

FORT ST. JAMES RURAL OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN DRAFT SCHEDULE A



Please note that this document (Schedule "A") is one of four parts of the Official Community Plan. This Plan also includes the Land Use Designation Map (Schedule "B"), Ecological and Wildlife Values Map (Schedule "C"), and the Recreation Values Map (Schedule "D"). The maps can be viewed at the Regional District office. If you wish to obtain a paper copy of a map, large format copying charges apply. The maps are also available on the Regional District's website at: www.rdbn.bc.ca.

1.	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1.	Purpose	2
1.2.	Plan Area Profile	3
1.3.	First Nations Communities	4
1.4.	Legislative Authority	6
1.5.	Plan Review and Amendments.....	7
1.6.	The Planning Process	7
2.	PLAN VISION AND GOALS	9
2.1.	General Plan Vision	10
2.2.	General Plan Goals	11
3.	OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES.....	12
3.1.	Agriculture (AG) Designation	13
3.2.	Commercial (C) Designation	15
3.3.	Industrial (I) Designation.....	16
3.4.	Rural Residential (RR) Designation.....	18
3.5.	Lakeshore (L) Designation	20
3.6.	Civic Institutional (CI) Designation.....	22
3.7.	Parks and Recreation (P) Designation.....	23
3.8.	Resource (RE) Designation.....	24
4.	GENERAL APPLICATION OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES.....	26
4.1.	Mineral and Aggregate Resources	27
4.2.	Natural Environment.....	28
4.3.	Outdoor Recreation.....	31
4.4.	Parkland Dedication	32
4.5.	Housing	33
4.6.	Heritage and Archeological Resources	35
4.7.	Public Services and Utilities	35
4.8.	Transportation	36
4.9.	Environmental Hazards and Protection	38
4.10.	FireSmart Development.....	39
4.11.	Economic Development.....	40
4.12.	Greenhouse Gas Emissions	41
5.	ASSOCIATED MAPS	45
5.1.	Interpretation of Land Use Designation Map	46
5.2.	Land Use Designation Explanations	46
5.3.	Interpretation of the Ecological and Wildlife Values Map	47
5.4.	Ecological and Wildlife Values Explanations.....	47
5.5.	Important Bird Areas.....	48
5.6.	Interpretation of the Recreational Values Map.....	48
5.7.	Recreational Values Explanations	49
6.	IMPLEMENTATION.....	50
6.1	Zoning, Development and Subdivision Control	51
6.2	Temporary Use Permits	51

6.3	Development Proposals Contrary to the Plan	52
6.4	Agricultural Land Commission	52
6.5	Building Inspection	52
6.6	Water and Sewerage Approvals	52
6.7	Collaborative Planning	53

1. INTRODUCTION

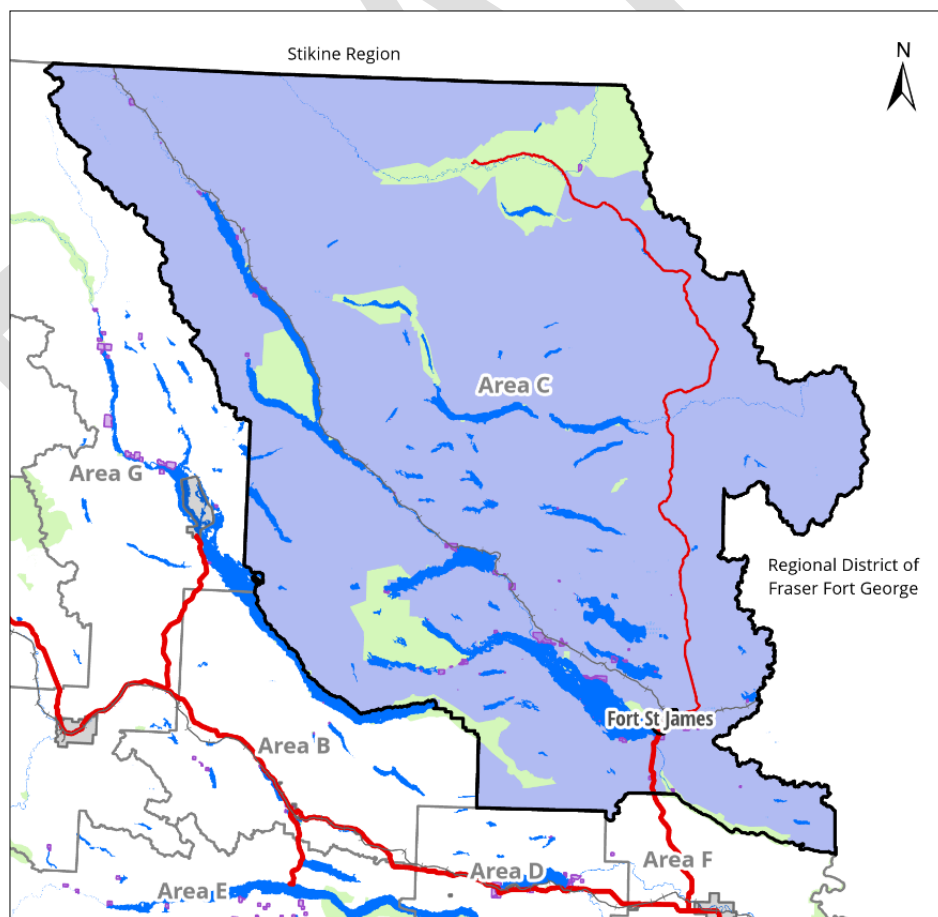


1.1. Purpose

The *Fort St. James Rural Official Community Plan* is a bylaw adopted by the Board of Directors of the Regional District of Bulkley Nechako. The Plan applies to Electoral Area C (Fort St. James Rural) but excludes the area around the Omineca Park and Germansen Landing (located in the northeast corner of Electoral Area C), which has its own separate plan.

The *Fort St. James Rural Official Community Plan* (the Plan) aims to identify the rural community's vision for the future, and outline the goals, objectives and policies relating to the form and character of existing and proposed land uses in the Plan area. By considering and adhering to this plan, community growth and development will take place in a manner consistent with the physical, economic, and social vision of the Plan area.

The Plan is not a land use, subdivision, or development regulation. Regulations are set out in the zoning and other bylaws. The Plan is intended to be used to provide direction regarding planning and development within the Fort St. James rural area by the public, the Regional District Board of Directors, Regional District staff, and provincial agencies. All amendments to Regional District land use and development bylaws are to be consistent with the intent and direction provided by the policies in the Plan.



1.2. Plan Area Profile

Electoral Area C is characterized by a stunning variety of lakes and mountains and extensive outdoor recreation opportunities. It is the largest electoral area in the Regional District at 25,528 square kilometres. The population is concentrated on the shores of Stuart Lake in or near the District of Fort St. James. Adjacent to the municipality is Naka'zdli's main reserve, Nak'azdli 1. Other communities in the area include Germansen Landing, Manson Creek, Pinchie Lake, Binche, Takla Landing, Tache, and Yekooche. The District of Fort St. James is the service, entertainment, and business centre of Electoral Area C.



According to the Statistics Canada Census, the municipal population declined by 13.3% from 1,598 to 1,386 persons between the years 2016 and 2021. According to the Statistics Canada Census for 2021 the population of Electoral Area C declined by 10.8 % from 1,420 to 1,266 persons between the years of 2016 to 2021. It is noted that there is common acceptance by area residents that there was a census undercount throughout the region, and it is believed that generally the population has been relatively stable.

POPULATION	2006	2011	2016	2021
District of Fort St. James	1,355	1,691	1,598	1,386
Electoral Area C (James Rural)	1,355	1,429	1,415	1,266
Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako	38,243	39,208	37,896	37,737

Sources: Statistics Canada Census Profile 2006-2021

On-reserve population data is compiled separately by Statistics Canada Census and is provided below.

ON RESERVE POPULATION	2006	2011	2016	2021
Nak'azdli 1	495	534	548	528
Yekooche 3	93	88	87	90
North Takla Lake (Takla Lake FN)	131	183	187	243
Tache 1 (Tl'azt'en Nation)	375	409	401	400
Binche 2 (Tl'azt'en Nation)	110	111	182	118
				Total 1,379

Forestry and mining remain the foundation of the local economy. Both the forestry and mining industries have helped making the surrounding wilderness accessible for outdoor recreation-based tourism, which also contributes significantly to the economy.

1.3. First Nations Communities

Electoral Area C spans the traditional territories of the Dakelh, Nedut'en, and Tse'khene speaking peoples, who have resided upon these lands since time immemorial. The Binche Whut'en, Nak'azdli Whut'en, Takla Nation, Tl'azt'en Nation, and Yekooche First Nations have reserve communities throughout the Stuart Basin of the Nechako Watershed. The Stelat'en, Lheidli T'enneh, Saik'uz, McLeod Lake, Halfway River, West Moberly, Doig, Nadleh Whut'en, Tsay Keh Dene, and Lake Babine Nations have identified aboriginal rights or title in Electoral Area C.

First Nation Communities in the Plan area



1.3.1. Binche Whut'en

The Binche Whut'en First Nation ceded from the Tl'azt'en Nation in 2019. The Binche Whut'en population is just over 200 members with ten reserves located northwest of Fort St. James. The main community of Binche is located on the shores of Stuart Lake and contains a commercial campground, Binche Bay store and gas station, a shuttle service, and several businesses.

Information about the history, distinct cultural practices, and more can be found on their webpage: <https://binche.ca/>

1.3.2. Nak'azdli Whut'en

The Nak'azdli Whut'en have over 2,000 members and 18 reserves in and around the Fort St. James area. Approximately 700 members live on Indian Reserve (IR) #1 which is commonly referred to as Nak'azdli. This community is adjacent to the District of Fort St. James and many Nak'azdli Whut'en members live within the District of Fort St. James and rural area. The Band Council consists of a chief and eight councillors, and the Band is a member of the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council.

The Nak'azdli community is served by administration and satellite offices, an Alternate Justice Centre, the Nak'azdli Whut'en Child Care Centre, a Health Centre, the Ernie Sam Memorial Arena / Youth Center, the Nak'albun Elementary School, the Nahounli Creek Gas Bar, the Sana'aih Market, the Nak'azdli Development Corporation, and Carrier Food & Fuel.

Information about the history, distinct cultural practices, and more can be found on their webpage: <https://nakazdli.wpcomstaging.com/>.

1.3.3. Takla Lake First Nation

Takla Nation, also known as Takla Lake Nation, has 17 reserves around Takla Lake and close to 900 members. The main community of Takla is located more than 180 km north of Fort St. James by forest service road. The community has an elementary school, health centre, store, restaurant, motel, and gas bar. Through Sasuchan Development Corporation, the Nation pursues economic interests in logging, fuel, construction, tourism, retail, real estate, and other ventures. Takla Lake has active forestry operations and has collaborated with various proponents of resource development projects in its traditional territory, including the Prince Rupert and the Westcoast Connector Gas Transmission Lines projects. It also has engaged in a cutting-edge protocol with government and industry for the reclamation, remediation, and monitoring of mine sites. The Nation is also a member of the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council.

