

ROCKY VIEW COUNTY

WHAT WE HEARD
REPORT

Land Use Bylaw Updates

June 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Rocky View County is reviewing parts of its Land Use Bylaw to make the development approval process clearer, more consistent, and easier to navigate. This work is part of the County's broader Development Approvals Transformation Program, a multi-phase effort to improve the development application process. The program focuses on reducing timelines, improving navigation, creating more integrated processes, applying tiered requirements that better match the scale and complexity of a project, and increasing transparency for both applicants and the public.

Public Survey:

From May 6 - May 26, 2026, residents were invited to share input through an online survey. In total, 169 surveys were completed, generating 129 comments.

Industry Feedback:

In addition to the public survey, the County also sought targeted feedback from developers and related industry stakeholders. Four industry responses were received. These respondents were very familiar with the County's development application review process and were generally supportive of using a more streamlined review process for routine, lower-impact development.

Community Feedback:

While participants were generally open to streamlining approvals for routine development, they consistently emphasized the need to balance efficiency with transparency, oversight, and protection of rural character.

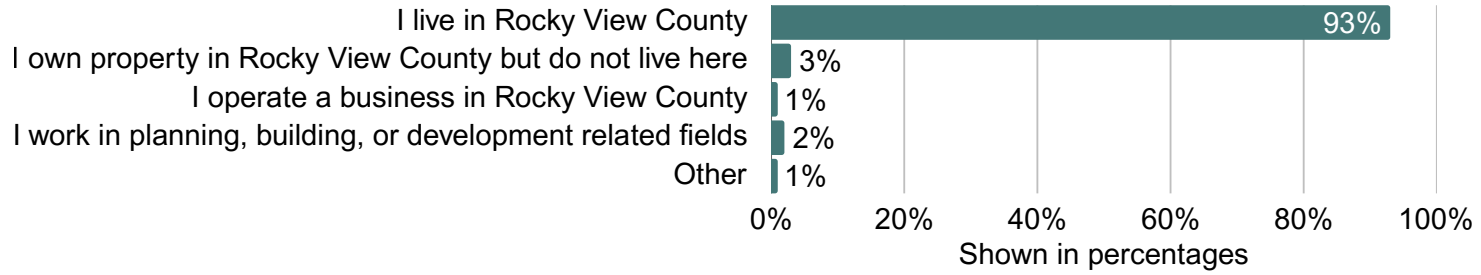
- Participants broadly supported simplifying approvals for clearly defined, low-impact development such as small accessory buildings and minor home improvements, provided that safeguards, clear criteria, and limits are in place.
- Many expressed concern that existing rules are not consistently enforced, and that further streamlining without stronger oversight could increase non-compliance.
- Feedback highlighted concerns about transparency and the use of discretion in decision-making, with some indicating that this affects their confidence in further bylaw changes.
- Participants emphasized the need to remain informed about development in their area and to retain opportunities for input, particularly where proposals may impact neighbouring properties.
- Respondents stressed the importance of protecting rural character, agricultural land, and neighbourhood compatibility, noting that even small developments can have cumulative or localized impacts if not carefully managed.

