



**Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako
Committee of the Whole
AGENDA
Thursday, October 12, 2023**

<u>PAGE NO.</u>		<u>ACTION</u>
	<u>First Nations Acknowledgement</u>	
	<u>AGENDA - October 12, 2023</u>	Approve
	<u>Supplementary Agenda</u>	Receive
	<u>MINUTES</u>	
3-8	Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes - September 7, 2023	Approve
	<u>DELEGATIONS</u>	
	<u>MINISTRY OF ENERGY, MINES AND LOW CARBON INNOVATION -via Zoom</u> Justin Schroff, P.Geo., Regional Director, NW Region RE: Gravel Extraction and Processing	
	<u>MINISTRY OF WATER, LAND AND RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP OFFICE OF THE WET'SUWET'EN - via Zoom at 12:00 p.m.</u> Robyn Van Iderstine, RPF, Land and Resource Specialist, RE: WIDZIN KWAH WATER SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT	
	<u>DEVELOPMENT SERVICES</u>	
	<u>Referral</u>	
9-12	Rowan Nagel, GIS/Planning Technician Mines Referral No. 161384335 Electoral Areas A (Smithers/Telkwa Rural)	Recommendation
	<u>REPORTS</u>	
13-30	Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning - Gravel Extraction and Processing	Receive

<u>PAGE NO.</u>	<u>REPORTS (CONT'D)</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
31-34	Nellie Davis, Manager of Regional Economic Development – Rural Bursary Policy	Recommendation
35-37	Shari Janzen, Economic Development Assistant -Letter of Support Request – District of Houston	Recommendation
38	Shari Janzen, Economic Development Assistant -Letter of Support Request – Town of Smithers	Recommendation

DISCUSSION

Bulkley Nechako Transit Service

- **Follow-up – Meeting with the Honourable Rob Fleming,
Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure**

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

NEW BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF BULKLEY-NECHAKO**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING****Thursday, September 7, 2023**

PRESENT:	Chair	Mark Parker
	Directors	Leroy Dekens Martin Elphee – via Zoom Judy Greenaway Clint Lambert Linda McGuire Shirley Moon Kevin Moutray Chris Newell Michael Riis-Christianson Stoney Stoltenberg Sarrah Storey Henry Wiebe
	Directors Absent	Gladys Atrill, Town of Smithers Shane Brienen, District of Houston
	Staff	Curtis Helgesen, Chief Administrative Officer Cheryl Anderson, Director of Corporate Services Nellie Davis, Manager of Regional Economic Development – arrived at 10:10 a.m., left at 10:27 a.m. John Illes, Chief Financial Officer Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning – left at 10:52 a.m. Deneve Vanderwolf, Planning Technician/Transit Coordinator – left at 10:52 a.m. Wendy Wainwright, Deputy Director of Corporate Services
	Others	Gillian Moxham, Project Director, Transit Strategy & Policy Branch, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure -via Zoom – arrived at 10:15 a.m., left at 10:52 a.m. Lindsay Taylor, Government Relations Manager, BC Transit – via Zoom – arrived at 10:15 a.m., left at 10:52 a.m.
	Media	Saddman Zaman, LD News

CALL TO ORDER Chair Parker called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.**FIRST NATIONS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

AGENDA

Moved by Director Storey
Seconded by Director Stoltenberg

C.W.2023-6-1

"That the Agenda of the Committee of the Whole meeting of September 7, 2023 be approved."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

MINUTES

Committee of the Whole
Minutes – June 8, 2023

Moved by Director Stoltenberg
Seconded by Director Greenaway

C.W.2023-6-2

"That the Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes of June 8, 2023 be approved."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

REPORTS

National Day for Truth and
Reconciliation- September 30,
2023

Moved by Director Stoltenberg
Seconded by Director Lambert

C.W.2023-6-3

"That the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako recognize the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on Monday, October 2, 2023."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Rural Bursary Policy

Discussion took place regarding the Manager of Regional Economic Development's Rural Bursary Policy:

- Including Trades Programs in the fields for special consideration
- Including additional schools in Eligible Institutions:
 - o Northside Christian School
 - o Bulkley Valley Christian School
 - o Houston Christian School
- Supporting all graduates from all schools in the region including brick and mortar, independent schools and online graduation programs
- Rural Bursary Policy vs. utilizing Grant in Aid for those Directors wanting to contribute
 - o Electoral Areas C (Fort St. James Rural) and D (Fraser Lake Rural) currently provide a bursary
- Annual Regional Grant in Aid taxation
- Providing consistent support throughout the region
- Schools distribute the bursary to successful recipients within the school's criteria

REPORTS (CONT'D)

- Director input in the selection process
- Including students with a municipal or rural permanent address
- Village of Granisle provides a bursary to a graduate
- District of Vanderhoof provides two bursaries – one for an academic field and one for a Trades field
- Number of schools per area
- Staff to bring forward additional details at a future meeting.

REGIONAL TRANSIT

Bulkley-Nechako Transit Service (Bylaw 1790) Amendment Bylaws

The following was discussed regarding the Director of Planning's Bulkley-Nechako Transit Service (Bylaw 1790) Amendment Bylaws memorandum:

- Need for confirmation of financial certainty from the provincial and federal governments
- Request for a meeting with the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure at the 2023 Union of B.C. Municipalities Convention in Vancouver September 18 to 22, 2023 was declined
 - o Awaiting a response regarding a request to meet with Ministry Staff
- Funding formula and model for the Bulkley-Nechako Transit
- Table 1, 2, 3 and 4 included in the memorandum
- Additional taxation challenging
- Charging more per rider
- Communication between BC Transit and the communities when drivers/buses are cancelled
- Operating and capital cost formula
 - o Setting a contribution limit
- Potential costs and tax increases in the future
- City of Prince George contribution to the service
- Investigate fare increases and potential policing
- Village of Granisle Community Bus increased fares from \$5 to \$7.50 without objection
- Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural) – off-corridor
 - o Residents have travelled to Vanderhoof to find the Bulkley Nechako Transit bus full
 - o Seniors Helping Seniors bus operates in Fort St. James
 - o Off-corridor communities' contribution is lower than those on-corridor
- Observed Less hitch-hiking along Highway 16
- Discussion with First Nations
- Conducting an Alternative Approval Process

REGIONAL TRANSIT (CONT'D)

- BC Transit Service Review of the Bulkley-Nechako Transit System
- Possibility of discontinuing the service without higher levels of government support commitment.

CORRESPONDENCE

City of Quesnel – Re: Quesnel Highway 97 North-South Interconnector Project Request for Support Moved by Director Stoltenberg
Seconded by Director Lambert

C.W.2023-6-6

“That the Committee receive the Administration Correspondence from the City of Quesnel regarding Quesnel Highway 97 North-South Interconnector Project Request for Support.”

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

NEW BUSINESS

Late Resolution to UBCM RE: 2023 Wildfire Season -Economic Impacts to the Forestry Sector – Request for Inventory Moved by Director Stoltenberg
Seconded by Director Riis-Christianson

C.W.2023-6-7

“That the Board submit the following late resolution to the 2023 Union of B.C. Municipalities Convention:

Whereas 2023 has been the worst wildfire season in BC’s history with over 2.2 million hectares burnt, and close to \$1 billion spent to combat the wildfires;

And whereas in April 2018 the Province received the Abbott/Chapman report titled *Addressing the New Normal: 21st Century Disaster Management in British Columbia* whereby recommendation 104 states: “Following wildfire events, promptly undertake timber supply reviews to enable industry response and adaptation to a new allowable annual cut, and to allow BC to better understand and respond to impacts on habitat, fibre availability and community stability.”

