

TOWN OF SMITHERS
OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN

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TOWN OF SMITHERS
OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN
 LIST OF AMENDMENTS

BYLAW NO.	ADOPTION DATE	CONTENT	APPLICANT
1355	September 27, 2000	Map A and B Amendment: Lot A Plan PRP47055 Section 19 Township 4 Range 5 Coast District be re-designated from Rural to Industrial	Sheng Holdings
1357	May 8, 2001	Map B Amendment: Lots 9-13 and Part of Lot 14 Section 30 Township 4 Range 5 Coast District Plan PRP42839 re-designated from Single Family Residential to Community Use	Bethel Reformed Church
1366	January 24 th , 2001	Text Amendment Policy 9.13 shall be amended by adding the following after “3,250 square metres (35,000 square feet)”: “, <i>and food stores with a minimum gross floor area of 2,300 square metres.</i> ” Map B Amendment Lots 18-21 Plan 5980 District Lot 865 Range 5 Coast District be re-designated from Automotive/Service Commercial to Large Scale Commercial	B.V. Wholesale

INTRODUCTION

1. CONTENT OF SMITHERS OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN

PURPOSE OF AN OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN

An Official Community Plan (OCP) is a tool used by local governments to express the broad objectives and land use policies of a community. The Plan is used as a guide for future development activity, including utility servicing, within a specified plan area. The intent of the Plan is to guide land use decisions on residential and commercial development, industrial activity, transportation infrastructure, and environmental consideration.

The purpose and content of an OCP is formally outlined in the Municipal Act R.S.B.C. 1996, Chapter 323 (Municipal Act). According to Section 877 “a community plan must include statements and map designations for the area covered by the plan respecting the following:

- a) The approximate locations, amount, type and density of residential development required to meet anticipated housing needs over a period of at least 5 years
- b) The approximate location, amount and type of present and proposed commercial, industrial, institutional, agricultural, recreational and public utility land uses
- c) The approximate location and area of sand and gravel deposits that are suitable for future sand and gravel extraction
- d) Restrictions on the use of land that is subject to hazardous conditions or that is environmentally sensitive to development
- e) The approximate location and phasing of any major road, sewer, and water systems
- f) The approximate location and type of present and proposed public facilities, including schools, parks and waste treatment and disposal sites
- g) Other matters that may, in respect of any plan, be required or authorized by the minister”

AMENDING THE PLAN

Once a Plan is adopted as a bylaw, all future land use decisions made by Council must be consistent with the objectives and policies outlined in the OCP. An OCP, however, is not intended to be a static document, but should adapt to new trends within society and respond to changing circumstances. As such, following careful consideration by Council, policies and land use designations in an OCP may be revised by an amending bylaw pursuant to provisions outlined within the Municipal Act.

Smithers' Town Council is not committed to carrying out any actions or implementing any strategies in the Plan, however, all bylaws enacted or works that are undertaken must be consistent with the policies outlined in the Plan.

PLANNING PROCESS

To date, in preparation of a new Official Community Plan for the Town of Smithers, the following tasks have been performed:

- ***Start-Up Meeting No. 1*** - UMA staff meet with the Town of Smithers Council, staff and the Planning Committee in order to obtain information on the key issues and concerns of the community (September, 1998)
- ***First Public Open House*** - an opportunity for the members of the public to become familiar with the OCP planning process; and for UMA staff to gather information and concerns the public may have regarding their community
- ***Discussion Brief*** - provides background analysis of population characteristics, and the assessment of trends which may influence the formulation of the new Official Community Plan; including a review of relevant planning issues
- ***Second Public Open House and Workshop*** - distribution of Newsletter 2 summarizing the principal background information, and providing an opportunity for residents to “sign-up” for workshops; as well as, issuing a comment sheet eliciting views and opinions of the community on specific land use issues (November, 1998)
- ***Planning Committee Review Meeting No. 2*** - met with Town Council, staff and the Planning/committee to review Discussion Brief, relevant issues and results of second public open house
- ***Draft One, Official Community Plan*** – issued February 1999
- ***Planning Committee Review Meeting No. 3 and No. 4*** – met with Planning Committee to review first draft of Smithers OCP

- *Draft Two, Official Community Plan* – issued April 1999
- *Third Public Open House* - to review the proposed Plan with the community (April, 1999)
- *Planning Committee Review Meeting* – met with Committee to review draft 2 and public open house results
- *Final OCP* – issued July, 1999

ORGANIZATION OF PLAN DOCUMENT

This plan document consists of three major parts:

- Part A is an introductory section, which explains the purpose of the Official Community Plan and the planning process. In addition, Part A provides an overview of the Town of Smithers, by population, housing, and economy setting the stage for the following section.
- Part B contains the Plan goals and policies for future land use within the Town. A Land Use Map is appended to the document as a graphic illustration of policies contained in Part B.
- Part C provides an outline of the actions and other implementation measures to realize the goals and policies stated in the Plan.

SMITHERS - AN OVERVIEW

The Town of Smithers is situated in the Bulkley Valley of northern British Columbia along Yellowhead Highway 16 approximately half way between the cities of Prince Rupert and Prince George. Smithers is a member municipality of the Bulkley Nechako Regional District. The Town's location is positioned with excellent road (the Yellowhead Highway 16), rail (Canadian National) and air (Smithers Airport) connections to the rest of the province of British Columbia.

Smithers is a town of 6000 people and is considered to be a regional service centre for the entire Bulkley Valley and, as such, offers a greater variety of amenities than other Towns its size. Set against the backdrop of Hudson Bay Mountain, the "Town for all Seasons" offers outstanding outdoor recreational pursuits for both residents and visitors, including skiing, fishing, and hiking, coupled with a range of urban features including cultural and indoor recreational opportunities.

The Town was surveyed in 1913 and a street grid pattern was established that is still very much evident today. Historically, intensive development has been oriented towards Main Street as the prime commercial focus with residential development radiating outward from the commercial core. The traditional downtown was punctuated by important civic structures - the (old) Courthouse at the northern end of Main Street or by community focal points - the Canadian National railway station at the southern end of Main Street. This pattern has been sustained by the preservation of the old Courthouse, with establishment of a major civic park in Central Park, and with the on-going restoration of the CN railway station as a community resource centre.

POPULATION

Historic Population Growth

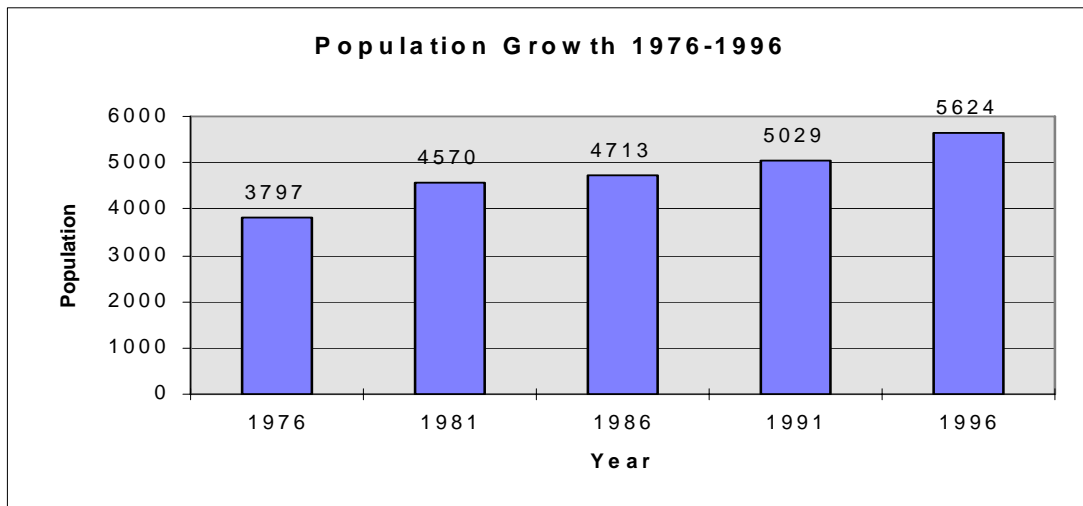
The Town of Smithers is estimated to have a 1999 population of close to 6,000 - approximately 5,820. This is an increase of 5.0% from its 1996 population. In the twenty-year period, between 1976-96 Smithers experienced slow but steady growth. However, it is noted that the rate of increase more recently (1991 to 1996) has been much higher at over 2% per year. Table 1 and Graph 1 below outline historic population growth.

Table 1: Historic Population, 1976 - 1996

Year	Population	% Change
1996	5,624	+12%
1991	5,029	+7%
1986	4,713	+3%
1981	4,570	+20%
1976	3,797	

Source: Statistics Canada, Smithers population by Census years

Graph 1: Historic Population



Source: Statistics Canada, Smithers population by Census years

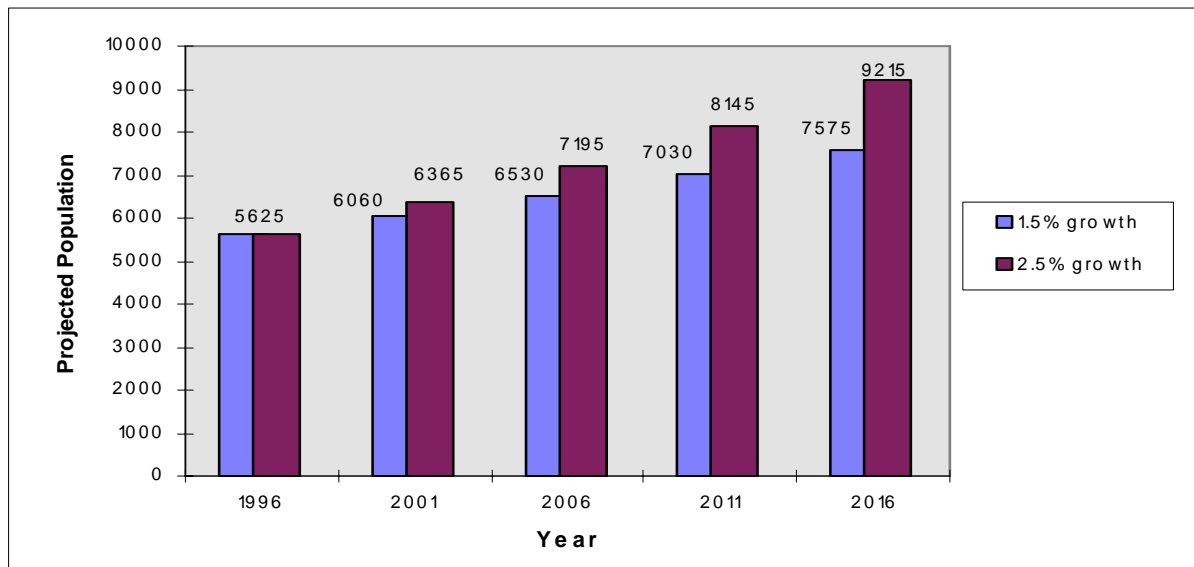
Since 1976, the Town of Smithers has grown by almost 50%. Expressed on an annual basis, this represents about 2.5% per year over the past twenty years, or an increase of about 90 new residents per year.

Future Population Growth

For the purposes of projecting future population growth for the Town of Smithers, the Ministry of Finance and Corporate Relations’ projected growth rates for Region 54 were used. Smithers is expected to grow at a more modest rate of 1.5% per annum over the next twenty years than previously experienced. As a contrast, a 2.5% per annum growth was also projected - closer to that experienced over the last 20 years. The projected populations for the Town of Smithers based on these two growth rates are shown in the following Graph 2.

Graph 2: Population Projections

**Projected populations are rounded to the nearest 5*



Source: Ministry of Finance and Corporate Relations, Population projections for Region 54 which includes Smithers, Houston and Telkwa. Town of Smithers population projections were extrapolated from Region 54 projections.

At the projected growth rate of 1.5% per annum, Smithers population could reach close to 7,600 people in the next 20 years. Using a person per house ratio of 3.0 (from the 1996 census data), this population increase could mean accommodating an additional 145 housing units over the next five years (about 30 per year) and nearly 700 housing units over the next 20 years. (Using a growth rate of 2.5% per annum, Smithers population could reach as high as 9,215 people in the next 20 years requiring about 1,200 new housing units or about 50 per year.)

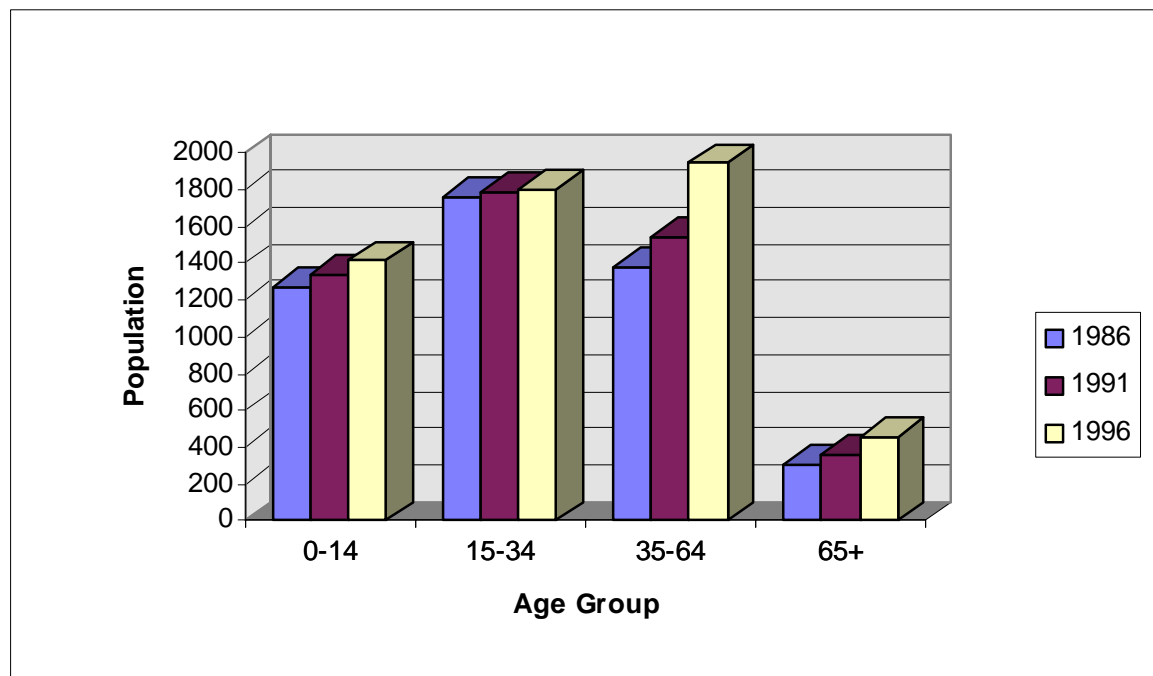
Population Characteristics

The make up of the population of Smithers has altered over the past years.