129
Total Comments

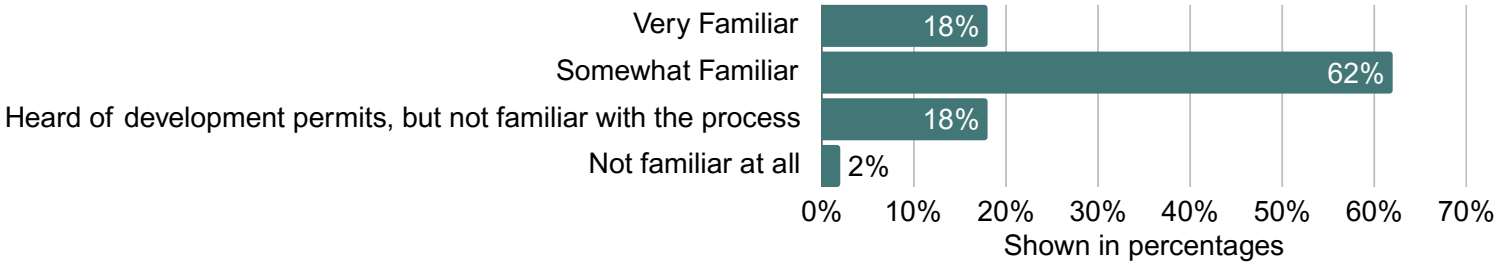
169
Total Surveys

KEY FINDINGS
FAMILIARITY & OVERALL

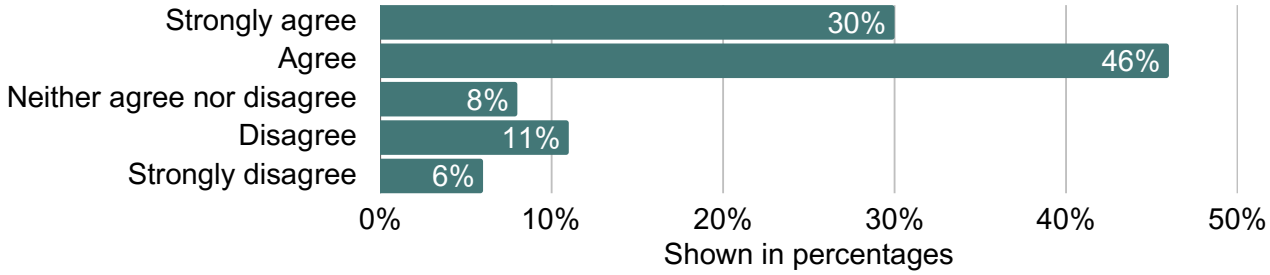
Q1: Which of the following best describes you? (169 respondents)



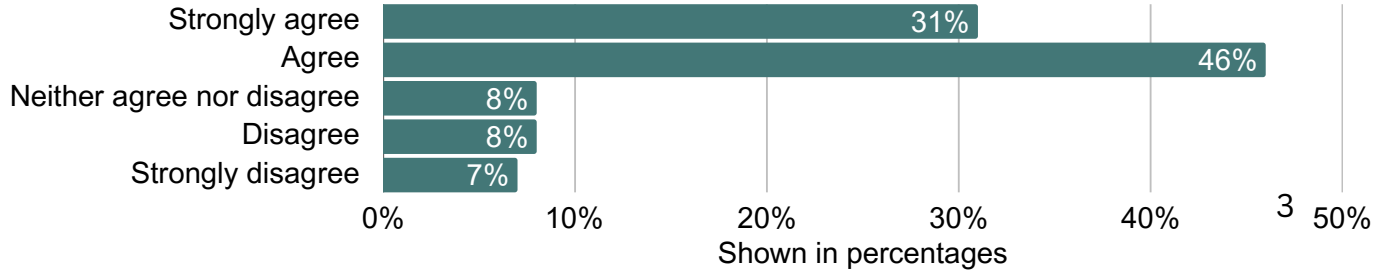
Q2: How familiar are you with how the County reviews development applications? (169 respondents)



Q3: The County is exploring three levels of review for development: "Exempt," a new streamlined review option called “Conditional Exemption,” and “Development Permit Required." In your view, should the County use different levels of review for different levels of impact? (169 respondents)

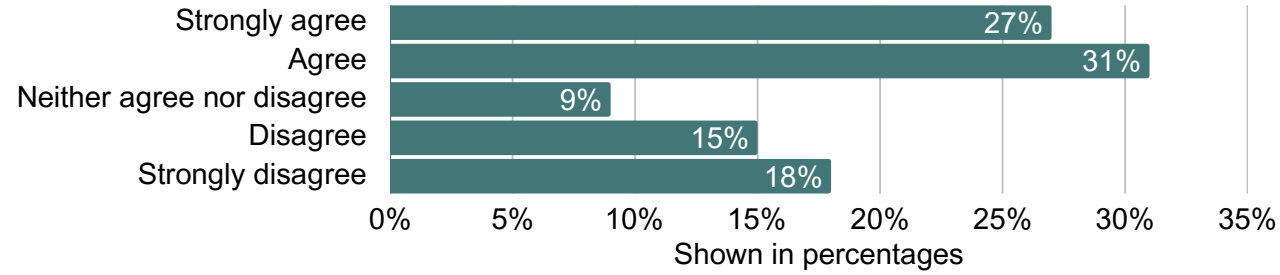


Q4: To what extent do you agree with the following statement? A new approval category between “Exempt” and “Development Permit Required” could be appropriate for some routine, lower-impact types of development, as long as they still meet applicable County standards. (169 respondents)