NEW BUSINESS (CONT'D)

And whereas there has not been a provincial inventory of land base assets since the 2007 fire season; however, within the last 2 years the Province has undertaken several new forest and land based initiatives such as the Old Growth Strategic Review, Forest Landscape Plans, and B.C. Biodiversity and Ecosystem Health Framework proposals that are being conducted in the absence of accurate inventory data;

Therefore be it resolved that the Province of BC immediately defer its current land base initiatives until a comprehensive inventory is conducted after the 2023 wildfire season recognizing that the impacts of wildfire to wildlife habitat, timber, fish, water, First Nations Reconciliation, and community stability need to be examined and prioritized to understand if the current land base initiatives remain in the best interest of the Province."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Wildfire Mop Up

Director Newell brought forward concerns and frustrations regarding the mop up of wildfires and that wildfires continue to burn and not be completely extinguished. He noted that local resources do not appear to be utilized to full capacity.

Discussion took place regarding rural fire response and the example of the Chinook Emergency Response Society on the Southside of Francois Lake. Training volunteers and rural areas taking the initiative regarding wildfire response was also discussed.

An After-Action Review was discussed as well as recognizing initiatives that worked well and areas that could be improved regarding wildfire response.

INCAMERA MOTION

Moved by Director Storey
Seconded by Director Newell

C.W.2023-6-8

"That this meeting be closed to the public pursuant to Section 90(1)(c) and (2)(b) of the Community Charter for the Board to deal with matters relating to the following:

- *Fire Safety Act*
- Labour Relations
- Legacy Funding
- Northwest B.C Resource Benefits Alliance (RBA)."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Director Stoltenberg
Seconded by Director Greenaway

C.W.2023-6-9

"That the meeting be adjourned at 11:20 a.m."

(All/Directors/Majority)

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Mark Parker, Chair

Wendy Wainwright, Deputy Director of
Corporate Services



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Committee of the Whole

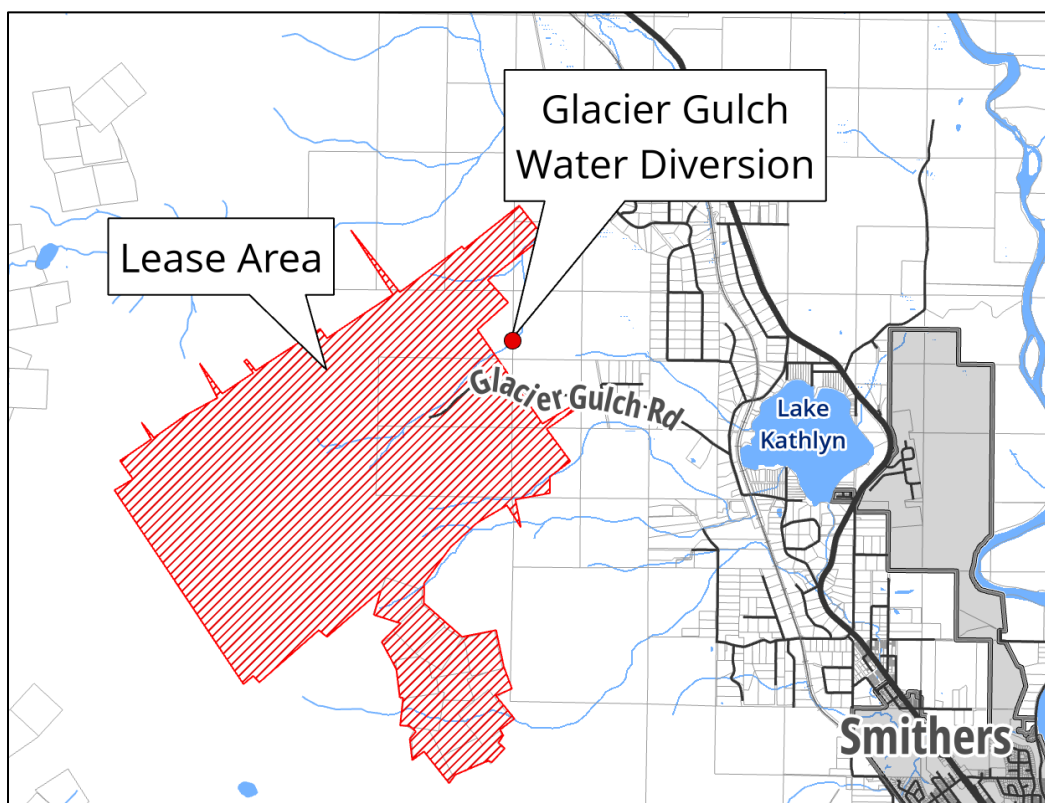
To: Chair and Committee
From: Rowan Nagel, GIS/Planning Technician
Date: October 12, 2023
Subject: Mines Referral 161384335

RECOMMENDATION:**(all/directors/majority)**

That the attached comment sheet be provided to the Province as the Regional District's comments on Mines Referral No. 161384335.

BACKGROUND

The RDBN has received a request for comment on a term extension application for a Mineral Lease under the *Mines Act*. The application covers approximately 16.5 square kilometres of undeveloped land west of Smithers. The nearest residential area is approximately one kilometre from the easternmost boundary of the lease area. The Glacier Gulch water diversion infrastructure is located adjacent to the lease area.



The application received from the Province contains no further information beyond the attached location map. Staff have requested additional information on the lease, but no response was received by the time of the writing of this report.

Given the proximity of the lease area to the Town of Smithers, the developed rural area, and the Glacier Gulch infrastructure, staff recommend that the Province not consider extension of the lease until the RDBN receives and considers additional information regarding the application.

