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**REPORT NAME**

Land Use Bylaw Text Amendment TA25-001 - Land Use District: Genesee Power Project Overlay District

**RECOMMENDATION**

1. That Council gives first reading to Bylaw 07-25 to amend Land Use Bylaw 7-08, section 9.16.3 of the Genesee Power Project Overlay District and add Information Service as a permitted use to this district, as presented.
2. That Council gives second reading to Bylaw 07-25 to amend Land Use Bylaw 7-08.
3. That Bylaw 07-25 to amend Land Use Bylaw 7-08 be given third reading by unanimous consent of the Council members present.
4. That Council gives third and final reading to Bylaw 07-25 to amend Land Use Bylaw 7-08.

**IMPLICATIONS**

**Reason:** The amendment to the Leduc County Land Use Bylaw 7-08 proposes to add *Information Service* as a permitted use within the Genesee Power Project Overlay District. The purpose of the proposed amendment is to provide the opportunity for new business development, such as data centers, to be developed within the district.

**Authority:** (MGA section/bylaw/policy number):

**Municipal Government Act (MGA)**

Part 17 of the *Municipal Government Act* provides Council with the authority to establish policy direction and regulation regarding the management of land uses in the municipality.

**Amount of funding required:** N/A

**Funding source:** N/A

**BACKGROUND****Location and Description**

The lands, subject to the Genesee Power Project Overlay in accordance with the Leduc County Land Use Bylaw 7-08, are located northwest of Telfordville and south of the lands subject to the Genesee Area Structure Plan. The Genesee Power Project Overlay covers an area of approximately 10,424 ha<sup>+/-</sup> (25,756 ac<sup>+/-</sup>).

**Development History**

Surface Coal Mining operations commenced in 1988 in Genesee and concluded in 2023. The Genesee Generating Station is made up of 3 power generation units which have been in operation since 1989. These power generating units have been upgraded and with the fuel source being changed from coal to natural gas in 2023, and remain operational.

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**Submitted by:** Karen Mercer, Senior Planner – Development Services

**Reviewed by:** Charlene Haverland, Manager, Development Services and Grant Bain, Director, Planning & Development Services

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### **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT & REFERRAL COMMENTS**

The notice of public hearing was advertised for two consecutive weeks in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Government Act, RSA 2000 c. M-26, as amended, for advertising requirements. The application was referred to all landowners within and adjacent to the Genesee Power Project Overlay area as well as to the County's internal departments and external stakeholders and advertised in the County Chronicle on Feb. 26, 2025.

Adjacent landowner comments: On Feb. 14, 2025, 53 landowners were notified. No letters of concern were received. Three requests for further information were received through e-mail and requested information was provided. Two phone calls were received requesting further information and all available information was provided to the callers.

The proposed amendment was also referred to adjacent municipalities, and internal and external departments and agencies, and we received the following comments:

- Alberta Health Services – advised they have no concerns with the proposed amendment.
- Town of Devon - advised they have no concern with the proposed amendment.
- Parkland County - advised they have no concern with the proposed amendment.
- Camrose County - advised they have no concern with the proposed amendment.
- Town of Thorsby - advised they have no concern with the proposed amendment.
- Brazeau County - advised they have no concern with the proposed amendment.
- Leduc County Agricultural Services – advised they have no concern with the proposed amendment.
- Leduc County Safety Codes – advised they have no concern with the proposed amendments.

### **DISCUSSION**

The proposed amendment will add *Information Service* as a permitted use within the Genesee Power Project Overlay, of Land Use Bylaw 7-08. Administration has reviewed all relevant policy documents, reports and studies to ensure the proposed amendment is in alignment with these documents.

### **Municipal Development Plan (MDP) (2024)**

#### **Chapter 4 Rural County**

#### **4.4 Economic Competitiveness and Employment**

This part of the plan encourages the majority of employment activities within the Rural County to locate within hamlets or within comprehensively-planned Local Employment Areas. The County encourages a wide range of employment development in the Rural County that is appropriately located to minimize land use conflicts with agriculture and support economic diversity within the rural landscape.