A profile of population changes in age groups is illustrated in Graph 3. Several points are worth noting:

- In the 15-34 age group, there was virtually no change between 1986-1991; the number of residents has remained relatively constant representing between 36-37% of the total population. However, 1996 experienced a percentage decrease representing only 32% of the total population
- A dramatic increase in the 35-64 age group occurred in 1996, representing 35% of the population; whereas, in the previous census years, this age group represented only 29% in 1986 and 31% in 1991. In BC, this age group represents 38% of all individuals living in BC
- The 65+ age group has remained relatively constant over the past 20 years; representing between 6-8% of the population. Whereas, 12% of all individuals living in BC fall within this age group

Graph 3: Population by Age Group



Source: Statistics Canada, 1996 Census year for Smithers

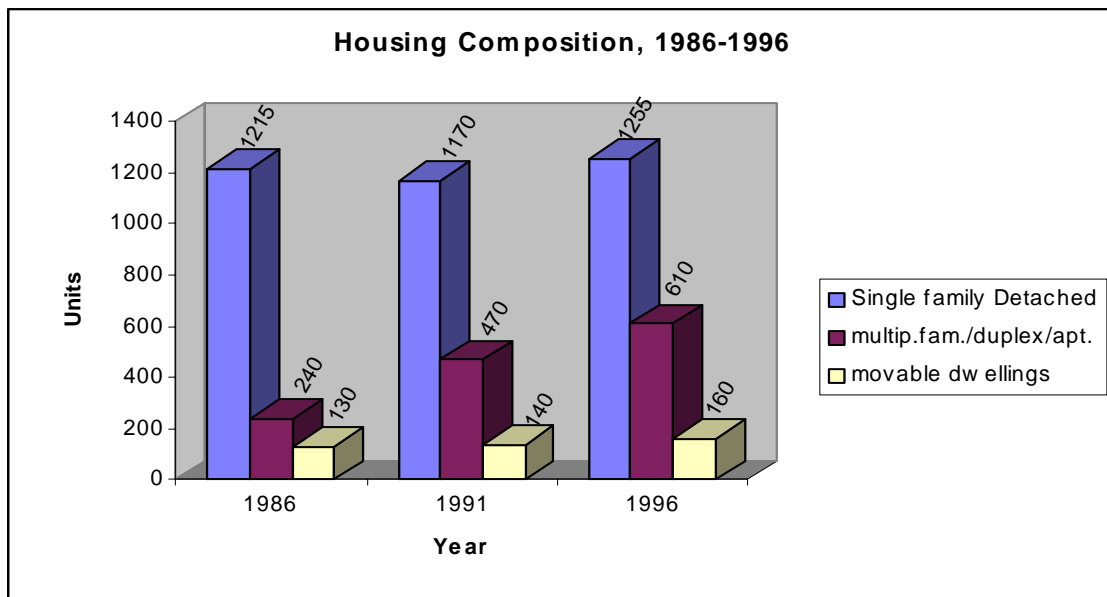
HOUSING

Housing Type

Housing data for the past three Census periods indicates that single family dwellings continue to predominate in Smithers as shown in Graph 4 below. However, the dominance of single-family homes in Smithers has slowly begun to evolve to more multi-family dwellings, as represented by Census figures. These are typical as communities, like Smithers, grow and mature and are able to offer a broader housing mix.

In the 1986 census, single family represented 77% of the housing stock, by 1991 this number decreased to 66%, and today, single family represents only 61% of the total housing stock for the Town of Smithers. As a comparison, single-family detached homes represent 56% of the total housing stock for BC. A tripling of multiple family dwellings has offset the decline in single-family dwellings. Movable dwellings have remained relatively constant, representing 8% of the housing stock available in Smithers. This figure is higher than that found for BC as a whole, where only 2% of the total dwellings are movable.

Graph 4: Housing Type

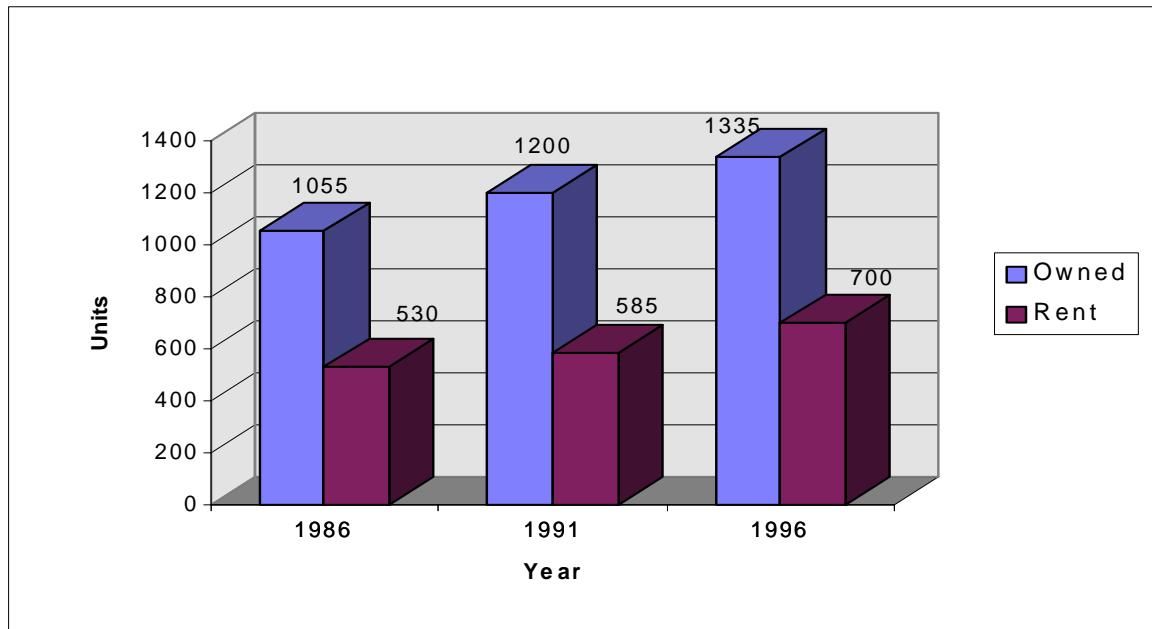


Source: Statistics Canada

Housing Tenure

According to the 1996 Census, the number of homes owned in Smithers was 1335, representing 2/3 of all units in the community; while 700 units or 1/3 of the total housing was rented. The number of renters has been steadily increasing over the last three census years. Between 1986-1991, there were 55 more rental units with an additional 115 units added between 1991-1996. Although the number of renters has increased over the years, the percentage of rental units (1/3 rented to 2/3 owned) has remained relatively the same for the past 20 years. This could reflect the increase in availability of rental units as shown by the increase in multi-family units. It may also reflect economic conditions or affordability, where residents choose to rent rather than own.

Graph 5: Housing Tenure

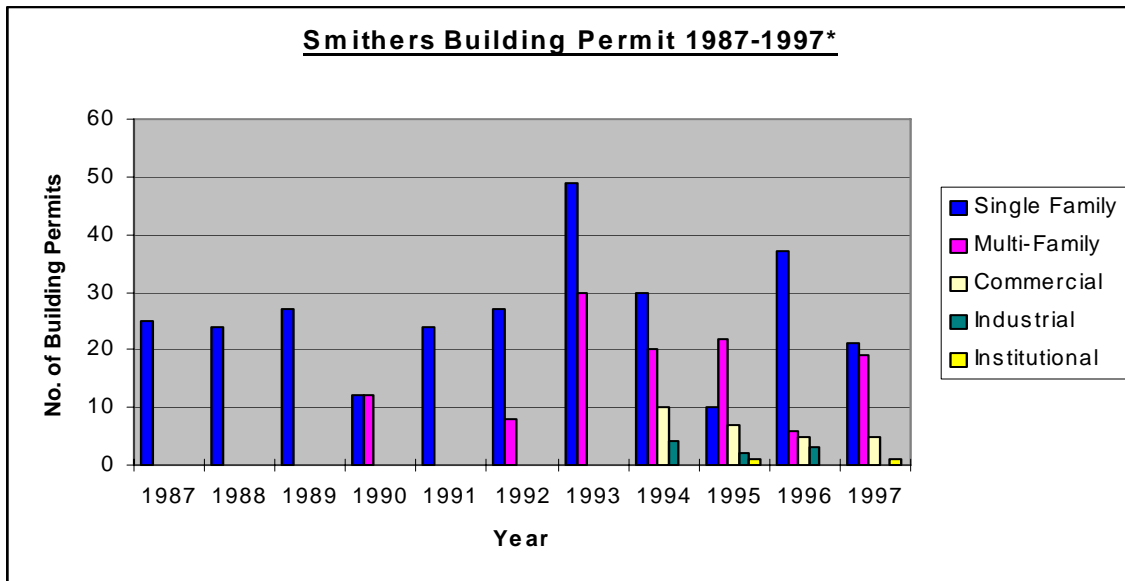


Source: Statistics Canada, by Census years

Development Trends

Building permit information for the ten year period, 1987 to 1997, is identified in Graph 6. Single-family dwellings throughout this period made up the majority of permits issued. The only exception is in 1995, when permits for multi-family dwelling outnumbered single family. On average, the Town has absorbed approximately 25 single-family units per year over the last 10 years.

Graph 6: Building Permits



Source: Town of Smithers. Note that information regarding the number of building permits issued in Smithers for the commercial, industrial and institutional sectors were not readily available between 1987-1993.

THE ECONOMY

The economy of Smithers was built upon the primary resource sectors, specifically, the forestry and mining industries. The economy has diversified over the years and the Town supports a strong government and service sector and growing tourism industry, however, forestry and mining continue to be important economic activities in the life of Smithers.

According to the 1996 Census, the key industries for the Town of Smithers include: Retail and wholesale; financial, real estate and business services; primary; manufacturing; and government services. Table 2, summarizes Smithers labour force by industry for both 1991 and 1996.

Table 2: Labour Force by Industry, 1991 & 1996

Industry Category	1991 Number of Employed	% of Total	1996 Number of Employed	% of Total
Primary	240	9%	275	9%
Manufacturing	275	10%	270	9%
Construction	195	7%	225	7%
Trans./Communic./Utilities	300	11%	275	9%
Retail & Wholesale	565	20%	615	20%
Fin./Real Est./ Business/Insurance	115	4%	290	10%
Government Services	240	9%	200	6%
Education Services	130	5%	110	4%
Health and Social Services	195	7%	260	9%
Accommodation, Food and Beverage Services			290	10%
Other Services	520	18%	215	7%
Totals	2775	100	3025	100

Source: Statistics Canada by Census years 1991 and 1996

Based on Table 2:

- A significant proportion of individuals employed in Smithers (20%) according to 1991 & 1996 census data, work in the Retail & Wholesale industries. This appears to indicate the strength of Smithers as a service centre for the Bulkley-Nechako region.
- There was a significant increase in the number of individuals employed in the Financial/Real Estate/ Business Sector in 1996 (290 individuals or 10% of the working population compared to only 115 individuals or 4% of the working population in 1991). This again, supports the role of Smithers as a service centre for its region.
- Despite the slow downs in the forestry and mining sectors, the 1996 proportion of individuals employed in the primary sector remains around 9%, the same as the 1991 figures. Primary industries continue to play a dominant role in Smithers' economy.
- In conclusion, Smithers has a very diverse economy that is uncommon for most northern communities, which are generally very reliant on the resource sector.

LAND USE POLICIES AND PLAN

1. COMMUNITY GOALS AND GUIDING OBJECTIVES

The Town of Smithers picturesque downtown commercial core, based on an Alpine theme, is reminiscent of traditional Main streets of a long ago era and supported with pride by the residents of Smithers. Smithers' uniqueness is in the Town's blending of old buildings and traditional development patterns in a small town atmosphere with broad based services offered by a community that serves as a road, rail, and air transportation hub for north-central British Columbia. Smithers are a "Town for All Seasons" offering outstanding recreational opportunities within reach of urban amenities.

The following goals and objectives¹ provide the framework for a vision for the Town by outlining the type of community Smithers residents want to achieve and some of the broad tasks that may be necessary to accomplish their goals. These community goals and guiding objectives form a framework building the policies, which are contained in this Plan.

The Community Goals and Guiding Objectives for the Official Community Plan are to:

- **Maintain a Small Town Atmosphere**
- **Support a Vibrant, Attractive Downtown**
- **Encourage a Diversified, Local Economy**
- **Protect the Natural Environment**
- **Meet the Housing Needs of all Residents and Future Residents**
- **Support Heritage Conservation**
- **Promote the Safe Movement of Pedestrians and Cyclists While Maintaining Efficient Vehicle Circulation**
- **Maintain and Enhance Park, Recreational and Community Facilities for all Smithers Residents**

¹ Note: The goals/objectives were developed through the community planning process that involved meetings with the Town's Planning Committee, Town Council and several public open houses. Material contained in previously prepared reports for the Town including the *1998 Economic Development Strategy* was also utilized.