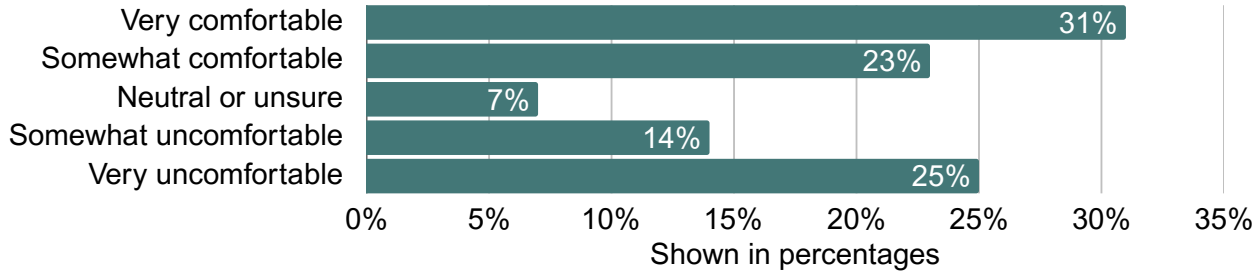


KEY FINDINGS
ACCESSORY & MANUFACTURED DWELLINGS

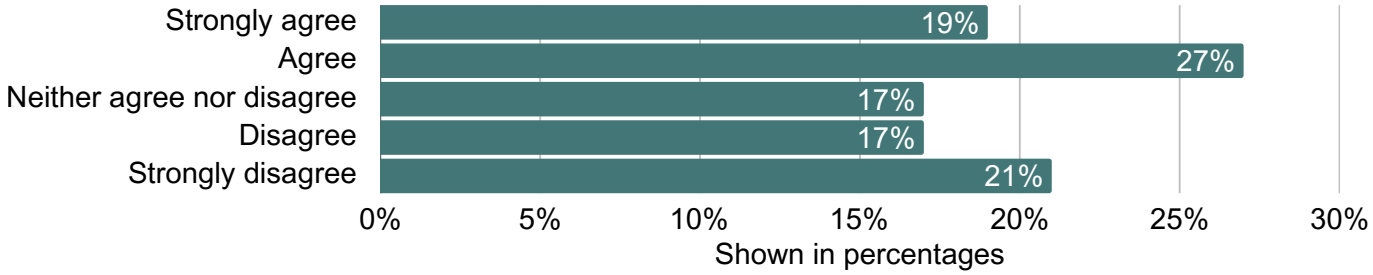
Q5:To what extent do you agree that accessory dwelling units should be considered for the Conditional Exemption category? (169 respondents)



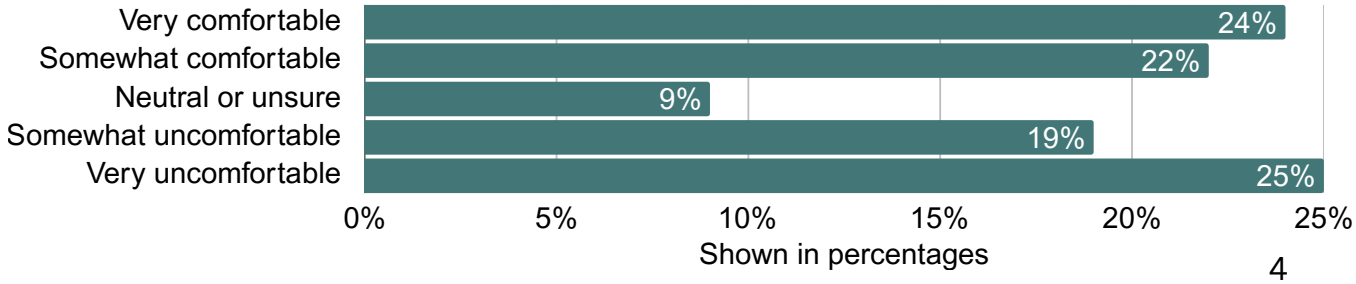
Q6: How comfortable would you be if public notice and an appeal period were not required for accessory dwelling units that meet applicable County standards? (169 respondents)



Q7: To what extent do you agree that manufactured dwellings should be considered for the Conditional Exemption category? (169 respondents)

