

What We Heard

Residential Strategy | Lethbridge County | Spring 2026

Lethbridge County is developing a Residential Strategy to guide how and where housing grows over the coming years. We asked residents and the development industry to share their priorities and concerns.

200+
Public survey responses

15+
Industry workshop participants

Key themes from residents



Protect agricultural land & rural character

- Protecting farmland is the #1 priority at 26%
- Maintaining rural character is #2 at 24%
- Residents chose the County for space, privacy, and connection to the land
- Growth should not bring urban-style density to the County



Direct growth to the right places

- 39% prefer a mix of development types across the County
- 30% want growth focused adjacent to existing hamlets
- Scattered development on prime farmland is generally opposed
- Infrastructure should keep up with growth, water access was one of the primary concerns



Allow more flexible property use

- Strong interest in home based businesses and mixed-use opportunities
- More flexibility for hobby farms, animals, and small scale agriculture
- Support for secondary suites and garden suites (e.g., for aging parents)
- Residents want to live, work, and adapt their property to changing needs



Make rules simpler & fairer

- Many residents feel regulations are complex and hard to navigate
- Rules should be consistently applied and clearly communicated
- Some residents want more flexibility; others want stronger enforcement

What the development industry told us

Throughout February and March, Lethbridge County hosted an Industry Workshops with developers, realtors, builders, engineers, and consultants. Four clear themes shaped the conversation.

Growth pressure is real and concentrated

- New Grouped Country Residential (GCR) subdivisions near the urban areas are seeing the strongest demand
- Hamlet growth and infill represent real but underused opportunities
- The County urban fringe areas are complex – multiple jurisdictions slow projects down

Current rules are creating unnecessary friction

- The land use bylaw is too complex and hard to navigate
- No clear policy path or unnecessary rules for tiny homes, garden suites, small businesses on GCR land, or accessory buildings size caps
- Utility timelines and engineering requirements add costly delays
- Inconsistent enforcement of existing rules frustrates everyone

Water access is the biggest barrier

- Mandatory municipal water connection for 5+ lots make many projects unviable
- Willingness to haul water is near zero – it routinely kills sales
- No consistent standard exists across GCR communities for how water is delivered
- Industry interested in collaborating with the County on creative servicing models

"More collaboration with developers and having an economic development mindset – making decisions, not just talking." *Industry Stakeholder*

Collaboration and certainty enable good projects

- Industry praised the County's open mindset and collaborative attitude
- Faster, more direct answers from County staff would move projects forward
- An economic development mindset – not just a regulatory one – is what's needed

Consistent themes

Despite coming from different perspectives, residents and the development industry shared surprisingly consistent messages:

Protect agricultural land

- Both residents and industry agree: prime farmland must be protected as growth occurs.

Align infrastructure requirements

- Development needs infrastructure to keep up. Proactive and creative solutions are needed—not just policy.

Direct growth strategically

- Growth should be intentional, with preference around hamlets and existing communities.

Simplify the rules

- Complex regulations, inconsistent enforcement, and unclear processes frustrate everyone. Simplicity matters.

Allow more flexibility

- Both groups want more housing types, uses, and options—within a clear and consistent framework.

Communicate more clearly

- Many residents are 'unsure' about the County's direction. Clearer communication builds trust.

What happens next?

This feedback will directly shape Lethbridge County's Residential Strategy. County staff and Council will use it alongside technical analysis to develop policy recommendations. The policy recommendations are anticipated to be presented to Council in Fall 2026.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to share your perspective. Your input matters.