

Cornerstone Area Structure Plan Update

Questions and Answers

Thank you to everyone who wrote to Council, spoke at, and attended the public hearing on October 13th. This document attempts to provide written answers to the questions we heard.

The short version: Bylaw 2026-29 updates a long-range plan for the Cornerstone area. It does not rezone any land. Nothing new can be built here until the land is rezoned through a Land Use Bylaw (LUB) amendment, where Council would need to hold a separate public hearing, with notice to nearby residents.

THE BASICS

1. What is an area structure plan?

An area structure plan (ASP) is a long-range guide for how an undeveloped area of town may grow over 20 years or more. It shows where homes, businesses, parks, roads and pathways could go. It does not give anyone permission to build.

The Cornerstone Area Structure Plan was first approved in 2017. Bylaw 2026-29 updates it to reflect current conditions, including the closure of the old waste transfer station and the former sewage treatment site.

2. Is the land being rezoned now?

No. Zoning is the set of rules that says what can be built on a piece of land. The zoning on these lands is not changing.

All three Town-owned parcels stay zoned Future Urban District. Any future rezoning would need its own bylaw and public hearing, and nearby residents would be notified and could speak.

3. What are the different types of zoning?

Full details can be found in the Town's Land Use Bylaw [HERE](#), but in summary:

- Future Urban District (FUD): A holding zone that keeps land undeveloped until Council approves another zoning for it. Only parks and sheds or similar buildings for existing uses are permitted. Farming, utilities and temporary buildings are allowable uses but require Council approval. No new homes or

businesses can be built. All three Town-owned Cornerstone parcels are zoned FUD today.

- Traditional Neighbourhood District (RTD): A residential zone for single homes, side-by-side homes (duplexes) and townhouses, with basement, garage or garden suites allowed. This is commonly referred to as “low density” zoning
- Mixed Use Node (MUN): A zone that mixes homes and businesses, often with shops on the main floor and apartments above. Permitted uses include apartment buildings, townhouses, duplexes, cafés, small shops, child care and small health clinics. MUN is commonly referred to as “medium density” or “high density” zoning

4. Has a developer already been chosen for these lands?

No developer has been chosen, and no pending deal is behind this plan’s update.

THE SALE OF THE LAND

5. Why did the Town buy this land?

The land was planned for development by its private owner, Long Sky Developments, as part of the 2017 Cornerstone Area Structure Plan.

In 2016, the Town paid to build the roads and underground water and sewer lines that serve the area. In return, the owner agreed to repay its share of those costs (about \$2.9 million) once the land was developed.

The land never developed. The owner tried for several years to sell it but was unsuccessful. That left a real risk that the land would sit empty for many years, and the Town would never recover its investment nor see development occur.

In 2026, Council approved an agreement for the owner to transfer the land to the Town in exchange for cancelling the amount owed. The Town now owns about 60 acres across the three parcels. The Town plans to sell the land to builders to recover its investment and bring new homes and businesses to Olds.

6. How will the Town set the selling price?

The Town intends to sell the land at market value, based on an independent professional appraisal. Interested purchasers will submit proposals, and the Town will consider the offer price, builder experience, and how soon they plan to build.

If the Town considered selling land for less than market value, provincial law requires that to be publicly advertised first.

HOUSING

7. Why does the plan allow higher density housing behind Walmart?

Most of the future Cornerstone area is planned for low to medium density homes, such as single homes, duplexes and townhouses. The land behind Walmart is the one spot with few neighbours: shopping to the south, the Town boundary to the west, and Rotary Park to the north.

Placing apartments next to shopping is common planning practice. Residents can walk to stores and services, which means fewer and shorter car trips. Traffic studies show an apartment home creates fewer daily car trips than a single-family home. The 2017 plan already encouraged higher density next to the shopping centre, so this is not a new idea.

8. What types of housing could be built?

If the land is rezoned in the future, the plan supports two kinds of zoning:

- East of 67A Avenue, neighbourhood residential zoning (Traditional Neighbourhood District or RTD). This allows single homes, side-by-side homes (duplexes) and townhouses. Small buildings with up to four homes may be allowed with Council approval.
- West of 67A Avenue and along 40 Street (Cornerstone Road), mixed-use zoning (Mixed-Use Node or MUN). This allows all of the above, plus apartment buildings and buildings with shops on the main floor and homes above.

9. How tall could new buildings be?

If the land is rezoned in the future, height limits would depend on the zoning approved:

- Neighbourhood residential zoning (RTD): up to 12 metres (~3 stories).
- Mixed-use zoning (MUN): up to 25 metres (~ 6 stories).

10. How does the Town know more housing is needed?

The Town relies on independent studies, including the [2025 Housing Needs Assessment](#) and the Province of Alberta's annual Apartment Vacancy and Rental Cost Survey. These informed the Town's first [Housing Strategy](#), adopted in 2025.