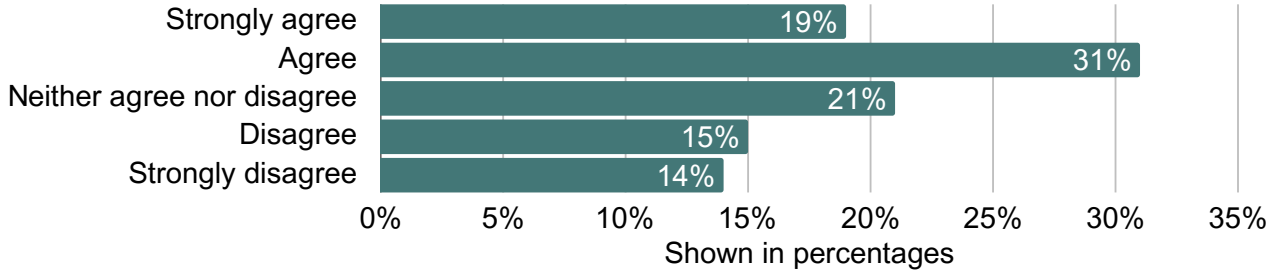


Q8: How comfortable would you be if public notice and an appeal period were not required for manufactured dwellings that meet applicable County standards? (169 respondents)

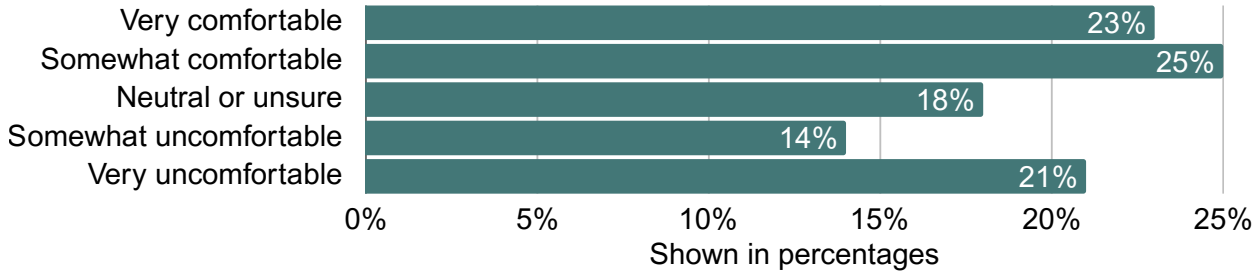


KEY FINDINGS
SHOW HOMES & FASCIA SIGNS

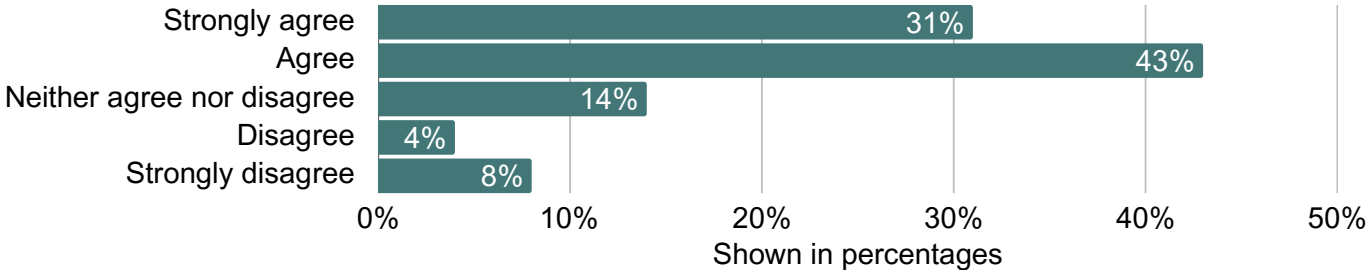
Q9:To what extent do you agree that show homes should be considered for the Conditional Exemption category? (169 respondents)



