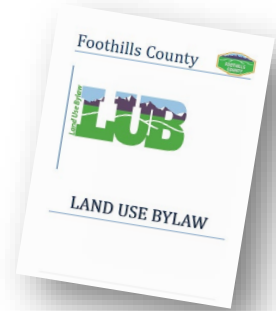


PUBLIC HEARING – NOVEMBER 5, 2025, AT 1:30 P.M.

PROPOSED LAND USE BYLAW AMENDMENTS FOR SMALL SCALE DATA PROCESSING FACILITIES



A public hearing has been scheduled for November 5, 2025, at 1:30 P.M. for a proposed amendment to current provisions under the County's Land Use Bylaw.

INTRODUCTION

Data Processing Facilities are becoming increasingly common, and the demand for such developments in Alberta continues to grow.

Currently, the Land Use Bylaw 60/2014 includes a definition for large-scale data processing, adopted by Council in February 2025. This use was approved as a site-specific use within the Business Park District on particular lands identified within the Foothills Crossing Area Structure Plan area, just east of the Town of High River. The existing definition reads as follows:

DATA CENTRE CAMPUS: A large-scale facility designed to house extensive computer systems and associated components, for supporting artificial intelligence, cloud computing, data security, data storage, management and processing digital media, information, and applications. This facility encompasses ancillary structures that support its primary function, including but not limited to administrative offices, educational and training facilities, maintenance facilities, power generation facilities, substations, and security buildings.

To better address this emerging trend, Planning Staff have drafted amendments to include smaller-scale data processing facilities that fall below the thresholds requiring provincial approval.

Data Processing Facilities meeting the following thresholds do not require Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC) approval or may qualify for exemption; however, notification in accordance with AUC Rule 007 remains mandatory:

- *On-site generation capacity below 1 MW;*
- *Generation for on-site consumption only, with no grid export;*
- *Renewable micro-generation (solar, wind, etc.) ≤ 5 MW for on-site use only, registered under the Micro-Generation Regulation.*

These smaller facilities are intended to be appropriately located within designated industrial land uses of Foothills County.

DRAFT PROPOSAL TO BE CONSIDERED BY COUNCIL AT THE PUBLIC HEARING

The following amendments are proposed:

1. THE FOLLOWING DEFINITION IS ADDED TO SECTION 2.5 OF THE LAND USE BYLAW:

DATA PROCESSING FACILITY – TYPE 1 means a building, dedicated space within a building, or a sea-can used to house computer systems and associated infrastructure for the purpose of small scale digital data processing.

Small scale facilities have limited infrastructure, do not exceed the thresholds requiring provincial approvals, and are anticipated to have minimal off-site impacts. These facilities are not intended to be included under the uses of Home Office or Home-Based Business.

2. **THE DEFINED USE SHALL BE ADDED AS A DISCRETIONARY USE UNDER THE FOLLOWING LAND USE DISTRICTS:**
- General Industry District
 - Direct Control District #34 – Commercial Solar Power
3. **THE FOLLOWING NEW SECTION IS ADDED TO SECTION 10 SPECIFIC USE REGULATIONS UNDER THE LAND USE BYLAW:**

10.29 DATA PROCESSING FACILITY

General Regulations

- 10.29.1 A Development Permit is required for a Data Processing Facility.
- 10.29.2 A Data Processing Facility – Type 1 shall not be considered as a Home Office or Home-Based Business.
- 10.29.3 A Data Processing Facility – Type 1 is a Discretionary Use within the General Industry District and Direct Control District #34 only.
- 10.29.4 Where a Data Processing Facility – Type 1 is not listed as a use within the current land use district, a bylaw must be enacted to allow a site-specific amendment or to redesignate the lands to an appropriate land use district prior to the Development Authority accepting a development permit application.
- 10.29.5 A Data Processing Facility – Type 1 shall comply with all applicable Land Use and Development Requirements, including height, setback, and lot coverage regulations for the applicable land use district.
- 10.29.6 A Data Processing Facility – Type 1 shall obtain an approved Building Permit and comply with all applicable Fire, Building, and Safety Code requirements.
- 10.29.7 Data Processing Facility – Type 1 developments shall be designed to minimize off-site impacts on neighbouring properties, including those related to appearance, noise, emissions, and water use for cooling or processing purposes.
- 10.29.8 A Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) shall be prepared by a qualified acoustical engineer demonstrating compliance with municipal noise limits and applicable provincial noise guidance.
- 10.29.9 A Noise Mitigation Plan shall be submitted, to the satisfaction of the Development Authority, identifying proposed measures to limit off-site noise impacts.
- 10.29.10 The design, character, and appearance of all buildings, including sea-cans, shall be compatible with the surrounding area and constructed of durable materials designed to maintain their original quality throughout the life of the development.
- 10.29.11 A high-quality visual appearance shall be achieved through landscaping and screening in accordance with the County's Screening Standards and, where applicable, the Highway 2A Industrial Corridor Design Guidelines.
- 10.29.12 Any outdoor storage shall be arranged in an orderly manner and limited to areas of the site where it is screened from adjacent properties and roadways through fencing, landscaping, or berming, as appropriate.
- 10.29.13 The development shall be designed to minimize demand on municipal water, wastewater, and road infrastructure.

Application Requirements

10.29.14 A Development Permit application for a Data Processing Facility shall include the following information, to the satisfaction of the Development Authority:

- a. A detailed Site Plan showing:
 - i. the entire parcel, with north oriented at the top of the page;
 - ii. all roads used for construction, access, and egress;
 - iii. all existing structures, including temporary or non-permanent structures;
 - iv. all proposed buildings and structures, including sea-cans, ventilation stacks, racking or framing structures, screening, fencing, exterior lighting, and any equipment for energy production or utilities;
 - v. locations of landscaping features, parking areas, and site circulation;
 - vi. all setbacks from property lines and the proximity to structures or uses on the site and on adjacent parcels; and
 - vii. identification of any sensitive, environmental, or topographical features present on the parcel.
- b. Elevation Drawings and Floor Plans of all proposed buildings and structures, including trailers, sea-cans, and related storage buildings.
- c. A summary of the number of computer units, fans, and other relevant details regarding anticipated noise impacts.
- d. A Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) prepared by a qualified acoustical engineer demonstrating compliance with municipal noise limits and applicable provincial guidance, addressing tonal and low-frequency components and proposed mitigation measures.
- e. Servicing and Stormwater Management details.
- f. Documentation confirming electrical supply arrangements, including either:
 - grid interconnection agreement or AESO study; or
 - copies of any required provincial approvals from the Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC); or
 - evidence of eligibility for an AUC own-use exemption.
- g. Where on-site power generation is proposed, confirmation of the total MW capacity at full build-out and copies of any required provincial approvals or registrations (AUC, AER, or AEPA/EPEA), or evidence that the proposed generation falls below applicable approval thresholds.
- h. A Lighting Plan.
- i. A Landscaping and Screening Plan, to the satisfaction of the County and in accordance with applicable screening standards or guidelines for the subject lands.
- j. An Emergency Response Plan prepared by a qualified professional and approved by the County's Emergency Management Department.
- k. A Decommissioning Plan outlining the removal of equipment and site reclamation in the event the use ceases.

PLEASE NOTE:

These amendments are not yet adopted. The purpose of the public hearing is to introduce these draft amendments to Council and the public for their review and consideration.

The public is encouraged to provide their comments on the matter to/at the public hearing.

For more information on the public hearing including how to submit information or participate, click, [here](#) (Link to the November 5, 2025, public hearing advertisement).