However, the Town does not decide how many homes get built. Demand in Olds is market driven, and while we try to measure that market, it is ultimately a decision of private builders what to build, and how fast, based on what people want to buy or rent.

NEIGHBOURHOOD FIT

11. How will the plan reduce impacts on existing homes?

Based on feedback received, the next draft of the Cornerstone ASP will include a height limit for new buildings next to existing homes. Assuming Council approves this amendment, future properties immediately north of existing duplexes will be limited to 2 stories in height.

12. Will the existing berm stay?

No. Because of a major sanitary line running underneath the berm, the Town will require permanent access. However, this means there will be a green space buffer between existing homes to the south and future homes to the north. The type of buffer has not yet been determined and would be part of the development stage. The Town will engage with affected landowners when that time comes.

13. How will parking be handled as the land develops?

The Town's Land Use Bylaw sets a minimum number of parking stalls for every type of building. This plan update does not change those requirements.

A builder who wants to provide fewer stalls than the rules require must apply for permission (called a variance) and explain why. Requests to reduce parking by more than 15% must go to Council for a decision.

In some parts of town, builders can pay the Town instead of building parking onsite (called cash-in-lieu). That option is only available in Uptowne and East Olds, not in the Cornerstone area.

14. Will new development add traffic on 67A Avenue?

Additional traffic is expected as the area grows and the Town is planning so that 67A Avenue does not become the only primary route in and out.

In the short term, the plan includes new access points at Cornerstone Road. These give new homes and businesses direct routes to Cornerstone Road and Highway 27 without passing through existing neighbourhoods and the commercial area.

In the long term, a new road connection to the north, into the Vistas community, will give residents another way in and out of the area. This spreads traffic across several roads instead of concentrating it on one.

Other steps will include:

- Update the existing traffic impact assessment, so impacts on 67A Avenue are measured before any development is approved
- Count traffic on 67A Avenue before and after each phase of development, and adding measures such as signs, crosswalks or parking limits if they're needed
- Work with Alberta Transportation on improvements to the Highway 27 intersection at 67A Ave.

Because the land will be developed gradually over many years, traffic will grow slowly, and the Town believes it will have time to monitor and respond appropriately.

15. Will the speed bumps on 67A Avenue and Cornerstone Road stay?

The speed bumps were installed as a temporary measure while these roads are bordered by empty land. As development occurs, the Town intends to remove these speed bumps along Cornerstone Road and its portion of 67A.

FUTURE BUSINESSES

16. What types of businesses could be allowed?

In both the RTD and MUN zones, some uses are allowed automatically if they meet the rules, while others need Council approval first, with notice to neighbours.

RTD or Neighbourhood residential zoning (east of 67A Avenue):

All businesses here need Council approval and are limited to:

- a cafe or bistro
- a residential care home
- small shops and services up to 300 square metres

MUN, or Mixed-use zoning (west of 67A Avenue and along Cornerstone Road). A wider range is allowed, including:

- cafes and bistros
- care facilities
- small health clinics
- offices
- places of worship
- shops and services, small to mid-sized (up to 2,000 square metres)
- liquor and cannabis stores (not within 100m of a school or park)

In the MUN district, businesses such as animal services (e.g., vet or groomer), car wash, funeral home, adult entertainment, and gas stations, require Council approval.

All residential zones also allow home-based businesses, such as a hairdresser or bookkeeper working from home.

TIMELINE AND HAVING YOUR SAY

17. What are the next steps for the Cornerstone ASP?

Town administration is drafting an updated document, based on initial feedback, for Council's consideration. We expect Council to consider this amended draft on October 26th and final reading is expected to be considered by November 9th.

18. How long will it take for the Cornerstone lands to develop?

We don't know for sure, as the housing market is hard to predict. But in a community the size of Olds, an area like this can take 20 years or more to fully build out. Land closest to existing roads and water and sewer lines is likely to develop first.

19. Will I be told about future development, and what are those future steps?

Yes. Before anything is built, a builder must go through these steps, in order:

1. Rezoning. The builder applies to change the zoning via a Land Use Bylaw Amendment. Council holds a public hearing, nearby residents are notified, and anyone can write to Council or speak.
2. Subdivision. The land is divided into lots, roads, and municipal reserve.
3. Development permits. The builder applies to build a specific project. Neighbours are notified where the rules require it and can appeal some decisions made by the Town to the [Subdivision and Development Appeal Board \(SDAB\)](#).

20. What if I have more questions?

Please contact the Town's planning department via email (planning@olds.ca) or by phone (403-507-4806). You can also reach out to a councillor directly; contact details are available on the Town's website [HERE](#).