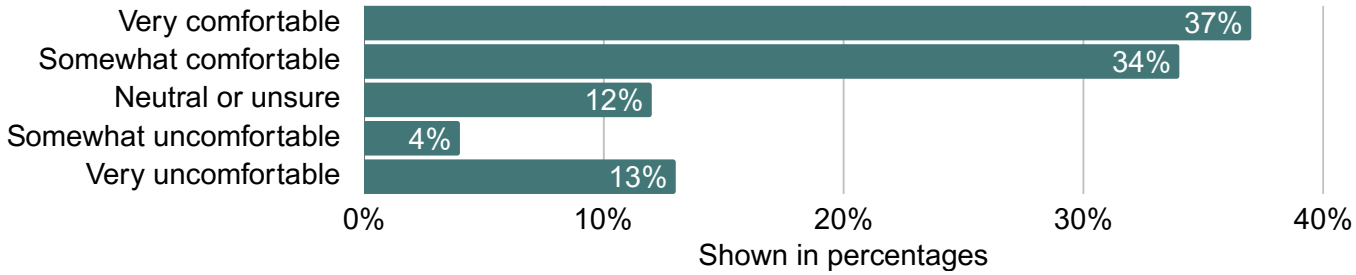
Q10: How comfortable would you be if public notice and an appeal period were not required for show homes that meet applicable County standards? (169 respondents)



Q11: To what extent do you agree that fascia signs should be considered for the Conditional Exemption category? (168 respondents)

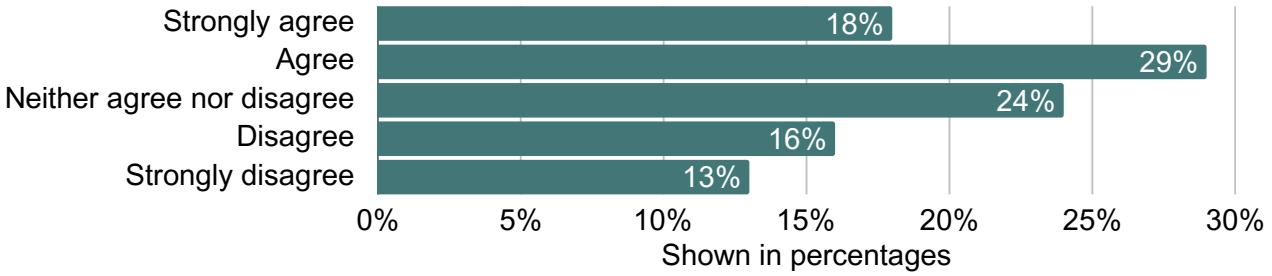


Q12: How comfortable would you be if public notice and an appeal period were not required for fascia signs that meet applicable County standards? (169 respondents)

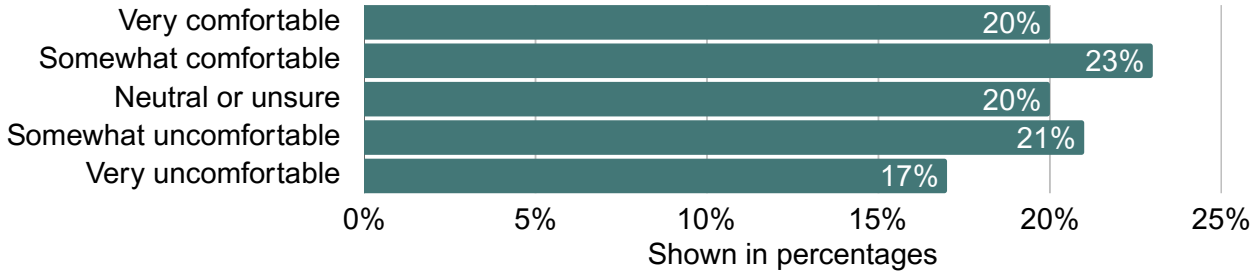


KEY FINDINGS
CONSTRUCTION & GRADING

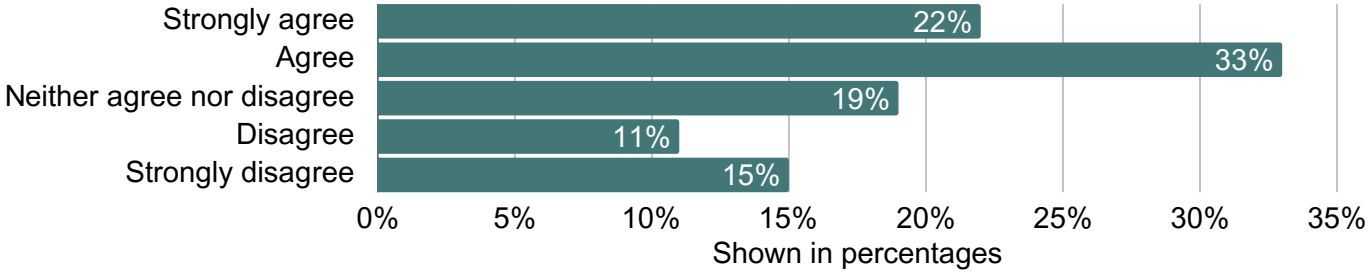
Q13: To what extent do you agree that construction camps should be considered for the Conditional Exemption category? (168 respondents)