ATTACHMENTS

- Comment Sheet
- Applicant's Location Map

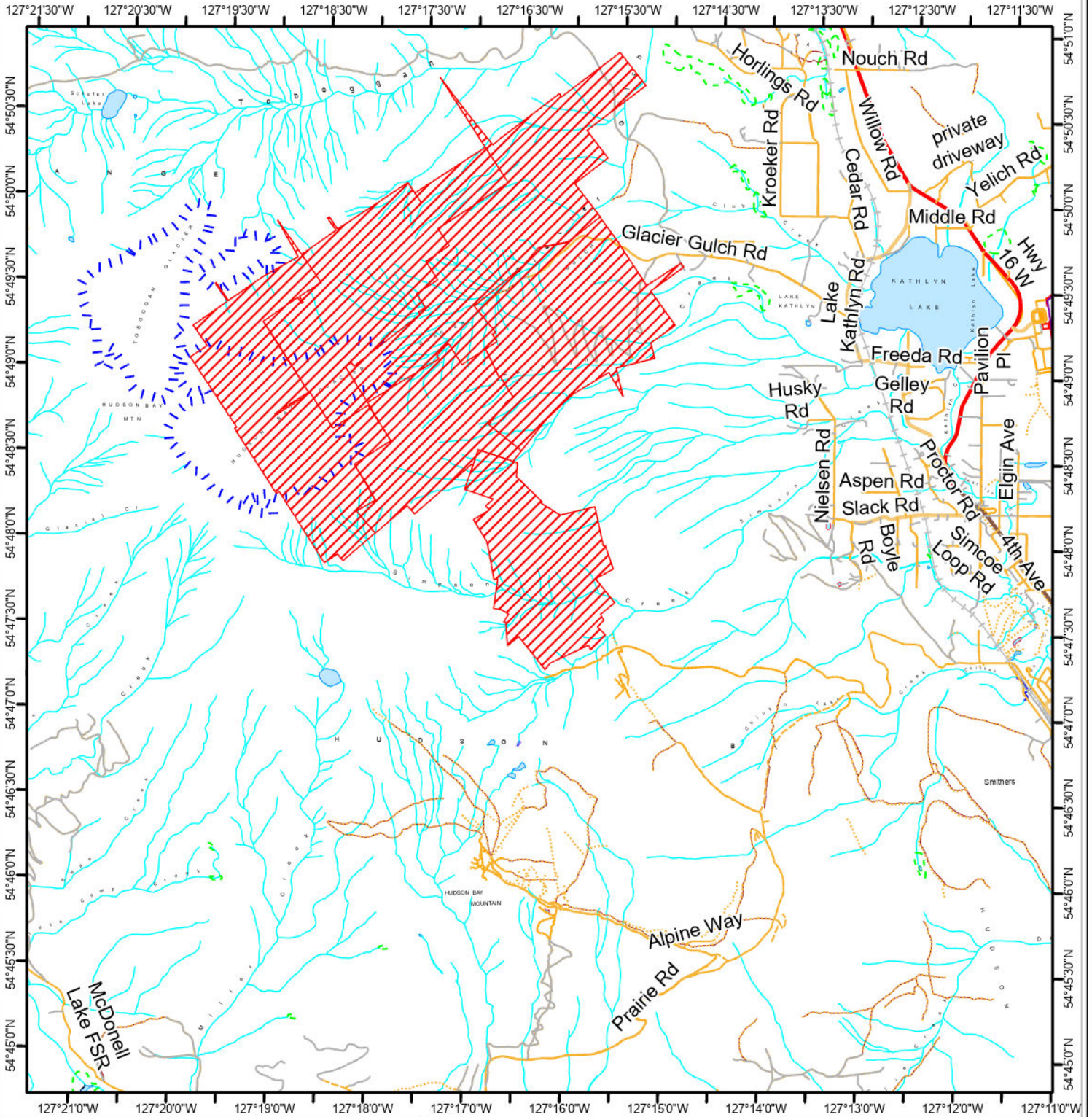
Comment Sheet on Mines Referral No. 161384335

Electoral Area:	Electoral Area A (Smithers/Telkwa Rural)
Applicant:	Donald Davidson
Existing Land Use:	N/A
Zoning:	Large Holdings (H2)
OCP Designation:	Resource (RE)
Proposed Use Comply with Zoning:	See comments.
If not, why?	N/A
Agricultural Land Reserve:	No
Access:	Glacier Gulch Road
Building Inspection:	Yes
Fire Protection:	No
Other comments:	

Given the proximity of the lease area to the Town of Smithers, the developed rural area, and the Glacier Gulch water diversion infrastructure the RDBN requests that the Province not consider extension of the lease until the RDBN receives and considers additional information regarding the application.

Interest Holder: DONALD DAVIDSON

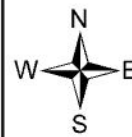
File No: 13880-02-282, 302-306 Mineral Lease Term Extension (Donald Davidson)



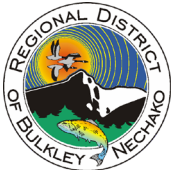
Scale: 1:60,000
 Type: MINING
 Sub Type: MINING LEASE
 Purpose: INDUSTRIAL
 Subpurpose: LEASE RENEWAL

-  Application Area
-  Indian Reserves
-  Park or Protected Area

Referral Map



Date: 15 Sep 2023
 Area: 1638 ha +/-



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Committee of the Whole

To: Chair and Committee
From: Jason Llewellyn, Director of Planning
Date: October 12, 2023
Subject: Gravel Extraction and Processing

RECOMMENDATION: (all/directors/majority)

Receive.

DISCUSSION

The Board has invited representatives from the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation (the Ministry) to the October 12th Committee of the Whole meeting to discuss gravel extraction and permitting in the RDBN.

To provide the Board with some background information in preparation for the delegation staff have attached to this report a 2021 discussion paper titled "Gravel Extraction and Processing in Electoral Area A." This document outlines the regulatory framework for gravel extraction and aggregate processing for all areas of the RDBN, and discusses the gravel extraction and aggregate processing situation in Electoral Area A.

This discussion paper was considered by the Board at their January 28, 2021, Board Meeting. At this meeting the Board unanimously passed the following motion."

"That staff be directed to work with the Ministry of Energy, Mines, and Low Carbon Innovation (EMLI) to identify opportunity to increase communication on land use conflict issues and ensure that the RDBN receives referrals regarding EMLI applications for new gravel extraction permits and permit renewals."

Following discussions between the Ministry and RDBN staff, as directed, the Ministry has been referring permit renewal applications to the RDBN Board for comment.

The Ministry and the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) have also entered a memorandum of understanding ensuring that permits are not issued or renewed without the required ALC approval. This process results in the RDBN Board processing ACL applications for soil removal in the ALR, increasing the RDBN's opportunity to comment on any land use impacts associated with aggregate extraction.

ATTACHMENTS

Discussion Paper "Gravel Extraction and Processing in Electoral Area A"

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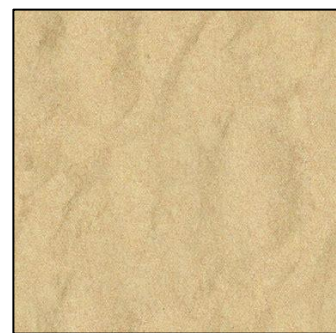
INTRODUCTION

For the purpose of this report aggregate refers to the wide range of materials used in construction and maintenance including sand, crushed stone and sorted stone. In the RDBN aggregate is processed gravel. Aggregates are a critical component of every aspect of building and infrastructure development. Almost every aspect of community building and maintenance requires some form of aggregate.

In the RDBN aggregate is typically produced in “gravel pits.” Sand and gravel are removed from the ground and washed, sorted and /or crushed into the multitude of aggregate products required by any community. The cost of gravel is closely tied to the transportation costs associated with extraction, processing and delivery. Therefore, there is a very strong desire for gravel pits to be located close to population centers. This results in the notable potential for land use conflict. The high potential for land use conflict, and the critical necessity for a good supply of inexpensive aggregate product for community building and maintenance, is the reason that the Province of BC has retained control over regulations that restrict the location of gravel pits in BC.

This report does the following:

- outlines the regulatory framework for gravel extraction and aggregate processing in BC.
- describes how aggregate processing is regulated by the RDBN, and
- discusses the gravel extraction and aggregate situation in Electoral Area A.



THE REGULATION OF GRAVEL EXTRACTION

The Mines Act

The Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation (EMLI) through the *Mines Act* retains the primary authority to regulate mining (which includes gravel extraction) in BC. The EMLI permitting process for gravel pits may include review and approval of site operational plans, the equipment used, the reclamation plans, access management, noise abatement, and protection of cultural and heritage resources. The EMLI may also require security as necessary to ensure that the approved mining plan and reclamation requirements are followed.

The Mines Inspector for the EMLI is responsible for evaluating applications for a permit to operate a gravel pit and have the authority to require First Nations and public consultation, and referrals to local governments. The Mines Inspector, through the substantial powers vested in the Chief Inspector of Mines, has significant powers to modify permits. Permit holders can be fined for violating permit conditions.

The EMLI process tends to focus on the mining process, worker health and safety, environmental impacts, and reclamation at the mine site. It does not appear to include a vigorous process to evaluate and address the full range of community impacts associated with gravel extraction operations. EMLI permits are typically issued for a term of 5 years and can be renewed any number of times.

Gravel Pits in the Agricultural Land Reserve



There are two ways in which gravel pits can be allowed in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). A property owner can initiate a Notice of Intent – Soil Removal on ALR Land (NOI) process or make a Non-Farm Use - Removal of Soil (NFU) application.