#### **Objectives**

1. To minimize the conversion and fragmentation of agricultural lands and manage land use conflict by directing non-agricultural (commercial and industrial) businesses to defined areas.

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2. To encourage the growth of agriculture-based businesses through the creation of agricultural hubs.
3. To support employment growth in comprehensively planned business parks (i.e. Local Employment Areas) and hamlets to create synergies and enhance services in the local area.

## **Chapter 5 Natural Resources**

### **5.3 Genesee Power Plant Area**

The Genesee Power Plant Area is a significant feature within the County. The Genesee Generating Station is in the western area of the County in a predominately agricultural area. With the introduction of Alberta's new Climate Leadership Plan, coal-fired energy has been phased out and replaced by natural gas-fired electricity or other technology. To support these initiatives, opportunities made possible by new technologies will be considered in the Genesee Power Plant Area to provide employment opportunities and encourage growth within this community. Leduc County encourages the redevelopment of the Genesee Power Plant Area for energy-related and agricultural uses and, where appropriate, accommodate recreational and park uses.

#### **Objectives**

1. To support the repurposing and/or redevelopment of the existing infrastructure systems in the Genesee Power Plant Area.
2. To support the growth of energy-related or agricultural employment opportunities within the Genesee Power Plant Area
3. To allow for recreational and park opportunities where compatible with energy-related and agricultural uses

#### **Policies**

**5.3.0.2** States the Genesee Power Plant Area, as identified on Map 4: Rural County Land Use Concept, shall be protected for resource extraction, energy-related uses, and new technology, including green technology.

### **Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Growth Plan (EMRGP) (Amended 2022)**

#### **Part A : Setting the Context - Chapter 3, 3.2 Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Structure**

##### **Policy Tiers**

Leduc County is identified in the Growth Plan to be located mostly within the Rural Area Policy Tier, and includes, Major Employment Areas, local employment areas and resource extraction areas. Growth directions identified within the Rural Area Policy Tier include, but are not limited to, supporting employment growth in the major employment areas and local employment areas. The EMRGP provides the following definitions:

**Rural Area:** the lands outside the metropolitan area within the wider Edmonton Metropolitan Region, consisting of rural working landscapes with agricultural lands, major employment areas and local employment areas, natural living systems, recreation areas and resource extraction areas, counties, towns, villages, incorporated hamlets and country residential development with some local levels of service and community amenities.

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**Major Employment Areas:** areas with a concentration of industrial, commercial and/or institutional land uses that have regionally significant business and economic activities and high levels of employment. This includes existing larger scale urban and rural industrial parks, Alberta's Industrial Heartland, the lands around Edmonton International Airport and regional airports.

## **Part B: Regional Policies - Chapter 4 Regional Policy Areas**

### **Policy Area 1 – Economic Competitiveness & Employment**

The guiding principle of this policy area is to promote global economic competitiveness and regional prosperity, and intends to foster a diverse and innovative economy that builds upon existing infrastructure and employment areas to achieve sustained economic growth and prosperity.

#### **Objectives**

##### **1.1 Promote global economic competitiveness and diversification of the regional economy**

###### **1.1.1 Global economic competitiveness and diversification in the region will be promoted by:**

- Identifying and enhancing regional assets;
- Encouraging diversification of the energy sector to attract and support green energy, manufacturing and technology industries;
- Supporting efforts to improve information and communications technology across the region;
- Defining and protecting major employment areas to provide for employment growth.

##### **1.2 Promote job growth and the competitiveness of the Region's employment base**

###### **1.2.1 An adequate supply of lands shall be identified and protected by member municipalities to accommodate the employment projections in schedule 1 and provide a variety of employment types and support economic diversification.**

###### **1.2.2 Employment growth will be accommodated in major employment areas and centers indicated on Schedule 3A.**

###### **1.2.3 Within major employment areas, growth will be accommodated by:**

- a. Supporting employment intensive land uses with a range of employment types including commercial, industrial and institutional uses.

