



**TransAlta Corporation**

# **Proposed changes to the Highvale End Land Use Area Structure Plan and Parkland County Land Use Bylaw:**

**What We Heard Report**

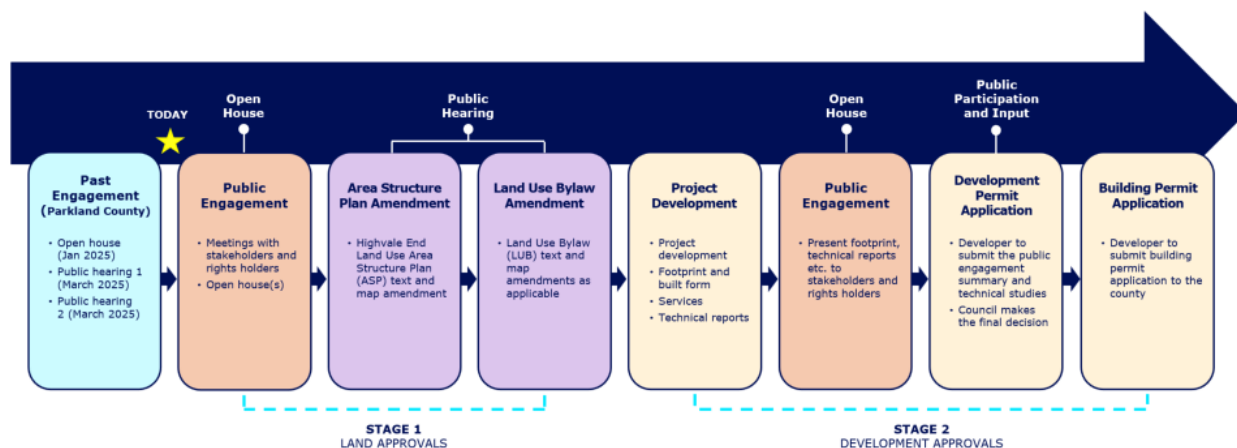
July 2025

## 1. PROJECT OVERVIEW

TransAlta is proposing changes to the Highvale End Land Use Area Structure Plan (ASP) and the Parkland County Land Use Bylaw (LUB). The proposed changes will amend the existing Keephills Direct Control District and create a new direct control district that gives Parkland County Council the ability to regulate development in the amended areas and allow for potential Data Centre developments in the future.

The ASP and LUB changes are an early step in the overall process as noted in the illustration below. Multiple additional engagement opportunities would be expected and required for any project moving forward.

### Development Approval Process



## 2. ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

The engagement approach was designed to share clear, accessible information about the proposed bylaw amendments and to collect feedback from the public and stakeholders. Four open houses focused on creating opportunities for open dialogue, clarifying technical aspects of the proposal, and responding to community input.

- **Open House 1:** Tuesday, June 17, 2025, from 3:00–7:00 p.m. at Seba Beach Heritage Pavilion, Seba Beach, AB
- **Open House 2:** Thursday, June 19, 2025, from 3:00–7:00 p.m. at Keephills Community Hall, Keephills, AB
- **Open House 3:** Tuesday, July 29, 2025, from 3:00–7:00 p.m. at Seba Beach Heritage Pavilion, Seba Beach, AB
- **Open House 4:** Wednesday, July 30, 2025, from 3:00–7:00 p.m. at Keephills Community Hall, Keephills, AB

At each open house event, attendees had the opportunity to learn about the proposed amendments, ask questions directly to TransAlta representatives, and share feedback. Information boards and maps were available, and attendees were encouraged to provide comments to TransAlta representatives in addition to written comments via the open house event feedback form. A contact email and phone number were provided for those wishing to provide further feedback and questions.



Engagement efforts were targeted toward landowners, residents, and stakeholders in and around TransAlta's Keephills and Sundance facilities, particularly those located near the lands subject to the proposed bylaw amendments. Notification of the open houses was provided through personally addressed mailed letters sent on June 2, 2025, and July 14, 2025, 15 days prior to each month's first open house. Notices were also published in the Stony Plain Reporter on June 6th and 13th, 2025, and on July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025, and the notice was shared on Facebook. In June, approximately 60 attendees participated in the June 17th event at Seba Beach, and approximately 50 attended on June 19th in Keephills. In July, approximately 24 attendees participated in the July 29th event at Seba Beach, and approximately 23 attended on July 30 in Keephills.