The Town of Smithers is situated along the Bulkley River in the Bulkley Valley with the Hudson Bay Mountain providing a majestic backdrop to the community. The Town is surrounded by four mountain ranges, hundreds of lakes, fish-laden rivers and vast wilderness. Smithers offers residents and visitors a unique, special blend of the natural environment include open, natural green spaces, mature forested lands, and scenic vistas.

However, there are also limitations for future development within the Town's boundaries due to constraints provided by the natural environment. These natural environmental constraints include the Bulkley River floodplain and steep slopes.

Bulkley River Floodplain

The Bulkley River lies along the eastern boundary of the Town of Smithers. The Water Management Branch of the provincial Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks (MELP) has formally designated a portion of the area adjacent to the River as floodplain. Approximately 90 hectares of floodplain lies within Town of Smithers boundaries. The Bulkley River floodplain is shown on Map 1. The designated flood has a statistical frequency of occurring once every 200 years.

Policy 2.1: It is the policy of Council to protect against the loss of life and to minimize property damage associated with flooding events by encouraging agricultural, park and open-space recreation uses of flood susceptible lands because the threat to life and property is lower with these uses than with residential, commercial and industrial land uses.

Policy 2.2: Residential use is the least acceptable in unprotected flood prone areas. In particular, multi-family residential and mobile home park uses shall be avoided. Where floodable lands are required for development, the construction and siting of buildings and mobile homes to be used for habitation, business or the storage of goods damageable by floodwaters shall be floodproofed to those standards specified by the Ministry of Environment, Land and Parks.

Map 1: Floodplain

Streams

The floodplain limits for side streams and tributaries of the Bulkley River have not been delineated by the MELP and it is likely that there may be lands prone to flooding adjacent to the following watercourses which flow to the Bulkley River: Chicken Lake Creek, Kathlyn Creek, Dahlie Creek (Bigelow Creek) and Seymour Creek. These creeks are also shown on Map 1. Adjacent to Chicken Lake Creek, Kathlyn Creek, Dahlie Creek, Bigelow Creek and Seymour Creek, the construction and siting of buildings and mobile homes to be used for habitation, business or the storage of goods damageable by floodwaters shall be flood proofed to those standards specified by the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks.

In addition, the Bulkley River is a provincially significant river for fishery resources. Streams that feed the Bulkley River flow through the Town of Smithers but originate outside Town boundaries within the mountainous areas. These stream edges, including private and public lands, have undergone human related disturbances including timber/vegetation removal, residential settlement, and agricultural-related impacts. These impacts can affect both water quality and fish habitat factors

Policy 2.3: To allow for the passage of floodwaters, possible bank erosion, and retention of natural vegetation for fish habitat, a setback to remain free from development will be required from the natural boundary of Chicken Lake Creek, Kathlyn Creek, Dahlie Creek (Bigelow Creek) and Seymour Creek. These setbacks shall be in accordance with the “Land Development Guidelines for the Protection of Aquatic Habitat” prepared by the Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Provincial Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks.

Steep Slopes

To determine lands that are suitable for development, and those that offer hazardous development conditions, an analysis of slopes within the Town's boundaries was carried out. Steep slopes are generally limited to two broad areas within the Town's boundaries: the mountain slopes that form the western edge of the municipality and a bench that runs along a portion of the eastern boundary of the Town, immediately west of the Bulkley River floodplain. Map 2 provides a graphic illustration of slopes within municipal boundaries.

Policy 2.4: It is the policy of Council to require professional geotechnical assessment for all construction on slopes exceeding 10%. Because of the hazards associated with steep slopes it is the policy of Council to discourage building, grading and tree harvesting on slopes exceeding 30%. Hillsides of 20-30% slope shall be developed at intensities not exceeding ten percent lot coverage including roads and patios. Grading and tree harvesting should be minimized, and hillsides exceeding 20% slope, with no forest cover, should be planted.

Map 2: Steep Slope Analysis

Visual Landscape

Crown lands surrounding the Town of Smithers are managed by the *Bulkley Land and Resource Management Plan* (LRMP). Hudson Bay Mountain, specifically, adjacent to Town boundaries, covers around 12,758 hectares of land and is classified by the LRMP as a “Special Management Zone 2”. According to the LRMP, primary planning objectives for the Hudson Bay Mountain area are to:

- Maintain visual quality by reviewing developments in order to minimize impacts to the greatest possible extent
- Encourage commercial and public recreation
- Retain existing road network
- Protect wildlife habitat and water quality

The Babine Mountains also form a significant visual backdrop to the Town of Smithers. The Province have recently declared the Babines as a Class A provincial park . As the closet park to Smithers, it is used by hikers, cross-country skiers and snowmobilers and constitutes a valuable visual and recreational resource for Town residents.

Policy 2.5: Council supports the objectives of the Land and Resource Management Plan to maintain the visual quality of Hudson Bay Mountain. The maintenance of the visual quality of all mountains surrounding the Town, including the Babine Mountains, is also encouraged. The recreational use of the Babines is also supported.

Air Quality

Air quality has been a continuing issue in Smithers. A recent report (Bulkley Valley Inhalable Particulate Summary: April 1998, by the Pollution Prevention Programme, Skeena Region, BC Environment) notes “recent regulatory initiatives such as those in place for woodstoves and open burning combined with public information campaigns have had qualified success.” However there are continued air quality indicators that exceed BC Environment air quality levels in Smithers, every year, “regardless of meteorological conditions and emission reduction and management strategies.”

Policy 2.6: Council continues to support the use of modern pollution control technology and implementation of additional emission reduction and management strategies to improve the air quality of Smithers and Bulkley Valley.

Trees

Trees are part of Smithers' natural heritage. They form a very important visual landscape element and are prized and appreciated by local residents and visitors alike.

Policy 2.7: Council supports the retention of existing trees and other significant vegetation in the Town of Smithers. In addition, Council supports the establishment of a tree protection bylaw.

Policy 2.8: Council shall amend its Subdivision and Development Control Bylaw to require that a new tree be planted for each new lot and/or for each 15 metres of road frontage (whichever requires the most trees) in new subdivisions.

Policy 2.9: Council shall undertake a street tree-planting program for the Downtown area.

CURRENT HOUSING STOCK

About 60% of current housing in Smithers is made up of single-family dwellings with an additional 10% mobile homes. The remainder is made up of various forms of multi-family housing, including duplexes, townhouses, three storey apartments. During the community planning process, residents and Council have indicated that they would like to see both more housing choice as an alternative to single family dwellings, and greater housing affordability including rental housing. During the public process towards development of the Community Economic Development Strategy residents identified housing as one of Smithers greatest weaknesses: perception that housing costs too much, there is not enough choice, and there is virtually no rental housing or multi-family units that are affordable for individuals in lower income brackets. *(Source: Community Economic Development Strategy, page 7)*

Future Needs

It has been estimated, based on past development trends and future projected growth rates, that there is a need in Smithers to accommodate approximately 25-30 single family dwellings per year with an additional 4-5 multi-family units per year. (It is noted that multi-family housing projects often supply 20 or more units at a time, but not necessarily on a consistent or annual basis.) For the near future, residential land uses will be largely accommodated within Town boundaries by development of the Willowvale subdivision. Additional housing will occur with some infilling of single family homes on vacant lots within established residential areas, as well as the redevelopment of properties perhaps to higher densities within older residential areas.

According to the Willowvale Plan, the Willowvale residential area can accommodate approximately 400 single family lots with a potential for an additional 120 multiple family units. At build out, it is estimated that about 1,600 people could be housed in Willowvale, thereby meeting the anticipated housing needs of Smithers for the next 10 to 20 years.

Mix of Housing Types

Policy 3.1: It is the policy of Council to encourage development of new residential subdivisions which will include a mix of housing types to accommodate the needs of all residents, including apartments and semi-detached and detached smaller housing designed to meet the special needs of senior citizens.

Single Family Residential

*Policy 3.2: It is the policy of Council that land use within areas designated **Single Family Residential** on the Land Use Map be restricted to detached single family residences only. The maximum, overall density shall be 4 - 6 dwelling units per acre or 10 - 15 dwelling units per hectare.*

Policy 3.3: Mobile Homes, including manufactured and modular homes are restricted to designated mobile home park areas as shown on the Land Use Map.

*Policy 3.4: New, stand alone, mobile home parks will be considered within **Single Family Residential** designations subject to the following conditions:*

- *Connection to municipal water, sanitary sewer and storm drainage systems*
- *A minimum site size of 1 hectare (2.5 acres)*
- *Establishment of a comprehensive site plan showing lay out of the pads, internal road circulation, parking, and extent of buffering from adjacent non-mobile homeland uses.*

Secondary Suites

Secondary suites are self-contained living quarters with food preparation and sanitary facilities, which are located within a single-family residential dwelling. These secondary suites are often located in basement or ground level areas of the residential dwelling. The creation of secondary suites can be an important component of increasing housing affordability in a community both for the renter of the secondary suite and the owner of the principal dwelling as a “mortgage helper”. The secondary suite provides a housing alternative, and increases the supply of rental accommodation, while only modestly increasing the housing density within a neighbourhood without affecting built form. Issues such as parking for the occupants of the secondary suite can sometimes become

contentious within an existing neighbourhood but can be overcome by provisions within a zoning bylaw to require an additional parking space.

Policy 3.5: Council supports secondary suites in single family dwellings within Smithers subject to revisions to the Town's Zoning Bylaw which will:

- *require an additional on-site parking space*
- *be owner-occupied*
- *have a maximum size for the suite of 1,000 square feet*
- *meet the BC Building Code*
- *not be contained within a dwelling also occupied by a home occupation*
- *require rezoning to a zone permitting single family dwellings with secondary suites*

Multi-Family Residential

While single-family dwellings are the predominant housing form in Smithers, there are some examples of multiple family developments within the Town. Low-rise apartments, generally three storeys in height, are found along the Main Street north corridor with some townhousing and duplex units located in the general area east and west of Downtown Smithers and in other isolated pockets around Smithers.

*Policy 3.6: Generally, a mixture of apartments, townhousing, duplexes and single family homes will be permitted in the areas designated **Mixed Residential** on the Land Use Map subject to specific policies for different Mixed Residential areas as outlined in the following policies.*

*Policy 3.7: The **Mixed Residential** designation is allocated to four primary areas: Area One - east and west of Downtown Smithers, Area Two – along Main Street North, Area Three - within the Willowvale neighbourhood and Area Four – within the Fulton Avenue Area. Specific housing form and density maximums for each of these areas are discussed in the policies below.*

Mixed Residential Area One: East and West of Downtown Smithers

The residential neighbourhood located east and west of Downtown Smithers can be characterized as a well-maintained older neighbourhood of mostly single family dwellings, which was historically built emanating from the primary commercial core of Town. The established pattern of existing single family dwellings, coupled with the difficulty in assembling large blocks of land for more intensive forms of housing (such as apartments), suggest that this area is not suitable for apartment-type dwellings. However, its location in close proximity to commercial and community services offered by the Downtown provide an ideal location for some increase in residential population. These combined factors suggest that this area is most suitable in accommodating a modest increase in residential density, which would include single-family dwellings, duplexes, and ground oriented townhousing.

*Policy 3.8: The following housing form is supported in the **Mixed Residential Area One**: single family dwellings, duplex units, and townhousing. Townhousing is described as attached, ground oriented, entry-level units that fit within a streetscape of predominantly single-family dwellings. No apartments are supported in this area. The maximum, overall density shall be 10 - 12 units per acre or 25 - 30 units per hectare.*

Mixed Residential Area Two: Main Street North

The Main Street north corridor accommodates a mix of residential building form, although it is the area where many of Smithers low-rise apartment units can be found. Located along a major roadway with immediate access to Highway 16 and commercial areas, this corridor should likely remain the area of Town with the most intensive residential concentration.

*Policy 3.9: The housing form supported in the **Mixed Residential Area Two** is 3 storey apartment dwellings, with some infilling on smaller land parcels of 2 storey stacked townhouse units. Single family and duplex units are not supported in this area. The maximum, overall density is 15 - 30 units per acre or 40 - 75 units per hectare.*

Mixed Residential Area Three: Willowvale Neighbourhood

The Willowvale Neighbourhood is the last, large, undeveloped area within the Town boundaries for residential land uses. The Plan for Willowvale provides for the eventual development of two neighbourhoods divided by a natural feature - Bigelow/Dahlie Creek. The Willowvale Plan, as currently adopted, allows a mixture of housing choice, primarily of single-family dwellings, with several areas designated for mixed residential use. Because the area is new to develop (no existing land uses) and much of the land base is municipally or provincially controlled, the area provides a unique opportunity for innovative housing form.

*Policy 3.10: The following housing forms are supported in the **Mixed Residential** area designated within the Willowvale Neighbourhood: townhousing and stacked townhousing to a maximum density of 12 - 15 units per acre or 30 - 40 units per hectare. Single-family dwellings and apartments are not supported.*

Mixed Residential Area Four: Fulton Avenue Area

The area generally bounded by Fulton Avenue, Fourteenth, Fifteenth, and Sixteenth Avenues is home to several large parcels of apartment buildings. These are mostly comprised of three storey “walkup” apartments and two storey townhouse complexes.

