

What Have We Heard?

A summary of the relevant questions received from the public at the virtual Open House, in person Open House and calls received

- 1) Why was I notified about the draft Sundre Airport Concept Plan and the proposed amendments to the Land Use Bylaw's regulations on Aerodromes when I don't live close to the airport? I live on the east side of the Red Deer River on River Road, over 3 kilometres away.**

Even if you don't live right next to Sundre Airport, the Outer Surface area, as depicted in the map below, is relevant to you. This area is part of the Aerodrome regulations within the Land Use Bylaw.

The Outer Surface is a circular zone extending 4,000 meters horizontally from the Sundre Airport's center point and reaching up to 45 meters vertically. Transport Canada established this area to protect aircraft during circling and maneuvering procedures. It's important to note that the Outer Surface itself isn't new to the Land Use Bylaw, and its size and location remain unchanged. If you live within this area, you're more likely to see aircraft landing or taking off as they maneuver near the runways.

We want to inform landowners within the Outer Surface about proposed amendments to the Land Use Bylaw that affect this area. The goal of these amendments is to ensure that future development or land use changes don't create safety hazards for aircraft. This includes concerns such as:

- Attracting birds or wildlife
- Communication tower height and interference
- Glare from renewable energy (i.e., solar panels)

The proposed regulations require that new rezoning, subdivision, or development applications do not negatively impact the safe use of the airport by aircraft. When applicable, applicants may be required to provide information on emissions (steam, smoke, or dust), signal communication interference, or external lighting when submitting applications, which will then be circulated to NAV Canada or Transport Canada.

- 2) I am concerned about the number of aircraft that fly around the area and that they may be flying too low. Do the proposed amendments to the Land Use Bylaw regulations provide rules for flying aircraft?**

No. Flying aircraft must follow federal aviation rules, which are outside the municipality's jurisdiction. Instead, the Land Use Bylaw regulations focus on the types of development and land uses near an airport to prevent conflicts.

- 3) The draft Sundre Airport Concept Plan includes a map that shows six quarter sections with future land uses, that include “Parks and Recreation” and “Potential Future Aggregate Extraction.” If the Concept Plan is approved, will the lands automatically change to these new uses?**

No. Existing land uses must continue to comply with their current land use zonings. For example, two quarter-sections within the Concept Plan area are currently zoned "Agricultural District (A)," permitting various agricultural operations. Although the Concept Plan suggests these quarters may be suitable for future recreation or aggregate extraction, any such change would require an application to the County and consideration by Council through a Public Hearing, providing the public an opportunity for feedback.

- 4) Given the amount of gravel resources within the area, can the Province prioritize extracting this resource before any forms of development can proceed?**

No. Provincial agencies cannot force landowners to extract gravel resources; that decision rests solely with the landowner. Before any extraction begins, aggregate operations must be approved for redesignation by County Council and secure necessary provincial approvals and Development Permits. However, municipal support is necessary to this process.

Since Mountain View County owns undeveloped quarter sections in the area, there's a future opportunity to pursue aggregate extraction. Currently, active aggregate operations exist in the two northernmost quarter sections within the Concept Plan area: one is privately owned, and the other belongs to the County. The County's operation is slated to begin this year and is expected to proceed in smaller phases over the next 50 years.

While there are no current plans to extract aggregate from neighboring quarters, the Concept Plan recognizes the importance of protecting these resources for future extraction. This is achieved by limiting development on these lands and allowing them to remain in a natural state. The County specifically purchased three quarter sections east of the Airport for future gravel use, essential for maintaining our road infrastructure.

- 5) Given all of the existing operations for gravel extraction, what are the impacts to neighbouring water wells?**

The Province is responsible for the Water Act and all associated approvals. The Concept Plan, however, specifically addresses overland drainage and flood hazards during flood events.

Due to ongoing landowner concerns about groundwater quality in McDougal Flats, both before and during the ASP Review, the County collaborated with Alberta Health Services on a voluntary, no-cost "Well Testing Project." This initiative aimed to determine if residential wells in the area showed evidence of water quality issues.

In summary, the 2024 chemical and bacteriological well testing revealed that groundwater exhibits lower levels of concern compared to historical local watershed and provincial water quality data. Information on the "Well Testing Project" is available on our website, and a second phase of testing is scheduled for 2027.

6) Three of the quarters contain potential future uses that will allow for “passive recreation.” What is passive recreation?