Information about the history, distinct cultural practices, and more can be found on their webpage: <https://www.taklafn.ca/>

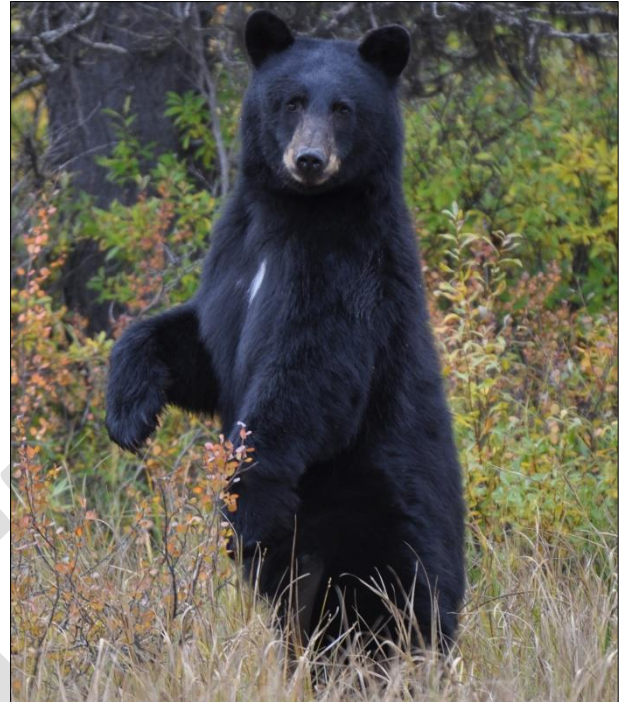


1.3.4. Tl'azt'en Nation

Located north of Fort St. James in the Stuart-Trembleur lake system, Tl'azt'en is made up of three communities - Tache, Dzit'ainli, and K'uzche. The Nation has 36 reserve

parcels and over 1,500 members. The main community of Tache contains the Nation's administrative offices, their elementary school, daycare, head start program, health office, and RCMP office. The Nation is involved in forestry, agriculture, fisheries, environmental stewardship, and other economic endeavors. The Nation owns and operates Tanizul Timber, a not-for-profit forest management company that operates throughout in the area. Tl'azt'en is a member of the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council.

Information about the history, distinct cultural practices, and more can be found on their webpage: <https://tlaztennation.ca/>



1.3.5. Yekooche First Nation

The Yekooche First Nation has a population of over 200 members and four reserves totaling approximately 370 hectares. Most band members live in the community of Yekooche which is located along the northwest arm of Stuart Lake, where Nancut Creek drains Cunningham Lake into Stuart Lake. Once part of the amalgamated Stuart-Trembleur Lakes Band, later known as Tl'azt'en Nation, Yekooche formed their own community in 1994.

Yekooche has formed a joint venture with a local contractor to sustainably harvest timber in the Fort St. James area. With the support of Western Economic Diversification Canada, it has also begun developing an E-Business to market its local arts and crafts, as well as provide professional development workshops for its members. It is involved in various agreements, including but not limited to: Yekooche First Nation Natural Gas Pipeline Benefits Agreement (Prince Rupert Gas Transmission Project) and Yekooche Natural Gas Pipeline Benefits Agreement (Coastal GasLink Pipeline Project).

Information about the history, distinct cultural practices, and more can be found on their webpage: <http://www.yekooche.com/>

1.4. Legislative Authority

The Fort St. James Rural Official Community Plan has been prepared in accordance with the *Local Government Act*.

Lands within the Plan area are also subject to other provincial and federal legislation and regulations. This includes, but is not limited to, the *Forest and Range Practices Act*, *Public*

Health Act, Land Act, Mines Act, Environmental Management Act, and the Agricultural Land Commission Act. Certain aspects of the Plan are required to be in accordance with provincial legislation and interests.

The *Local Government Act* (section 474 (2)) states that:

“If a local government proposes to include a matter in an official community plan, the regulation of which is not within the jurisdiction of the local government, the plan may state only the broad objective of the local government with respect to that matter unless the minister has, under section 473 (1) (g), required or authorized the local government to state a policy with respect to that matter.”

1.5. Plan Review and Amendments

New information and changing circumstances must be continually monitored to ensure that the application of the Plan continues to be current. A comprehensive review of the Plan shall be undertaken every five to ten years depending on the actual conditions which occur to influence land use. This review may be required sooner if there is significant population growth or other changes impacting land use and development.

Amendments to the Plan must be made in accordance with the *Local Government Act* and are subject to a formal approval process. Individuals or groups requesting amendments to the Plan must submit an application, with supporting material, to the Board of Directors for consideration. The Board may choose to refuse to approve an application and deal with the broader land use issue as part of the next planned comprehensive review.

1.6. The Planning Process

In November 2021 the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors directed staff to proceed with the review process for the Fort St. James Rural Plan and approved a work plan and a consultation strategy. The process was undertaken in conjunction with the review of the District of Fort St. James Official Community Plan.

A preliminary consultation meeting with the Advisory Planning Commission for Electoral Area C was held in March 2022. This Commission is made up of community members appointed by the Electoral Area Director.

Letters with information about the review process and requests for preliminary comments were sent to First Nations, community groups, the District of Fort St. James, School District 91 (Nechako Lakes), and various provincial ministries.

The OCP review process was first introduced to Nak'azdli during a virtual meeting in January 2022, between Regional District, District of Fort St. James and Nak'azdli Whut'en staff. At this meeting advice was solicited on how to best engage with the First Nation community. In April 2022, RDBN and District staff presented to Nak'azdli Whut'en Chief and Council. At this meeting the purpose of the OCP was outlined, and the OCP review process and several land use issues impacting both communities were discussed.

Fort St. James Rural Official Community Plan

An in-person open house was held on April 20, 2022, in Fort St. James and a virtual open house was held on April 27, 2022. The purpose of the open houses was to introduce the review process to the public and to solicit participation in a working group to assist in the process and the drafting of a new Plan. At the open houses, the Regional District introduced a project website with OCP review information and a survey to obtain public input regarding the issues that require attention in the plan.

The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, Northern Health, District of Fort St. James, Nak'azdli Whut'en, Tl'azt'en First Nation, Yekooche First Nation, Binche Whut'en, Takla Lake First Nation, Stuart Lake Seniors Association, Community Futures Stuart-Nechako and the Fort St. James Chamber of Commerce were asked to provide a representative to participate on the working group.

A single working group was formed for both the municipal and rural OCP. The purpose of the working group was to have community members work with staff on the details of the proposed new OCP document and was intended to serve as a relatively informal opportunity to discuss and work through various land use and development issues.

Working group meetings were held on May 31, June 7, June 23 and July 13, 2022. The focus of these meetings was to review the OCP development process, identify and discuss key issues, help to define the community visions and goals for the plan areas, and to develop the policies contained in the plans.

In May 2023, RDBN staff had a meeting with the Manager of Yinka Huwunline and a Nak'azdli Whut'en Councilor. The rural and municipal OCP review, the Nak'azdli Land Stewardship process and how the plans should align on common issues was discussed.

A preliminary draft of the OCP was created based on the input from the working group, the public, First Nations and stakeholders.



2. PLAN VISION AND GOALS



2.1. General Plan Vision

Electoral Area C envisions its future as a safe, friendly, socially diverse, economically vibrant, and ecologically healthy area. The residents of Electoral Area C understand that development and growth must occur in a manner that is not detrimental to the natural environment, the world class outdoor recreational opportunities, and the rural character of the area. Residents enjoy a good quality of life that is based upon enjoyment and stewardship of the natural environment, support of and respect for neighbours, an affordable cost of living, a quiet and independent lifestyle, and a relatively stable regional economy. The vision is for a community that strives to protect, and build upon, the above positive aspects that contribute to quality of life and a healthy environment.



A diversified economy is becoming increasingly important to ensure that the area remains vibrant, and residents enjoy economic and employment stability. The community realizes that being able to offer a high quality of life and an attractive and well-functioning built environment to new and existing residents will serve to increase the potential for economic diversification beyond reliance on the mining and forest products industry.

Maintaining the character of existing rural neighbourhoods is also considered very important. This character includes a certain amount of independence and diversity of use and development, which is reliant on low rural residential density and the avoidance of rural residential sprawl. The vision is for communities that protect their positive aspects and characteristics yet are not wary of embracing and working towards positive change for the benefit of the community.

The Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako is committed to sustainable forms of rural land development that result in positive social and economic impacts for the community, while protecting the environment. Land use and development patterns that work towards more complete and self-reliant communities are supported, along with local food production and increased food security. The importance of sustainable development is recognized, especially within the context of environmental impact and climate change.

2.2. General Plan Goals

In achieving the above vision, the OCP strives to meet the needs of the present without compromising the area's natural, social, and economic attributes and without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In this effort the Fort St. James Rural Official Community Plan pursues the following goals.

- (1) Development of opportunities for economic development and diversification, particularly through the identification and preservation of lands appropriate for industrial development.
- (2) Land use patterns and economic activities which do not compromise the existing rural character of the Plan area.
- (3) Land use patterns that maintain the existing rural character of the Plan area and that reflect a diversity of lifestyles, and economic and recreational activities.
- (4) Protection and preservation of farmland and soil having agricultural capability, and the appropriate utilization of that land for agricultural purposes.
- (5) Protection and stewardship of environmentally sensitive attributes (including fish, riparian and wildlife habitat; and quality and quantity of ground and surface water).
- (6) Recognition of the unique natural characteristics of the Plan area and their protection from development that has the potential to negatively impact the natural environment.
- (7) Increased opportunities for outdoor recreation for all residents including access to lakes, rivers, trails, and parks.
- (8) Maintenance of a balance between the regulation of land use to protect community values and the desire of residents for a lifestyle with a high degree of self expression respecting use of their property.
- (9) Rural growth occurring in a controlled manner which reduces rural sprawl, preserves rural lands for industrial opportunities, and limits the impact of rural growth on the natural environment.
- (10) Directing large scale commercial development and higher density development to the District of Fort St. James.
- (11) An appropriate mix of uses that increases the community's independence and results in a reduction in motorized vehicle dependency and energy use.

A person wearing a blue helmet, a purple t-shirt, and grey pants is climbing a rock face. They are wearing a climbing harness and holding a rope. The background shows a rocky cliff with some sparse vegetation. The image is framed by a blue and yellow border at the top and bottom.

3. OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

The Regional District of Bulkley Nechako is committed to achievement of the goals in this Plan through application of the policies in this section.

3.1. Agriculture (AG) Designation

The Agriculture (AG) designation applies to those areas that are most suitable for agricultural activities. It is the intent of this designation to preserve these lands for the purposes of farming and other related activities. In general, the Agriculture designation follows the boundaries of the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR).