The NOI application fee is \$150 and the application must be made prior to gravel pit operation. Retroactive approvals cannot be given through the NOI process. The application is reviewed and considered for approval by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC). Upon review of a complete NOI application the CEO may request additional information within 60 days. Once all the additional information requested by the ALC is provided, the CEO has 60 days to approve or deny the application.

Approvals are typically given subject to terms and conditions relating to the reclamation and remediation of the site in a manner appropriate for future agricultural use. Local governments are notified when a Notice of Intent is submitted; however, they do not have a role in processing or evaluating the application, unless the CEO requests their input. Local governments are copied on decisions once made.

A NFU application can be made if a NOI application is refused. A property owner may also apply directly for a NFU application without first making a NOI application. The NFU application fee is \$1,500, or \$1,350 if a NOI application has been previously submitted (and refused). The application is considered by the ALC's Soil and Fill Panel and applications are expected to take between 6 months to one year for approval. NFU applications are processed through the local government to the ALC. The local government reviews the application and forwards it to the ALC with comments and recommendations.

The ALC provides little indication of the type of soil removal activity that can be expected to be allowed under the NOI process. Therefore, property owners may choose the NFU application process even though it is the longer and more expensive process because of the uncertainty and potential time delay associated with the NOI process. RDBN staff have encouraged the Ministry of Agriculture to work with ALC staff to develop meaningful guidelines regarding the nature of soil removal which can be expected to be approved through the NOI process.

Soil Removal and Deposit Bylaws

Gravel extraction includes the activities necessary to remove gravel from the ground and transport it from the property. This is not a use that can be regulated through local government zoning powers. Local governments have the potential authority to regulate the gravel extraction process, and the location of gravel pits, through the adoption of a Soil Removal and Deposit Bylaw pursuant to section 327 of the *Local Government Act*. However, in recognition of the Provincial interest in mining, including gravel extraction, section 9 of the *Community Charter* requires that a Soil Removal and Deposit Bylaw be approved by the Minister of Energy, Mines, and Petroleum Resources if it prohibits gravel removal.

EMLI has taken the position that a Soil Removal and Deposit Bylaw which contains regulations which create volume restrictions on gravel removal is in effect prohibiting soil removal. Therefore, Minister approval may be required for a bylaw which regulates the extraction process even though that bylaw does not explicitly control where gravel extraction may occur.

Obtaining Minister approval for a Soil Removal and Deposit Bylaw has been described as a daunting process. Local governments are required to satisfy the EMLI that the bylaw will not inappropriately conflict with EMLI regulations and processes and will not have an impact on the local supply of, or cost for, aggregate resources for the foreseeable future. Satisfying EMLI typically requires the undertaking of a comprehensive aggregate inventory within the area that is subject to the proposed bylaw.

All regional district Soil Removal and Deposit Bylaws are in the southern half of the Province. There are reports that efficient and effective implementation of these bylaws may be a challenge given the overlapping jurisdiction with the EMLI. Also, there is limited ability to retroactively enforce a new bylaw or revisit the terms of a Mines permit that has been granted. There are also concerns that the EMLI may rely on the local government to assume most of the enforcement activity for which they were previously responsible.

In the Planning Department's opinion, the cost to develop and administer a Soil Removal and Deposit Bylaw which can control the location of gravel pits may outweigh any community benefits that would be achieved. Should the Board wish to proceed with the development of a Soil Removal and Deposit Bylaw for the RDBN it is recommended that the bylaw only regulate (but not prohibit) soil removal. The recommended approach is that the RDBN work with the EMLI to ensure that the RDBN receives referrals regarding gravel pit permits, and that the approval processes appropriately consider community impacts associated with gravel extraction. This approach has minimal RDBN taxation implications, avoids unnecessary jurisdictional conflict and overlap, and avoids placing an additional level of bureaucracy on the aggregate industry.

THE REGULATION OF GRAVEL PROCESSING

Gravel Processing and Zoning

As previously noted, the gravel extraction process is not a land use that can be regulated through local government zoning. However, the processing of gravel and manufacture of aggregate-based products can be regulated through zoning. Most operational gravel pits can be expected to screen or crush gravel on-site at some time throughout the year. A few gravel pits have gravel processing equipment on site all year and operate that equipment as necessary; however, many gravel pits bring processing equipment to the pit to operate only for a few weeks during the year.

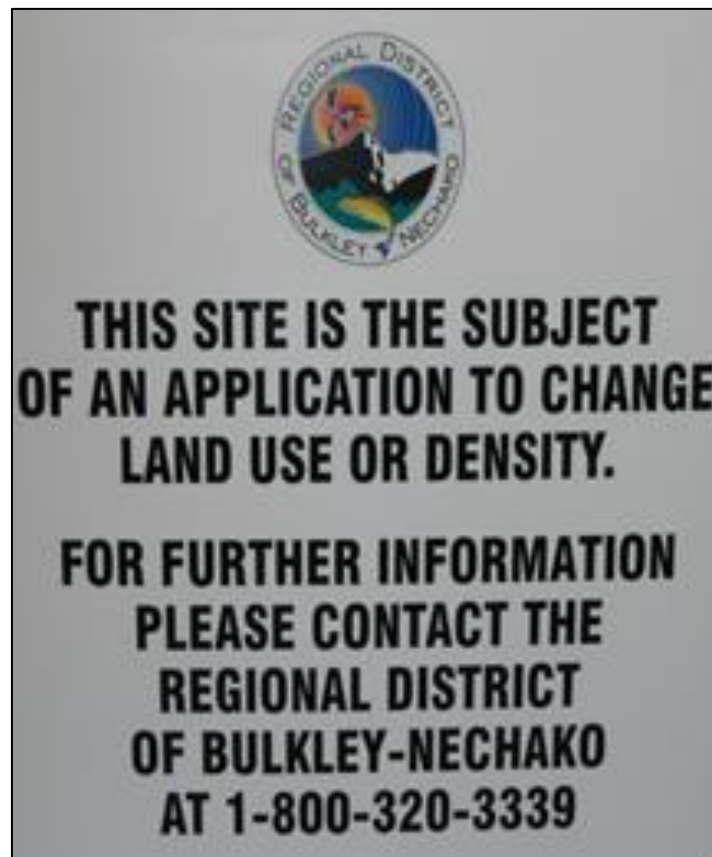
“Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Zoning Bylaw No. 1800, 2020” defines “**Aggregate Processing**” as the use of a mechanically operated device or structure to sift, sort, crush or separate rock, sand, gravel or other material of which land is composed; or to wash or separate silts, and other fine or small materials from larger rock, sand, gravel or other material of which land is composed. These uses are allowed in the Light Manufacturing (M1), and Heavy Manufacturing (M2) Zones. However, in most situations in the RDBN, and throughout the province, gravel processing in gravel pits is approved by local governments through the issuance of a Temporary Use Permit (TUP).



Temporary Use Permits

If a property owner has a need to use property, on a temporary basis, for a use that is not allowed by zoning they may apply for a TUP. This permit, if issued by the RDBN Board, may allow a use that is not permitted by zoning for a period of up to 3 years, in accordance with the terms outlined in the permit. The Board may extend the TUP for up to another three years. A TUP may only be extended once. Once an extended TUP expires a new TUP application, subject to *Local Government Act* public notification requirements, is required.