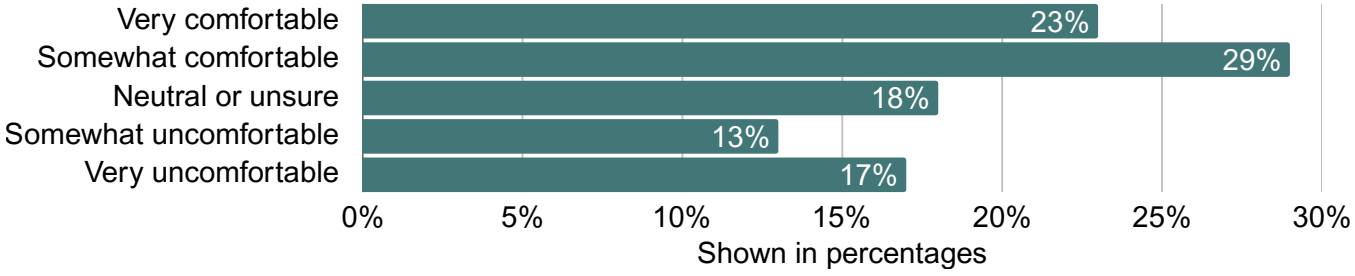
Q14: How comfortable would you be if public notice and an appeal period were not required for construction camps that meet applicable County standards? (169 respondents)



Q15: To what extent do you agree that stripping, grading, excavation and fill should be considered for the Conditional Exemption category? (169 respondents)

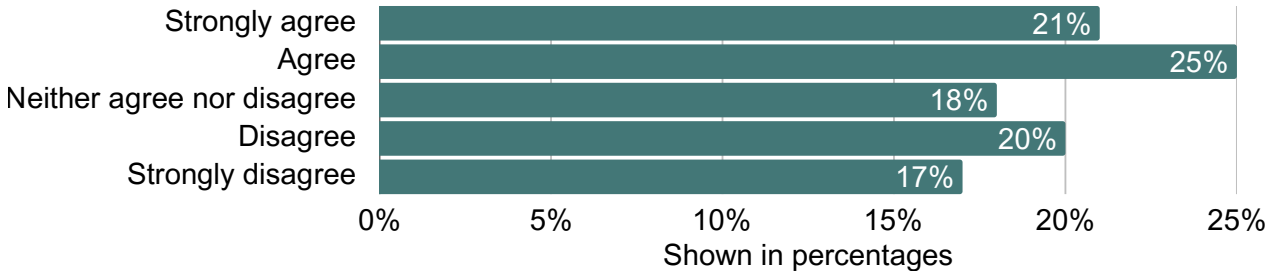


Q16: How comfortable would you be if public notice and an appeal period were not required for stripping, grading, excavation and fill that meet applicable County standards? (168 respondents)

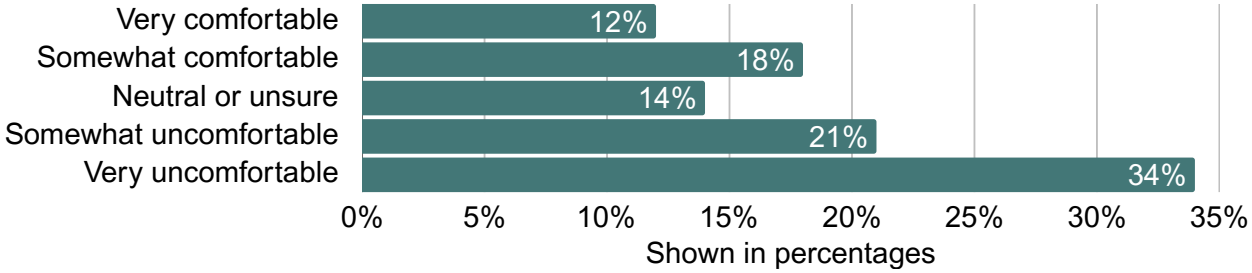


KEY FINDINGS
CELL TOWERS

Q17: To what extent do you agree that communication facilities should be included in a more streamlined County review process, where the County provides standardized recommendations? (168 respondents)

