

What We Heard: Initial Engagement for the Bergen Area Structure Plan Review

The Bergen Area Structure Plan Review Steering Committee has prioritized a thorough communications and engagement strategy. As part of this, the first Open House was successfully held at the Bergen Community Hall on June 4, 2025, with approximately 45 residents attending.

This initial engagement session aimed to provide an overview of the existing Vision, Planning Strategies, and general policies related to subdivision. The primary objective was to gather comprehensive input from participants, helping us understand the preferred types of growth and development Bergen residents envisioned for their community.

Supportive materials and a video are currently available on the County's website. Attendees of the Open House were encouraged to review these resources in advance of completing the accompanying survey.



KEY THEMES

The following summarizes the key themes that emerged from the Question & Answer session during the Open House presentation.

Planning Vision

- 1) The last bullet of the Planning Vision notes one of the key attributes of Bergen as “gradual change through focused and measured growth”. It sounds contrary to the rest of the Vision. What does this mean?

Change and growth are inevitable as more people are looking towards Mountain View County and Bergen as desirable areas to live, work, and play. The wording within this vision statement

indicates a desire for slow, intentional growth within the Bergen community. The ASP is a tool to shape how this growth and change occur. Through the ASPs policies, we can direct subdivisions and development to the areas that are most appropriate. The ASP can also define what types of development should or should not be allowed in the Bergen area.

- 2) The Planning Vision notes one of the key attributes of Bergen as “sustainable environment”. However, the focus appears to be on agriculture and subdivisions. It does not appear that environmental considerations are addressed by the current Area Structure Plan.**

The current Bergen Area Structure Plan does address environmental considerations. Most notably, *Section 7.2 Significant Features and Environmental Protection* contains a number of policies relating to environmentally significant areas. These policies discuss appropriate land uses in these areas, with policies guiding how subdivision and development may occur. They also discuss the potential for environmental reserves or environmental reserve easements as a protection strategy for significant lands.

Additionally, the Bergen ASP contains dedicated Stream Corridor and Jackson Lake land use policy areas. These policy areas help to protect Bergen’s significant water bodies by controlling what kind of activities and development may occur in proximity to these areas.

Environment

- 3) What is the impact of additional subdivisions on water and septic? There is concern that allowing 4 subdivisions per quarter section will impact neighbouring wells, and that septic systems could contaminate groundwater. How will this be addressed?**

Water wells and septic codes are both provincially regulated, limiting the control that Mountain View County has over these areas. The County may request studies related to water and sewer services for any redesignation, subdivision, or development application if it is deemed necessary.

Additionally, the current Bergen ASP Policy 7.6.7 notes that the County shall not approve any subdivisions or development if groundwater resources are insufficient or if the use of groundwater may unduly affect existing groundwater users in the area. These are examples of policies that allow the County to limit subdivisions and development if it is proven that groundwater supplies are insufficient.

- 4) The current Area Structure Plan does not have enough environmental protection. We need to protect our water and our wetlands.**

The ASP contains considerations for environmentally significant areas. If the feedback from the Bergen community is that additional protective measures are needed, then that is something that the Steering Committee can consider.

Agriculture

- 5) **Bergen contains more types of agriculture than just cultivation. For example: pasture, beekeeping, tree nurseries, etc. Having a system for subdivision density centered on the suitability of land for cultivation may not be the most appropriate strategy here.**

Mountain View County recognizes that there are many different types of agriculture. County policies aim to direct development and subdivision to the least productive areas with the goal of preserving agricultural land of all varieties (whether that be cultivated land, pasture lands, etc.). Development and subdivision should be directed away from productive agricultural lands, whether that is cultivated land or otherwise. Depending on the feedback from the surveys, the Steering Committee can consider additional criteria for determining land suitability for subdivisions.

Subdivision and Development

- 6) **The ASP should take into consideration which roads are planned to be upgraded in the next 10 years. Could we concentrate subdivisions in Bergen along collector roads?**

This is a strategy that was utilized in the past by Mountain View County. Directing increases in density to higher traffic/traveled roads could allow for the preservation of the more rural areas within Bergen. This may be a consideration for the Steering Committee when evaluating survey results.

- 7) **The Bergen store was a defining feature of the community for decades. Should there be a designated area for commercial development in Bergen?**

The current Bergen ASP recognizes the history of the Bergen Store and notes that land around this area may be appropriate for future commercial development. We would be interested in hearing from the Bergen community if there are any additional areas that would be deemed appropriate for future commercial development.

- 8) **The current Area Structure Plan does not discuss industrial development. It is not wanted in this area. Should we include more concrete wording within the ASP to reflect this?**

The potential for Light Industrial uses is mentioned briefly in Section 7.5 *Plan Area Economy*. Since the ASP does not comment on heavy industrial uses, they would not be considered an appropriate land use within the Bergen area. If the community indicates a desire for clearer policies on industrial development, then the Steering Committee can consider this in their review process.