*Policy 3.11: To reflect existing development in the area, the housing form supported in the **Mixed Residential Area Four** is 3 storey apartment buildings with some infilling on smaller parcels of 2 storey stacked townhouses. Single-family dwellings and duplexes are not supported. The maximum overall density is 15 - 30 units per acre or 40 - 75 units per hectare*

Housing Affordability

Phase One: Willowvale Planning Study, prepared in 1993 by City Spaces, noted “Quality housing is relatively affordable when compared with many other centres in the province.” (Source: *Phase One: Willowvale Planning Study*, page 2). However, the report also notes “There are many households in Smithers who cannot afford home ownership and find it difficult to secure affordable, adequate housing for themselves or their families. Housing problems are most serious for low income, lone parent families.” (Source: *Phase One: Willowvale Planning Study*, page 3) The Study questions whether new, rental housing will be built unless market

rents move higher, and notes that as an alternative, developers may build small, strata-titled projects for sale to individual investors who, in turn will use them for rental income.

The Willowvale Study stresses that Smithers requires a balanced housing stock, which would meet the needs of all residents and future residents through encouragement of alternatives to the traditional single-family dwelling. Changing stages of life, age groups, family structure, lifestyle and income such as experienced by the elderly, youth, single parents, unemployed, and those on social assistance need to be accommodated within different housing forms and tenures.

Policy 3.12: The Town will continue its role in developing land and private developers will be invited to bid on developing Town owned land. While it is the policy of Council that lot prices will recover the actual costs of development, Council will consider subsidizing serviced land for senior citizen housing projects and other groups whose housing needs are not met by the private market.

Role of the Town of Smithers

As public land owners in primary residential areas (i.e. Willowvale) the Town of Smithers has an excellent, and somewhat unique, opportunity to help facilitate the provision of all types of housing including affordable housing. Affordable housing would include the development of housing for low-income households, people with “special needs” and/or rental accommodation. (“Special needs”, as defined in the Willowvale Plan, could include people with chronic physical or mental disabilities, victims of violence/abuse, low-income families, older single men and others.)

In Phase Two of the Willowvale Plan, the majority of sites for multiple family development are located near the western or townward end of Willowvale and are considered an ideal location for the construction of special needs, seniors or affordable housing because of their proximity to services and amenities already available.

*Policy 3.13: Council supports the leasing of Town-owned and Crown-owned property in suitable locations to non-profit groups for the creation of affordable and special needs housing. Specifically, land designated **Mixed Residential** within the Willowvale neighbourhood would be considered suitable. To ensure the maintenance of these properties for affordable and/or special needs housing the Town will enter into a housing agreement with the non-profit group under provisions of the Municipal Act, which would specify tenure, occupancy, and rent reviews.*

AGRICULTURE

Agriculture forms a significant part of the economy for the entire Bulkley Valley and, specifically, for the Town of Smithers. Generally, the land is best suited for the production of forage crops and cattle farming and dairy production predominant. *(Source: Community Economic Development Strategy, page 14)*

Much of the land in the northern portion of the Town, including the airport and associated lands, and some pockets of land along the Bulkley River is located within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). About 430 hectares of Smithers' land base is found within the ALR - encompassing about 1/4 of Smithers' total land base. Map 3 shows the ALR lands within the Town of Smithers and, to provide context, beyond municipal boundaries.

Land found within the ALR is regulated by the provincial government through the British Columbia Agricultural Land Commission (BCALC). Provisions of the Agricultural Land Commission Act, and associated regulations and Commission resolutions, take precedence over municipal land use bylaws, including Official Community Plans. Commission staff have confirmed that there are no active applications for exclusion or inclusion of ALR lands within the Town.

Policy 4.1: Support the agricultural industry by supporting the Agricultural Land Reserve.

*Policy 4.2: All lands within the Agricultural Land Reserve are designated **Agricultural** within the Land Use Map.*

*Policy 4.3: Only agricultural activities are supported in the area designated **Agricultural** with the exception of the airport and its operations.*

Non-Farm uses within the ALR

Policy 4.4 The existing airport and its current operations are supported as non-farm uses within the Agricultural Land Reserve. The land area covered by the airport is shown graphically on the Land Use Map.

Policy 4.5 Notwithstanding Policy 4.4 it is recognized that the Town may make application to the Land Commission for future exclusion from the ALR for the airport lands. Exclusion may be necessary to enhance airport operations in order to achieve economic viability as the Town takes over control of operations.

Map 3: Agricultural Land Reserve

RURAL

For the most part, rural residential land uses (homes on large acreages) are restricted to small areas on the edge of Town associated with agricultural operations or areas outside of Town boundaries under the jurisdiction of the Bulkley-Nechako Regional District. These areas are unserved by municipal water and sewer utilities.

There is a growing demand for large lot residential for individuals who desire a more rural lifestyle than is offered by the traditional single-family lot in an urban environment. These lots would typically be in the order of 0.4-2 hectares (1-5 acres). This type of residential land use does not, by its nature, have access to municipal utility services. Lots of this type are only suitable where adequate on-site water can be found and soils are capable of providing on-site sewage disposal. This is problematic, as soils within the Town of Smithers are generally not considered suitable for on-site septic disposal.

Policy 4.6: While it is recognized that there may be a desire for large lot residential land uses (in the order of 0.4 – 2 hectares or 1 to 5 acre parcel holdings), this type of rural residential land use is not supported within current Town boundaries.

*Policy 4.7: It is the policy of Council that development of land designated **Rural** will not be allowed. Subdivision of land into parcels less than sixteen hectares within areas designated **Rural** will not be permitted without the provision of roads and sewerage, storm drain and water facilities. The cost of providing such services will dictate a more rural development density.*

5.**PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION**

The extensive network of active park space, passive open space, and indoor recreational facilities which Smithers residents have available, help to define the high quality of life residents of the Town have come to enjoy. The green space, to enjoy outdoor pursuits of all kinds and for all ages, are in large part the reason why people stay in Smithers and the reason why many people move to Smithers.

The need to maintain existing parks and expand park and recreational facilities is of great interest to the community. Residents are interested in the provision of additional recreational opportunities including ball diamonds and soccer fields, as well as more informal open space with particular interest in completion of and expansion to the Perimeter Trail system.

The *1997 Parks and Recreation Master Plan* suggests that Smithers has a well developed system of parks and open space with a mix of active and passive areas which are well used by Smithers residents and visitors. The community's existing active parks and open spaces are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Existing Parks and Open Space

Public Parks	Size in Hectares
Community Parks	
Heritage	7.0
Elks	5.8
Civic Use	
Veterans Peace Park	0.6
Central Park	2.0
Neighbourhood Parks	
Dogwood	1.9
Chandler	3.3
Mystery	0.1
Princess	0.2
Ranger	3.7
Lake Kathlyn	1.5
Silverking / Reiser Parks	0.3
Open Space	
Riverside Park	45.9
Total Park and Open Space	72.3

Source: adapted from Figure Three: Developed Parks and Open Space, page 13, Town of Smithers Recreation and Culture Master Plan

Existing parks and open spaces are illustrated in Map 4 on the following page.

Map 4: Existing Parks and Open Spaces

Park Space and Recreation Priorities

There is a total of 72.3 hectares of active park and open space for Smithers residents of which 26.5 hectares is dedicated to active park use. Special use areas, such as the Fall Fair Grounds, and facilities, such as school play areas, have been excluded from the calculation.

Based on a total of 26.5 hectares of active park space and a population of 6000 residents, Smithers currently has a parks to person ratio of 4.4 hectares per 1000 residents. The Town's Master Parks Plan states that the established Canadian standard is 3.6 hectares of park per 1000 population. The Parks Master Plan, however, also acknowledges that these standards cannot be universally applied and the focus should be on meeting the park needs of each unique community. (*Source: Town of Smithers Recreation and Culture Master Plan 1998 – 2002*)

The following sections of the Plan outline the park and recreation priorities of the Town to meet Smithers green space objectives.

The Willowvale Neighbourhood

It is anticipated that some of the shortfall in park space as identified in the *Park and Recreation Master Plan* may be made up with the completion of the Willowvale residential neighbourhood. The *Willowvale Plan* calls for 8.2 hectares of new park space. This includes two active, local neighbourhood parks one each in the east and west neighbourhoods (2.3 hectares), a passive park area in Dahlie (Bigelow) Creek Park (5.4 hectares) centred around the Creek, and several linear parks to accommodate a trail system (0.5 hectares).

Policy 5.1: Council supports the creation of Dahlie (Bigelow) Creek Park and additional neighbourhood park space in the Willowvale neighbourhood at such time as further residential development takes place in Willowvale. The approximate locations of additional park space in Willowvale is as designated on the Land Use Map.

Subsequent to completion of the *Park and Recreation Master Plan*, the Town's Recreation Commission has placed a high priority on the following items:

- second sheet of ice
- ball diamonds/soccer fields

- Heritage Park washrooms

With the exception of the ball diamonds/soccer fields, it is anticipated that all facilities will be located within the Heritage Park.

Policy 5.2: Council supports the recommendations of the Town's Recreation Commission that a second sheet of ice, ball diamonds/soccer fields and Heritage Park washrooms are high priority items.

Heritage Park

Heritage Park, located along the Yellowhead Highway between Toronto and Manitoba Streets, is a significant community park for the Town of Smithers. It is a multi-use site which houses three major indoor recreational facilities (the ice arena, curling rink, and pool), ball diamonds, a skateboard park and an active children's area. Heritage Park is acknowledged as an ideal location for additional facilities due to savings in capital and operating costs from like-facilities located together, convenience, access and serving as a focal point for the community. However, given existing recreational facilities and the demand for more facilities (with the associated needs for parking etc.), it needs to be determined if Heritage Park can successfully accommodate more facilities without jeopardizing the integrity of existing facilities.

Policy 5.3: In recognition of the increasing demand for additional facilities at Heritage Park, Council supports the development of a comprehensive plan for Heritage Park which would include the maintenance of existing built facilities, as well as, the possibility of a second sheet of ice, racquet courts and washroom facility. The Plan should also include consideration for adequate parking.

Ball Diamonds/Soccer Fields

The location of additional ball diamonds/soccer fields has not been determined. A *Ball Park and Soccer Field Site Search*, completed in 1998, confirmed that the existing softball and soccer facilities are barely adequate to meet current demand and inadequate to meet any significant increase in demand which will come with population growth in Smithers and the surrounding area. Single fields may be constructed in conjunction with future school sites, namely Willowvale, Silverking, and Fulton Avenue, however it may be some time before these schools are built and these fields could be developed in advance of school construction.

Policy 5.4: Council supports the cooperative efforts of the Town and School District No. 54 towards the location of ball diamonds and soccer fields on future school sites in Willowvale, Silverking and Fulton Avenue areas. The Town will work with the School District in the siting of ball diamonds and soccer fields on future school sites so as to avoid the removal or reallocation of the fields in the future when the schools are built.

Policy 5.5: The Town will work cooperatively with School District 54, as well as the independent schools in Smithers, to investigate options for improving existing ball and soccer facilities at the various school sites and making these available for community-wide use.

While construction of new single fields on school reserve sites may alleviate some pressure for new facilities, the *Site Search Study* recommends that a multiple soccer field and four diamond ballpark facility be built. The Study looked at a number of publicly owned sites both within Town boundaries and beyond. Ownership, parcel size, location, access, topography, zoning, Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) designation, as well as other factors, were considered in ranking each site for their suitability for ballpark/soccer field development. The Fall Fair Grounds was ranked number 2 (of the 14 sites) after a site located outside Town boundaries. The site offers good access, suitable topography, existing public use zoning, and Town ownership. The site is also located outside of the ALR. Other sites may also be appropriate.

Policy 5.6: Council supports the development of a multiple ball field/soccer field facility within Town boundaries.

Active Play Equipment

In the past, community groups in Smithers have bought play structures and donated them to the Town for use in neighbourhood parks. This includes such facilities as the Kinsmen's Kiddies Park in Heritage Park.

Policy 5.7: It is the policy of Council to continue its support of community initiatives to improve recreation and cultural opportunities.

Perimeter Trail System

The Perimeter Trail system offers residents of Smithers a circular trail system around the edges of Town for a variety of activities including: walking, jogging, hiking, biking, and cross-country skiing. The trail system connects major community parks, such as Riverside Park along the Bulkley River with smaller neighbourhood parks, residential neighbourhoods, and Downtown Smithers.

One section of the Perimeter Trail system is currently incomplete - from the Willowvale neighbourhood along Railway Avenue to Toronto Street. The preferred routing of the trail would be west of the existing rail tracks. Completion of the trail in this location, however, is contingent upon receiving the necessary access (and land) from Canadian National Railways (CN). As an alternative to using CN land, there may be an option to develop a trail along Railway Avenue. It is anticipated that the Railway Avenue trail connection will accommodate both cyclists and pedestrians and involve a 10 to 12 foot wide crushed gravel pathway that has picnic tables, benches and planned trees.

Policy 5.8: Council supports the completion of the Perimeter Trail system to connect Willowvale to Toronto Street within the Railway Avenue corridor, as well as connections to neighbourhoods, as a priority item of the Recreation Commission. A vegetated, landscaped buffer is to be provided along all trail edges wherever possible.

Natural Open Space

Natural open spaces form a significant component of the overall parks system and play a vital role in maintaining environmental integrity of the Town of Smithers. These open spaces include areas, which have remained undeveloped due to natural features such as watercourses, ravines, wetlands and steep slopes. These open space areas may or may not incorporate areas for passive recreational use, such as wildlife viewing, and informal pathways.

A wetland natural area has been proposed on Town land adjacent to the Willowvale neighbourhood. It is intended that the wetland area will serve as a storm water detention facility as well as provide for passive recreational opportunities.

Policy 5.9: It is the policy of Council to maintain undevelopable areas as natural open space. Where appropriate, passive recreational uses and informal walkways may be incorporated into the open space.

