farm, Electric Vehicle Charging Station, Electric Storage System, and Electronic Data Processing uses on both proposed parcels. Should subdivision of the parcel be supported, two operations within proximity of each other could be constructed through a Development Permit process. If Council wishes to support the application, Administration recommends referring the application back to Administration to work with the applicant on an appropriate land use designation, such as Agricultural, Small Parcel District (A-SML p18.5), over the area of the proposed southern parcel.

Area Considerations

Approximately 1.80 kilometres (1.12 miles) north of the subject parcel, on the west side of Highway 2, is the North Central Industrial Area Structure Plan (ASP). This ASP presents a vision of what the area could be like in 20 to 25 years and provides goals to development of the area over that period of time. The ASP covers approximately 373 hectares (923 acres) of land situated on the eastern boundary of the town of Crossfield, and west of Highway 2. This ASP provides for Industrial, Light Industrial, and Institutional uses with connections to the Town of Crossfield's Crossfield East Area Structure Plan.



ROCKY VIEW COUNTY

Respectfully submitted,

“Brock Beach”

Acting Executive Director
Community Services

Concurrence,

“Dorian Wandzura”

Chief Administrative Officer

LC/rp

ATTACHMENTS:

ATTACHMENT ‘A’: Application Information

ATTACHMENT ‘B’: Application Referrals

ATTACHMENT ‘C’: Bylaw C-8287-2022 & Schedules ‘A’ & ‘B’

ATTACHMENT ‘D’: Map Set

ATTACHMENT ‘E’: Public Submissions