3.1.1. Objectives

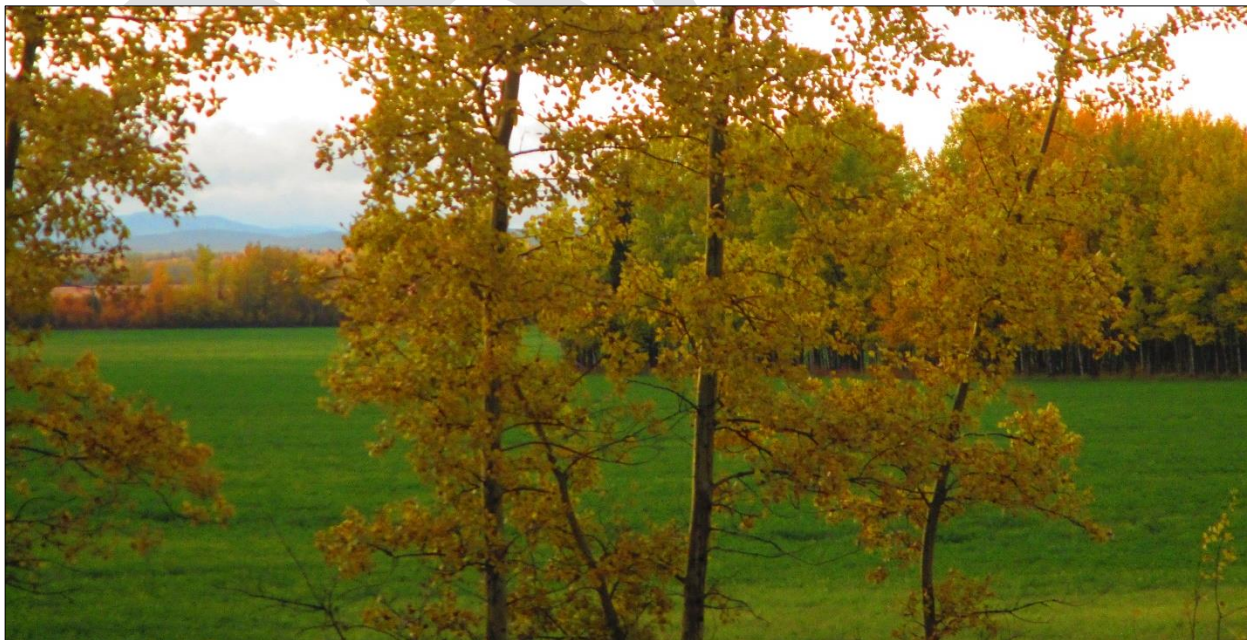
- (1) To protect and preserve farmland and soil having agricultural capability.
- (2) To encourage the expansion and full utilization of land for agricultural purposes.
- (3) To support the objectives of the Provincial Agricultural Land Commission.
- (4) To encourage a diversity of agricultural uses and opportunities.

3.1.2. Policies

- (1) Agriculture, grazing, and other compatible uses of land provided within the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* will be permitted.
- (2) The responsible provincial ministry should ensure that agricultural lands used for aggregate extraction are adequately restored for agricultural purposes.
- (3) A minimum parcel size of 16 hectares (39.5 acres) is supported unless a different parcel size is approved by the Agricultural Land Commission.
- (4) New roads and utility and communication corridors required in the Plan area should minimize the negative impact on existing and potential agricultural operations.
- (5) Wherever possible contiguous areas of agricultural land will be preserved to ensure that agriculture and associated activities remain economically viable and environmentally sound.
- (6) Applications for subdivisions, non-farm uses and non-adhering residential uses within the ALR may be supported if the proposed subdivision or use will not have a negative impact on the agricultural use of the subject lands or surrounding agricultural lands.
- (7) The inclusion of land in the ALR is supported provided the reason for inclusion is based solely on the agricultural suitability of that land.

Fort St. James Rural Official Community Plan

- (8) Applications for exclusion of land from the ALR shall only be made by the Regional District where the exclusion has been accepted as necessary by the Board after consideration of the land use planning issues.
- (9) The voluntary consolidation of legal parcels which form part of the same farm unit will be encouraged. Subdivisions and consolidations which permit more efficient use of land for agricultural purposes will also be supported.
- (10) The Regional District supports the implementation and enforcement of the *Farm Practices Protection Act*, the *Agricultural Environmental Management Code of Practice* and applicable environmental guidelines for agricultural producers.
- (11) Home-based businesses, including bed and breakfasts, operated in accordance with the requirements of the ALR, are supported.
- (12) The Province is encouraged to implement innovative approaches to making appropriately located Crown lands available for agricultural use.
- (13) The Regional District encourages the Agricultural Land Commission to take steps to prohibit the use of productive agricultural land for the planting of trees for purposes of creating a carbon sink or carbon offset.
- (14) The Regional District encourages the planting of native tree species that enhance biodiversity on non-arable land within the Agriculture Designation.
- (15) The Province is encouraged to support local agricultural operations to ensure their long-term viability.



3.2. Commercial (C) Designation

Only a limited amount of commercial development has been designated within the Plan area with the intent of focusing commercial activity into the District of Fort St. James. Opportunities for neighbourhood-based services, tourist commercial services, and bed and breakfasts may be accommodated within the rural area subject to the following Commercial objectives and policies.

3.2.1. Objectives

- (1) To provide for limited and appropriate opportunities for tourist and neighbourhood commercial development throughout the Plan area, where those services do not conflict with existing uses.
- (2) To support and provide opportunities for home-based business.
- (3) To recognize the District of Fort St. James as the commercial centre of the Plan area.

3.2.2. Policies

- (1) Significant commercial uses will be encouraged to locate within the District of Fort St. James.
- (2) Applications to designate lands Commercial to accommodate neighbourhood services may be considered subject to the following criteria.
 - (a) The primary target market for the service(s) to be provided or sold is the local rural area, and that area is not already adequately serviced.
 - (b) Sufficient on-site parking is provided.
 - (c) The proposed commercial use will not create an amount of traffic, noise or other impact that will adversely affect the rural character of the area.
 - (d) The proposed commercial development will not have an unacceptable negative impact on the natural environment.
 - (e) The proposed commercial use will not have an unacceptable negative impact on neighbouring land uses or property owners.
- (3) Applications to designate lands Commercial to accommodate tourist commercial uses may be considered subject to the following criteria.
 - (a) The use is directly associated with a distinctive or special characteristic or feature of the Plan area.

- (b) The proposed commercial use will not create an amount of traffic, noise or other impact that will adversely affect the rural character of the area.
 - (c) Traffic management issues will be considered and addressed appropriately.
 - (d) The proposed commercial development will not have an unacceptable negative impact on the natural environment.
 - (e) Negative impacts on neighbouring land uses or property owners are minimized.
- (4) Home-based businesses, including bed and breakfasts, are supported throughout the Plan area subject to restrictions in the implementing Zoning Bylaw.
 - (5) To encourage the establishment of permanent greenbelt buffers along parcel boundaries to provide a physical separation between commercial uses of land and adjacent agricultural lands.

3.3. Industrial (I) Designation

Industrial development has been limited within the rural areas to focus industrial activity into the District of Fort St. James. Industrial development may be accommodated within the rural area within the Industrial (I) designation subject to the following Industrial objectives and polices.

3.3.1. Objectives

- (1) To provide opportunities for limited industrial uses in suitable locations.
- (2) To accommodate primary resource extraction and primary processing, as well as value added industry.
- (3) To support industrial uses that will not have any significant negative impact on the natural environment.

3.3.2. Policies

- (1) New light industrial uses will be encouraged to locate within the boundaries of the District of Fort St. James.
- (2) Applications to designate lands Industrial, or to rezone lands to accommodate industrial use, may be considered subject to the following criteria.

Fort St. James Rural Official Community Plan

- (a) The proposed industrial development will not create an amount of traffic, noise, or other impact that will adversely affect the rural character of the area.
 - (b) The proposed industrial use may occur in a manner that has minimal negative impacts on the environment.
 - (c) The proposed industrial use will not have an unacceptable negative impact on neighbouring land uses.
- (3) To support agricultural industry in appropriate locations throughout the Plan area.
 - (4) Floating Industrial designations have been applied to areas along Tachie Road and Germansen Landing Road, indicating that zoning to accommodate appropriate uses may be considered on the lands in the area, and that the extent of the area appropriate for industrial uses will be determined through the rezoning process.
 - (5) To encourage the establishment of permanent greenbelt buffers along parcel boundaries to provide a physical separation between industrial uses of land and adjacent agricultural lands.



3.4. Rural Residential (RR) Designation

The Rural Residential (RR) designation is intended to provide opportunities for people to live in a rural setting while protecting and preserving the rural character of the area. Development requiring a higher level of community services, such as water and sewer, will be directed into the District of Fort St. James.

3.4.1. Objectives

- (1) To provide opportunities for residential parcels that fit the existing rural character of the Plan area.
- (2) To ensure future development does not have a significant negative impact on the natural environment.
- (3) To protect and enhance the quality of life associated with existing and new rural residential development.
- (4) To take advantage of opportunities for new housing forms that fit the character of rural areas to allow rural residents greater opportunity to age in place.

3.4.2. Policies

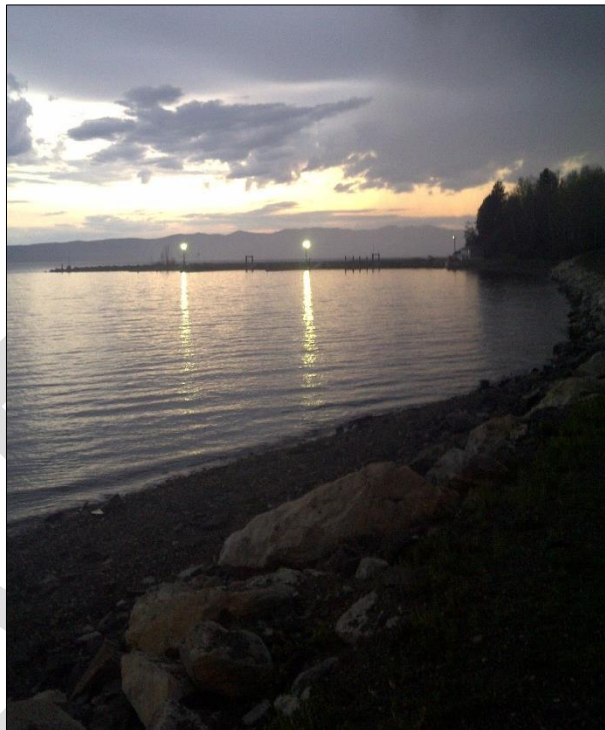
- (1) Low to moderate density residential (fee simple and bare land strata) subdivisions, recreational and other unobtrusive uses will be permitted in the Rural Residential designation.
- (2) Limited forms of agriculture may be permitted within the implementing zoning bylaw.
- (3) Home-based business and cottage industries are supported subject to restrictions which will ensure that they will not have an adverse impact on neighbouring uses and the rural character of the area.
- (4) The Regional District will not take responsibility for the operation, maintenance or funding of any new water or sewer system associated with rural residential development.
- (5) Rezoning applications to allow a strata subdivision that relies on sewer or water systems that are located within the strata development and are owned and operated by the strata corporation may be considered.
- (6) Applications to allow a strata subdivision with parcels smaller than 1.6 hectares (4 acres) may be considered where appropriate, provided that:
 - (a) the subdivision includes less than 15 strata parcels;

- (b) the size of the parent parcel is a minimum of 1.2 hectares (3 acres) of Rural Residential designated land for each strata parcel proposed (for example a proposal for 5 strata parcels would require a parent parcel of 6 hectares (15 acres);
 - (c) common property is appropriately protected from further subdivision, unnecessary tree removal, and disturbance of environmentally sensitive areas;
 - (d) the applicant submits an acceptable fire prevention plan for the development and consideration is given to securing the major aspects of the plan; and,
 - (e) the criteria outlined in section 3.4.2 (7) are achieved.
- (7) Applications to permit parcels as small as 1.6 hectares (4 acres) may be considered where:
- (a) there is no known barrier to the development of an on-site water supply and sewage disposal system;
 - (b) the development is compatible with adjacent land uses and maintains the rural character of the area;
 - (c) parcels are not located within a floodplain or on other hazard lands; and,
 - (d) the development adequately addresses wildlife and ecological values.
- (8) Applications to permit parcels smaller than 1.6 hectares (4 acres) to a minimum parcel size of 0.4 hectares (1 acre) may be considered where:
- (a) an existing parcel is truncated by an existing road or natural water feature;
 - (b) the average size of all parcels created is not smaller than 1.6 hectares (4 acres); and,
 - (c) the criteria outlined in section 3.4.2 (7) are achieved.
- (9) Applications to permit parcels smaller than 1.6 hectares (4 acres) to a minimum parcel size of 0.8 hectares (2 acres) may be considered where:
- (a) the reduced parcel size for certain parcels will result in a parcel layout that provides improved protection of an environmentally unique or sensitive area; and
 - (b) the average size of all parcels created is not smaller than 1.6 hectares (4 acres).

