

PROPOSAL TO THE FACULTY OF ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Name of Project: Community Development Plan for Hamlet of Rolling Hills.
Sponsoring Agency: County of Newell

Background

The Hamlet of Rolling Hills is located approximately 44 km southeast of the Town of Brooks adjacent to secondary highways 875 and 525 (see Attachment I for location and information). The primary land use in this community is residential with some commercial and institutional. It is a community with an established history, which includes settlement in the early part of the last century. The community has experienced sporadic growth since it was first established. The level of development in the last three years, however, has begun to utilise vacant developed land and there is no adopted plan, which addresses future growth of the community.

This development, however, has not been without community concern about the type and age of buildings permitted by the municipality through its land use by-law. The Hamlet Advisory Committee has expressed concerns about the long-term suitability of some of the development approved in this community. The difficulty experienced by the municipality in enforcing the provisions of the land use by-law is that no accepted community standard exists to which development may be compared. The result is a mixture of development, which is not readily accepted by the community.

Nature of Project

It is believed the study will be interdisciplinary in nature with the possibility of involving three streams of the Faculty of Environmental Design including architecture, urban and regional planning and environmental science. The team would be collectively involved in establishing architectural considerations, land use planning, community planning, environmental planning, policy formulation and implementation, methods of public consultation, etc.

Project Need

There is a need for this type of study. The municipality benefits because it presently does not have the resources to produce such a document. The student team benefits from the study in that their work is likely to be utilised well into the future by the municipality in the review of development and subdivision applications. The proposal may serve as a catalyst for other hamlets in the municipality to develop standards of their own for development and what direction their community should follow in the future.

Issue Identification

The issues to be addressed in this project include the following:

- What building standard can the community accept for future development?
- How can a community accepted standard be incorporated into a policy document the municipality can utilise when reviewing development proposals?
- Are there acceptable architectural considerations that could be incorporated into the land use by-law to establish community standards for this hamlet?
- Are there limitations to growth in the hamlet given that areas outside of it are utilised for agricultural production and future growth may impact this production?
- Can a growth strategy be developed which addresses the loss of farmland by residential land uses and identifies a future direction for community expansion?

It is felt that some of these issues are short-term while others are long-term. It is believed that the community has a sufficient land base to accommodate growth for several years into the future. The difficulty, however, is that there is no adopted plan which directs how or where the community should grow. It is believed that this study undertaken by students of the Faculty of Environmental Design could be adopted by the municipality as a policy framework or several components incorporated in the existing land use by-law.

Product Implementation

The product created by the student team is likely to be adopted by the municipality as a policy framework for future development in this community or have components included as part of the land use by-law. It is also likely that parts of the document could be incorporated into a revised municipal development plan when this document is reviewed in the future by the municipality.

Project Resources

The County's planner can be utilised as a liaison and technical resource for this study. The majority of meetings, if necessary, could be held at the Faculty of Environmental Design to reduce travel costs. The municipality has a budget allocated to undertake the study. Discussions have occurred with the hamlet's Advisory Committee regarding their participation in this study. This participation was not confirmed at the time this proposal was prepared.