



Town of

Athabasca

Gateway to the Great New North

October 2024 Town News and Views Volume 19, Issue 3

The Town of Athabasca respectfully acknowledges that we are meeting on Treaty 6 and Treaty 8 territory, home to the First People living on Turtle Island, and we honour all of the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples who have lived, traveled, and gathered on these lands for thousands of years. We commit to sharing a path forward of respect, learning, and opportunity.

Municipal Development Plan and Land Use Bylaw Update

The Town of Athabasca has engaged ISL Engineering and Land Services Ltd. (ISL) to undertake a targeted review and update of the Town's current Municipal Development Plan (MDP) and Land Use Bylaw (LUB). This work will reflect recent changes in provincial legislation and better meet community needs now and into the future.

The current MDP and LUB were adopted in 2010, and updates to some sections are needed to make sure they address community needs, reflect changes in the community and development trends, and align with recent changes in provincial legislation.

The Municipal Development Plan:

- Serves as a roadmap that guides community growth, development, and infrastructure needs.
- Identifies goals, objectives, and policies to link the physical and social development of the community.
- Contains general policies about future land use, development sustainability, transportation, utilities, & municipal facilities.

Town Bylaws Under Review

Speed Limit Bylaw: There is ongoing debate whether or not to lower the speed limit in some areas in town. The Town is running an online survey through October to get feedback from residents. The debate is: 40 km/hr in town; 40 km/hr with some exempt roads; or leave it at the current rate of 50 km/hr. Please watch for the survey and participate. Results will be announced.

Animal Control Bylaw and Community Standards Bylaw: Coming soon. Both bylaws are still under legal review. Please watch the Town website for updates.

Off-Season Parking Bylaw for RVs

As summer comes to a close, residents are reminded of the following parking regulation regarding recreational vehicles (RVs):

"No person shall keep or permit the keeping of a recreational vehicle in any part of a front or side yard adjacent to a road in any Residential District (within the Town of Athabasca) between November 1 and March 31 each year."

The term "recreational vehicle" includes trailers, motorized homes, slide in campers, chassis mounted campers and boats with sleeping facilities. Refer to [Land Use Bylaw 13-10](#), Part 7.6 (2).

The Land Use Bylaw:

- Organizes the Town into land use districts (commercial, residential, industrial, etc.) and identifies the permitted and discretionary land uses allowed.
- Sets the Town's development permit and rezoning processes.
- Establishes standards for lot size, setbacks, building height.
- Outlines requirements for parking, signage, and landscaping.

The review process will include public engagement: residents and interest holders will have the opportunity to participate in two rounds, the first in Sept/Oct 2024, and the second in April/May 2025. Feedback received will be used to inform proposed updates to the MDP and LUB. Proposed updates will be presented to the public and interest holders to gather additional feedback that will be considered when refining and finalizing the updates. The project is expected to be completed by August 2025.

Watch the [Town website](#) and [Town of Athabasca Facebook](#) for more info as dates of public engagement are made available.

Housing Needs Assessment

The Town of Athabasca is applying for an [Alberta Community Partnership](#) (ACP) Grant to undertake a housing needs assessment in the Athabasca region, including the Town, Athabasca County, and Village of Boyle. Athabasca County and the Village of Boyle have provided the Town with letters of support.

The objective of the ACP program is to improve the viability and long-term sustainability of municipalities.

Key program outcomes include:

- New or enhanced regional municipal services
- Improved municipal capacity to respond to priorities
- Effective intermunicipal relations

The Town intends to:

- Identify the types of housing that may most be needed
- Look into the possibility of some form of residential tax assistance
- Determine how best to incorporate the results of the assessment into the [Town Council Strategic Plan](#).

More details will follow as the project progresses.



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Appreciation for Firefighters and Others in the Community

Town Council and Administration express their sincere thanks to all who assisted during the loss of the Grand Union Hotel due to the devastating fire that occurred in July. After standing as a community landmark for 110 years, the historic structure was reduced to rubble in a matter of hours. Firefighters, EMS, RCMP, volunteers and others are to be commended for their part in battling the fire, preventing it from spreading to nearby buildings, and helping to minimize the disturbance to downtown traffic.