The Genesee Generating Station, which is also part of the Genesee Power Plant Overlay, has been identified as a major employment area in accordance with Schedule 3A of the EMRGP. The growth plan defines a major employment area as areas with a concentration of industrial, commercial and/or institutional land uses that have regionally significant business and economic activities and high levels of employment. Employment growth is supported in the major and local employment areas within the Rural Area Policy Tier. There are three key components that may see this area continue to grow beyond the current major employment area identified in the growth plan; and they are the presence of and energy source, available access to two major transportation routes, being highways 622 and 770 and an overlay that, as it exists today, provides opportunities for the growth of industrial and commercial development types.

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**EMRGP Regional Agricultural Master Plan (RAMP) (Amended 2022)****Section 4 RAMP Policies**

This part of the plan identifies the location of the policy areas within the region, provides policy statements, goals, objectives and policies for each policy area, and also provides direction to EMRB member municipalities consistent with the outcomes for each policy area specific to agriculture.

**Section 4.2 – Policy Area 2 Agriculture Co-Exists With Other Land Uses**

Policy Area 2 seeks to ensure the cultivation of productive agricultural areas over the long –term on lands that co-exist with land with other designated uses.

**Objectives**

The objectives of this policy are to acknowledge that agriculture can co-exist with other designated land uses and will not constrain or restrict the designated priority use, to maximize the opportunities for the continued presence of agriculture and related activities and, where possible, encourage re-designation of lands back to agriculture if they are not needed for the priority land use, as well as to ensure agricultural lands are managed through the application of best management practices specific to soil, water and the environment.

**Policies**

Policy 1 Agricultural lands co-exist with existing designated land uses and shall remain in *agricultural use* until required for conversion.

Policy 2 Reclaimed lands should be rehabilitated for agricultural uses. Where it may be more appropriate, reclaimed lands may be rehabilitated for environmental or ecological purposes, or for commercial, industrial, institutional or recreational uses that can leverage existing infrastructure. When applications are made to re-designate and/or re-district non-agricultural lands, consideration must be given to re-designating and/or re-districting the lands for *agricultural uses*.

**Land Use Bylaw 7-08 (LUB)**

The area subject to this amendment is the Genesee Power Project Overlay of Land Use Bylaw 7-08.

**Part 9 – District Regulations****9.16 Genesee Power Project Overlay**

**9.16.1 General Purpose** To provide for orderly development of the Genesee Power Project as an interim land use, and applies to all lands within the Genesee Power Project Overlay areas as shown on the overlay map, as amended under Bylaw 3-15.

**Section 9.16.3 and Section 9.16.4** provide for the following permitted and discretionary uses:

<b>9.16.3 Permitted Uses</b>	<b>9.16.4 Discretionary Uses</b>
Cemetery	Accessory Building
Cultural Facility	Child Care Facility
Industrial, General	Commercial Greenhouse
Labour Group Housing	Frame & Fabric Structure
Park	Recreation, Indoor
Natural Resource Extraction	Security Suite
Utility Service – Major	Sign (in accordance with Part 8 of this Bylaw)
Warehousing and Storage	

### **Leduc County Employment Growth Forecast, December 2022**

#### **Purpose & Study Area**

The purpose of this analysis is to provide updated employment forecasts for Leduc County. This analysis includes forecasts for several employment areas within the County including the Genesee area. The forecasts are correlated to expectations of economic activity in the Edmonton Region. This includes consideration of the impacts of COVID-19 on the regional economy and the short-medium term recovery of many sectors to pre-pandemic levels. This analysis includes the energy and technology sectors.

#### **Key Growth Sectors**

As global energy markets transition from carbon based fuel sources, the investment and income generated by this sector in Alberta is expected to not be the driver of economic activity as it has historically. Alberta's reliance on this sector for economic growth is shifting. Economic diversification efforts are expected to focus on leveraging existing strengths into new products and markets including, but not limited to the following:

**Energy:** The energy sector is diversifying with new investments in alternative energy projects, including: solar, wind, hydrogen, geothermal, bioenergy and discussions about the potential for nuclear energy.

**Technology:** Technology is affecting every other economic sector at a rapid pace. Software, hardware and digital services have evolved and are expected to continue to grow in every major economy. Interactive digital media which involves gaming, e-sports, animation/FX, immersive technologies and digital media are targeted to grow.

