



COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE & STRATEGIC GROWTH – AGENDA REPORT

Meeting Date: 10 December 2024

Subject: Bylaw B-33/2024 – Land Use Bylaw Amendment – Proposed Supportive Housing Regulation Updates

Directorate: Strategic Growth and Investment

Issue:

The Community Infrastructure and Strategic Growth Standing Committee is being asked to recommend that Council approve Bylaw No. B-33/2024, being a bylaw to amend supportive housing regulations within Land Use Bylaw No. B-01/2016 (LUB).

Policy / Council Direction:

Through a Notice of Motion made by Council on April 16, 2024, Council directed Administration to conduct a review of LUB regulations regarding the 'Supportive Housing, Limited' category. The review was required to involve a comparison of best regulatory practice, a campaign to inform and engage the public and, ultimately, provide options for regulation updates regarding this housing type. In addition to LUB regulations, there are multiple higher-level policy documents that speak to supportive housing. A brief overview is provided in Attachment 1.

Background:

Introduction

Supportive housing is defined as a longer-term housing solution designed to promote independent living for vulnerable community members within a residential housing setting while offering access to care and additional services to meet their evolving needs. These facilities vary in size, physical design, and service offerings and are critical to creating inclusive and thriving communities.

In the Airdrie context, the Land Use Bylaw separates supportive housing into two categories based on scale and level of intensity. 'Supportive Housing, Limited' is defined as a small-scale facility integrated with other residential land uses. Services might include regular housekeeping, nursing care, personal care, health, wellness, and recreational support. 'Supportive Housing, General' is considered a larger-scale institutional facility which may offer professional care, supervision and health treatment in addition to the services that the limited category provides.

Public Engagement

The topic of supportive housing can be complicated as the Province and the City each have contributing roles regarding this type of housing. Administration determined a dialogue was

needed to both ask and answer clarifying questions. To foster discussion and deeper understanding of Airdrie residents' concerns, values, and priorities around integrating supportive housing into residential areas, Administration held three evening focus group discussions on November 12, 13, and 14, 2024. A What We Heard Report is included as Attachment 2. For additional context, a brief description of the roles and responsibilities of each level of government is included in Attachment 3.

Key Considerations for Adjusting the LUB

The current LUB regulations for supportive housing (written in 2016) reflect a purposeful intention to be broad, flexible, and reduce barriers allowing for opportunities to facilitate these types of housing developments in a way that is inclusive and respectful of resident (client) privacy. However, this discretionary nature may be seen as leaving too much room for interpretation.

Important to note, Airdrie's current flexible model is in alignment with other municipalities. The municipalities of Lethbridge, Red Deer, Cochrane, Okotoks, High River, and Calgary are also broad and discretionary in nature (evaluated on a case-by-case basis). Prior to 2019, Edmonton was more prescriptive in terms of their LUB regulations, but they were repealed to increase opportunities for development widely across the city, allowing for flexibility in the location of new facilities, and for operators to be able to adapt to different forms and tenures depending on supportive housing needs at the time. Similarly, Saskatoon has taken a broader approach in July of this year to enable additional flexibility as part of their Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) strategy.

To address the gap between providing opportunities and flexibility for the development of supportive housing facilities and adding specificity to balance concerns related to the use, Administration believes there are six topics that can be adjusted. A drafted bylaw proposing a series of amendments is outlined in Attachment 4 and 5. The following is a high-level overview of these key topics:

1. Definition(s) of supportive housing and maximum intensity:

The definitions have been improved by adding a specific number of residents (clients) that each category of supportive housing could accommodate, a more thorough list of typical uses to avoid confusion, and a differentiation between long and short-term housing options. To achieve this, Administration has proposed to limit 'Supportive Housing, Limited' to 3-5 residents (clients) as this number would maintain a residential feel, while listing typical elements that supportive housing does not include. Administration is recommending two new definitions for temporary care facilities.

2. Instances where a development permit would be exempt or required:

Currently, regardless of the number of residents (clients) and/or staff within the facility, a development permit is always required. In alignment with the above topic, Administration recommends that a supportive housing facility with two or fewer residents (clients) does not necessitate a development permit and should be exempt – noting that a business license would still be required.