- (10) The development of new Manufactured Home Parks is discouraged throughout the Plan area and is directed to locate within the District of Fort St. James.

3.5. Lakeshore (L) Designation

The Lakeshore (L) Designation is intended to accommodate the demand for residential development in close proximity to Stuart Lake and any other lake in the Plan area. Not all lands adjacent to the lakes are designated for Lakeshore development. The lands available are limited to allow in-fill development at a scale that will not impact the character of existing Lakeshore development or other neighbourhoods. The density and scale of development is also limited to ensure that the environmental integrity of the lakes is not negatively impacted, and to avoid the necessity for the establishment of regulations monitoring the operation of on-site sewage disposal systems and regulating the development lakeshore parcels.



3.5.1. Objectives

- (1) To provide opportunities for lakeshore residential parcels that fit the existing character of the Plan area.
- (2) To ensure future development does not have a negative impact on the natural environment.
- (3) To protect and enhance the quality of life associated with existing and new lakeshore and rural residential development.

3.5.2. Policies

- (1) Low to moderate density residential (fee simple and bare land strata) subdivisions, recreational and other unobtrusive uses will be permitted in the Lakeshore designation.
- (2) Home-based business and cottage industries are supported subject to restrictions which will ensure that they will not have an adverse impact on neighbouring uses or the character of the area.

- (3) The Regional District will not take responsibility for the operation, maintenance or funding of any new water or sewer system associated with lakeshore development.
- (4) Rezoning applications to allow a strata subdivision that relies on sewer or water systems that are located within the strata development and are owned and operated by the strata corporation may be considered.
- (5) Rezoning applications to allow a strata subdivision with parcels smaller than 1.6 hectares (4 acres) may be considered where appropriate, provided that:
 - (a) the subdivision includes less than 20 strata parcels;
 - (b) the size of the parent parcel is a minimum of 1 hectare (2.47 acres) of Lakeshore designated land for each strata parcel proposed (for example a proposal for 5 strata parcels would require a parent parcel of 5 hectares (12.4 acres));
 - (c) common property is appropriately protected from further subdivision, unnecessary tree removal, and disturbance of environmentally sensitive areas; and,
 - (d) the applicant submits an acceptable fire prevention plan for the development and consideration is given to securing the major aspects of the plan: and,
 - (e) the criteria outlined in section 3.5.2(6) are addressed.
- (6) Applications to permit parcels as small as 1.6 hectares (4 acres) may be considered where:
 - (a) there is no known barrier to the development of an on-site water supply and sewage disposal system;
 - (b) the development is compatible with adjacent land uses and maintains the rural character of the area;
 - (c) parcels are not located within a floodplain or on other hazard lands; and,
 - (d) the development adequately addresses wildlife and ecological values.
- (7) Applications to permit parcels smaller than 1.6 hectares (4 acres) to a minimum parcel size of 0.4 hectares (1 acre) may be considered where:
 - (a) an existing parcel is truncated by an existing road or natural water feature; and,
 - (b) the criteria outlined in section 3.5.2 (6) are addressed.

- (8) Applications to permit parcels smaller than 1.6 hectares (4 acres) to a minimum parcel size of 0.8 hectares (2 acres) may be considered where:
 - (a) the reduced parcel size for certain parcels will result in a parcel layout that provides improved protection of an environmentally unique or sensitive area; and
 - (b) the average size of all parcels created is not smaller than 1.6 hectares (4 acres).
- (9) Rezoning applications to permit new waterfront subdivisions that would typically contain several waterfront access points shall consider amalgamating the required water access points onto a single area which is practical for development and use as public access.
- (10) Floating Lakeshore designations has been applied to areas along Stuart Lake, indicating that zoning to accommodate appropriate uses may be considered on the lakeshore in the general area, and that the extent of the area appropriate for Lakeshore uses will be determined through the rezoning process.

3.6. Civic Institutional (CI) Designation

The Civic Institutional designation is intended to provide a range of public, government, and community related uses within the Plan area. Such uses may include schools, fire halls, community halls and places of worship.

3.6.1. Objective

- (1) To provide for the establishment of public facilities when necessary.

3.6.2. Policies

- (1) The Regional District will cooperate with the local school district in planning for educational facilities. This will include:
 - (a) assessing the demand for new facilities by considering residential development activities and proposals; and,
 - (b) selecting appropriate sites for schools.
- (2) The Regional District Board may permit additional Civic Institutional uses by way of rezoning of lands with any land use designation, without the requirement for an OCP amendment to designate the land as Civic Institutional (CI), subject to the following criteria:
 - (a) There is a demonstrated need for the proposed service.

- (b) The proposed civic institutional use will not create an amount of traffic that will have an unacceptable negative impact on the rural character of the area.
- (c) The proposed civic institutional development will not have an unacceptable negative impact on the environment.
- (d) The proposed civic institutional use will not have an unacceptable negative impact on the neighbouring land uses or property owners.
- (e) The proposed civic institutional use has the support of the Agricultural Land Commission if the land is within the ALR.

3.7. Parks and Recreation (P) Designation

The economic and social benefits of outdoor recreation and public access to natural amenities are recognized. Lands throughout the Plan area have been designated to protect areas having significant recreational attributes and areas noted for their environmental values. A notable example in the Plan area of a high wildlife values is the newly established Tl'o Ba Grizzly Bear Wildlife Habitat Area, located along the Kuzkwa River north of Fort St James.

While parks and recreation uses are permitted throughout the Plan area this designation may be used in the future to designate additional areas for parks and recreation purposes.



3.7.1. Objectives

- (1) To protect lands having significant recreational or environmental value.
- (2) To improve outdoor recreational opportunities that enhance the liveability and tourism potential of the area.
- (3) To support and encourage the appropriate use of recreational amenities to enhance the economy of the area.
- (4) To protect or secure public access to natural amenities and important landscape features.
- (5) To support appropriate outdoor public recreation opportunities on provincial lands, in a manner that does not unnecessarily conflict with or restrict the resource capacity or wildlife values of those lands.

3.7.2. Policies

- (1) Provincial parks are recognized as important attributes of the Plan area and are designated as Parks and Recreation (P) on the Land Use Designation Map (Schedule B).
- (2) Lands designated as Parks and Recreation (P) on Schedule B that are not provincial parks are recognized as having potential for development as Regional District Parks and Trails.
- (3) Parcels used for parks and recreation purposes are not subject to a minimum parcel size.
- (4) The Regional District Board supports the preservation of existing, and the identification of new public recreation sites and access points along lakes and rivers.
- (5) Parks for passive recreation, playgrounds, protection of wildlife habitat or environmentally sensitive areas may be considered throughout the Plan area in any designation.

3.8. Resource (RE) Designation

The Resource area is characterized by a lack of settlement. It is the intent of this designation to protect the resource, environmental, recreational and cultural values of the designated area and to minimize conflicts among recreation, grazing, mining, and wildlife with other uses by discouraging settlement on Resource designated lands. These lands are also valued for their environmental attributes and as wildlife habitats.

3.8.1. Objectives

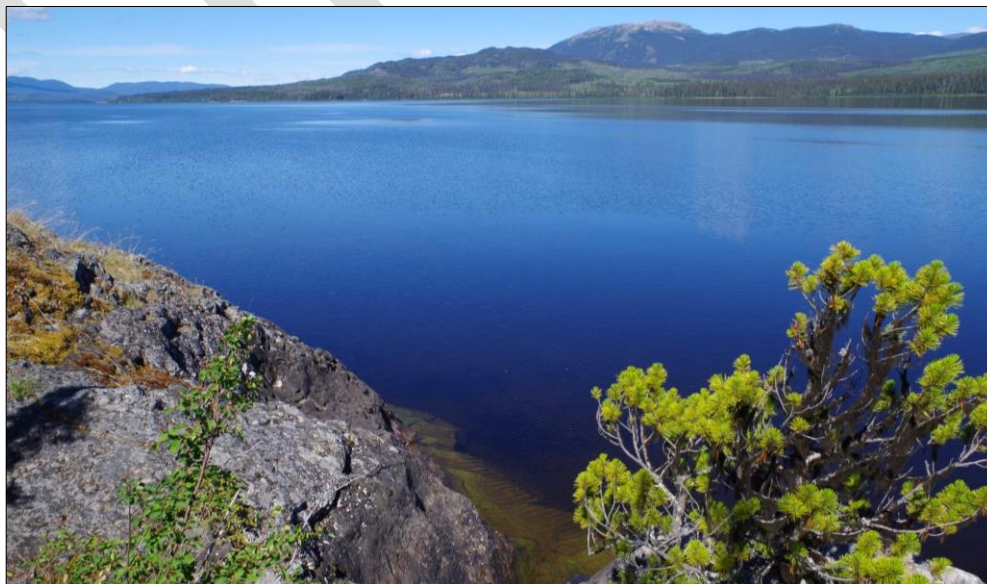
- (1) To protect lands within the Plan area for their resource, environmental, recreational and cultural values.
- (2) To support sound sustainable resource management within the Resource (RE) designation.

3.8.2. Policies

- (1) Only residential uses and uses directly associated with agriculture and grazing, mineral or aggregate extraction, fish and wildlife management, wilderness-oriented recreation, First Nations cultural and traditional uses and necessary institutional, public, utility or transportation services use will be permitted in the Resource (RE) designation.
- (2) A very limited amount of low-density residential use may be permitted within this designation, where appropriate.