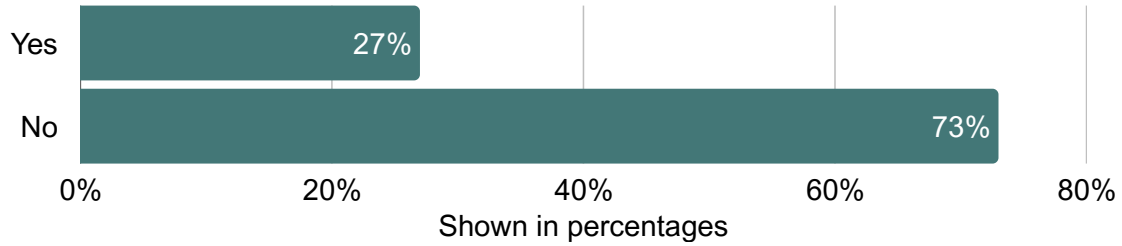


Q18: How comfortable would you be if public notice and an appeal period were not required through the County's process for communication facilities? (168 respondents)



KEY FINDINGS
OTHER TYPES OF DEVELOPMENT

Q19: Are there any other types of routine, lower impact development that you think could be considered for a more streamlined review process, as long as they still meet all County standards? (165 respondents)



Q20: Please describe the types of development you have in mind and why you think they may be suitable for a more streamlined review. (40 respondents)

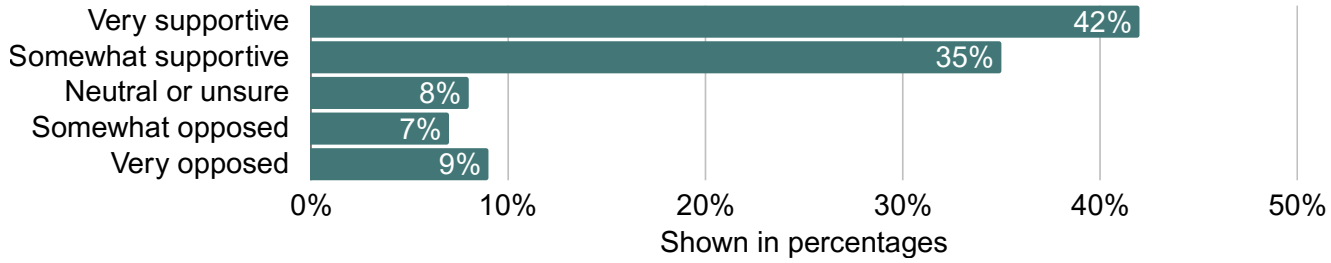
Theme	Indicative Quotes
Streamline Minor Residential Structures & Supporting Rural Lifestyle Uses (87%)	*"Pole / storage sheds and small greenhouses (under 1000 sq. feet) on farm property. I was told that I needed a permit and engineered drawings, neither of which should be necessary in my opinion as long as all the setbacks are observed."* *"Residential decks, hot tubs and such pertaining to individual residences."*
Home-Based & Low-Impact Business Uses (13%)	*"Home Based Business I and II, Air B&Bs, Large Family Gatherings and Parties, Temporary Tents for Wedding and Parties."*

Overall Sentiment:

Respondents indicated that routine, low-risk and rural lifestyle essential uses should face reduced requirements and higher size thresholds. They expressed a desire to simplify approvals for common, low-impact residential and rural uses that reflect everyday acreage and farm living. Many comments referenced accessory structures, such as sheds, greenhouses, barns, sea-cans, and decks, along with small-scale home improvements and typical rural activities like livestock and storage buildings. Respondents also supported streamlined processes for home-based business and small-scale commercial or community activities such as daycares, short-term rentals, and event spaces.