RECREATION

The Town of Smithers Recreation and Culture Master Plan recognizes that “...for a small community, Smithers has a large number of indoor recreation facilities, most of which are in public ownership...” A listing of these recreational facilities is provided in Table 4.

Table 4: Major Recreation Facilities

Facility	Ownership	Operation
Curling Rink	Curling Club	Curling Club
Ice Arena	Town of Smithers	Town of Smithers
Indoor Pool	Bulkley Nechako Regional District	Bulkley Valley Aquatic Society
Forestry Building	Town of Smithers	Town of Smithers
Museum	Town of Smithers	Museum Society
Senior Centre	Bulkley Valley Senior Society	Seniors Society
Library	Town of Smithers	Library Society
Golf Club	Smithers Golf and Country Club	Golf Club
Central Park Building	Town of Smithers	Central Park Building Society
Archery Grounds	Town of Smithers	Bowmen Valley Association
Fall Fair Grounds	Town of Smithers	Town of Smithers

Source: Adapted from Town of Smithers Master Parks and Recreation Plan, Figure 6, Page 25.

Policy 5.10: It is the policy of Council to place high priority on the development of the Town’s outdoor recreation facilities to meet the demand for recreation by its residents and to enhance tourism.

6.**COMMUNITY USES**

Community land uses include a broad range of public and institutional facilities, which serve the educational, health/safety, and cultural needs of the Town's residents. These uses include specific sites such as schools, churches, hospital and police stations, as well as, land required to service the municipal utility infrastructure - sewage treatment facilities and water reservoirs. Civic uses, such as the library and Town Hall are also included as Community Uses.

Schools

School District No. 54 (Bulkley Valley) has five existing school facilities within the Town of Smithers; there are three elementary schools, one middle school and one secondary school with a 1998 total public school enrolment of 1,887 students. By year 2005, Smithers is expected to have a public school enrolment of just over 2,000 students. Lake Kathlyn Elementary School is located in the northern most edge of Smithers and serves the rural population of northern Smithers and the surrounding Regional District. In addition, there are two private schools operating in Smithers - Bulkley Valley Christian School (two sites) and St. Joseph School.

Public school facility planning is the responsibility of School District No. 54. While no new school construction is scheduled, Walnut Park Elementary School is slated for an addition and the School District has received funding from the BC government in order to have an addition built for Smithers Secondary School. Neither of these additions requires additional land.

In addition to providing educational facilities, the existing school sites offer important recreational amenities for the residents of Smithers, including ball diamonds, soccer fields and play areas.

Policy 6.1: The policy of Council is to continue the close cooperative working relationship with the School District in providing education, joint recreation and community facilities and activities.

Future School Sites

School District 54 owns one future school site, located in the Fulton Avenue area. The Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks has also established school reserve sites in the Willowvale and Silverking subdivision areas. These sites are slated for construction once student enrolment growth in these areas exceeds existing facilities. These are shown as Community Use - Schools on the Land Use Map.

Policy 6.2: Future schools sites will be maintained as schools reserves to ensure that at such time as population warrants school construction can take place in the Willowvale neighbourhood, Silverking neighbourhood, and Fulton Avenue areas.

Policy 6.3: It is the policy of Council to continue reserving school sites for the future construction of public schools in Smithers.

Civic Facilities

There are several important civic facilities, including government offices and the library, located within Downtown Smithers or in close proximity. The Bulkley Valley Museum, Art Gallery, Chamber of Commerce (and fire hall) are located within Central Park with the Town Hall located along Fourth Avenue. While the Post Office has recently relocated off Main Street to a new facility, it has remained within Downtown Smithers.

Policy 6.4: To help maintain a vibrant, thriving Downtown Smithers, Council supports the location of any new civic facilities to be located in Downtown Smithers or the reconstruction of civic facilities on existing sites. Senior levels of government are encouraged to locate their offices in a Downtown Smithers location.

Public Health and Safety

There are a number of community uses within the Town, which are directly related to the health, and safety of the public. These include the firehall, police station, ambulance centre, and Bulkley Valley Hospital.

Other land areas to accommodate utility infrastructure, such as sewage lagoons, are also considered community use, as they are vital public health facilities. These have also been designated community use and specifically labelled. Additional community uses for public health and safety, such as medical clinics, may be anticipated in the near future. Future public health and safety facilities will require a **Community Use** designation.

Existing community uses related to public health and safety have been designated **Community Use** on the Land Use Map.

Churches and other Gathering Places

There are several churches located throughout the Town of Smithers each serving a specific membership or community. Many churches fulfil a number of roles beyond their traditional religious function by providing educational, daycare services, and community meeting places. Additional church sites have not been designated in this Plan. Churches and other religious institutions or facilities for community-based organizations are generally compatible with and should be located within residential neighbourhoods. Existing church sites, outside of Downtown Smithers, are designated as **Community Use** and marked “C” for church on the Land Use Map.

Policy 6.5: The location of future church sites should respect Smithers original Town pattern by: terminating street end vistas, be adjacent to major intersections, or near an important community activity centre such as a park or school site.

Social Planning

As the Town continues to grow and diversify, the social well being of the Town’s residents becomes increasingly important. Town Council recognizes the importance of addressing the social well being of the Town from a holistic perspective and supports the formation of a Social Planning Committee to incorporate diverse community interests to provide input to Council on social planning issues.

Policy 6.6: It is Council’s policy to support the formation of a Social Planning Committee. The Social Planning Committee is to provide input to Council on matters of concern with respect to the social well being of the Town, including, but not limited to, issues concerning:

- *the physically and mentally challenged members of the Smithers community*
- *members of the community who are economically or culturally disenfranchised*
- *support for children, youth and seniors.*

Heritage

Smithers was designated as a town site for the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway's divisional headquarters in 1913. In 1921, Smithers became the first village to be incorporated in the province of British Columbia. Originally founded by the Grand Trunk Pacific, later to become Canadian National, the Town succeeded on the strengths of the discovery of large mineral deposits and activities such as logging, saw-milling and agriculture. These resource-based activities have remained a framework of the Town's economy.

Two buildings in the Town of Smithers have been designated as Provincial Heritage buildings, and as such, are protected from demolition by provincial legislation. These buildings are the CN Railway Station and Central Park Building (the old court house). The Central Park Building houses the Bulkley Valley Museum and art gallery, as well as a dance studio. The CN Railway Stations is currently being restored and has been donated to the Smithers Community Services Association for their use.

The eventual restoration of the historic railway station is certain to become a significant focal point for Downtown Smithers, specifically, and for the Town of Smithers in general. It will serve to enhance the Downtown's overall attractiveness. The reuse of these two heritage buildings for community uses serve as examples to the desirability of integrating heritage sites for active use within the community.

Policy 7.1: Council supports the active use of provincially designated heritage buildings for community benefit.

Policy 7.2: Council encourages the initiatives of private owners to preserve the heritage characteristics of their sites, wherever possible.

Discussion at the first open house with residents indicated that there are several other potentially significant historical buildings throughout Smithers. Some examples may include the early 1900's Victorian homes brought in from Victoria by the railway company when the Town was first established, and the church along King Street that was built in 1914. However, there is no formal documentation of buildings with historical significance or heritage sites within the Town. One of the projects to be undertaken by the Bulkley Valley Museum in 1999, with local high school students, will be a photographic documentation of historic buildings in Smithers and a recording of former/present ownership and changes over time. The Bulkley Valley Historical and Museum Society administer the Bulkley Valley Museum.

Policy 7.3: Council supports the ongoing efforts of the Bulkley Valley Historical and Museum Society to preserve and promote historically significant material and knowledge of Smithers, including the initiative to document historic sites within the Town.

Policy 7.4: Council will endeavour to make use of provincial heritage legislation, including related programmes as a means of preserving heritage features within the Town.

Arts and Culture

Historically, the Town supports each year, through grants-in-aid, the Smithers Public Library Association, the Bulkley Valley Museum and Historical Society, the Smithers Gallery Association and the Bulkley Valley Community Arts Council. These organizations are of long standing in the community. The Bulkley Valley Community Arts Council (BVCAC) is an umbrella body, incorporating 18 non-profit groups, 3 profit groups and 1 individual member. In spite of this long-standing financial support, however, there is no comprehensive cultural development plan for the Smithers community as a means of providing direction for various initiatives involving arts and culture. A paper commissioned by the Union of BC Municipalities notes that municipalities have begun to recognize the benefits of art/cultural development which range from economic to social.

Policy 7.5: Town Council recognizes the outstanding efforts of the various cultural service organizations in Smithers, as well as the surrounding Bulkley Valley, in helping to enrich the lives of residents and visitors alike by creating a more complete and healthy community in which to live and visit.

Policy 7.6: Town Council will continue to support, through grants-in-aid funding, as its municipal budget allows, various cultural organizations.

Policy 7.7: In an effort to plan long term for the cultural life of the Smithers community, Town Council supports the development of a future vision by the cultural sector, perhaps through the BVCAC. This vision would include the nature of the relationship between the cultural community and the Town.

The following section provides a vision for the economic role of the Town of Smithers within the context of its Northwest regional setting. Many of the factors affecting the local economy are not within local control - notably many market demands for natural resources, and decisions of major employers and senior governments. However, it is important that the community articulate its vision and strategy for sustaining the local economy, and express support for the business initiatives of the local commercial and industrial sector.

Some of the policies in this section draw on the findings of a recently completed “Community Economic Development Strategy”, published in June 1998, and from public input received during the OCP process. As well, many of the policies of the 1989 OCP remain valid, as the overall direction for economic development has not changed significantly since that time, except that markets and employment in the resource sector have become even more uncertain.

Community Economic Development Strategy

Policy 8.1: Council endorses the 1998 Community Economic Development Strategy as a guiding framework to support economic development in Smithers, and will work to achieve the recommendations of that strategy.

Diversified Economic Base

Policy 8.2: The current broad-based and diverse economy in Smithers is a particular strength, and unusual for a northern community. Retaining and strengthening this diversity is a guiding principle for economic development in the Town of Smithers, and Council will give careful consideration and support to business activities, which strengthen the diversity of economic activities.

Quality of Life

Policy 8.3: The quality of life enjoyed by Smithers residents is an important component of economic strength in the area, and Council is committed to ensuring that economic, social, and environmental quality of life is considered as part of any land use and economic decisions.

Role of Government Offices

Policy 8.4: Regional and provincial government offices in Smithers are an important part of economic diversity, and Council will make all efforts to ensure provincial government services are retained or expanded as much as possible.

Resource Industries

Policy 8.5: Council recognizes the economic foundation provided to the community by resource industries, notably forestry, agriculture and mining, and supports all efforts for these industries to become viable, sustainable, and environmentally sensitive components of the local and regional economy.

Policy 8.6: Council supports business initiatives, which provide added value to resources and supports development of compatible value-added secondary manufacturing business within Smithers industrial areas.

Transportation Centre

Policy 8.7: Smithers supports the enhancement of the regional airport and rail service.

Policy 8.8: In order to strengthen Smithers as a hub of regional transportation and support tourism, Smithers supports an increase in vehicle ferry service and cruise ship service in and out of Prince Rupert as an important transportation linkage.

Retail and Wholesale Business

Policy 8.9: Smithers will continue to enhance its role as the regional centre for retail and wholesale businesses.

Tourism

- Policy 8.10: It is Council policy to develop and support the many tourism opportunities available to the community, which are based upon the exceptional quality and diversity of the natural resources of the Bulkley Valley and the Northwest region of the province.*
- Policy 8.11: Tourism is recognized as an important component of the local economy. Development of tourism is supported through the Commercial land use policies section of the Plan and in the enhancement of tourism-operated facilities of the Town.*
- Policy 8.12: Smithers will continue to improve and add to Town-owned recreation facilities such as public access to the Bulkley River and a perimeter trail system, and supports improvements to regional recreational facilities.*
- Policy 8.13: Council encourages the provincial government to recognize the importance of tourism to the economy and incorporate tourism as an element of all natural resource plans and approvals, including any current or future integrated resource use plans.*

Highway 16 Upgrading

- Policy 8.14: Improvements to the functioning of Highway 16 and appearance to adjacent properties is an important aspect of economic development, and is a primary goal for Council as outlined in the commercial land use and transportation policies of the OCP. Development Permit Area designations on properties adjacent to the Highway are intended to improve design standards in the area.*

Implementation: Ministry of Transportation and Highways; development permit area designation.

Development Approvals

Policy 8.15: Council will work to ensure that all bylaws and development procedures are readily understood by the public and business community, and where possible, will consider streamlining the development process where such actions will not compromise the community desire for input and consultation on development issues.

Implementation: Development Procedures Guides; workshops with business community.

Gaming

Policy 8.16: Council recognizes the importance of charity gaming including small-scale bingos in providing needed revenue for valuable non-profit community organizations in the Town of Smithers. However, while Council supports these local small scale gaming ventures operated by non-profit organizations and service clubs, Council does not support any “destination casinos” or large scale commercially run gaming enterprises including large-scale commercial bingo halls. In addition, the use of video lotto terminals (VLTs) is not supported.

9.**COMMERCIAL**

Smithers functions as a regional commercial service centre, and has a diverse commercial sector, which serves both local and outlying areas. Government plays an important role in the local economy, with provincial offices of the Ministry of Environment, Parks and Lands and the Ministry of Forests, as well as other federal and provincial government offices. Commercial land use is focused both in the Downtown area (primarily along Main Street and 1 block east and west) and the Highway 16 corridor. The Downtown area is the centre for retail, office and civic uses. The Highway 16 area caters to automotive uses, tourist support services (accommodation and restaurants) and some office and retail uses. At the east end of the highway corridor, lands are designated for industrial use, although there is some blurring between commercial and industrial uses through this area.

