

LAND USE BYLAW REFRESH



The Land Use Bylaw (LUB) sets the rules for land use and development in Peace River, aligning with the Municipal Development Plan. It balances landowner rights with community interests while considering the town's unique natural features and development patterns. We want your feedback to ensure this bylaw remains effective for future growth.

What are Land Use Districts?

Land Use Districts define what types of development are allowed in different areas of Peace River. They set rules on land use and building types. Some places call these "Zones."

Examples include residential districts for housing, commercial districts for businesses like stores and offices, industrial districts for factories and warehouses, and public districts for parks, utilities, and community spaces.

Why does the LUB need to be refreshed?

The Land Use Bylaw, last updated in 2012, is being refreshed to improve clarity, consistency, and alignment with modern planning practices. A full update is needed to reflect Peace River's context and evolving development trends.

How does the LUB affect my taxes?

Indirectly. The LUB governs property development and use, while property taxes are based on the revenue needed to fund Town services. To determine the required tax revenue, the Town subtracts income from fees, permits, and grants from total expenditures. The remaining balance is raised through property taxes. Tax rates are set based on the required revenue divided by the total property assessment. The assessed value, which determines property taxes, is influenced by the land use and improvements permitted in the Land Use Bylaw's districts.

Do I have to wait for the new bylaw to submit a development permit or subdivision application?

You can apply for a development permit or subdivision at any time. An application received before the new bylaw is approved will be evaluated with the existing LUB.

Will my existing developments still legal or do I have to reapply for permits?

Existing land uses and developments with approved permits are considered legally existing. If they don't comply with the new bylaw, they are "legally existing, non-conforming." Most developments will remain legally existing.

For non-conforming developments, the Municipal Government Act imposes limits. You can continue using the land or building as it is, but you cannot resume use after it has been discontinued for more than 6 months, nor can you rebuild a non-conforming building if it's substantially destroyed by fire or a natural disaster.

How will this affect me?

The proposed changes will affect development opportunities in town, impacting all residents. If you plan to develop land or a building, these changes may directly affect you. The update will also modify development processes, including how the community is notified of approvals.

Key proposed changes

Combining residential districts

Merge eight low-density residential zones into a single "Residential 1" district, permitting single homes, duplexes, and accessory dwellings town-wide.



Key proposed changes continued

New residential 6 district

Introduce a "Residential 6" district for properties without municipal water and sewer services, tailoring regulations to these areas.

Main street development rules

Adjust building height requirements on Main Street, reducing the minimum from 2 storeys to a 1.5-storey façade to encourage development.

Simplified business relocation

Allow certain businesses to change locations within commercial or industrial buildings without a development permit, provided the business falls within a 'permitted use' class.

Home-based business regulations

Permit home offices and minor home-based businesses (e.g., massage therapy) to operate without a development permit, supporting entrepreneurship with minimal neighborhood impact.

Commercial patios

Enable businesses to establish patios on private property without a development permit, following specific guidelines.

Solar panels

Allow building-mounted solar panels without a development permit, ensuring installations meet safety standards through building permits.

Fence regulations

Set maximum fence heights (e.g., 1 meter in front yards, 1.9 meters in rear yards) to establish clear expectations and maintain neighborhood aesthetics.

Storage containers (sea cans)

Permit storage containers as accessory structures in commercial, industrial, and institutional areas, with limitations in downtown zones; continue to prohibit them in

residential areas except during construction.

Landscaping requirements

Introduce specific landscaping mandates for new developments, such as requiring at least one tree in the front yard of residential lots.

Recreational vehicle (RV) parking

Limit residential properties to a maximum of two RVs, with guidelines on placement to maintain neighborhood character.

Downtown parking requirements

Remove minimum parking requirements for most uses along key downtown streets, except for apartments and hotels, leveraging existing public parking.

On-street parking credits

Allow on-street parking adjacent to a development site to count toward parking requirements for public and commercial uses.

Bicycle parking

Introduce bike parking requirements for apartments, commercial, and public developments where on-site parking is mandated.

Public notification process

Modify how the public is notified about development permits, including notifying neighbors before certain decisions and posting results online.

Assessment criteria for applications

Establish clear criteria for evaluating discretionary use and variance development permit applications, considering factors like visual impact, traffic, and environmental effects.

See the full draft at peacriver.ca/LUBrefresh.

The Town received great feedback in our public survey this winter. The details of the bylaw will change as we consider and incorporate the feedback. Watch our website, social media, and utility inserts for more information.