This land use category encourages the public to enjoy natural settings with minimal development. It prioritizes environmental preservation by limiting activities that could harm nature. Think hiking, bird-watching, and horseback riding as examples of these passive recreational uses.

7) The ASP was just reviewed last year, why is there a Concept Plan prepared separately? Is the County following the correct process and how is the Town involved?

The Steering Committee for the South McDougal Flats Area Structure Plan (ASP) recognized that the six quarter sections within the Sundre Airport Concept Plan area needed a more in-depth review, specialized expertise, and updated technical mapping than the ASP review could provide. Therefore, the development of the Concept Plan was specifically incorporated into the South McDougal Flats ASP policies.

If approved by Council after a Public Hearing, the Concept Plan will be integrated directly into the ASP. Mayor Richard Warnock represents the Town's interests as a Steering Committee member. The Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP), which guides development in the County primarily around Town boundaries, acknowledges that the ASP can be amended periodically.

8) Are there plans to expand the Sundre Airport?

The draft Sundre Airport Concept Plan outlines a phased approach for future airport expansion. Currently, all hangar development is concentrated in the northwest corner of the quarter, with land still available for additional hangar lots.

Once the current area reaches full capacity, the Concept Plan details Phase 1B, an option to create new airport lots in the southwest corner of the quarter. This phase prioritizes airside development (hangars requiring direct taxiway access to runways) and some groundside development on the south end that doesn't need taxiway access. These areas are preferred for expansion due to existing infrastructure and convenient access to Range Road 55.

Phases 2 and 3, located on the east side of the main runway, are identified as future development areas. However, these would necessitate legal and physical access from the north, northeast, or east quarter sections.

While there are no immediate plans to expand the runways, the draft Concept Plan emphasizes that options for potential expansion should not be restricted.

9) A Condo owner in Coyote creek does not support Airport expansion closer to Coyote Creek due to noise and would like to oppose the Concept Plan.

Due to its high Environmental Significance (ESA Level 1 designation from our 2008 Summit Report) and Floodway designation, the Concept Plan supports future land uses that are considered passive recreation, low-impact, and non-motorized. If no such uses are proposed, the land will remain in agricultural use.

While runway expansion is not currently proposed or planned by the County, the only logical direction for the main runway's expansion is south into this quarter, and potentially the quarter to the east. This is reflected in the Concept Plan's policy. It's important to note that when the condominiums were approved, instruments were registered to ensure every unit owner was aware of the airport noise (Instrument No. 021 258 959 Section 5 f) and Instrument 091 045611 Section 5 k)).

10) What are the implications for construction of new dwellings within areas that are within the Noise Exposure Projection areas? Do these regulations impact the development for users of Coyote Creek?

The Noise Exposure Projection (NEP) regulations aim to reduce the impact of aircraft noise on properties near the airport. The proposed rules prohibit new dwelling construction in NEP areas above 30, as these zones experience the highest noise levels and are adjacent to the runways. Most of these high-noise areas fall within the Sundre Airport Concept Plan and are County-owned, except for the gravel pit in the northwest corner.

For properties within NEP areas between 25 and 30, new dwellings are permitted, but acoustic insulation will be required to mitigate noise nuisance.

While agriculture and airport operations have coexisted for decades, Country Residential lots are considered less compatible with airport activity. Therefore, the regulations do not support the creation of new Country Residential parcels within any NEP areas.

It's important to note that recreational sites within Coyote Creek aren't classified as dwellings, so they don't have special acoustic insulation requirements. Additionally, when the condominiums were approved, legal instruments were registered to ensure every unit owner was aware of the airport noise (Instrument No. 021 258 959 Section 5 f) and Instrument 091 045611 Section 5 k)).

11) The uses listed within the proposed regulations for Airport District zoned land includes "Eating Establishment, Indoor" but proposed the removal of "Eating Establishment, Outdoor"? Does this mean that we are not allowed any picnic tables or food trucks?

The proposed regulations aim to minimize conflicts between aircraft and wildlife, as outdoor eating areas can attract unwanted animals, especially birds. Therefore, potential future eating establishments at the airport must primarily operate indoors with indoor seating. However, this doesn't rule out the option for a small outdoor area. Food trucks are not considered outdoor eating establishments under these regulations. It remains crucial to mitigate any potential issues with waste management and ensure wildlife are not attracted to the area by food.