Applications for TUPs must follow a process that is outlined in the *Local Government Act* and “Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Development Procedures Bylaw No. 1898, 2020”. A notice and location map will be published in the local newspaper the week prior to the Board meeting where an application is considered. Adjacent property owners and residents are sent a written notice of the consideration of the TUP and are given an opportunity to provide input to the Board. The sign shown below is placed on the property advertising the application. A TUP application is typically considered by the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board after they have provided area residents with an opportunity to comment on the proposed TUP. The Board will then consider the application, and may issue the TUP subject to conditions, request additional information, or reject the application. Generally, the process takes from two to four months to complete.



Dealing with gravel processing at gravel pits through the issuance of a TUP has several advantages. The RDBN does not have to commit to allowing the processing use long term. The RDBN can review the processing use and the impact on the community at least every three years when a permit is renewed, or a new application is required. The issuance of a temporary use permit is discretionary and the RDBN Board has a high level of flexibility in imposing conditions or refusing to issue a permit. The permit term approved can also be less than the three-year maximum. Typical conditions associated with the issuance of a TUP are limitations on hours and days of operation, and screening such as berms. The conditions imposed are designed to limit the overall impact of the gravel extraction process, and not just the gravel processing activity.

The Planning Department is typically supportive of accommodating aggregate processing in gravel pits at the site of extraction. If aggregate cannot be processed at the site of extraction it must first be shipped to a processing location prior to use. This unnecessarily increases heavy truck traffic on public roads and increases the cost of aggregate.

It is noted that the zoning regulations regarding the processing of gravel were strengthened with the adoption of “Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Zoning Bylaw No. 1800, 2020.” Gravel pits in the RDBN that legally processed gravel prior to the adoption of the new zoning bylaw may continue non-conforming processing under the protection of section 528 of the *Local Government Act*. Most gravel pits which process infrequently do not have TUP approval for processing. The RDBN Planning Department relies on public complaints to initiate enforcement where aggregates are being processed without a required TUP. When public complaints are received, staff will investigate whether gravel processing is occurring and may work with the aggregate producer to determine if a TUP is required.



PROVINCIAL CONSULTATION REGARDING GRAVEL EXTRACTION

EMLI Referrals

In the past EMLI has not consistently send referrals to the RDBN regarding new permits to operate gravel pits in the RDBN; however, staff believe that this has been addressed. The RDBN is not typically sent referrals regarding the renewal of a EMLI permit, and the RDBN has not required these referrals. It is recommended that the RDBN ask to be sent referrals regarding permit renewals. This increases the opportunity for the Board to highlight land use conflict issues that may exist, and work with EMLI to appropriately engage with area residents, without adding an additional layer of bureaucracy on gravel pit operators.

ALC Notice of Intent and Non-Farm Use Referrals

The RDBN is not involved in the ALC's NOI approval process for gravel extraction from ALR land. Given the nature of this process it is not recommended that the RDBN ask to become involved.

The RDBN is involved in processing and commenting on NFU applications on ALR land. The RDBN has the option of not forwarding these applications to the ALC and can, therefore, prohibit the legal operation of a new gravel pit in the ALR through this process. RDBN comments to the ALC asking the ALC to regulate non-agriculture related impacts will likely not be acted upon.

Crown Land Referrals

The Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (MFLRD) are consistent in sending referrals to the RDBN regarding the issuance of new licenses of occupation (LOU) for gravel pits. These gravel pits are typically small and tend to be remotely located.

The RDBN Planning Department has previously raised concerns with the MFLRD regarding their issuance of LOU's for the processing of gravel, including the operation of asphalt plants, without first ensuring that the uses are permitted on those lands by zoning. This has led to enforcement issues in the past as license holders assume that Provincial authorization is adequate to allow the processing.

GRAVEL PITS IN ELECTORAL AREA A

Gravel Pits and Community Character

The maps attached as Schedule A titled “Electoral Area A Gravel Pit Map 1/2 and 2/2” show the location of operating gravel pits in Electoral Area A between the Village of Telkwa and the Town of Smithers. This report focuses on this area between the municipalities as it contains the greatest concentration of gravel pits in proximity to residential and agricultural uses. The table attached as Schedule B provides information regarding the status of the gravel pits shown on the Electoral Area A Gravel Pit Maps.

Most of these gravel pits (pits 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, and 12) are located on lands designated Agriculture (Ag) in the “Smithers Telkwa Rural Official Community Plan” (OCP), within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), and zoned Agriculture (Ag1) in “Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Zoning Bylaw No. 1800, 2020.” Gravel pit 1 has an Industrial (I) designation. Gravel pits 9 and 10 are located on lands designated Resource (Re) in the *Smithers Telkwa Rural Official Community Plan* (OCP), and zoned Large Holdings (H2) in “Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Zoning Bylaw No. 1800, 2020.”

The area between the municipalities is reserved primarily for agriculture and resource development uses in the long term. The area has relatively low population density. However, there are pockets of residential development within the area where resident’s quality of life expectations may conflict with the gravel pits operations. These impacts are typically related to noise, aesthetics, and heavy truck traffic. The most notable impacts tend to be associated with noise. Planning Department staff do not receive a notable number of complaints from residents regarding gravel pit operations. Complaints tend to be received when there is a change in situation (new gravel pit, removal of a berm or screening, etc.).

An RDBN enacted soil removal bylaw, with Minister approval, could regulate the location of gravel pits within the area between the Town of Smithers and the Village of Telkwa. However, as this area is the primary location of known gravel resources in the region the RDBN would have to identify an accessible source of gravel relatively close to the municipalities, preferably in a location free from potential land use conflict. This may not be practical.

In staff’s opinion the most efficient and effective approach would be to work with the EMLI to identify land use conflict issues that require consideration during their permitting process, and that adequate operational restrictions are put in place to mitigate community impacts. This could include the RDBN requesting that the EMLI consider requiring gravel pit operators to engage with the community to better understand the impacts that may require mitigation, as part of the permitting process.

Gravel Pits on Agricultural Land

Official Community Plan policy 1.1.2 (2) states that “The responsible Provincial Ministry should ensure that agricultural lands used for aggregate extraction are adequately restored for agricultural purposes.” The Agricultural Land Reserve approval process and the EMLI permitting process both apply reclamation requirements. Typically, agricultural soils are to be preserved on site and distributed back on the land at the end of the gravel extraction operations on the land. Agricultural Land Commission approval typically requires that the gravel extraction process not impact the long-term agricultural viability of the land. This includes consideration of the proposed final topography of the lands.

An RDBN enacted soil removal bylaw (may not require Minister approval) could regulate the way a gravel pit is reclaimed and could require security to ensure reclamation is undertaken. This regulation would be in addition to the reclamation regulations imposed by the ALC and the EMLI. In staff’s opinion the most efficient approach would be to work with the EMLI to ensure that reclamation is given appropriate consideration during their permitting process, and that adequate security is being required to ensure proposed reclamation is undertaken as soon as possible.



Gravel Pits and the Environment

Vegetation and topsoil must be removed from the ground to access gravel. This has an incremental impact on biodiversity as plants and habitats are removed. If done inappropriately, gravel extraction can disrupt the movement of surface water and groundwater, and in extreme circumstances may impact the quantity and quality of water for residents and wildlife. There is no reason to believe that the EMLI does not appropriately regulate gravel extraction to provide the necessary protection of the environment, and water quality and quantity. It appears that this is the focus of their regulatory efforts.

Gravel pit reclamation typically includes recontouring of lands, re-distributing topsoil or suitable growth medium, and re-establishing vegetation. It is important that gravel extraction occurs in a planned manner to ensure that disturbed lands can be reclaimed as soon as possible. A mine plan which includes reclamation planning and phased pit development may reduce reclamation costs and allow for earlier reclamation. This avoids large reclamation costs when a pit is closed and reduces the chance that reclamation does not occur because of topographical or budget constraints.