### 3. KEY FINDINGS

Conversations and feedback highlighted a broad range of considerations and questions regarding the proposed bylaw amendments. Although much of the feedback was focused on the proposed amendments to the ASP and LUB, many discussions also considered the future permitting of a Data Centre.

The following is a record of participant comments from the July open houses. Comments from the June open houses are available at: [Proposed Data Centre Development - TransAlta](#)

#### 3.1 Questions and Comments on proposed Area Structure Plan and Land Use Bylaw Amendments

##### Land Use, Area Structure Plan & Bylaw Amendments:

- Would a data centre take up the entire footprint allocated in the Proposed Land Use Bylaw in Keephills and Sundance?
- Does TransAlta have a preference to have development at Keephills vs Sundance as identified in the Land Use Bylaw Amendments?
- In the Keephills District Control District (DC area) section 4.2 it says, "Council may require any technical studies or information as outlined in Section 7.40 that it deems necessary to decide on an application" Does that mean that the items listed below are optional?
  - Similar concerns with the term "may" in proposed 1.18. Additional Requirements under 5.80. Data Processing Facilities

- The Wabamun Watershed Management Council's (WWMC) is completing its own report on the lake; however, it will not be completed prior to the Parkland County public hearing, shouldn't that be completed before a decision is made on land rezoning?
- Questions about what the Data Centre zoning amendment areas regulate and how they differ?
- Is TransAlta required to reclaim land identified within the Area Structure Plan (ASP) boundary?
- Could residential use occur in Resource Extraction district on undisturbed land?
- Seeking clarification on why power generation is included as a permitted use?
- What's allowed in "business and medium industrial"?
- Will the Data Centre need to follow any provincial regulations or approval processes?
- Why are several sections of land included in the amendment?

#### Communication & Engagement:

- Why is there a second round of open houses? What new information is being shared?
- How will TransAlta respond to all the questions raised during public engagement? Will the answers be publicly available?
- What consultation has taken place with Indigenous communities?
- The newspaper used for public notifications does not reach all relevant stakeholders and residents in Parkland County because of a reduced delivery area radius.
- Concern about changing the context of the ASP, without fulsome community involvement.
- Will there be more chances for the public to give input?
- Will there be an opportunity for public input in environmental assessments?

### 3.2 Questions and Comments on a potential Data Centre development

#### Access, Infrastructure & Roads:

- What road will be used to access the Data Centre site?
- Will there be upgrades to Range Road 41?
- What infrastructure and services (e.g. fire) will the County bring to this area to support this development?
- Who pays for infrastructure upgrades?

#### Community Impact:

- What are the construction impacts of building a Data Centre?

- Could the Data Centre be built on different land, further away from residential lands? (Specific concern about areas near the Sundance Plant.)
- Concern that the technical jobs needed for the Data Centre won't go to local workers in Parkland County.
- If the final owner of the Data Centre is not Canadian, what are the privacy concerns (e.g., U.S. Cloud Act)?
- Skepticism is that the economic benefits of the Data Centre have been overstated. A Canadian owner would bring more long-term benefits to the County and Province overall.
- Concern that local services, infrastructure, and amenities are already strained and could be further impacted by a Data Centre.
- Belief that tax revenue from the Data Centre may not be significant enough to justify calling it an "economic benefit."
- Could the Data Centre start building at the south end of the Sundance amendment area, or build a berm, so to be farther away from residential?
- Were the potential impacts and risks of the Data Centre assessed before considering the land use applications?
- Concern about availability of fire services - the closest fire stations are in Stony Plain and Tomahawk, and insurance considers Keephills an "unprotected area"
- Will the cost of the project be added to residents' power bills?
- Who will collect the property taxes from the Data Centre?
- Comment that Data Centre is unwanted at the south end of Keephills amendment area.
- What are the benefits to the community?
- Will I see a reduction in the cost of my electricity bill?