Fort St. James Rural Official Community Plan

- (3) The minimum parcel size within the Resource (RE) designation shall be 8 hectares (19.77 acres).
- (4) Rezoning applications to allow increased residential density shall not be supported if the proposed development can be expected to:
 - (a) lead to a conflict with, or otherwise negatively impact resource, environmental, recreational or cultural values,
 - (b) unnecessarily increase community greenhouse gas emissions; or,
 - (c) provide increased demand for provision of Regional District services into a new or remote area.
- (5) Wherever possible, established routes used by cattle or wildlife, recreation lands, First Nations cultural or traditional land uses and rare or unique fish and wildlife habitats will be protected from incompatible land uses.
- (6) Rezoning applications to allow wind turbines intended to generate power for sale shall be considered on Resource designated lands where it can be demonstrated that the turbines will not have an unacceptable negative impact on a residential area and will not have an unacceptable environmental impact.
- (7) Nak'azdli Whut'en has identified a special interest in the area around Chuchi, Tchentlo and Inzana Lakes. It is recognized as a highly valued and culturally significant area containing trails and traditional use areas. The Regional District recognizes the area's historical and cultural significance and encourages the Province to collaborate with the Nation in stewardship and protection of the Crown lands in the area.





4. GENERAL APPLICATION OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

4.1. Mineral and Aggregate Resources

Several provincial and federal acts pertaining to resource extraction activities supersede the Regional District's land use authority on crown and private land. These acts include, but are not limited to the *Mines Act*, the *Mineral Tenure Act*, the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and the *Forest and Range Practices Act*. The agencies responsible for managing this legislation are encouraged to implement review processes that address the public interest in these matters, and the final decisions regarding land use rest with the Province. The *Local Government Act* only permits a Regional District to express broad objectives with respect to mineral and aggregate resources within an Official Community Plan.

4.1.1. Objectives

- (1) To support the conservative use of mineral and aggregate resource deposits and to protect these from development that would irreversibly prohibit its future utilization.
- (2) To provide opportunities for the exploration and development of metallic, industrial mineral and sand and gravel resources.
- (3) To encourage the Province to require the appropriate rehabilitation of gravel pits.

4.1.2. Policies

- (1) The Provincial government is recognized as being responsible for the administration of the Province's mineral and aggregate resources under various pieces of legislation.
- (2) All sand and gravel deposits are recognized by the Regional District Board as being within the provincial management jurisdiction. These deposits are too numerous to show on the map in Schedule "B".
- (3) Soil removal and deposit within the ALR is recognized as being subject to the *Agricultural Land Commission Act*.
- (4) The Regional District encourages the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation to give due consideration to the impact of extraction and processing activities on surrounding land uses and developments.
- (5) The Regional District encourages the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation not to issue new surface permits for sand and gravel/quarry processing near residential areas unless the applicant demonstrates how mitigation measures will minimize or nullify the effects of the proposed activity.
- (6) The Regional District encourages the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation to require appropriate reclamation of gravel pits and

mine sites and to ensure that adequate bonding is secured, and that the reclamation is undertaken in a timely manner.

4.2. Natural Environment

The natural environment is the foundation of the economic, ecological, and social viability of the Plan area. As such, careful management at local, regional and provincial levels is necessary. The Regional District recognizes the provincial government as having the primary responsibility in managing this resource and supports provincial efforts to manage the natural environment appropriately.



Stuart Lake, Pinchi Lake, Tezzeron Lake, Trembleur Lake, Babine Lake, Takla Lake, Tchentlo Lake and the Stuart and Necoslie Rivers are the predominant natural features of the area. Their importance, along with other lakes and watercourses, to the local communities, the entire region, and areas beyond cannot be overemphasized. These features play a role in many aspects of community life. They are the source of drinking water, an economic generator, and a recreational playground. Not only are the area's lakes and rivers an important amenity for the community and visitors, but they are also the natural habitat for a wide variety of fish and aquatic life, waterfowl, and plant species.

The importance of these lakes and rivers must also be looked at from a regional perspective. The water drains into the Stuart and Omineca Rivers and makes up part of the Fraser and Peace Basins, flowing into the Pacific and Arctic Oceans. Communities within these drainage basins also rely on the health of this surface water.

4.2.1. Objectives

- (1) To protect environmentally unique, rare, or sensitive areas or features; including, but not limited to, wildlife corridors, limited wildlife habitats, seasonal and year-round watercourses, lakes, ponds, wetlands, and riparian habitats.
- (2) To protect air quality, and surface and ground water resources for the benefit of the environment and human health and safety.
- (3) To protect the water quality of all area lakes and rivers.

- (4) To enhance environmental awareness and promote activities that protect and restore the natural environment.

4.2.2. Policies

- (1) The Regional District encourages the protection and enhancement of fish and wildlife habitats throughout the Plan area through the following means:
 - (a) alternative development practices such as lot averaging, where appropriate;
 - (b) conservation covenants; and,
 - (c) the dedication of lands to a private land trust, non-governmental organization, or the Province.
- (2) The “Ecological and Wildlife Values” map (Schedule “C”), shows several important wildlife and ecological areas. The Regional District supports and encourages development proponents to incorporate protection and enhancement of these areas and associated values in the design of development within the Plan area.
- (3) The Regional District supports efforts by the provincial government to identify wildlife and ecological values, with the input of residents, through various planning processes.
- (4) The Regional District will support and encourage the retention of a greenbelt of natural vegetation along watercourses.
- (5) Provincial and federal governments and non-governmental organizations will be supported in their efforts to enhance the fish and wildlife resources in the Plan area.
- (6) The Regional District recognizes the importance of healthy air quality and surface and ground water resources on a local, regional and provincial scale and supports efforts to protect the quantity and quality of these resources for future generations.
- (7) The Regional District encourages environmentally sound farm practices which protect surface and ground water and soil quality.
- (8) The Regional District encourages the provincial government to undertake an inventory and study of groundwater sources to determine the best means of protecting these water supplies.
- (9) Efforts to work with the community, landowners, and developers to protect environmentally unique or sensitive areas through the provision of information and education are supported.

- (10) Rezoning applications to allow subdivision or development on land adjacent to or containing environmentally unique, rare, or sensitive areas shall only be supported if it can be reasonably demonstrated that the proposed development will not negatively or adversely impact surface or groundwater resources or an environmentally unique or sensitive area.
- (11) The Regional District supports and encourages the distribution of educational information about the importance of responsible stewardship of the environment.
- (12) The Regional District encourages the replacement of older, on-site sewage systems with newer systems using improved technology to prevent potential contamination of the shoreline and water.
- (13) The Regional District discourages the removal of vegetation along the shoreline, as this can lead to erosion, loss of food and nutrients for fish, and loss of shade for young fish.
- (14) The Ministry of Forests is encouraged to take the following factors into consideration when reviewing foreshore tenure applications. In addition, emphasis should be placed on the environmental sensitivity of the foreshore areas, as well as ensuring an appropriate relationship with upland areas.
 - (a) Private moorage should not impede pedestrian access along the accessible portion of the foreshore.
 - (b) The siting of new private moorage shall be undertaken in a manner that is consistent with the orientation of neighbouring private moorage, is sensitive to views and other impacts on neighbours, and avoids impacts on access to existing private moorage and adjacent properties.
 - (c) Non-moorage uses are not appropriate on foreshore areas. These include facilities such as beach houses, storage sheds, patios, sun decks, and hot tubs. These types of development should occur only on privately owned upland areas.
 - (d) Private moorage owners and builders are encouraged to refer to the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy's Best Management Practices for Small Boat Moorage on Lakes, and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' Code of Practice for Repair, Maintenance and Construction of Docks, when constructing a dock.
- (15) Government agencies that have mandates for protecting the environmental integrity of the area's lakes, especially Stuart Lake, are encouraged to carry out scientific research and water quality testing to monitor the quality of lake

water, identify the causes of the reduced water quality, and take steps toward correcting the situation.

- (16) The protection of the environmentally unique or sensitive areas through the purchase or dedication of lands to a private land trust, non-governmental organization, or the Province is encouraged.
- (17) The Provincial Approving Officer is encouraged to follow provincial guidelines for development near aquatic areas and other environmentally sensitive areas.
- (18) The Province is encouraged to prohibit the dumping of sewage and other waste from boats into lakes and rivers in the region.

4.3. Outdoor Recreation

Access to parks, lakes and natural areas is essential to residents' quality of life, and a crucial part of attracting newcomers to the area. Recreational opportunities should support people of diverse abilities and mobility levels.



Electoral Area C and the District of Fort St. James established a joint Parks and Trails function in 2020 in response to the need for increased recreation facilities in the rural area, and in recognition of the importance of outdoor recreation to quality of life and regional economic development. A Recreation Contribution Service Area was also established to make financial support available to service groups providing outdoor recreation opportunities to the area's residents.

4.3.1. Objectives

- (1) To encourage a broad range of accessible recreational opportunities with minimal impact on the natural environment in the Plan area.
- (2) To support the Province, municipal government and community organizations in their role of providing public recreation opportunities.

4.3.2. Policies

- (1) Develop an Electoral Area C Parks and Trails Master Plan to serve as a strategy and action plan for recreation, parks, and trails in the rural area and to establish a priority list of projects and tasks to be undertaken to meet community recreation needs.

- (2) Develop partnerships with community organizations, municipal and provincial government, and the public to enhance the long-term sustainability and viability of community recreation.
- (3) The "Recreation Values" map (Schedule "D") shows major recreational features in the Plan area. The Regional District supports and encourages development proponents to consider recreational values and enhancement of these areas and associated values in the design of development within the Plan area.

4.4. Parkland Dedication

- (1) Where a proposed subdivision triggers a requirement to provide up to five per cent dedication of parkland or cash in lieu pursuant to section 510 of the *Local Government Act*, the Regional District shall evaluate whether to accept parkland or cash in lieu of parkland or a combination of both.
- (2) Land to be accepted as parkland dedication must be of adequate size and must have adequately high recreation value to provide a benefit to the community. Where this community benefit does not exist because of limited size or recreation value the Regional District may require cash in lieu of land to contribute towards the purchase of land in Electoral Area C.
- (3) One or more of the following criteria must be met for land to be considered having a high recreation value:
 - (a) the land is adjacent to a lake or a watercourse and improves public access to the water;
 - (b) the land improves access to a park or trail, a school, or public amenity;
 - (c) the land includes viewpoints and opportunities for nature appreciation;
 - (d) the land contains a locally or regionally significant natural feature or ecosystem that, if preserved or managed, would result in a net benefit to the community;
 - (e) the land is identified for a park or trail use in this plan or any other Regional District parks and trails plan.
- (4) Environmentally sensitive lands to be retained in a natural undisturbed state or archaeological features to be protected may be accepted as parkland dedication, however, these lands should be in addition to the minimum parkland dedication requirements pursuant to the *Local Government Act*.
- (5) The Regional District shall, when considering a rezoning application, consider accepting the dedication of land for the purpose of parkland, green space,

and/or natural areas. Parkland acceptance should be evaluated in accordance with the criterion identified in section 4.4(3).

4.5. Housing

The Regional District completed a Housing Needs Report in January 2022. The purpose of the Housing Needs Report is to help determine current and projected housing needs in Electoral Area C.

The Housing Needs Report projects a need for approximately 170 new housing units in the the Plan area from 2016 to 2026. According to the 2021 census, there are 580 occupied dwellings in Electoral Area C and the housing stock consists of single-family dwellings and manufactured/mobile homes. Approximately 86 per cent of dwellings were owner-occupied.