Gravel pits and the movement of gravel can facilitate the growth and spread of invasive plants and noxious weeds. It is important that gravel pits have procedures in place to control invasive plants and noxious weeds. This is an important consideration given that gravel pits are commonly located in agricultural areas.

Gravel Pits, Cumulative Effects, and Quality of Life

The concept of “cumulative effects” from development activities occurring in the rural area has been raised by Board Directors in the past. Cumulative effects can be defined as changes to the environment caused by multiple activities whose individual direct impacts may be relatively minor but in combination with others result in environmental effects over time.

The most prevalent activities contributing to cumulative effects in Electoral Area A, in order of impact are (in staff’s opinion) agriculture, residential development, industrial activity including gravel pits), and transportation infrastructure. It is noted that a new gravel pit has not been created in the study area in the last 10 years; however, the size of some gravel pits has increased. Agriculture is also relatively stable as a land use and appears to be increasing at a moderate rate in the area. The most constant area of change in Electoral Area A is associated with the continued increase in residential development in the rural area. New house construction in the rural area is greater than that occurring in the Village of Telkwa and the Town of Smithers. People are increasingly choosing to move into areas designated for Agriculture (Ag) or Resource (Re) use in the “Smithers Telkwa Rural Official Community Plan”

(OCP) even though their quality of life is defined by aesthetics and a very quiet lifestyle. The function of these areas is, in part, to accommodate land uses such as gravel pits, which must be accommodated in the rural area because they may conflict with specific quality of life expectations.

The best process to manage the above noted community development issues is through the Official Community Plan review process. This process includes extensive consultation with all community stakeholders to find the most appropriate balance between the various community interests that exist. The land use issues associated with gravel extraction were specifically discussed as part of the OCP review process in 2014 and will again be evaluated during the next OCP review scheduled for 2023.

CONCLUSION

Staff do not recommend that the RDBN pursue the option of enacting a soil removal bylaw. The practical ability to impact the location of gravel pits in the region is limited. There is no reason to believe that the EMLI does not appropriately regulate gravel extraction to provide the necessary protection of the environment, and water quality and quantity. And the EMLI and the ALC both regulate gravel pit reclamation.

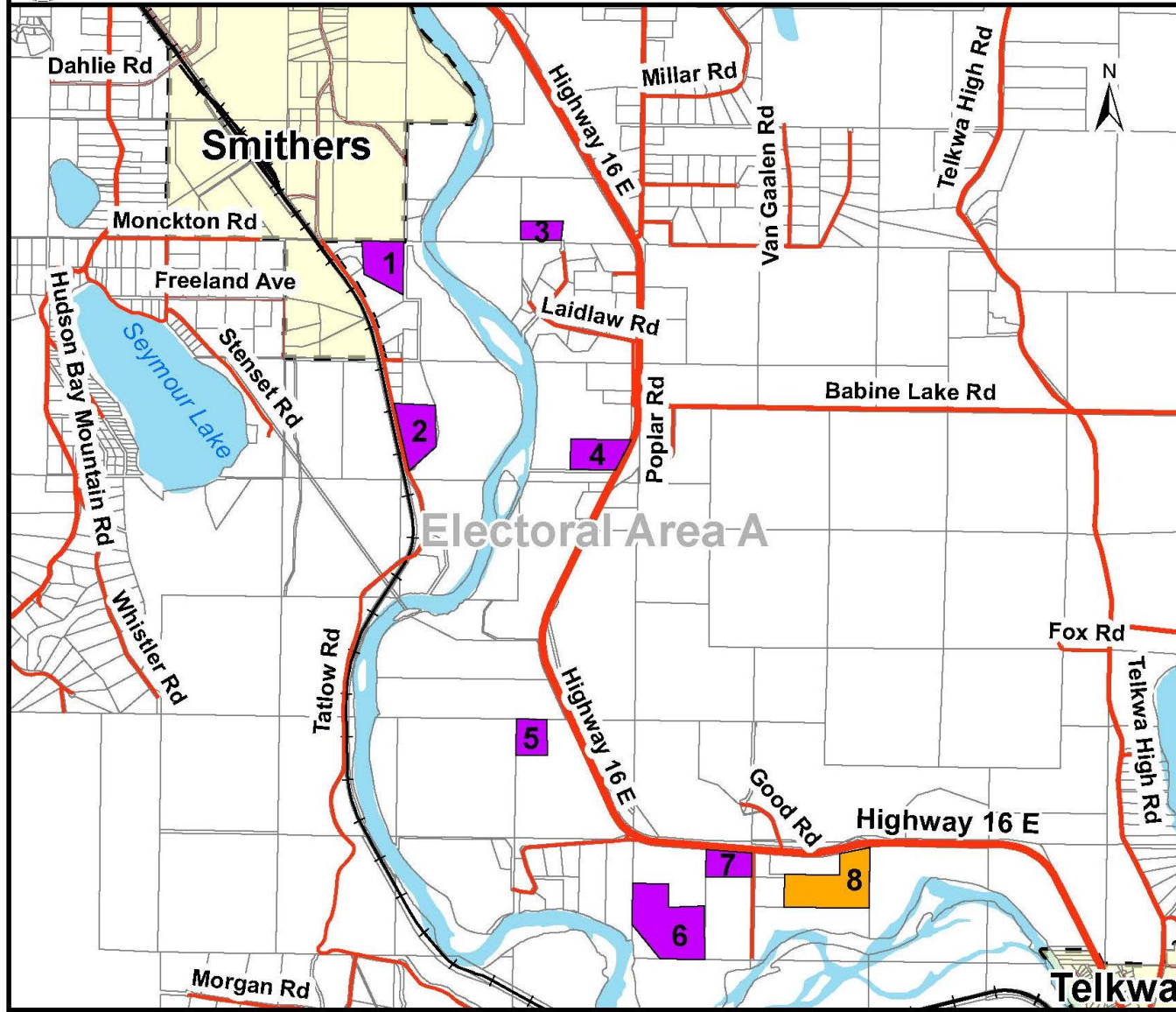
In staff's opinion the most efficient and effective approach to address land use conflict between gravel pits and rural residents is to work with the EMLI to improve the referral process. This will allow the Board an opportunity to highlight potential land use conflict issues that should be given appropriate consideration during their permitting process and identify adequate operational restrictions that may be put in place to mitigate community impacts. The RDBN could also request that the EMLI consider requiring gravel pit operators engage with the community to better understand the impacts that may require mitigation.