#### Lighting, Dust, Noise & Visual Impacts:

- What is the noise like from the fans and generators?
- Has TransAlta considered the impact of the Data Centre on wildlife?
- Has the cooling method for the Data Centre been evaluated to mitigate noise impacts?
- Does the noise assessment account for pitch, not just what is permissible regarding decibel levels?
- Comment that residents don't want abandoned development, blight, and waste of power and water resources.

#### Power Supply & Energy Use:

- Will hydraulic fracking be completed to extract natural gas to power a Data Centre?

- Suggest exploring public-private partnerships for Data Centre development and long-term operations.
- Concern about the assumption of unlimited natural gas, which could lead to more polluting energy sources later. A better planning model is needed.
- Consideration for nuclear energy?
- Has TransAlta looked into using renewable energy to power the Data Centre?
- What are TransAlta's current and future operational plans for the Sundance and Keephills plants?
- Where are the transmission lines near the Sundance and Keephills plants?

#### Project Timeline & Process:

- Will TransAlta lease or sell the land to the Data Centre end-user?
- What will TransAlta gain from selling or leasing the land to the Data Centre end-user?
- Will there be regular environmental assessments required for TransAlta and the Data Centre end-user to undergo?
- Can the environmental assessments be shared publicly? Will they be provided to decision makers?
- How long will it take for the Data Centre to go from planning to being fully operational?
- Has TransAlta developed an exit strategy in case the end-user or Data Centre project is not completed?

#### Reclamation & Future Land Use:

- Questions were raised about the land reclamation process.
- Is it possible the land near the Sundance Plant won't be developed for a Data Centre?
- What's the full process for land reclamation and how is land sensitivity being assessed?
- What is the status of TransAlta's land sales?

#### Water Use & Environmental Impacts:

- What are the impacts to water?
- Will TransAlta lease or sell the land?
- Will TransAlta consider also including a Greenhouse with a Data Centre Development?
- How could a Data Centre affect nearby lakes and water bodies?
- Concern about drainage and runoff due to the area's topography.
- What will be used to fill the cooling ponds for the Data Centre?
- How exactly will the Data Centre be cooled?

- Were renewable energy options considered to power the Data Centre sustainably?
- Will the future Data Centre impact Wabamun Lake?
- How much land will the Data Centre require to operate?
- What measures are in place to address fire risks onsite, given past incidents at Sundance and Keephills plants?
- Will Data Centre cooling require drinking quality water?
- Suggest using heat from the Data Centre to generate steam that could be reused in pipelines.
- Where are the active and abandoned wells around the Sundance and Keephills plants?

#### 4. CONCLUSION

TransAlta appreciates the time and consideration given by stakeholders to discuss potential amendments to the Highvale End Land Use Area Structure Plan and Land Use Bylaw. The feedback received on this important initial step will be considered for incorporation into the final proposed ASP and LUB amendments to be submitted to Parkland County for approval.

In addition to feedback on the proposed ASP and LUB amendments, TransAlta also received feedback from stakeholders specific to a potential data centre development. Should the proposed amendments to the ASP and LUB be approved, TransAlta will share collected stakeholder feedback with an eventual Data Centre proponent.

During the public engagement process stakeholders took the opportunity to share their views and concerns associated with the ongoing operation of TransAlta's Keephills and Sundance facilities. TransAlta appreciates the feedback received and will follow up those concerns outside of the ASP and LUB amendment application process.

TransAlta has established a website to keep the public informed about the ASP and LUB amendment processes. Stakeholders are encouraged to contact TransAlta to provide feedback on the proposed ASP and LUB amendments at their convenience. Further, TransAlta's Stakeholder Engagement email inbox and phone number remain open at all times.

Contact TransAlta:

#### **Highvale End Land Use Area Structure Plan and Land Use Bylaw Proposed Amendments:**

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**Proposed changes to Land Use Area Structure Plan Website**

[Proposed Data Centre Development - TransAlta](#)