One of the important issues for the OCP is determining appropriate roles and land uses for the downtown and highway commercial areas. There appears to be some polarisation of highway businesses and downtown businesses. Ideally, they will complement each other, and development of one area will reinforce the other and strengthen the overall commercial sector. Concerns have been expressed about the loss of key businesses from downtown to the highway and to home occupations. Conversely, problems regarding the difficulty of land assembly, site size, exposure to regional traffic/customers, and available parking have been identified as reasons for seeking sites on the highway rather than downtown. OCP policies are aimed at clarifying the roles of these areas, while being practical about the needs of some specific businesses to locate outside the downtown.

It appears that demand for both locations remains high, and that lack of readily available sites is also a concern for new or expanding businesses. It is expected that redevelopment of existing sites will become more important over time. This redevelopment will be a key part of the upgrading process discussed both in this section and in Section 11 Transportation Policies.

Commercial Land Use Strategy

Policy 9.1: The following strategy is intended to define the future roles of the key commercial and industrial areas:

- a) The Downtown will be the primary location for retail, personal service, civic uses and offices. Main Street will be the focus of downtown retail activity, and is expected to become a more specialised commercial district due to property sizes and the existing development pattern.*
- b) The more peripheral areas Downtown including King and Queen Streets, will play an increasingly important role for office and retail use. Upper storey office and/or residential uses are supported in these areas.*
- c) The “Golden Triangle” is considered to be a focal point of the Downtown, and will be redeveloped to incorporate first class tourist accommodation.*
- d) The Smithers Shopping Centre may be considered an anchoring component of the Downtown. Design guidelines will be developed to provide better pedestrian integration and landscaping improvements to reinforce this link to the Downtown.*
- e) The Highway/Tourist Commercial area is intended to provide tourist support services. Development Permits will be required for developments in this area to ensure a high standard of urban design and improve overall appearance.*
- f) The Automotive/Service Commercial area is considered to be a hybrid of service commercial and light industrial uses, with a focus on automotive sales and service.*
- g) To ensure an adequate supply of industrial land in the community, the Light Industrial and Heavy Industrial sites are to be used for warehousing, manufacturing, processing and similar uses. Retail and office use will be restricted to a minor role on these sites, and must be associated with the primary business.*

Implementation: Zoning Bylaw Review; New Development Permit Areas for Highway and Service Commercial

DOWNTOWN SMITHERS

Residents frequently mentioned maintaining the vitality of downtown as the centre of commercial activity and community life as a highly important goal for the OCP. In fact, much of Smithers identity is a direct reflection of the appearance and function of its downtown. It is a key aspect of the following OCP policies that the downtown is recognised as more than a commercial district, but as a true, vibrant downtown characteristic of smaller communities.

Downtown Policies

Policy 9.2: Downtown Smithers consists of the area indicated on Land Use Map B, and incorporates the shopping centre and sites north of Highway 16 which are intended to develop according to the Alpine Theme and provide improved landscaping and pedestrian linkage to the downtown streets. This will also be reinforced by the urban upgrades planned for Highway 16.

Policy 9.3: Downtown Smithers is to be the primary area for commercial uses, offices, government offices and services, and civic uses including library, Post Office, Town Hall and other similar public facilities. Any future Town Hall is to be located within the Downtown.

Parking and Cash-in-Lieu of Parking

The Downtown has successfully developed as a compact, attractive, pedestrian-oriented area that is a prime business location, and a valued part of everyday Smithers community life. One of the difficulties faced by new or expanding businesses is meeting bylaw requirements for parking spaces. Currently, businesses must provide the required parking on their site, or on another site protected by Restrictive Covenant.

Allowing businesses the cash-in-lieu option can be a valuable tool for true downtown areas, which rely on pedestrian use of multiple business sites, provided there is available municipal parking in high demand areas.

The availability of parking in the Downtown, and the parking requirements for new uses have been issues for some time in Smithers. Two parking studies have been completed (UMA, 1991 and Stanley, 1998). The UMA study indicated that the overall supply of parking in the downtown was considered adequate, and that parking requirements and standards were similar to those of comparable communities. The study recommended that the off-street parking requirements be maintained at existing levels.

However, the study also noted the need to improve the site development standards and marking of parking spaces in order to maximise usage of sites, which are often poorly used. The Stanley study on the option of paying cash-in-lieu provided further examination of the parking issues, and recommended that cash-in-lieu be implemented as an option.

Cash-in-Lieu of Parking

Policy 9.4: Council supports the principle of accepting cash-in-lieu of required parking for commercial uses within the Downtown. The cash-in-lieu option will not apply to residential developments, including upper storey residential uses, or to larger developments requiring more than 15 stalls.

Implementation: Zoning Bylaw amendments as per Stanley report

Policy 9.5: The cost of parking spaces paid through cash-in-lieu shall be based on long-term land acquisition costs and site development costs, and shall be reviewed periodically to reflect current costs.

Implementation: Zoning Bylaw

Policy 9.6: Cash-in-lieu payments are not refundable or transferable to other uses, and are considered to be a one-time payment.

Implementation: Zoning Bylaw

Parking Development Standards

Policy 9.7: All parking areas in the Downtown are to be paved and landscaped to improve both their appearance and their usage, with parking spaces to be marked and signed appropriately. Parking spaces should be located adjacent to lanes behind buildings and buildings should be accessible from the lane. A parking site plan is to be included with the Development Permit and Building Permit applications, and shall include all layout, landscaping, storm water drainage, access, lighting and other site plan details as required by the Zoning Bylaw.

Implementation: Subdivision and Development Bylaw; Zoning Bylaw Amendments

HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL

Policies for this commercial land area are intended to provide a clearer direction for the areas now defined as either “Automotive/Service Commercial” or “Highway/Tourist Commercial”. The OCP policies are intended to ensure a future land use pattern that meets the needs of the business community and enhances this area over the long term. The OCP policies are also intended to reinforce the more urban focus proposed as part of the highway upgrading program by improving design standards for developments.

Policy 9.8: Council’s vision for Highway 16 is to develop a strong highway commercial area, which caters both to local residents and the travelling public, with high standards of design, site development and signage, which enhance the image of the community as well as the business itself.

Highway/Tourist Commercial Areas

*Policy 9.9: Areas designated as **Highway/Tourist Commercial** are intended to provide services to tourists and the travelling public. Appropriate uses will include tourist accommodation, restaurants, and service stations. This area is not intended to be the primary automotive area in the long term, and those uses are encouraged to locate in the **Automotive/Service Commercial Area** in the long term.*

Automotive/Service Commercial Area

Policy 9.10: This designation is intended to provide a commercial area, which is focused on automotive and service uses, rather than on tourist uses. In the long term, the Town is supportive of a multi-tenant “truck stop” or “auto mall type” of use in this area to allow grouping of compatible uses.

Signage

The current approach to signage along the Highway 16 corridor has resulted in a very cluttered appearance, and is frequently mentioned by residents as part of the “poor appearance” of this commercial area.

Policy 9.11: Council will work with business owners and the Chamber of Commerce to develop a comprehensive sign bylaw to reduce the overall impact of signage on this corridor according to the Development Permit Area No.2 guidelines.

OTHER COMMERCIAL POLICIES

Home Businesses

In general, home-based businesses are considered to be an asset to the community, providing an “incubator” option, and providing small owner-operated businesses an opportunity for lower start-up costs, part-time work, and lifestyle options for closer relationships between home and family. Trends throughout the province indicate the growing importance of this segment of the economy.

Policy 9.12: Council’s policy is to support home-based business, provided the scale of the business does not:

- *detract from the nature and primary purpose of the residential area*
- *result in significant traffic increase or parking*
- *create any audible or visible evidence of the business (with the exception of minor signage)*
- *have any non-resident employee(s)*

Implementation: Zoning Bylaw

In order to fit within the neighbourhood, the owner of a home-based business will inform the abutting property owners of the proposed home based business prior to the Town issuing a business licence.

Large Scale Commercial Retail

The past decade has seen an explosion of large-scale commercial retail stores or ‘big box’ stores in Canada. This trend towards ‘big box’ stores will likely continue for some time as it filters out of the main metropolitan areas to smaller centres like Smithers. Smithers has historically grown with the original commercial focus on its main street. Commercial

stores then, as now, wanted maximum exposure to shoppers and, accordingly, located on the busiest street. A similar growth has occurred along Highway 16 where there is a significant amount of commercial floor area that already exists, including retail uses such as cars, tools and catalogue warehousing.

Typically ‘big box’ establishments require very large sites to accommodate about 3,250 square metres (35,000 square feet) or more of retail floor area and significant parking areas for a large number of customers. Generally, adequate sites in a small-scale, pedestrian-friendly Downtown, such as Smithers, cannot readily be found or are unsuitable due to access or adjacent uses.

While there are mixed opinions as to the benefits and costs of even the establishment of ‘big box’ retail in a community, it can be argued that this type of development may:

- Potentially lure other ‘big box’ retail stores to Smithers and promote retail growth in general, in the community
- draw people from adjacent communities with a potential for ancillary purchases from existing retailers and other businesses in Smithers
- increase the Town’s direct tax base
- enhance the Town’s competitive position for future commercial development relative to adjacent municipalities
- enhance the Town’s economic diversification away from reliance on traditional resource based industries

Perhaps the greatest challenge lies not in whether “big box” retail is desirable but in finding a suitable and appropriate location for ‘big box’ retail to operate. In addition, a challenge lies in establishing satisfactory guidelines to promote a building form that is compatible with surrounding land uses, as well as, the existing commercial business sector.

Policy 9.13: While retail uses are encouraged to find sites within the Downtown, Council will consider permitting retail uses that have a minimum square footage of 3,250 square metres (35,000 square feet), and food stores with a minimum gross floor area of 2,300 square metres (Bylaw 1366) on Highway 16, only where it can be demonstrated that a larger site size, parking areas and exposure to through traffic are essential to the business and cannot be accommodated on a Downtown Commercial site.

Temporary Commercial Uses

Policy 9.14: In recognition of the need for seasonal commercial uses and per the Municipal Act, Temporary Commercial Uses are supported in the Town of Smithers on lands designated for commercial use. Council may consider this provision for uses which

may not be permitted in the zoning bylaw, but which are considered appropriate short-term uses. As per the Municipal Act requirements, the public shall be advised of any such applications and have opportunity for comment.

Industrial land use in Smithers is located primarily in the south portion of the Town on both sides of Highway 16. One of the planning issues related to industrial land use is ensuring that industrial lands are well utilized, and do not become another, more dispersed commercial area. This is problematic on the Highway 16 sites, as they are attractive for commercial use due to their exposure to through traffic and larger site sizes than found closer to the Downtown. This is less of an issue south of Dahlie Creek/Nineteenth Avenue where uses are clearly more industrial in nature, and related to primary resources.

The Town of Smithers is a major land owner in the industrial area, and can use this as an opportunity to support growth in sectors such as value added forestry as identified in the economic strategy.

The current OCP indicates both light industrial and heavy industrial site areas, but does not clarify the intended role or land uses for each of these areas. Heavy industrial is located mainly south of Pacific Street and adjacent to the rail tracks.

General

Policy 10.1: It is Council's policy to restrict industrial development to the area generally south of Pacific Street and east of the planned extension to 16th Avenue in order to concentrate industrial development in areas separate and distinct from commercial and residential lands

Policy 10.2: It is Council's policy to continue to sell at market value surplus industrial land which is owned by the Town.

Light Industry

Policy 10.3: Areas designated as light industry on the Land Use Map shall provide for enclosed manufacturing, processing, assembly, wholesale, distribution, transportation industries, utilities and related uses. To ensure that these sites are not under-utilised, or become commercial in nature (i.e. as retail or office sites), the zoning bylaw should be amended to create more distinct use categories. Office use should be an ancillary use, and retail sales should not be permitted except for sales of equipment logically located in an industrial area and goods manufactured on site.

Automotive/Service Commercial Uses

Policy 10.4: The area north of 16th Avenue on the north side of Highway 16 is designated for Automotive/Service Commercial use to more closely reflect their current use pattern. Light industrial uses fully enclosed within a building may still be part of the land use in this area, but it is not considered to be primarily an industrial area.

Temporary Industrial Uses

*Policy 10.5: It is Council policy to permit temporary industrial uses on lands designated as **Light** or **Heavy Industrial**. Council may consider this provision for uses which may not be permitted in the zoning bylaw, but which are considered appropriate short-term uses. As per Municipal Act requirements, the public shall be advised of any such applications and have opportunity for comment.*

Heavy Industry

*Policy 10.6: Heavy industrial uses are to be located in the areas designated **Heavy Industrial** on the Land Use Map. **Heavy Industrial** includes uses which may occur outdoors, including resource processing, manufacturing, gravel extraction and auto wreckers and similar uses which may by their nature cause noise, emissions, or visual impact and should be separated from other uses. The zoning bylaw shall specify appropriate site sizes, setback distances and range of uses to ensure that heavy industry can operate effectively.*

Airport Industrial

The airport is a vital component of the Smithers economy, critical to maintaining the diverse economy, accessibility and focus of Smithers as a regional service centre. Ensuring the Smithers Airport remains viable is very important to residents and the business community. However, as communities of Smithers' size do not generally sustain a viable airport, it may become necessary for a broader level of regional support for the airport facility. Some issues to be addressed include transfer of responsibility from Federal Transport Canada to Community Airport status and need for future upgrades.

It is also noted the airport site is located within the Agricultural Land Reserve (which is not uncommon in many communities). The current airport facilities operate as “Non-Farm Uses” permitted by the Agricultural Land Commission. Any expansion into other types of land uses or more intensive commercial use will require ALC approval, and are not supported at this time.