An inventory of existing parcels in the rural area surrounding the District of Fort St James and Nak'azdli was undertaken in July 2022. The inventory identified the following parcels available for development, indicating that land availability is not a constraint on housing development:

- 144 vacant parcels that could be relatively easily developed for residential purposes.
- 20 developed parcels (one or more houses) where up to 137 new lots could be created without rezoning (estimate based on applicable zone and does not consider any other factors).
- 18 vacant parcels where up to 135 new parcels could be created without rezoning (estimate based on applicable zone and does not consider any other factors).

Older housing stock from the 1960s to the 1980s in the rural area needs to be replaced or updated at an increased rate, and the region's rural housing stock needs to be diversified to meet the needs of current and future residents. However, the function of the region will not benefit from increased rural growth in comparison to municipal growth, and multi-family housing and non-market housing must be accommodated in municipalities.

A key regional challenge in the effort to replace rural housing stock and accommodate increased housing choice in the region is increasingly high construction costs in relation to property values. The resale value of a home once it is built does not adequately exceed construction costs. Therefore, there is limited new house construction in the region.

Most of the population growth is expected in people older than 45 years. In 2016, the area had 15 per cent more households than it did a decade prior. The pace of total household growth is faster than that of population growth, indicating a need for increased choice in housing type and reduced house size.

The majority of the region's housing issues relating to housing affordability and special needs housing cannot be addressed to a notable extent in the rural area. The Regional District has a clear interest in supporting municipalities in addressing the region's housing needs in a coordinated and proactive manner.

The facilitation of investment in housing and the creation of increased diversity of housing type is an economic development and diversification issue, as well as a resident quality of life issue. The region's economic future is not solely determined by the forest products industry, mining, and large energy projects. It is recognized that economic diversification beyond reliance on these industries is dependant on the region's ability to attract skilled workers, entrepreneurs, and professionals that have a high degree of mobility and choice regarding their home community. An ability to provide the services and amenities necessary to maintain a healthy and fulfilling regional lifestyle and attract new residents is a critical component of the region's future. This increased demand is necessary for any market-based solution to the Regional District's housing issues.

4.5.1. Objectives

- (1) To work with and support municipalities in their pursuit of affordable housing, rental housing and special needs housing.
- (2) To ensure that adequate land is available to meet the region's rural housing needs.

4.5.2. Policies

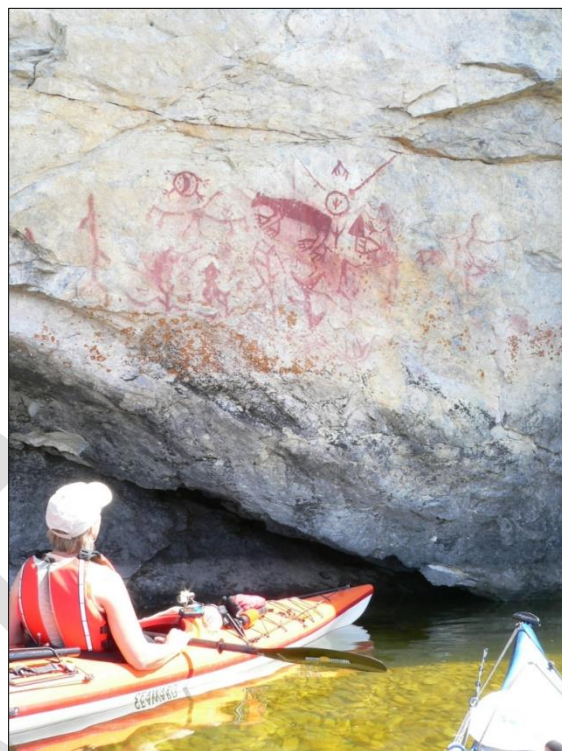
- (1) The Regional District will encourage assisted living housing and services to be developed within the District of Fort St. James to ensure access to the services, supports and amenities needed by the intended residents of those units.
- (2) The Regional District will encourage the development of accessible and adaptable housing options to meet the needs of seniors, persons with mobility issues, and persons with disabilities.

4.6. Heritage and Archeological Resources

Heritage and archeological resources are recognized by the Regional District as being important Plan area attributes that enhance the area's unique character and sense of place. Archaeological sites are indications of a rich history extending back thousands of years.

Archaeological sites are protected by the Province through the *Heritage Conservation Act* and applies to both private and Crown land. The Regional District encourages the identification, protection, and conservation of archaeological, historical and paleontological sites throughout the Plan area.

Nakaz'dli Whuten has identified a special interest in the area around Chuchi, Tchentlo and Inzana Lakes as it carries cultural significance to the Nation.



4.6.1. Objectives

- (1) To encourage and facilitate the identification, protection, and conservation of archaeological, historical, and paleontological sites.
- (2) To implement the applicable provincial legislation regarding archaeological, historical, and paleontological sites as required.

4.6.2. Policies

- (1) In accordance with provincial legislation, development proponents are required to consider archaeological, historical, and paleontological resources during all phases of project planning, design, and implementation.
- (2) The Regional District Board recognizes and supports the application and enforcement of the *Heritage Conservation Act* by the provincial government. Specifically, section 12.1 of the Act requiring that known archaeological sites not be altered or changed in any manner without a permit, is supported by the Regional District.

4.7. Public Services and Utilities

The Plan area is characterized by a dispersed settlement pattern and a level of services and utilities that is common for rural communities. Additional services that are to be supported

by the local tax base need to reflect the intent of the Plan to not provide for population growth or densities that will impact the rural character of the Plan area.

4.7.1. Objectives

- (1) To support the planning and development of public services and utilities which are economically feasible and that have an appropriate degree of public support.

4.7.2. Policies

- (1) Urban scale development requiring community water and sewer services, except as appropriate for a bare land strata development, will be directed into municipalities where such services can be provided as an extension to existing systems.
- (2) The Regional District will continue to assist rural residents in assessing the feasibility of new utilities and services in accordance with the *Local Government Act*.
- (3) The location of utility services and communication corridors which minimize the disruption of the natural environment and the impact on existing and potential resource activities or land uses (such as forestry, agriculture, mineral and aggregate extraction, recreation, fish and wildlife management) will be supported.
- (4) The Regional District will encourage the efficient and economic extension of services where there is a demonstrated need and public support.

4.8. Transportation

Cost efficient and safe transportation networks that are well developed and maintained are important within the Plan area. The provincial government is recognized as having responsibility over transportation planning and development within the Plan area.

4.8.1. Objectives

- (1) To ensure the establishment of a safe and efficient transportation network and to consider traffic matters and the functional integrity of the transportation system in land use decisions.
- (2) To ensure that development is not approved without the necessary infrastructure improvements to accommodate the traffic generated by that development.



- (3) To support the development by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure of a safe, efficient, and economic transportation system servicing both local and provincial needs.
- (4) To support the development and maintenance of active transportation infrastructure.

4.8.2. Policies

- (1) The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure shall be encouraged to consult with the Regional District and the community in the planning of new roads or upgrades within the Plan area to effectively manage impacts to existing and future land uses.
- (2) The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure shall, wherever possible, be encouraged to direct future roads away from existing and potential agricultural lands, environmentally sensitive areas, and important view-scapes.
- (3) Off-street parking regulations in the zoning bylaw shall ensure a free flow of traffic on public roads.
- (4) To recognize Highway 27 as a main collector where:
 - (a) continuous strip development will be discouraged;
 - (b) development should have access on or to frontage/side roads; and
 - (c) the use of adjoining land should be of a type not affected by the noise and speed of traffic along this route.
- (5) The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure shall be encouraged to address the safety and maintenance issues that exist on Mowbay Road.
- (6) The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure shall be encouraged to provide additional passing lanes on Highway 27 in the area between Pitka Creek FSR and Cook Road.
- (7) The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure shall be encouraged to repair the road at the corners that occur immediately north of the Necoslie River Bridge, on the reserve lands.
- (8) Work closely with Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, Nak'azdli Whut'en and the District of Fort St James to explore options for safe pedestrian and biking access along Highway 27 to link the rural area along Sowchea Road and Nak'azdli 1 with the Fort St James commercial core.

4.9. Environmental Hazards and Protection

There are a number of natural hazards (including flooding, landslides, and wildfire) that have the potential to cause damage, or loss, of life or property. In some instances, areas within the jurisdiction of this Plan may not be appropriate for development or may require special considerations in their development.

4.9.1. Objectives

- (1) To manage development in a manner that reduces risk to life and damage to property in natural hazard areas.
- (2) To encourage provincial agencies, property owners, and developers to implement development strategies that reduces the risk of flooding and other hazards.
- (3) To ensure that human activities do not contribute to flooding, increased water run-off, soil erosion, environmental pollution, or slope instability.

4.9.2. Policies

- (1) The Regional District will continue to manage building construction in floodplains by way of a floodplain management bylaw with measures such as minimum elevations and setbacks for new construction.
- (2) To protect against loss of life and property damage associated with flooding the Regional District will encourage non-polluting agricultural, park, and recreational uses in designated floodplain areas or on flood susceptible lands.
- (3) The Regional District encourages the Ministry of Forests and other provincial agencies having jurisdiction to implement land use patterns that reduce the risk of wildfire and floods within the Plan area.
- (4) When rezoning to allow subdivision and/or development in areas that are known to have potential hazards, it is important that the proper scientific assessments are undertaken to ensure the area is appropriate for development and to mitigate potential damage to persons or property.
- (5) Rezoning to allow subdivision and/or development in a hazardous area or down slope from a hazardous area, will not be supported if it cannot be demonstrated by a qualified person that measures will be taken to remediate the hazard, make the development capable of withstanding the effects of the hazard in a manner that requires minimal maintenance, and to protect adjacent properties from possible impacts.

4.10. FireSmart Development

Residential and other development in proximity to forested areas are at risk from wildfires. Wildfires are recognized as a significant hazard in the Plan area given the community's close connection to the natural environment. This threat has increased due to the dead timber associated with the pine beetle infestation, historic fire suppression practices and climate change. The OCP supports efforts to reduce the risk associated with wildfire.

4.10.1. Objectives

- (1) To limit development that increases the potential for interface between wildfire and residential areas and manage new development in a manner that reduces risk to life and damage to property due to wildfire.
- (2) To encourage provincial agencies, property owners, and developers to implement development strategies that reduces the risk of wildfire.
- (3) To reduce the wildfire hazard for existing development.

4.10.2. Policies

- (1) Property owners and developers are encouraged to implement FireSmart principles and other development strategies that reduce the risk of wildfire. For example, property owners are encouraged to:
 - (a) use non-combustible roofing and siding materials,
 - (b) keep roofs, gutters and the area beneath decks clean from combustible debris,
 - (c) keep combustible materials such as firewood, and coniferous trees and shrubs at least ten metres away from a principal building, and
 - (d) set buildings away from the top of sloped lands.
- (2) Applications to allow subdivision shall be evaluated based on the consideration of increased potential for interface between wildfires and residential areas. Applicants shall be required to consider FireSmart principles in their subdivision design. For example, new development should be designed to provide adequate emergency vehicle access and alternate escape routes.



