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Council adopts MDP

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Nanton's density dilemma was laid to rest Monday night when town council passed the Municipal Development Plan (MDP).

The MDP raises the town's density from the current four units per acre to six units per acre in and gives council the ability to consider residential development up to eight units per acre.

The Calgary Regional Partnership and the Land-Use Framework are urging municipalities to reduce their environmental footprint by upping development density; however, many residents argue large lots distinguish Nanton from Calgary.

Council was split in their opinions on density.

Councillor Bill Szabon pointed out that upping the residential density would provide a broader range of housing options, thereby providing people who cannot afford a single family home on a

5,000-square-foot lot with an attainable housing solution.

"There's nothing wrong with density, if it's done right," Szabon said. "The status quo, I don't think we can stay there."

Council agreed the density should be increased to six units per gross acre in order to prevent urban encroachment on agricultural lands, but took issue with the inclusion of "and may consider development density up to eight residential units per acre."

Councillors Kevin Todd and Gwen Smith argued there may come a time when eight units per acres is appropriate, but Nanton should not increase the density to that level any earlier than needed.

Town planner Gavin Scott reminded that council will hold the authority to accept or decline higher-density developments.

Mayor John Blake moved to strike the provision of eight units per acre, but the motion was defeated four to three, and the MDP was approved as presented.

