



**Subject:** *Plan Update - Campgrounds*  
**To:** CAO for Planning Advisory Committee, November 16, 2021  
**Date Prepared:** November 12, 2021  
**Related Motions:** PAC21(14), PAC21(5), PAC21(6), C21(23), C21(24), PAC21(26)  
**Prepared by:** Debbie Uloth, Project Planner  
**Approved by:** John Woodford, Director of Planning and Development

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### Summary

As part of the ongoing plan update, Planning staff are preparing background papers to discuss and propose approaches to different land use issues within the Municipality. The current background paper discusses campgrounds and proposes that the development of campgrounds be regulated through site plan approval throughout the Municipality.

### Financial Impact Statement

The Community Plan Update has been budgeted for in 2021/2022 Municipal Budget.

### Recommendation

That Planning Advisory Committee recommend that Council authorize staff to draft proposed amendments to the Official Community Plan in regards to permitting campground by site plan approval, as presented to Executive Committee on November 16, 2021 and outlined in this staff report.

### Recommended Motion

*Planning Advisory Committee recommends that Council:*

- *authorize staff to draft proposed amendments to the Official Community Plan in regards to permitting campgrounds by site plan approval, as presented to Executive Committee on November 16, 2021 and outlined in this staff report.*

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## Background

Under the current regulations of the Land Use Bylaw, campgrounds are permitted in the Rural Use (RU) land use Designation and Zone as-of-right by applying for a Development Permit. Only the minimum lot zone provisions (lot area, frontage and setbacks) are required to be met to receive a permit. The minimum lot zone provisions are not directly related to the development of a campground. There are no land use regulations that speak directly to the development of campgrounds such as campground layout, number of campsites, wood burning, traffic or noise.

This background report proposes that campgrounds be regulated by site plan approval in both the Rural Use (RU) Zone and in identified parts of the future planned area. Proposed changes are based on feedback from East Hants residents.

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## Discussion

As mentioned in the Rural Residential Background Report, during the Plan Update Open Houses and as part of the Plan Update Survey, staff received feedback regarding campgrounds. Some of the comments from residents included:

- *No campgrounds within 1 km from a home.*
- *Concerned with the number of RVs on a property.*
- *RVs - yes, there should be a limit to unpermitted RVs on a lot that is not a campground.*
- *No more campgrounds.*
- *Suddenly allowing an 80-slot private campground to develop in a quiet rural small community where there was a cohesive mix of peaceful family living is not appropriate growth.*
- *There has been a significant increase in private campgrounds being developed in rural residential areas, contributing to campfire smoke drift, noise, strain on water and septic systems, and bringing a transient nature to our communities. There are many lots and land that have sold and the buyers are installing Rvs and small travel trailers rather than build. There is a big shift towards viewing my part of East Hants as a recreational or vacation area, when there are many of us who live here year-round.*
- *The campground at Selma was rumored to be just a family campground with a few sites. It appears to be a full-scale commercial campground. I haven't heard that noise is a problem, but it was surprising to see such a big development.*

Under the Land Use Bylaw (LUB) campgrounds are currently defined as “...a land and building complex designed or used for group sport, recreation, or cultural activities which may have facilities for sleeping and the preparation and serving of food and operated under single ownership on a temporary or seasonal basis.” Planning staff recommend that the definition is changed so it becomes clearer and more in line with other Municipal jurisdictions. Staff recommend the following definition:

**Campground** means a building, structure, land, or part thereof used for a range of overnight camping experiences, including but not limited to tenting, recreational vehicle sites (serviced and un-serviced), and other camping structures. This includes accessory facilities that support camping, including, but not limited to, administration offices, laundry facilities, recreation halls and canteens, but does not include the use of mini-homes or recreational vehicles on a permanent year-round basis.

In addition to updating the definition of campground, staff also recommend that a new definition is added to the Land Use Bylaw that describes camping structures such as geodomes, yurts, oTENTiks, and other similar structures. Currently, there is no existing definition that fits with these types of uses. These structures offer

the traveling public with interesting accommodations, and offer property owners with an alternative to tradition cabins.

**Camping structure** means a building or structure constructed for temporary or seasonal use and may include but is not limited to yurts, geodomes, oTENTiks, wood structures, or other camping structures.

As mentioned previously, campgrounds are permitted by Development Permit in the Rural Use (RU) Zone as-of-right. After talking to residents who attend the Plan Update Open Houses and reviewing the results of the Plan Update Community Survey, Planning staff are recommending that campgrounds are permitted by site plan approval, including in the Rural Use (RU) Zone and in identified areas of the Future Planned Area. Cumberland County has recently (2020) updated their Land Use Bylaw to put in place site plan approval requirements for campground development. Kings County has taken the alternative approach of having a specific zone for commercial recreational uses, which includes campgrounds. Planning staff have reviewed campground requirements from both municipalities and are proposing a cross of both land use regulations for East Hants.

Staff recommend that the following matters be addressed by site plan approval:

1. A single unit dwelling shall be permitted as an accessory use for the residence of the owner or operator of the campground.
2. The minimum lot size of a campground shall be 2 hectares and the minimum lot frontage shall be 30 m.
3. Where a neighbouring land use is residential and within 250 m of the campground, the campground shall be buffered with fencing, opaque vegetative strips (or existing substantive vegetation), or berms to minimize the transmission of noise.
4. Fires are only permitted in fire pits, barbeques, wood burning stoves or other facilities.
5. All elements, including parking, camp sites, public gathering areas, loading areas, and outdoor storage shall be setback 12 m from the side and rear lot boundaries.
6. Refuse shall be enclosed and concealed.
7. All disturbed areas not used for structures, refuse, parking and circulation shall be landscaped.
8. The campground shall not create undue traffic or pedestrian hazards, traffic and pedestrian circulation shall be clearly marked.
9. Campgrounds that existed on the date of the adoption of this Bylaw and that do not meet the above requirements shall be permitted provided any expansions are required to apply for site plan approval.

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## Conclusion

Creating regulations for campground development was not initially on the list of land uses needing review. However, during the Plan Update Open Houses and the Plan Update Community Survey, it became apparent that residents in more rural areas of the Municipality felt that campgrounds did need regulating based on the development of some new RV parks that have caused issues for neighbouring residents. Planning staff feel the proposed regulations will hopefully reduce conflicts between new campgrounds or the expansion of existing campgrounds and neighbouring land uses. The site plan approval process also permits neighbouring residents to view the site plans and ask questions before a permit is issued for the campground use.

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## Recommendation

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