- (3) Provincial agencies are encouraged to implement strategies to assess and reduce the risk of wildfire on their lands.
- (4) The Regional District encourages the Provincial Approving Officer to implement FireSmart standards for subdivisions.

4.11. Economic Development

It is recognized that to achieve the goals contained in the Plan the region must provide opportunities for the creation of a vibrant, diverse, and sustainable economy. To do so requires maintenance and enhancement of the region's quality of life, as well as its natural, cultural, and built amenities, thus ensuring compatibility between future economic activity and the rural character of the Plan area. As noted in the Plan, industrial and commercial activity is supported in select areas and within the District of Fort St. James. However, the Plan recognizes the importance of a healthy home-based business sector to the regional economy.

The Plan supports the maintenance of existing, and the increased establishment of new, home-based businesses that are compatible with the rural residential and agricultural character of the area, and do not negatively impact the quality of life of area residents.

4.11.1. Objectives

- (1) To concentrate commercial and light industrial development in existing centres of activity, and to direct most of that activity within the District of Fort St. James.
- (2) To increase the attractiveness of the Plan area to new residents, entrepreneurs, and business by protecting and enhancing the aspects of the social, cultural, natural, and built environment that contribute to the quality of life of residents.
- (3) To support home-based business activity that fits within the rural character of the area and does not negatively impact resident quality of life.

4.11.2. Policies

- (1) Home-based business activity that is compatible with the rural residential character of the Plan area shall be supported.
- (2) The Regional District especially encourages consulting, technology and information based home-based business to locate in the Plan area.
- (3) The Regional District encourages service providers to improve cell phone service and high-speed internet service in the areas where this service is limited or nonexistent.

- (4) The opportunity to establish home-based business with a personal service, retail, or industrial character shall be limited in order to protect rural residential areas from impacts associated with noise and traffic, and to help protect the integrity of existing commercial and industrial areas.

4.12. Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako recognizes that increasing emissions of human caused greenhouse gases (GHG) such as carbon dioxide and methane are affecting the Earth's climate, and the effects of climate change are evident across British Columbia.

In 2009 the Regional District of Bulkley signed the Climate Action Charter (CAC), which is an agreement between signatory local governments and the Province which outlines the commitments and responsibilities of the Province and local governments as they work together towards reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

Through the CAC the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako has agreed to develop strategies and take actions to achieve the following goals:

- Being carbon neutral in respect of operations by 2012, recognizing that solid waste facilities regulated under *the Environmental Management Act* are not included in operations for the purposes of the CAC.
- Measuring and reporting on our community's GHG emissions profile.
- And, creating complete, compact, more energy efficient rural and urban communities.

Section 473 (3) of the *Local Government Act* states that Official Community Plans must include targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the area covered by the plan, and policies and actions of the local government proposed with respect to achieving those targets.

The Province of British Columbia completed the Community Energy and Emissions Inventory (CEEI) in 2007 and 2012. The data provided by the CEEI initiative does not provide the information necessary for the establishment of a baseline, or future measure, of the community wide GHG emissions generated in each Electoral Area. Therefore, the data is not appropriate for the establishment of bottom up or pragmatic targets. Area specific, accurate, and measurable data regarding emission sources and quantity, especially with regards to transportation, are necessary to identify GHG reduction targets that have any meaning with respect to measurement and achievability. However, the CEEI data can potentially be used to quantify current and future patterns of energy used by building type and on road transportation, provided that future CEEI data is comparable in future years. This would serve as an indicator of the intensity of energy used and GHG emitted in the region.

The Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako does not have the financial capacity to undertake community energy emissions inventories that are an improvement over the provincial CEEI initiative. Therefore, the remaining option to satisfy the Province with regards to section 473 (3) of the *Local Government Act*, and to ensure the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako remains eligible for provincial grant funding, is to establish visionary or top-down targets which are not based upon any analysis regarding achievability and are not intended to be tracked or achieved locally. However, these targets reflect a commitment to action, and they are backed up by concrete community goals and objectives regarding the reduction of GHG emissions.

4.12.1. OCP Visionary Targets and Action

To comply with section 473 (3) of the *Local Government Act* and to meet the commitments under the CAC, the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako accepts the following provincial GHG reduction targets as the Regional District's visionary target:

- By 2030, B.C. will reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 40 per cent, compared to 2007 levels.
- By 2040, the Province will reduce its GHG emissions by 60 per cent, compared to 2007 levels.
- By 2050, GHG emissions in the Province will reduce its GHG emissions by 80 per cent, compared to 2007 levels.

The Plan seeks to reduce GHG emissions in a manner that promotes and secures the region's long term economic prosperity, protects the environment, and ensures that the negative effects of climate change are minimized for the benefit of the residents of the region and British Columbia.

In the rural areas of the Regional District, the primary manner in which the Regional District can influence community wide GHG emissions is through the establishment of objectives and policy for development and land use patterns that are more energy efficient, result in more self-sustaining communities, and limit unnecessary rural residential sprawl. This involves policy relating to increased public awareness of issues and options regarding energy use. These objectives and policies are identified in sections 4.12.2 and 4.12.3 below.

The Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako is committed to doing its part to achieve reductions in GHG emissions; however, it is recognized that success in reducing community wide GHG emissions is largely dependent upon technology change and the actions of senior levels of government, and their agencies and corporations. The majority of the GHG emissions that are generated in the rural areas of the Regional District are subject to limited influence by the Board of the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako.

4.12.2. Objectives

- (1) The Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako will work towards reducing Electoral Area C community GHG emissions by encouraging, facilitating, and supporting development and land use patterns that are more energy efficient, result in more self-sustaining communities and limit future unnecessary rural residential sprawl.
- (2) The Regional District will promote energy efficiency, energy security and reduced energy costs.
- (3) The Regional District will work cooperatively with senior levels of government on their initiatives to reduce GHG emissions where meaningful consultation is initiated.

4.12.3. Policies

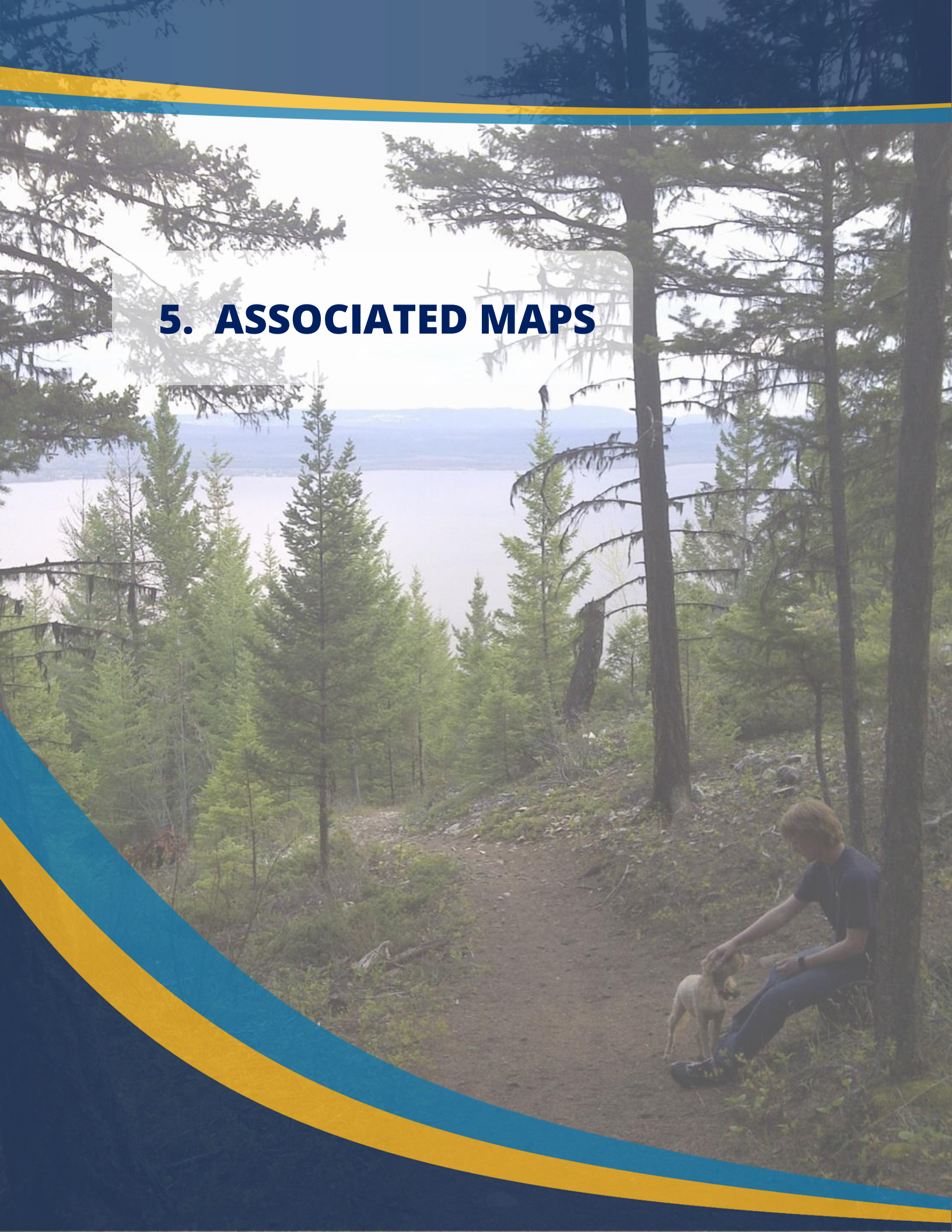
- (1) Incentives offered by utilities and senior government to reduce residential energy use will be promoted.
- (2) Residents and local businesses shall be encouraged to investigate and adopt new technologies and best practices to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- (3) The use of sustainability checklists shall be considered for use as part of building permit, rezoning, development variance permit, and temporary use permit applications to raise awareness of options to reduce GHG emissions and reduce the impact of development on the environment.
- (5) Renewable energy generation such as biomass, geothermal heating, solar power, and wind turbines are encouraged.
- (6) The objectives identified in section 4.11.2 of this bylaw are achieved through the implementation of the following land use and development policies:
 - (a) Within the Agricultural Designation, the Policies listed in section 3.1.2 support the local production of food, and other agricultural products.
 - (b) Within the Commercial Designation, Policy 3.2.2(1) encourages significant commercial uses to establish within the District of Fort St. James.
 - (c) Within the Commercial Designation, Policy 3.2.2(2) supports commercial areas for neighbourhood services subject to certain criteria.
 - (d) Home-based businesses are supported throughout the plan with Policy 3.2.2(4), Policy 3.4.2(3), Policy 3.5.2(2) and Policy 4.10.2(1).

Fort St. James Rural Official Community Plan

- (e) Within the Industrial Designation, Policy 3.3.2(1) encourages new light industrial uses to establish within the boundaries of the District of Fort St. James.
- (f) Within the Rural Resource Designation, Policy 3.8.2(1) allows only a limited amount of low density residential use.
- (g) Within the Rural Resource Designation, Policy 3.8.2(6) supports the development of wind farms intended to generate power for sale.
- (h) Policies 3.4.2(6), 3.5.2(5), and 4.2.2(1)(a) promote the use of alternative development practices such as lot averaging and bare land strata development.
- (i) Policy 4.2.2(6) supports efforts to protect healthy air quality, and surface and ground water resources on a local, regional and provincial scale.
- (j) Policy 4.6.2(1) directs urban scale development requiring community water and sewer services into municipalities where such services can be provided as an extension to existing systems.