Policy 10.7: In order to concentrate commercial development in the Downtown and highway commercial areas, development of retail and tourist accommodation uses on the airport site and adjacent non-ALR lands is not supported.

Policy 10.8 Commercial and light industrial uses directly related to air transportation including those industries which use the airport as an essential component of their operations such as aviation training, repair facilities, shipping and similar uses are encouraged.

Gravel Extraction

*Policy 10.9: Existing gravel extraction sites are recognized within the areas designated as **Heavy Industrial** on the Land Use Map. Additional gravel sites, where sufficient resources justify their creation, are supported within the area designated as **Heavy Industrial**.*

Road Network Plan - Background

The overall road network in the Town of Smithers has been established for many decades, consisting of Highway 16 as the primary corridor, and series of local and collector roads, which serve local neighbourhoods and new developed areas. The Road Network Plan was more formally established through a 1977 Ministry of Highways report “Smithers Major Network Study”, which has provided a basis for the road network in subsequent OCP’s.

The central issue, which appears to have carried through Council decisions and OCP policy from the 1960’s through to the present, is the need to upgrade Highway 16. This plan, therefore, concentrates on Highway 16, and provides policy direction regarding the community intent regarding this highway and its role. It is noted that the Town’s policy and vision for this highway may differ from those of the Ministry of Transportation and Highways (MoTH) who have jurisdiction over the actual highway.

Highway 16 - Future Vision

Highway 16 is a defining element of the Smithers land use pattern, and affects many aspects of community life. It is both a connecting element, linking the community to the surrounding areas and other communities, and it is also a divisive element fracturing the community between north and south, and creating both a visual and physical barrier between these areas. The linear nature of Highway 16 also works against the community pattern of compact development within the Town boundaries, particularly as commercial development stretches throughout this corridor.

During public meetings on the Smithers OCP, residents frequently mentioned this corridor as a planning issue. Clearly, the highway area is often perceived as an unattractive area, which does not reflect the sense of pride residents have in the community overall.

The planning challenge for this area is to provide for highway improvements in a manner, which enhances its relationship with the community, both functionally and visually. Over time, the intent is to create a corridor that provides a more hospitable and safe pedestrian environment. This corridor must also have improved design and development standards in order to create a more attractive appearance, and to provide a commercial area that reflects the uniqueness of Smithers and encourages the same sense of pride as does the Downtown.

HIGHWAY 16 - STUDIES UNDERWAY***ICBC Pilot Corridor Planning Project***

An important project is underway with ICBC concurrently with the OCP review, entitled “ ICBC Pilot Corridor Planning Project”. The recommendations of that study provided several options for the Highway 16 corridor. The draft OCP integrates the ICBC recommendations where relevant.

Ministry of Highways - Functional Plan Highway 16

MoTH has completed a Functional Plan for Highway 16. The next step is the preliminary design stage to provide detailed design of highway upgrades. It will be important for the Town of Smithers to communicate their draft OCP policies to MoTH (and the selected consultant if applicable) to ensure the Town’s views are considered in the highway design process. Depending on the timing for completion of design, the Town may wish to revise some of the draft policies in this section.

Transportation Planning Principles And Objectives

The following principles will be used by Council to guide decisions regarding transportation planning:

- To promote a compact urban form within the Town in order to reduce reliance on automobiles;
- To support transit, bicycle and pedestrian uses as key components of the transportation plan for the community;
- To incorporate the principles of Safety Conscious Planning (ICBC) in all decisions related to the road network and transportation planning.
- To develop a hierarchy of roads with development standards suited to their role and function within the community;
- To require new developments to provide full urban standards for all road works;
- To review all commercial, industrial and multi-family developments to ensure they have appropriate access and egress, and provide for pedestrian safety as an integral part of their design.

Road Network Plan

Policy 11.1: The overall road network for Smithers shall be in accord with the existing and proposed roads indicated on Map 5.

Policy 11.2: Roads shall be constructed according to their function and role within the road network system:

- a) Arterial Road - Highway 16 - To be built to an urban standard as detailed in Policy 11.18.*
- b) Collector Roads - Provide for a higher level of traffic volumes, to connect neighbourhood areas, to connect to major uses such as Downtown or public facilities. To be built to either an Urban Collector standard, with a minimum of sidewalks on one side of the street, or a Rural Collector standard, with broad shoulders to accommodate pedestrian use.*
- c) Local Roads - Primarily to provide direct access to lots. Local roads in new developments to be built to an urban standard with curbs, gutters, and sidewalks. Existing local roads to be upgraded as per Policy 11.4.*

Implementation: Subdivision and Development Bylaw

Ski Smithers Access

Policy 11.3: Council supports investigating the feasibility of constructing a more direct route to the ski area as an option to future paving of the existing 24 km. access road. This study should also consider the need for future ski base development.

Map 5: Road Network Plan

Upgrade of Local Roads

Policy 11.4: Council will continue to participate with the owners of private property to upgrade with sidewalks and pave gravel streets in residential neighbourhoods.

Implementation: Local Improvement Policy that Council will consider paving existing streets upon application by the majority of property owners fronting on at least one block to pay a substantial portion of costs on road reconstruction or upgrade.

Policy 11.5: The upgrading and extension of Railway Avenue is considered to be a long-range project, subject to future boundary extensions and environmental considerations.

Traffic Calming

Policy 11.6: Council supports the use of traffic calming measures in order to reduce the impacts of vehicles on the community, and will consider such measures on request from existing neighbourhoods, and as part of new development plans.

Implementation: Subdivision and Development Bylaw; Local Improvement Program

Road Development Standards

Policy 11.7: To minimise long term costs, to develop a reliable infrastructure and to provide an attractive community, Council will require suitable development standards for all new developments or subdivisions within the community, including those fronting on Highway 16. Long-term considerations will take priority over short term cost savings to ensure long lasting future facilities and minimise unnecessary future maintenance costs.

Implementation: Subdivision and Development Control Bylaw; liaison with Ministry of Transportation and Highways.

Bikeways

Policy 11.8: It is Council policy to support and encourage the use of bicycles as a form of transportation in Smithers, and to integrate the design of bikeways and related safety measures in its road, sidewalk and trail reconstruction projects, where feasible.

Implementation: Subdivision and Development Bylaw; Outdoor Recreation Master Plan; Highway 16 Upgrade

Parking Standards

Policy 11.9: It is Council policy that all new developments provide adequate off-street parking as per zoning bylaw standards.

Policy 11.10: All parking areas are to be paved and landscaped.

Implementation: Subdivision and Development Bylaw; Development Permit Requirements

Cash-In-Lieu Of Parking

Policy 11.11: To support the unique nature of the downtown and the pedestrian atmosphere, Council will accept cash-in-lieu of parking requirements for downtown uses according to the conditions of OCP policy 9.4.

Highway 16 Issues

There are several approaches the Town could take toward Highway 16, depending on the role the community wishes the highway to perform. It is an inherent contradiction of this highway that it historically has performed both as a local road and as a major provincial highway. These contradictory functions are illustrated by the development of a frontage road for some portions of the highway in order to accommodate through traffic and minimise points of access. However, in other portions, there is no frontage road, and access occurs frequently, and without clear designation of access/egress points.

Pedestrian facilities (sidewalks, crosswalks, and signals) are very limited along the whole corridor and the highway is hostile to pedestrian use. This reflects the priority to date, of vehicle movement over other aspects, such as design which links the north and south segments of the community or creates a more hospitable pedestrian environment.

The focus of the policy section regarding Highway 16 is to address the overall question of the role of this highway posed by the following questions:

- Is Highway 16 primarily a provincial highway, accommodating through traffic as efficiently as possible?
- Is Highway 16 primarily a local highway, accommodating access to businesses, providing for pedestrian use and linkage between neighbourhoods?
- Is Highway 16 both of the above? If so, does more attention need to be paid to improving either of these opposite functions?

It is the premise of the OCP policies that the latter role applies to this highway corridor, and that significant improvements can be made over time to the appearance of the highway corridor and the way in which it functions to meet both local and regional traffic needs.

Upgrading and Beautification of Highway 16

Policy 11.12: Upgrading of Highway 16 in co-operation with the Ministry of Transportation and Highways as soon as possible is a top capital improvement priority of Council.

Policy 11.13: As part of the Highway 16 improvements, Council will ensure that additional off-street parking is available, particularly for tourist use, in the high demand area between King and Queen Streets.

Urban Role of Highway 16 in Smithers

Policy 11.14: The role of Highway 16 within the Town of Smithers is considered to be an urban corridor, which serves the needs of both the local community and the traveling public. The highway is not to be considered a rural highway within the Town boundaries. It is Council policy to promote that all decisions and design standards related to Highway 16 shall reflect this urban orientation.

Future Cross Section of Highway 16

Policy 11.15: Council supports an urban cross-section for the highway upgrading, with the following key elements:

- a) Two-lane divided highway from the westbound gateway to Alberta Street;*
- b) Four lane divided highway from Alberta Street to the eastbound gateway (approximately at Chicken Lake Creek);*
- c) A raised landscaped median with turning bays shall be constructed throughout this corridor to ensure safe pedestrian crossing, traffic separation and visual attractiveness.*
- d) Full pedestrian sidewalks on both sides of the highway shall be constructed with marked crosswalks at major intersections. Wherever possible, the sidewalk shall be separated from the curb by a landscape buffer, allowing for a future street tree program to be implemented.*
- e) Cycle lanes on both sides of the highway.*

Access Management

Policy 11.16: In order to minimise points of access to properties along the highway corridor for safety reasons, while still providing reasonable access for commercial uses for all new development or redevelopment fronting on Highway 16, wherever possible, two or more sites will be required to share access and egress to Highway 16 and to provide internal traffic circulation between sites.

FRONTAGE ROADS

The frontage road system in Smithers has been the source of on-going debate. These roads provide ready access to the businesses, but also contribute to the overall poor appearance of this part of the community. The roads themselves are constructed to a rural standard, without curbs, sidewalks, and have very disorganised access/egress and parking provisions in some locations. Overall, they also contribute to the separation between the north and south portions of the community, with vast crossing distances, particularly for pedestrians, and very large land areas dedicated to traffic.

Other issues related to the frontage roads are:

- Businesses on frontage roads are not directly visible to through traffic, and depend on extremely large, high signage for visibility;
- Frontage roads do not create the sense of “town character” as the businesses are much removed from the street;
- Loss of land to right-of-way could be more effectively used for landscaping, walking areas or for additional commercial land, particularly in the Main Street area.
- Complexity of closely spaced intersections created by the frontage road system. This can be problematic in the Downtown area.

The following OCP policies are based on accepting and improving the existing frontage road system, but not extending it further on the Highway.

Extent of Frontage Roads

Policy 11.17: The existing frontage road system will be maintained as indicated on Figure 1 to provide access to businesses in these locations.

Policy 11.18: As it is not realistic or practical to extend the frontage road concept to other areas of Highway 16, no new additional frontage roads will be developed except consideration of the following:

- *Tatlow Road to Victoria Drive on the north side of the highway*
- *Toronto Street eastward on the north side of the highway*

In order to provide highway fronting properties with appropriate and acceptable access/egress, it is recognised that some minor additional frontage road segments may need to be acquired and developed. Any additional frontage road sections would be constructed by the landowner in cooperation with the Town and MoTH for the specific purpose of providing access to and egress from highway-fronting properties.

Figure 1: Existing Proposed Frontage Roads

Standards for Frontage Roads

Policy 11.19 Council shall consider upgrading frontage roads to an urban standard with 2 travel lanes and curb and gutter to improve the appearance and functioning of these roads. Sidewalks will be provided adjacent to the commercial properties. A parking lane will be paved and added on the highway side.

King-Main-Queen Corridor

This King-Main-Queen section of Highway 16 is heavily used, and is a congested, complex and poorly designed area. Due to the close proximity of the three intersections on the highway, traffic management is particularly difficult. This area, however, is also a significant focal point for the community which should function as a key entrance to the downtown. It requires major functional and landscaping improvements if it is to fulfil this purpose. Pedestrian safety is a particular concern in this area due to the many traffic movements and the number of travel lanes to cross.

Policy 11.20: Council supports the ICBC Road Calming Program which may include design elements such as:

- *gateway entrances*
- *sidewalks, curbs and gutters*
- *landscaping*
- *frontage road improvements including sidewalks, curbs and gutter*
- *fourelane divided highway from eastbound to westbound gateways*
- *revised intersection at Main Street*
- *pedestrian activated lights at Main Street*

SANITARY SEWER

The Town's sewage treatment plant utilizes a lagoon system with a capacity of the existing plant rated for a population of approximately 9,000. However, the Smithers' operation staff believe the actual capacity may be closer to a population of 8,000. There is adequate land to at least double the capacity of the system in the future.

Most of the Town's sewer collection lines are in good condition, which can be attributed to the standards set out by the Town and the maintenance practices provided by the Operations Department. The area serviced by a community sewage collection and disposal system is shown in Map 6.

Most of the soils within the Town of Smithers and the Lake Kathlyn and Lake Seymour fringe areas outside the municipality are not suitable for septic tank sewerage disposal. Soils are generally very poorly drained and contain clay and peat material, which does not drain well. Although small lot subdivisions down to 18,000 square feet in size and even trailer courts have been allowed by the Regional District in the fringe areas, experience has proven that septic tank - drain field systems do not function well in much of these areas.

Several large employers including two sawmills and a panel board mill occupy the southern sections of the Township. This area is serviced with potable water, but not with the community sewage collection and disposal system. Individual septic provides sewage disposal systems with drain field disposal. A distinctly different soil type exists in the southern, industrial areas – one that is somewhat more suitable for sewage disposal to ground. The systems are operating adequately and there is no immediate plan to sewer this area.