3. Classification of supportive housing as a permitted or discretionary use in certain districts:

Currently, all supportive housing uses are classified as a discretionary use. This means additional considerations are utilized in the decision-making process and an approval must be advertised for a minimum 21-day appeal period and landowners within a 60m radius are directly notified. Administration recommends this process remain as official neighbour notification is important for this type of housing.

4. Parking:

The required parking for 'Supportive Housing, Limited' is specified as per the appropriate housing form. In most cases, this means a minimum requirement of two stalls. It does not outline separate parking for residents (clients), staff, or visitors. Administration recommends that this is updated to ensure that in addition to the amount required for the appropriate housing form, there is also at least one stall per employee.

5. Cumulative impact through location and siting:

Administration feels that adding a series of specific technical parameters (neighbourhood cap, distance from another facility, distance from a collector street, etc.) would be limiting and unintentionally create barriers to development. If specificity is desired, it is recommended that the Standing Committee add a regulation to the proposed bylaw specifically for 'Supportive Housing, Limited,' which requires a minimum 150m separation distance between approved facilities. This would help distribute this use across the City. Attachment 6 includes such a policy for additional consideration.

6. Public engagement:

Currently, Administration strongly encourages applicants to reach out to their neighbours prior to making a development permit submission. However, this is currently not a specified requirement in the LUB. Administration recommends that this be changed, with the addition of a regulation that states engagement/notification may be required of those properties within a 60m radius of the subject property prior to an application being submitted.

To support operators and future applicants, Administration has prepared a public engagement guide. The guide identifies common questions and concerns of adjacent neighbours that, if answered, may help the long-term success of the facility. It also lists recommended techniques on how engagement could be conducted. This guide is included as Attachment 7.

Administration Recommendation:

That the Standing Committee passes the motion provided by Administration to endorse Bylaw No. B-33/2024. This bylaw would update the existing regulations by maintaining a degree of flexibility to accommodate the range of housing needed to support the Airdrie community while balancing common questions, concerns, and apprehensions related to this type of housing option. Administration is in support of the proposed amendments because of the following:

- They are in alignment with Council's Strategic Focus Area of achieving a caring community.
- They align with the goals, objectives, and criteria of the Airdrie City Plan and the AirdrieONE Sustainability Plan.
- The [City of Airdrie Housing Needs Assessment](#) outlines that there is current need for supportive housing options. Specifically, there is a projected deficit of 145 permanent supportive housing units (single adults, seniors and people with disabilities at risk of or experiencing homelessness) and 155 special needs housing units (persons who experience cognitive and/or physical activity limitations) by 2027.
- These amendments create an environment more conducive to balancing the need to be flexible to not limit these types of developments from occurring, but in a way that respects adjacent neighbour values and needs.

- A multi-disciplinary approach and a diversity of inputs were utilized during the review to gain a collection of information, perspectives, and ideas to arrive at the final recommendations.

Alternatives/Implications:

Alternative One: The Standing Committee passes the motion provided by Administration to endorse Bylaw No. B-33/2024 with additional considerations/amendments for Council.

This would allow the Standing Committee to provide a motion of support to Council and provide Council additional notes of consideration and/or recommendations of amendments from the Standing Committee.

Budget Implications:

No budgeting implications are anticipated with the proposed amendments.

Communications and Engagement:

Following the Standing Committee's recommendation, in keeping with *Municipal Government Act*, the Public Notification Bylaw, and LUB requirements, Administration will provide notification of the future public hearing via the "City Connection" section of the local newspaper and on the City's website for three consecutive weeks.

Recommendation:

That the Standing Committee recommends that Council give three readings to Bylaw No. B-33/2024, being a bylaw to amend supportive housing regulations within the Land Use Bylaw B-01/2016, as presented.

Crystal Jeromski, Planner II

Staff Presenter:	Crystal Jeromski, Planner II
External Presenter:	N/A
Department:	Current Planning
Reviewed by:	Stephen Utz, Director, Strategic Growth & Investment
Attachments:	#1: Supportive Housing High-Level Policy Direction #2: Public Engagement What We Heard Report #3: Supportive Housing Role of the Province vs City #4: Draft Bylaw B-33/2024 #5: Proposed Amendments (Redlined) #6: Additional Considerations for Amendments #7: Supportive Housing Engagement Guide