Electoral Area A Gravel Pit Map (1 of 2)

Legend



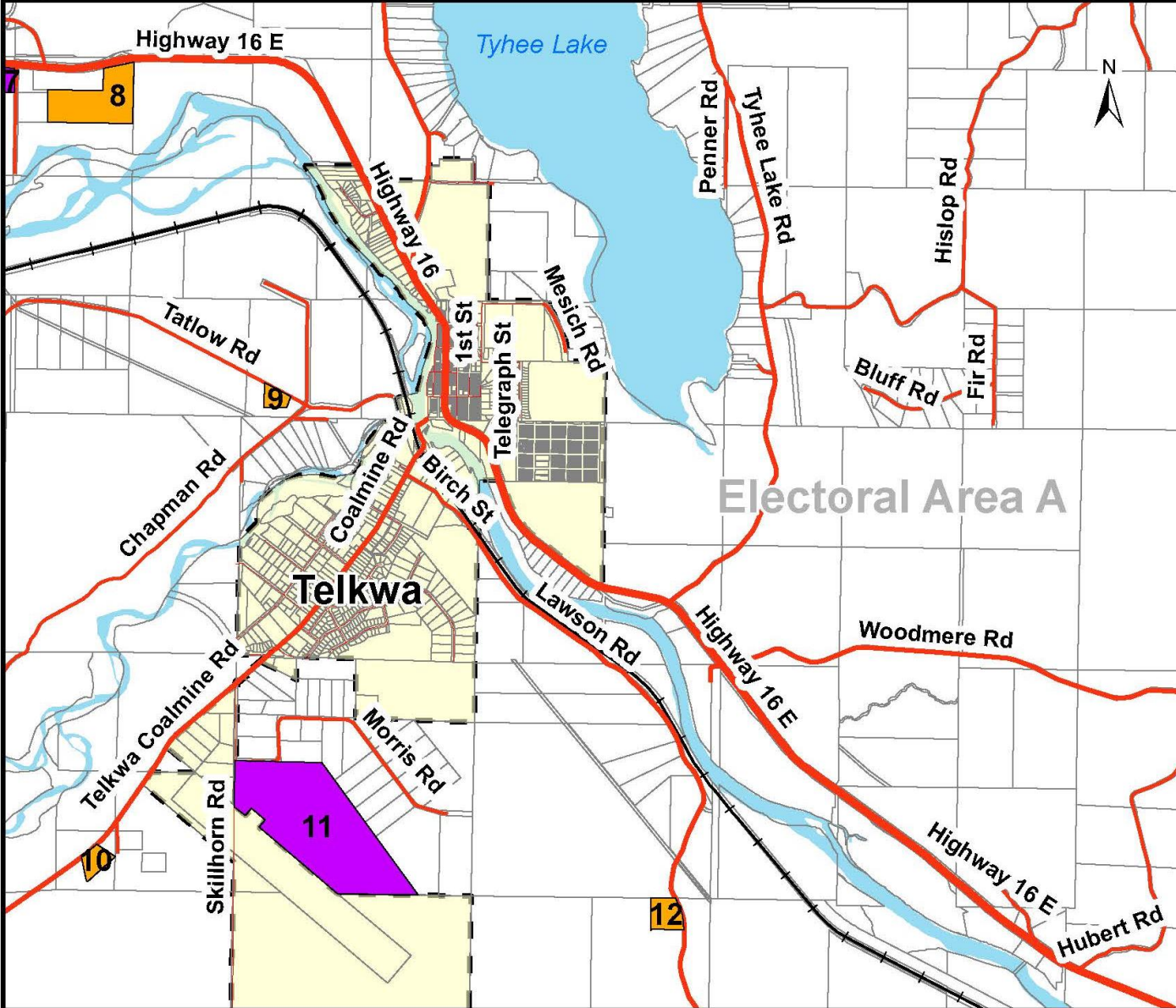
- Gravel Pit - Crown
- Gravel Pit - Private
- Highway
- Highway
- Major Secondary Road
- Secondary Road
- City Street
- STTS**
- Operational
- PMBC Cadastre
- Municipal Boundary

*DISCLAIMER: The Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako makes no Warranty, Representation or Guarantee of any kind regarding either maps or other information provided herein or the sources of such maps or other information. The Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako assumes no liability, either for any errors, omissions, or inaccuracies in the information provided regardless of the cause of such or for any decision made, action taken, or action not taken by the user in reliance upon any maps or information provided herein. Please be advised that the data represented here will be maintained on an ongoing basis, and as such, changes frequently.










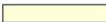
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Electoral Area A Gravel Pit Map (2 of 2)



Legend

-  Gravel Pit - Crown
-  Gravel Pit - Private
-  Highway
-  Highway
-  Major Secondary Road
-  Secondary Road
-  City Street
- STTS**
-  Operational
-  PMBC Cadastre
-  Municipal Boundary

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Schedule B: Electoral Area A Gravel Pit Status Table

Gravel Pit 1	Status	Comment
Private or Crown	Private	
OCP and Zoning	Industrial / Ag1	
ALC approval	n/a	
EMLI Permit	Permit No. G-2-115	Mine No. 0200506
TUP	no	
Gravel Pit 2	Status	Comment
Private or Crown	Private	
OCP and Zoning	AG / Ag1	
ALC approval	Yes	5-year term expires April 30, 2021
EMLI Permit	Permit No. G-02-68	Mine No. 0200279
TUP	no	
Gravel Pit 3	Status	Comment
Private or Crown	Private	Very small and inactive
OCP and Zoning	AG / Ag1	
ALC approval	Expired	NOI expired August 31, 2016
EMLI Permit	Permit No. G-2-130	Mine No. 0200462
TUP	no	
Gravel Pit 4	Status	Comment
Private or Crown	Private	
OCP and Zoning	AG / Ag1	
ALC approval	Yes	Soil Conservation Act 2001
EMLI Permit	Permit No. G-2-130	Mine No. 0200582
TUP	no	
Gravel Pit 5	Status	Comment
Private or Crown	Private	
OCP and Zoning	AG / Ag1	
ALC approval	Yes	ALC approval Expires Dec. 2021
EMLI Permit	Permit No. G-2-144	Mine No. 1650585
TUP	Yes (2020)	
Gravel Pit 6	Status	Comment
Private or Crown	Private	
OCP and Zoning	AG / Ag1	
ALC approval	Decision pending	Application made March 19, 2020
EMLI Permit	Permit No. G-2-112	Mine No. 0200550
TUP	no	
Gravel Pit 7	Status	Comment
Private or Crown	Private	
OCP and Zoning	AG / Ag1	

ALC approval	Yes	ALC approval expires Sept. 2021.
EMLI Permit	Permit No. G-2-131	Mine No. 0200455
TUP	no	
Gravel Pit 8	Status	Comment
Private or Crown	Crown / MoTI	
OCP and Zoning	AG / Ag1	
ALC approval	Yes	NOI (2008) to extract 100,000 m3.
EMLI Permit	n/a	
TUP	n/a	
Gravel Pit 9	Status	Comment
Private or Crown	Crown / MoTI	
OCP and Zoning	RE / H2	
ALC approval	No record	
EMLI Permit	n/a	
TUP	n/a	
Gravel Pit 10	Status	Comment
Private or Crown	Crown / MoTI	
OCP and Zoning	RE / H2	
ALC approval	n/a	
EMLI Permit	n/a	
TUP	n/a	
Gravel Pit 11	Status	Comment
Private or Crown	Private	
OCP and Zoning	AG / Ag1	
ALC approval	No record	
EMLI Permit	Permit No. G-2-8	Mine No. 0200075
TUP	no	
Gravel Pit 12	Status	Comment
Private or Crown	Crown / MoTI	
OCP and Zoning	AG / Ag1	
ALC approval	Yes	ALC approval expired in 2002
EMLI Permit	n/a	
TUP	n/a	



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Committee of the Whole

To: Chair and Committee
From: Nellie Davis, Manager of Regional Economic Development
Date: October 12, 2023
Subject: **Bursary Policy Revision**

RECOMMENDATION: (all/directors/majority)

- 1) That the Committee recommend that the Board approve the RDBN Bursary Policy, and;
- 2) That the Committee direct staff to include bursary taxation in Regional Grant in Aid for the 2024 Draft Budget for either All General Government or Rural Contributors.

BACKGROUND

As per direction at the September 7, 2023, Committee of the Whole meeting, staff are providing a revised Draft RDBN Bursary Policy for consideration.