5. ASSOCIATED MAPS



5.1. Interpretation of Land Use Designation Map

The Land Use Designation Maps attached hereto as Schedule “B” indicate the general location and distribution of major land use designations in the Plan area. The boundaries of the designations are approximate and convey the relationship between principal uses. The boundaries will be defined in detail in the implementing bylaws.

The Land Use Designation Map shows, in select places, the short title for a Land Use Designation within a circle. It is referred to as a “floating designation” and indicates that the lands in the vicinity of the floating designation may be considered for rezoning to allow another use. The floating designation applies to the land as well as any other applicable land use designation identified in Schedule B.

5.2. Land Use Designation Explanations

Unless otherwise restricted in this Plan, lands with the following land use designations may be considered for rezoning as follows:

Agriculture (AG): In areas so designated, the Small Holdings (H1), Large Holdings (H2), Agricultural (Ag1), Rural Resource (RR1) and Agricultural Industry (M3) zones, or new zones with similar uses, may be considered.

Commercial (C): In areas so designated, any of the Commercial zones or new zones with similar uses, may be considered.

Industrial (I): In areas so designated, any of the Industrial Zones or new zones with similar uses, may be considered.

Rural Residential (RR): In areas so designated, the Residential Zones, the Small Holdings (H1), the Small Holdings – Additional Dwelling (H1A), and Large Holdings (H2) zones, or new zones with similar uses, may be considered.

Lakeshore (L): In areas so designated, the Waterfront Residential II (R4), Small Holdings (H1), Small Holdings – Additional Dwelling (H1A), and Large Holdings (H2) zones, or new zones with similar uses, may be considered.

Civic Institutional (C/I): In areas so designated, the Civic/Institutional (P1), Recreation (P2), Airport (A1) zones, or new zones with similar uses, may be considered.

Parks and Recreation (P): In areas so designated, the Rural Resource (RR1), Civic/Institutional (P1) and Recreation (P2) zones, or new zones with similar uses, may be considered.

Resource (RE): In areas so designated, the Rural Resource (RR1), Large Holdings (H2), Agricultural (Ag1), Recreation (P2) and Special Recreation (P2A) zones, or new zones with similar uses, may be considered.

5.3. Interpretation of the Ecological and Wildlife Values Map

The Ecological and Wildlife Values Map attached hereto as Schedule "C" indicates the general location and distribution of major ecological and wildlife habitat features in the Plan area. The intention of this map is to identify areas where specific ecological and wildlife habitat values will be considered during development review processes.

5.4. Ecological and Wildlife Values Explanations

The data representing the features presented in the Ecological and Wildlife Values Map was provided by the Province. The Zones described below were identified in the Fort St. James Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) process. The Ungulate Winter Ranges, Wildlife Habitat Areas, Fisheries Sensitive Watersheds and Old Growth Management Areas described below were established under the *Forest and Range Practices Act*.

Settlement/Agriculture Resource Management Zone: A relatively large area of lands within the zone are currently used or proposed for farming, and/or are used or proposed for settlement in an Official Community Plan, Crown Land Plan, or LRMP. Management on these lands integrates Crown lands with the historic pattern of settlement and agriculture in the planning area, and management of natural resource values and resource development is compatible with this.

Resource Development Resource Management Zone: These are lands with existing or future potential for intensive resource development and are managed with consideration of other resource values and within the guidelines of specific zone objectives and strategies. Management on these lands emphasizes the development of resources such as mineral extraction and timber harvesting, while minimizing impacts on other resources through a variety of integrated resource management strategies. Access is relatively unrestricted, with the exception of any land that may need special management considerations.

Multi-Value Resource Management Zone: These lands are managed to integrate a wide range of resource values. Access within these zones is relatively unrestricted, with the exception of any land that may need special management considerations.

Special Management Resource Management Zone: These lands are managed for a wide array of resources, often by dividing the resource management zones into subzones. Resource development (including road access development) may proceed as long as impacts on other resource values are minimized, and resource values are maintained.

Protected Area Resource Management Zone: Protected Areas are established in perpetuity so that the ecological systems they encompass can continue to evolve with a minimum of intervention. The Protected Areas system comprises a family of protected areas. The system, rather than individual areas, provides for the diversity of ecosystems, special features and outdoor recreation opportunities and experiences sought. As such, not all uses are appropriate or compatible within every Protected Area.

Wildlife Habitat Areas (WHAs): Areas that are necessary to meet the habitat requirements of an Identified Wildlife element. WHAs designate critical habitats in which activities are managed to limit their impact on the Identified Wildlife element for which the area was established. The purpose of WHAs is to conserve those habitats considered most limiting to a given Identified Wildlife element.

Ungulate Winter Range (UWRs): Areas that contain habitat that is necessary to meet the winter habitat requirements of an ungulate species. UWRs are based on current understanding of ungulate habitat requirements in winter, as interpreted by FLNR regional staff from current scientific and management literature, local knowledge, and other expertise from the region.

Fisheries Sensitive Watersheds: Areas with specific management objectives intended to guide development activities which may adversely impact important fish values.

Old Growth Management Areas (OGMAs): Areas of old growth forest that are identified during landscape unit planning or an operational planning process. Forest licensees are required to maintain legally established OGMAs when preparing Forest Stewardship Plans. OGMAs, in combination with other areas where forestry development is prevented or constrained, are used to achieve biodiversity targets.

5.5. Important Bird Areas

Three rivers in Electoral Area C have been identified as an Important Bird Area (IBA) by the IBA Program. IBAs are sites that support specific groups of birds: threatened birds, large groups of birds, and birds restricted by range or by habitat.

The Middle River, Tachie River and part of the Stuart River are connected rivers that support globally significant numbers of wintering Trumpeter Swans. The Trumpeter Swan (*Cygnus buccinator*) is the largest native swan in Canada.

Source: - Environment and Climate Change Canada and the IBA Program. The IBA Program is an international conservation initiative, and the Canadian co-partners are Birds Canada and Nature Canada.

5.6. Interpretation of the Recreational Values Map

The Recreational Values Map attached hereto as Schedule "D" indicates the general location and distribution of major recreational features in the Plan area. The intent of this map is to identify areas where specific recreational values will be considered during the development review process.

5.7. Recreational Values Explanations

The features represented in the Recreational Values Map, attached hereto as Schedule “D”, include those identified during the OCP planning process, the RDBN recreation inventory and in data provided by the Province.



6. IMPLEMENTATION



Several options are available to ensure that the Board's goals and objectives are achieved following the formal adoption of this Plan. Implementation shall be the ongoing responsibility of the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Board of Directors and its actions must be consistent with the Plan. The document also serves as a guide and resource for Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako staff and other levels of government in their planning and decision-making processes. This section identifies some of these mechanisms for implementation and considers their application in the Plan area.

6.1 Zoning, Development and Subdivision Control

- (1) Development proposals that require rezoning or other discretionary approval by the Regional District shall be evaluated in accordance with the intent and direction provided by the policies in this Plan.
- (2) The final approval of subdivisions remains with the Provincial Approving Officer who shall have regard for the policies of this Plan in considering applications.
- (3) Generally, the Regional District shall, as the need and opportunity arise, provide input to and liaise with other agencies to ensure that development proposals reflect the land use designations, policies and objectives of this plan.

6.2 Temporary Use Permits

- (1) Temporary use permits may be issued, pursuant to section 493 of the *Local Government Act*, throughout the plan area, where:
 - (a) the proposed temporary use will not create an amount of traffic that will adversely affect the natural environment, or rural character of the area;
 - (b) the environment would not be negatively affected by the proposed temporary use;
 - (c) the need for security in the form of an irrevocable letter of credit with an automatic extension clause has been considered to ensure that the required decommissioning and reclamation is complete;
 - (d) the proposed temporary use will not have adverse affects on neighbouring land uses or property owners;
 - (e) the proposed temporary use does not require a significant amount of capital investment in a particular location; and,
 - (f) the proposed temporary use has the support of the Agricultural Land Commission if the land is within the ALR.

6.3 Development Proposals Contrary to the Plan

- (1) Development proposals that require rezoning or other discretionary approval by the Regional District and are contrary to the objectives, policies or land use designations of this Plan shall not be approved.
- (2) Proposals to amend the Plan must be approved by the Regional District Board of Directors pursuant to the requirements of the *Local Government Act*, and, subject to any required provincial approvals.

6.4 Agricultural Land Commission

- (1) The Regional District Board recognizes the Agricultural Land Commission's mandate. It is also recognized that all lands within the ALR are subject to the *Agricultural Land Commission Act*, its orders, and regulations.
- (2) Proposals for non-adhering residential use, non-farm use, subdivision, inclusion, soil use for placement of fill or removal of soil, transportation, utility and recreational trail use and exclusion of lands within the ALR require approval from the Agricultural Land Commission. In commenting to the Agricultural Land Commission, the Regional District will have regard for the provisions of this Plan, the potential impact on the agricultural viability of the subject property and surrounding area, and the suitability of the land for agriculture.

6.5 Building Inspection

- (1) Building inspection is a requirement in parts of the Plan area. Building permits cannot be issued for developments that are contrary to the implementing Zoning Bylaw.
- (2) The consideration of expansion of Building Inspection services shall occur for areas where notable development is occurring.

6.6 Water and Sewerage Approvals

- (1) The provincial government regulates water and sewerage systems through such legislation as the *Drinking Water Protection Act*, the *Public Health Act* and the *Environmental Management Act* and regulations thereto.
- (2) The Regional District supports these enactments and expects that all water and sewerage systems within the Plan area will comply with applicable regulations.

6.7 Collaborative Planning

- (1) To facilitate orderly urban growth, the Regional District will work with the District of Fort St. James as necessary to develop land use strategies for lands identified for future incorporation into the municipalities.
- (2) Where the Regional District is addressing a land use issue that is adjacent to, or potentially impacting, the District of Fort St. James, the Regional District shall consult with the municipality as appropriate.
- (3) Where the Regional District is addressing a land use issue that is within, adjacent to, or potentially impacting, an established neighbourhood, the Regional District shall consult with those established neighbourhood groups, as appropriate.
- (4) Where the District of Fort St. James is addressing a land use issue that is adjacent to, or potentially impacting, the Regional District, the municipality is encouraged to consult with the Regional District, as appropriate.
- (5) Where the Regional District is addressing a land use issue that is adjacent to, or potentially impacting, First Nations communities, the Regional District shall consult with those First Nations, as appropriate.
- (6) Where a First Nation is addressing a land use issue that is adjacent to, or potentially impacting, the Regional District, the First Nation is encouraged to consult with the Regional District, as appropriate.
- (7) The Regional District encourages opportunities to undertake collaborative planning and consultation processes with other local governments, First Nations, provincial ministries, and other agencies and groups to better achieve the goals of this Plan.