

OCP Amendment Application Guide



This handout provides information on the requirements and processes to change the Official Community Plan land use designation.

When is an Official Community Plan (OCP) Amendment Application Required?

An OCP amendment application is required when a proposed development does not conform to the land use designation of the City's OCP. An amendment is the process of legally changing the land use designation on a property through an amending bylaw. An OCP Amendment is often processed concurrently with a rezoning application. An application does not guarantee approval.

What is an OCP?

An Official Community Plan is the highest level policy document for a municipality – it informs and guides the community as it grows. The Official Community Plan is a bylaw adopted by Council that sets out the vision, objectives and policies that will guide the future growth and development of Dawson Creek. It integrates policies on land use, economic development, environmental stewardship, municipal services and infrastructure, transportation, protective services, community facilities and services to set out a clear path for elected officials and staff to follow.

Prior to Application

OCP Amendment applications should be thoroughly considered and prepared by the applicant before submittal. The following steps are recommended:

1. Official Community Plan (OCP) Land Use Designations: Check the OCP land use maps for the designation of your property and the types of land uses allowed within that corresponding zone. The OCP also contains policies related to specific types of development.

2. Zoning Bylaw and Maps: Check the City's Zoning Bylaw and Zoning Maps to find the zoning designation and zoning requirements for your property. It is possible that the existing zoning may not allow your proposed project. If this is the case, a rezoning application may also be required.

3. Contact the Development Services Department: Staff are available to meet with applicants to discuss the proposed OCP amendment application. Staff can provide advice on submission requirements and the review procedure to assist timely processing of the application prior to submittal.

Application Procedure:

Complete an OCP Amendment Application Form and submit the information outlined on the OCP Amendment checklist. Check with staff as to what information listed on the checklist is required. All information requested in the checklist must be provided in a timely manner to ensure the application is referred to the appropriate City Departments and can be responded to in a suitable timeframe.

Official Community Plan Amendment Process

Process

- 1. Assigned:** The application will be assigned to a Planner in the Development Services Department. The application will be reviewed by staff and all requested information must be received prior to processing the application.
- 2. Amending Bylaw:** The Planner will prepare an amending bylaw and report which will be brought to Council with one of the following recommendations:
 - Give first and second reading to the amending Bylaw and refer the application to a Public Hearing;
 - Decline the application; or,
 - Defer the application.
- 3. Referrals and Notifications:** If given first and second reading by Council, the Planner refers the application to appropriate City departments including but not limited to Building, Engineering and Fire Protection Services. The Planner may also refer the application to an external agency including the Provincial Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, the Provincial Ministry of Environment, and Forestry, depending upon the location and significance of the proposed amendment application. Notifications regarding the application and public hearing date are sent to neighbouring residents and posted in the newspaper.
- 4. Referral Requirements:** If the Planner receives referral comments which require action, the applicant may be required to provide additional information. The amending bylaw may also be modified to reflect requirements or suggestions from the referrals.
- 5. Consultation:** A Public consultation session is held in accordance with Section 475 of the *Local Government Act*.
- 6. Public Hearing:** A public hearing is held prior to third reading and adoption of the amending bylaw. Written and verbal comments from the public will be presented. Council may direct changes to the amending bylaw as a result of comments received.

7. Third Reading and Adoption: After the public hearing the amending bylaw will be brought to Council with one of the following recommendations:

- Give third reading and adoption to the amending bylaw
- Decline the OCP Amendment application

8. Amendments Made: If adopted by Council, the required amendments will be made to the Official Community Plan and Land Use Map, if required.

Timeframe

An OCP Amendment application generally takes two months to complete depending on a number of factors including:

- completeness of the application,
- changes requested by agencies or the public,
- timing of Council meetings.

OCP Amendment applications associated with more complex applications will require more time to finalize.

Fees

The fee for an Official Community Plan Amendment can be found in the Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw No. 3932.



Additional Applications:

- A Development Permit Application (DP) may also be required with the application if the site is located within a Development Permit Area. (Refer to the Development Permit Application Guide)
- If the proposed OCP Amendment application is to facilitate the creation of new lots, and/or requires adjusting an existing property line, a subdivision application will also be required. (Refer to the Subdivision Application Guide)
- If the proposed zoning does not permit the proposed use, a rezoning application will be required, which is done concurrently as a joint application.

If the proposed OCP Amendment requires a development permit and/ or subdivision application, the applications may be processed concurrently.

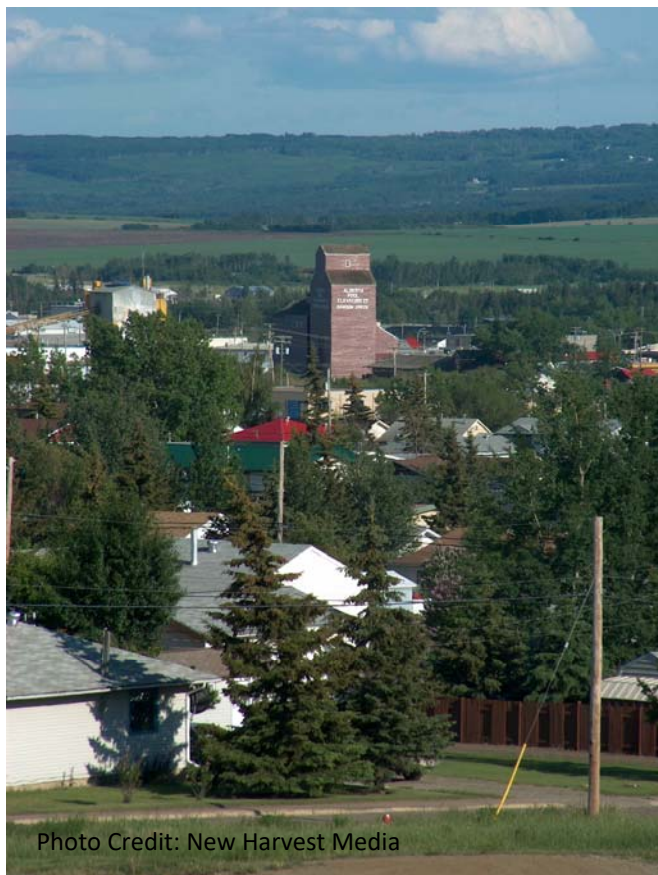


Photo Credit: New Harvest Media

What is a Public Hearing?

A public hearing is a meeting of City Council where the applicant and public are given an opportunity to comment on the proposed OCP amendment. Comments may be provided to Council either in writing, prior to or at the public hearing, or verbally during the public hearing when the amending bylaw is presented. Once the Public Hearing is closed, Council may not receive any further information from either the applicant or the public before making a decision on the amending bylaw.

Who is the Development Services Team?

The City's Development Services Team includes representatives from the following departments: Planning, Building, Engineering and Fire Protection Services.

Talk with your Neighbours

Consultation with your neighbours who may be affected by the proposed OCP amendment application is strongly encouraged. Obtaining neighbours input better enables an applicant to address any concerns and/or modify their application before significant time and investment are made in the review process.

Questions?

Official Community Plan Amendment Applications

- Planning 250-784-3601

Site Servicing, Street Works or Utility Construction

- Engineering 250-784-3621

Transportation

- Planning 250-784-3601

Signage

- Building Department 250-784-3654

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