Town Council hosts an annual event to thank and acknowledge volunteers and others in the community, with a spotlight on our local firefighters. This year's event is being held in October.

Appreciation goes out also to the Whispering Hills Country Music Association for organizing a Country Music songwriter's competition and special appreciation event to honour firefighters, the community, and the Grand Union Hotel, to be held on Oct. 25 at the Multiplex. For more info, contact Debbie at 780-675-5679.

Taste of Athabasca Invites Participants

Another irresistible *Taste of Athabasca* event is being planned for the community, and organizers are inviting participants interested in showcasing their heritage through their culinary talents. The event is scheduled for Nov. 2 at the Athabasca Regional Multiplex. The deadline for registering a table is Oct. 24.

Taste of Athabasca is a joint venture of the Friends of the Athabasca Public Library & Archives and the Athabasca Lions Club. Everyone is welcome to sign up, but don't delay, as space and resources are limited. Sign-up sheets with more information are available from the Alice B. Donahue Library, or by emailing friends.abdlas@gmail.com.

Appeal Board Seeking Members

Athabasca County, the Town of Athabasca, and the Village of Boyle, in partnership, have formed an Intermunicipal Subdivision Development Appeal Board (SDAB). The SDAB will consist of a pool of eight board members from across the greater Athabasca County region. SDAB training will be provided.

Interested parties from all three municipalities are invited to apply. Please submit a letter and resume of qualifications to:

Village of Boyle
Attention: SDAB Application
Box 9, Boyle, AB T0A 0M0

Or by email to: warren@boylealberta.com

For more information, contact the Town Office at 780-675-2063.

Christmas Decorating Contest



Back for another run, it's the Town of Athabasca **Christmas Decorating Contest!** The deadline to enter is December 9th, and yes, there are prizes for the winning entries!

• \$100 for Residential Winner • \$100 for Non-Residential Winner

Nominate a neighbor or enter yourself! Drop off an entry form and photos at the Town Office, or email to town@athabasca.ca.

Winners to be announced at the Dec. 17th Town Council Meeting.

Old Brick School Conservation Project

Athabasca Public School, more commonly referred to as the "[Old Brick School](#)," or, simply, the "Brick School," stands as a monument to times past in the Town of Athabasca. This historic structure was built in 1914 and served as a school until the late 1960s. Since then, the building has been home to a variety of community groups and organizations.



Time takes its toll on all things physical, and the Old Brick School is no exception. Recognizing the need to revitalize and actively manage the conservation of this cherished historic resource, concerned shareholders and others in the community launched a multi-phase initiative in 2019 to research and plan for the rehabilitation and ongoing care of the aging structure.

Tasked by Athabasca Town Council with managing the conservation of the building, the [Athabasca Public School Conservation Committee](#) has begun the process of restoring the Old Brick School.

Reimagine Architects (formerly Manasc Isaac Architects, Ltd.) is the author of a comprehensive study, completed in 2019, titled the [Old Brick School Design Development Report](#).

This report is the Conservation Committee's reference as they work through the complex process of conserving the building. The original character of the building is to be conserved and maintained as much as possible.

As the project moves forward, potential uses for the restored building will be considered and debated.

The Design Development Report highlights two foundational design philosophies for the building. In brief, they are:

- The Athabasca Old Brick School should be a community building, which upholds its roots through its art, culture, and historic programming.
- This design intends to activate all spaces, at all times of the day and year, in order to bring the bustle of Athabasca back into the school's old brick walls.

Since the committee's inception, committee members have been applying for grants, drafting budgets and hiring contractors for the various stages of conservation, including mitigating asbestos and replacing the windows.

Funding Determines Progress

As with most projects of this magnitude, funding the necessary and/or recommended improvements remains one of the most challenging aspects of the endeavour. While committee members continue to research and review plans for specific elements of restoration, they are also wrapped up in an ongoing search for grant funding opportunities. Renovations can take place only as quickly as funding can be arranged, meaning progress is slow and projects must be prioritized. The committee is starting with the boiler in the basement and will continue to work their way upwards in the building, subject to funding.

More info can be found on the [Conservation Committee site](#), including an invitation to make donations to the project.