KEY FINDINGS
OVERALL

Q21: Overall, how supportive are you of the idea of using a more streamlined review for some routine, lower impact types of development? (167 respondents)



Q22: If you selected "somewhat opposed" or "strongly opposed" for any of these, what are your main concerns or conditions? (23 respondents)

Theme	Indicative Quotes
Concerns about Transparency & Lack of Trust (52%)	*"Concerned that anything could be built without public knowledge especially when land is changing to residential."*
Need for Oversight, Enforcement & Accountability (30%)	*"Certain individuals in certain areas are getting away with everything illegal already and they have to jump through hoops I can't imagine what kind of a mess and a gong show some of these neighbors would be doing if they didn't have to go through the proper steps."*
Concerns about Community Impact & Compatibility (17%)	*"I do not support relaxing the approval and scrutiny process for buildings and structures within the County. While I understand the desire to streamline approvals and reduce delays, standards and oversight exist for an important reason – to preserve the character, quality, consistency, and long-term value of our communities. Once rules loosen, it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain cohesive community aesthetics and development standards. Inconsistent structures, poorly planned additions, or developments that do not align with the surrounding area can negatively impact the overall appearance, feel, and value of neighbourhoods."*

Overall Sentiment:

Respondents expressed low confidence in the County's planning processes, citing limited consideration of public input, poor transparency, and decisions favouring development interests. They are concerned that reduced oversight will increase non-compliance and strain already limited bylaw enforcement. Some fear this will allow rules to be bypassed or applied inconsistently. Respondents called for stronger enforcement and careful review of development to protect neighbourhood character, appearance, and property values.

KEY FINDINGS
FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Q23: Is there anything else you would like the County to know or consider regarding updating the Land Use Bylaw? (66 respondents)

Theme	Indicative Quotes
Balance Between Streamlining & Maintaining Standards (40%)	*"Some types are fine, others are a real concern and I would like to be informed - especially when it impacts a neighbour or neighbourhood."* *"Anything that is outside the code (size, height, area, etc) should automatically be exempt from this streamlined process and be sent for the old review. Example, if the accessory building can only be 9 square metres, and it's 12, it should have to be reviewed the old way."*
Lack of Trust In Process & Decision Making (28%)	*"My only concern is overdevelopment in rural areas, so my hope would be that, even with the third category, a wise and responsible review and decision making process would be undertaken."* *"You really need to start helping development and not keep changing the goal posts."*
Protection of Rural Character, Agriculture & Community Impacts (18%)	*"Please be very careful to maintain our beautiful natural landscapes at the centre of this. We moved to Rocky View for this and are not looking for modular units, secondary suites on land or cell towers. Help keep the rural beauty."*

Overall Sentiment:

Respondents support reduced red tape and faster processes for minor projects but caution against lowering standards or oversight, particularly related to high-impact developments. There is an overall desire for clear thresholds, definitions and consistent rules, along with concerns about communication and awareness of development approvals. Feedback highlighted the desire for transparency, improved communication and more meaningful engagement in the planning process. Respondents also emphasized preserving rural character, natural landscapes, and agricultural lands, with development carefully managed to protect existing communities and the rural feel.

TARGETED
INDUSTRY FEEDBACK

Rocky View County also made a targeted effort to hear from developers and related industry stakeholders who regularly work with the County's development application review process.

Industry feedback at a glance:

- 4 responses received
- All 4 supported different levels of review for different levels of impact
- All 4 were very or somewhat supportive of streamlined review for routine, lower-impact development
- Strongest support was for show homes, fascia signs, stripping/grading/excavation/fill, and communication facilities

A focus group was offered for this phase of the project; however, participation was limited. To gather industry input, Administration invited developers and related stakeholders to complete the Land Use Bylaw survey. Four industry responses were received, all from respondents who indicated they were very familiar with the County's development application review process.

Overall, industry feedback was supportive of the proposed direction. All four respondents supported using different levels of review for different levels of impact, and all were either very supportive or somewhat supportive of a more streamlined review process for routine, lower-impact development.

Support was strongest for including show homes, fascia signs, stripping, grading, excavation and fill, and communication facilities in a streamlined review process. Feedback was more mixed for accessory dwelling units, manufactured dwellings, and construction camps. Manufactured dwellings were the only proposed use where one industry respondent indicated they would be uncomfortable if public notice and an appeal period were not required.

Two respondents also identified additional opportunities for streamlined review, including change of tenant in a commercial space and signage on buildings.



THANK YOU

Thank you to all residents and industry members who participated in the public engagement on Land Use Bylaw Updates.

This report will help guide the project team in preparing a report to Council and providing a recommendation.