The following tables include the annual Regional Grant in Aid taxation per partner based on the consideration of fourteen eligible schools:

All General Government Contributors	
District of Houston	\$828
Town of Smithers	\$2,465
Village of Burns Lake	\$408
District of Fort St. James	\$570
Village of Fraser Lake	\$332
Village of Granisle	\$42
Village of Telkwa	\$396
District of Vanderhoof	\$1,464
Electoral Area A	\$2,205
Electoral Area B	\$668
Electoral Area C	\$1,115
Electoral Area D	\$752
Electoral Area E	\$638
Electoral Area F	\$1,561
Electoral Area G	\$556
Total	\$14,000

Rural Contributors Only	
Electoral Area A	\$4,118
Electoral Area B	\$1,250
Electoral Area C	\$2,084
Electoral Area D	\$1,404
Electoral Area E	\$1,190
Electoral Area F	\$2,916
Electoral Area G	\$1,038
Total	\$14,000

The attached Draft RDBN Bursary Policy has been updated to reflect the inclusion of schools operating under the BC Independent School Act and schools offering online graduation programs within the RDBN. It has also been updated to remove the requirement that a student be entering a prescribed field of study.

ATTACHMENTS

Draft RDBN Bursary Policy



**Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako
Bursary Policy
ADOPTED: TBD**

Purpose:

To provide direction for RDBN Directors and staff regarding annual bursaries to be provided to high-school students from the RDBN going on to post-secondary education.

Policy:

Eligible Institutions

To be eligible, a school must offer a Grade 12 graduation program. Standard schools, schools operating under the BC Independent School Act, and schools offering online graduation programs in School District 54 (Bulkley Valley) and School District 91 (Nechako Lakes) will be eligible for the Bursary.

Eligible Institutions in SD 54 include:

- Smithers Secondary School
- Houston Secondary School
- Bulkley Valley Christian School
- Ebenezer Canadian Reformed School
- Houston Christian School
- Bulkley Valley Christian Online School
- Bulkley Valley Education Connection

Eligible Institutions in SD 91 include:

- Fort St. James Secondary
- Lakes District Secondary
- Nechako Valley Secondary
- Babine Elementary-Secondary
- Fraser Lake Elementary-Secondary
- Northside Christian School
- Ebus Academy

Bursary Provision

Each eligible institution managing a bursary program will receive one \$1,000 bursary annually, payable in January of a given year, without application required. RDBN Finance staff and the staff member responsible for Grant in Aid will ensure annual payment and tracking of bursary grants.

Schools receiving a bursary will be responsible for advertising the bursary, collecting and reviewing applications, and selecting the successful student to receive the award. They will be responsible for verifying eligibility requirements are met, and the bursary payment is provided to the successful student.

Schools awarding a bursary will extend an invitation to the Rural Director to present the bursary at the Commencement Ceremony by notifying the RDBN office of the date and time at least three weeks prior to the event. Directors may choose to accept or decline the invitation to present.

Eligible Students

Awarding of the bursary will be at the discretion of the school's bursary committee. Advertising and awarding of the bursary must follow the eligibility requirements as outlined:

- 1) The successful student must have a permanent home address in a community served by an eligible school.
- 2) The successful student must demonstrate acceptance to a post-secondary institution.
- 3) Consideration should be given to applicants entering any academic or trades program and the award decision should not be tied to the applicant's Grade Point Average.



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Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Committee of the Whole

To: Chair and Committee
From: Shari Janzen, Economic Development Assistant
Date: October 12, 2023
Subject: **Letter of Support Request – District of Houston**

RECOMMENDATION:

(all/directors/majority)

That the Committee recommend that the Board approve the District of Houston's request for a Letter of Support for a Rural Economic Development Infrastructure Program application for the Bymac Park and Campground Revitalization project.

BACKGROUND

Please see the attached letter for additional details.

ATTACHMENTS

Letter of Support Request



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako
PO Box 820
Burns Lake, BC V0J 1E0
Sent via email: nellie.davis@rdbn.bc.ca

October 3, 2023

Dear Board of Directors,

RE: Request for Letter of Support for the Bymac Park Redevelopment Project

I am writing to kindly request The Regional District of Bulkley Nechako's support in the form of a letter for our application to the Rural Economic Diversification and Infrastructure Program (REDIP) – Economic Diversification (ED) Stream for the Bymac Park and Campground Revitalization Project.

Project Overview:

The Bymac Park and Campground Revitalization Project entails the redevelopment of a municipal campground facility designed to serve as a compelling magnet for tourism dollars in our region. This ambitious venture will introduce a host of modern amenities and captivating recreational opportunities aimed at enticing travelers and nature enthusiasts alike.

This project underscores our commitment to fostering tourism and boosting the local economy by offering a top-tier campground experience that will not only attract tourists, but also encourage them to stay longer, explore our community, and contribute significantly to the economic growth and vitality of our region.

Key Objectives:

1. Foster economic diversification, moving away from dependence on the longstanding forestry sector.
2. Create seasonal employment opportunities by hiring campground managers, caretakers, and a contractor for park redevelopment.
3. Transform a 25-site municipal campground into a modernized destination, designed to attract tourists from around the world, leveraging our abundant outdoor activities and renowned Steelhead fishing.
4. Maximize the use of Bymac Park's natural infrastructure to draw tourists to our community, thereby increasing local revenue.
5. Establish Houston as an attractive hub for recreational activities, catering to both tourists and residents.



The imperative need to foster economic diversification in Houston has intensified following the recent Canfor sawmill shutdown. The vision to revitalize Bymac Park centers on the development of a campground, injecting fresh vitality into the region to attract tourists and stimulate spending within our local community. This exciting project not only serves as a pivotal economic diversification strategy for our community, but also invites visitors to explore our region and discover its unique offerings. The success of this endeavor hinges on the establishment of strategic partnerships with key stakeholders in the Northwest.

By leveraging Houston's strategic significance in the regional economy, our goal is to foster the growth of small businesses within our community and optimize our local assets to attract tourists, thereby capitalizing on our emerging tourism industry. Our objective is to empower Houston in constructing a robust tourism economy, ensuring a steady flow of revenue that benefits local businesses and creates various job opportunities. Ultimately, our aim is for Houston to achieve sustained economic expansion and actively contribute to the regional economy through the creation of a campground facility and its amenities that not only draws tourists in, but also cultivates the growth of local businesses, strategically revitalizing our community.

In light of the above, your letter of support would strengthen our application and validate our project's objectives. Your endorsement would highlight the project's benefit to Houston's and the region's economies during its duration and in the future. For your convenience, we have attached a template for you to sign and return, should you prefer. **Please feel free to alter this template to fit with your organization's preferences.**

I would be happy to provide any further information or details that you might require. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me directly at grants@houston.ca or 250-845-2238.

Thank you for considering our request, and we deeply appreciate your continued support and belief in our community's potential.

Warm regards,

Karen Hogstead

Karen Hogstead
Deputy Director of Corporate Services / Grant Writer
District of Houston



Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Committee of the Whole

To: Chair and Committee
From: Shari Janzen, Economic Development Assistant
Date: October 12, 2023
Subject: **Letter of Support Request – Town of Smithers**

RECOMMENDATION:

(all/directors/majority)

That the Committee recommend that the Board approve the Town of Smithers request for a Letter of Support for a BC Active Transportation Grant application for the Smithers Cycle 16 Connector Trail project.

BACKGROUND

The Town of Smithers is applying to the BC Active Transportation Infrastructure Grants Program. This program supports the development of active transportation infrastructure for all ages and abilities.

The Smithers Cycle 16 Connector Trail will be a two kilometre, three-metre-wide paved multi-use path that will connect the existing Fulton Avenue multi-use path to the newly constructed Phase 1 of the Cycle 16 Trail that begins at the Bulkley River Bridge.