### **Investment Readiness and Implementation Strategy Phase 1 and Phase 2, January 2021**

The Investment Readiness and Implementation Strategy (IRIS) project aims to create an implementation strategy that will provide clear direction for future growth and employment in crucial areas of rural development, agriculture, commercial and industrial growth within Leduc County. With the phase-out of coal-fired electrical generating plants, there is an urgent need for economic diversification opportunities.

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**Rural West Economic Diversification Plan January 2021**

At the outset of this project, job creation in Leduc County was identified as a key success factor of this project. To support this the following project objectives were developed:

- To describe the current state and the desired future state of the County, and use this to inform the creation of actionable steps for County Council and Administration to close the gap.
- To identify Leduc County's competitive advantages that describe key features of the County, and that can be used to attract new business.
- To identify up to five diversification opportunities that will create new jobs in Leduc County, through economic diversification, through inter-industry diversification, intra-industry diversification (in both agriculture and energy sectors), and product diversification. A priority focus will be on intra-industry diversification as it will allow Leduc County to focus on their competitive advantage.

**Key Messages**

Leduc County's future will respect the past, and will build on what has made us strong.

- a. We will identify new opportunities and industries that will thrive in Leduc County.
- b. We want these opportunities and industries to build on our existing strengths and advantages, like our land, our environment, our energy and our people.

**Project Implementation**

Leduc County has a respected and successful history in agriculture and energy production, resulting in a highly skilled workforce. The eco-system is available to the County to support research and development in various sectors, attracting public and private sector investment. With this in mind, the foundation on which this project has been implemented was built on two key pillars, being Agriculture and Energy.

**Energy** – This included being open minded to, and investigating alternative energy sources for Leduc County, based on feedback and ideas from stakeholders. The project team was to recognize opportunities within the circular economies (e.g., nano-tubes, renewable energy), and new energy opportunities such as lithium production, and green solutions for data storage for streaming services.

The Genesee Power Project Overlay was introduced into the Leduc County Land Use Bylaw 1665-83 through the passing of Bylaw 14-01 in May 2001. The overlay was then amended under Land Use Bylaw 7-08 to add an additional 64 quarter sections to the Genesee Power Project Overlay through the passing of Bylaw 3-15 in January 2015. This overlay currently provides for various commercial, industrial, utility, and recreational land use types. The addition of Information Service to this overlay is in line with the current land uses prescribed within this district.

Administration has concluded that the proposed amendment to add Information Service as a permitted use in Genesee Power Project overlay is supported by the policies, goals and objectives of the documents referenced in this report. These documents encourage opportunities made possible by new technologies for diversification of the energy sector to attract and support green energy, manufacturing and technology industries. As noted in the County's Economic Growth Forecast, economic diversification efforts are expected to focus on leveraging

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existing strengths into new products and markets including the energy and technology sectors. The addition of an Information Services land use type is consistent with other land uses provided for in the overlay such as general industrial land uses, and will allow for new and diversified business opportunities to occur within the overlay area, including land uses such as data centres. While administration believes the location of the lands covered by the overlay to be appropriate for these types of land uses, we anticipate that any potential impacts associated with specific development proposals will be managed through the development permitting process.

In accordance with the information provided within this report, it is the recommendation of administration that Council provide first, second and third reading to the proposed bylaw to amend the Leduc County Land Use Bylaw 7-08 as presented.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Notice of Public Hearing
2. Land Use Amendment Application TA25-001
3. Genesee Power Project Overlay 9.16 Land Use Bylaw 7-08
4. Proposed Amending Bylaw 7-25 (Draft)
5. Maps:
  - a. LUB 7-08 Genesee Power Project Overlay
  - b. MDP Map 4 - Rural County Land Use Concept
  - c. Adjacent Landowner referral map
  - d. EMRGP Schedule 3A - Major Employment Areas
  - e. EMRGP Schedule B - RAMP Agricultural Policy Areas
  - f. EMRGP Schedule D - RAMP Policy Area 2 – Agriculture Co-Exists with Other Land Use

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