Map 6: Serviced Areas – Sanitary Sewer

Because rural residential use is irregularly scattered in a low density over a large area, the cost of providing and maintaining roads, sewer and water systems, school bussing and other services are higher than in fully developed areas and much more relative to residential areas in Town. Because the Town may in the future be required to annex the fringe areas, it is in the Town's interest to do what it can to guide the optimum development of these areas.

Policy 12.1: It is the policy of Council to require all new residential subdivisions within the Town with lots less than five acres to connect into the Town sewer system.

Policy 12.2: The Council strongly recommends to the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako that the minimum lot size for rural residential parcels of at least five acres be maintained within a 10-kilometre radius outside Town boundaries. Smaller lots are not to be considered unless adequate water and sewer infrastructure is available.

Policy 12.3: Because it would tend to encourage higher density development and because the Town is not permitted to charge higher rates to service properties outside Town, which are more expensive to service, it is the policy of Council not to allow properties outside of the municipal boundary to connect to the municipal sewerage treatment system.

WATER SUPPLY

The Town's water supply and distribution system is in good condition. The existing system utilizes three wells, two storage reservoirs, and a distribution system. Currently, the system meets the needs of the community until the population reaches approximately 7,500. The area serviced by the municipal water system is shown in Map 7.

It is not economical to supply water to residential properties, which are irregularly scattered and low in overall land use density. This is generally true for the Kathlyn Lake fringe area where surface water sources are contaminated, shallow wells have been known to fail during drier seasons, and deep wells have been very expensive to develop. Some people living in the fringe areas have been known to haul water from Town to meet their needs during winter months. The Town is not allowed to charge more to service properties outside town even though increased charges can be justified on the basis that it costs more to provide them.

Map 7: Serviced Areas – Water Supply

Policy 12.4: The policy of Council is not to supply water connections to properties outside the Town boundary.

There is a small pocket of development near Fourth Avenue and Virginia Street, and Jackson Avenue, which are supplied with water through individual private wells. The area is isolated from the rest of settled Smithers by the golf course and servicing it with municipal water is not considered practical. It is intended that this area be incorporated into the Town water distribution system once the Town distribution has expanded enough to make it practical.

The airport is serviced for water by their well and there is no intent, at this time or in the near future, to extend the Town water distribution system to service the airport.

STORM DRAINAGE

Because of poorly draining soils, the provision of storm drainage is critical in the Town of Smithers. During the formative development of the community, surface drainage was provided by a system of surface ditches. During the last several decades, the Town has been expanding the system of underground storm drains, which collect excess water and deliver it to the large creeks.

Policy 12.5: It is the policy of Council to require the construction of underground storm drains before improvement or pavement of streets or parking lots and as needed for all new subdivisions and other development.

Policy 12.6: It is the policy of Council to protect and maintain the natural drainage courses in Town.

The area of Town serviced by underground storm sewer systems are shown in Map 8. Overall, storm sewers with some minor sections of open ditching service the developed areas of the Town. There are no known incidents of serious flooding.

Policy 12.7: Council supports a review of the Town's storm drainage system to ensure appropriate storm drainage collection for the Town including, but not limited to, consideration of:

- *wetland areas as natural storm water retention areas and the subsequent need to protect natural wetland areas from development*
- *the impact of the proportion of impervious to permeable surface areas on overall storm water management*
- *the treatment of all storm water (by biofiltration) before direct discharge into creeks*

Map 8: Serviced Areas - Storm Drainage

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

The Regional District of Bulkley - Nechako is responsible for the disposal of the Town’s solid waste. The Town of Smithers, along with private contractors, collects the Town’s garbage and deposits the garbage in a District-operated waste transfer station located outside the Town boundary. The waste is transported to a District-owned landfill near Houston, BC. There are two private recycling operations, which handle paper, glass and scrap metal in Town. One of the private recycling operators uses a drop-off depot to collect newspaper, cardboard, fine paper, glossy paper and refundable glass containers. The second recycling operator collects scrap metal via pick up.

Current markets for recycled products are somewhat limited and further restricted by Smithers’ distance to larger urban centres. With the maturing of recycling markets over time, there may be a possibility of formalizing recycling efforts through a municipal initiative. The Regional District has a Solid Waste Management Plan in place, which attempts to reduce the amount of garbage going to the landfill site through the use of increased recycling programs. *(Source: Integrated Resource Accounting for Smithers, BC, Draft Report).*

In accordance with the national and provincial goals of reducing waste by 50% by the year 2000 and as a reflection of changing social values, the Town of Smithers is reviewing the current waste management infrastructure. Policy tools for reducing waste requiring disposal are being formulated and may be implemented over the next few years in the areas such as public education, economic incentives and regulations.

Policy 12.8: It is the policy of Council to encourage and support recycling of glass, aluminium, paper and other materials that can be economically reused and to discourage the use of non-biodegradable plastic packaging materials when adequate substitutes are available.

Policy 12.9: Town Council is committed to ensuring that the local solid waste stream is reduced to the greatest extent possible, in accordance with the hierarchy of reduce, reuse and recycle, and consistent with local resources and the nature of the regional solid waste stream.

Policy 12.10: The Town shall encourage the Regional District to provide regulations and possible economic incentives that encourage separation of materials for reuse and recycling through such mechanisms as variable tipping fees, salvaging permits, marshalling areas, and a reuse shed.

Private disposal companies service the fringe area outside the Town boundaries. The Town has no intention of including these areas in the municipal garbage collection operation.

Policy 12.11: The policy of Council is not to provide garbage pick up service outside the Town boundary.

Long Term Residential Potential

As discussed, residential demand in Smithers for the next 10 to 20 years will be largely met through the development of Willowvale neighbourhood, some infilling in existing neighbourhoods, and redevelopment to higher densities in older areas of Town.

As the economy in Smithers continues to diversify and existing land is used, there may be a need in the future to expand municipal boundaries to suitable areas. One area of consideration for possible boundary expansion may be towards the Seymour Lake area. The Seymour Lake area provides for a natural area of expansion in terms of servicing and connection with the existing Town residential areas and street network.

The 1989 OCP suggested that the large undeveloped area between Kathlyn Creek and the south end of the airport is ideally suited for future residential development. This area currently lies outside municipal boundaries (but within the Agricultural Land Reserve) and was the subject of a past municipal boundary extension study which concluded that utility servicing constraints did not support extension into this area. In addition, it must be recognized that current and future residents of this unincorporated area live there as a lifestyle choice within a rural setting. Residents may not wish to be incorporated into municipal boundaries and required to alter their lifestyles to include, for example, connection to municipal services. However, because this land is located in close proximity to urban commercial and other community services, the area may in the long term (once existing residential lands in Town are developed) be considered for boundary expansion and residential designation.

Policy 13.1: The area between Kathlyn Creek and Smithers Airport may be considered for future inclusion to municipal boundaries and residential designation once existing residential lands within the Town are substantially developed, utility servicing can be economically established and maintained, and the land has been excluded from the Agricultural Land Reserve.

Other Possible Boundary Expansion Areas

Other areas may also need to be considered.

Policy 13.2: The Town will consider boundary expansion subject to an assessment of utility servicing costs, road upgrade considerations, and other “soft” cost impacts such as policing and fire protection.

14.

SPECIAL STUDY AREA

C N Lands

The CN lands adjacent to Railway Avenue constitute a very significant land holding in the Town. Recently there have been discussions about CN Real Estate Division putting a large portion of these lands up for sale. Given the proximity of these lands to the downtown and to adjacent residential uses and potentially for future expansion of the Town’s boundaries towards Lake Seymour, Council wishes to conduct a special study that will review opportunities and constraints to future land use development of these lands.

Policy 14.1: The Town designates the CN Lands as a Special Study Area to assess the future land use opportunities including heavy industrial uses in the study area.

DEVELOPMENT PERMIT AREAS

DEVELOPMENT PERMIT AREAS (DPA)

Section 879 of the BC Municipal Act states that an Official Community Plan may designate development permit areas for the:

- protection of the natural environment
- protection of development from hazardous conditions
- protection of farming
- revitalization of an area in which a commercial use is permitted
- establishment of guidelines to direct the form/character of commercial, industrial or multi-family residential development

The Town of Smithers has established Development Permit guidelines to regulate development in the following areas:

Development Permit Area Map	Name
No. 1	Downtown Smithers
No. 2	Highway 16 Commercial
No. 3	Natural Environment and Hazardous Conditions

Where properties are located in more than one Development Permit Area the guidelines for each DPA shall apply.

DOWNTOWN SMITHERS DPA No. 1

Purpose

The Downtown Smithers Development Permit Area is designated under the authority of the Municipal Act, Section 879 (1) (d) for the purpose of revitalizing the economic vitality, as well as, to promote the establishment and maintenance of a consistent architectural style based on an “Alpine Theme” within Downtown Smithers.

Area

The extent of the Downtown Smithers Development Permit Area No. 1 – (DP-1) is shown on Map DP-1. The following development permit guidelines apply to all new development and redevelopment on parcels within the DP-1.

Exemptions

A Development Permit is required prior to issuance of a Building Permit or final Subdivision Approval except for:

- interior renovations that do not result in any exterior changes to the building
- construction that amounts to less than a 20% increase in total floor area or a maximum of 300 square feet of new floor area

Businesses requiring new signs only can apply for a Sign Permit but must conform to the Alpine Theme and DPA No. 1 Guidelines.

Justification

The importance of Main Street, and the immediately adjacent streets that make up Downtown Smithers, as the commercial center and focus for the Smithers’ community was first acknowledged over 25 years ago when the Alpine Theme was formally established by Council resolution to relate to the mountain and winter sports heritage that is particular to Smithers. The definition of the alpine design theme included extended rooflines, shuttered windows, balconies, pictured exterior walls, and wooden signs.

Since 1972, considerable energy and money has been invested in the reconstruction of portions of this area, including rebuilding and paving of streets, brick paver tile sidewalks, angle parking, street furniture, lighting and landscaping. These initiatives continue to this day. The Downtown was declared a “Downtown Revitalization Area” by the provincial government in 1981. The creation of a much-improved physical

environment has enhanced the economic vitality of Downtown, as well as, improved pedestrian and vehicular safety.

In addition, downtown merchants and property owners have contributed enormously to the vitality of Downtown by creating a cohesive downtown commercial area by developing or redeveloping their properties in accordance with the alpine theme.

The implementation of the Development Permit Area for Downtown Smithers will ensure a continuity of the work already completed. The objective of the Downtown Commercial DPA No. 1 is to further assist with the revitalization of side streets from Main to meet both economic development and community identity objectives.

Guidelines

The construction of new or the renovation of existing buildings within the Downtown Smithers DPA shall incorporate the Alpine Theme in accordance with “Architectural Design Guidelines Alpine Theme” prepared for the Town of Smithers by Pentangle Design, 1997, as well as, in accordance with the following general guidelines:

(a) Basic Design Approach – Smithers Alpine Theme

The basic design approach to be applied within the Downtown Commercial Development Permit Area is the Smithers Alpine Theme. Design and site planning shall reflect the Smithers mountain and winter sports heritage by providing convenient and interesting services for the skier in winter, the outdoor recreationalist in summer, and customers from the Bulkley Valley and surrounding region who come to shop in the Town of Smithers.

Design and site planning shall therefore blend in with Hudson Bay Mountain setting, the beautiful rural pastoral setting of the Bulkley Valley and the lifestyle of the people who live in the region.

The downtown business area shall be durably constructed in response to the harsh effects of the northern climate and year round activities.

(b) Landscape Design

Landscaping elements such as seating, lighting, planters and plant material can provide variety, interest and colour at the street level and is encouraged. Planters, which are integral with the building design, are encouraged but plant materials and planters must be durable and appropriate to Smithers northern climate. All structures adjacent to areas, which require snow clearing by machinery, must be designed with durable materials. All landscape planters and landscape areas must be irrigated and plant material, which adds variety and colour, is encouraged. Plant material located in snow dump areas must be

sufficiently durable to survive the effect of snow dump. Because of its durability, stone is a recommended building material for planters in building foundations. Red paving brick or paving stones is required on all plaza and pedestrian areas in order to contribute texture and pattern. Outdoor activities should be maximized. Where possible, building design should accommodate sheltered sunny pockets and public spaces in neighbouring properties. Where appropriate, opportunities for outdoor seating and other interesting landscape elements should be incorporated adjacent to buildings.

(c) Pedestrian Orientation

The downtown commercial area shall be developed with a strong pedestrian orientation with convenient connections between street and indoor activities. Development must encourage a lively village atmosphere through the clustering of activities and satisfying the demands of privacy, sun, and a variety of experiences for the pedestrian in building design. Thus, each individual development must contribute to the image of a cohesive village yet, at the same time, still express its own individuality. To provide adequate sunshine and vistas to the Hudson Bay Mountain and surrounding viewscape, building height shall be limited to two storeys.

(d) Basic Architectural Design

Decks, balconies, porches and bay windows are encouraged, particularly on the north side of the east/west streets as they provide sunny outdoor space and add visual interest to the streetscape. The face of the buildings must contain architectural features to break the structural plane of the building. These features can include bay windows, balconies, dormers and façade detailing as textural elements which strengthen the pedestrian and resort image of the downtown commercial area.

The preferred roof design is a unified composition of sloped roofs in a variety of complementary materials and colours. Examples of preferred alpine roof design include the Bulkley Valley Credit Union, MacKenzie Travel, the Hudson Bay Lodge and the A & W. Roof form should be modulated with the use of dormers, extension of building face or other architectural features. The roofs of connecting buildings must be fully coordinated to minimize the exposure of party walls.

(e) Snow Management

The impact of the extreme freeze/thaw cycle in Smithers on snowshed, snow retention, watershed, icicle management, ice dams and water infiltration must all be taken into consideration.

Sloped roofs shed accumulated snow in avalanche fashion and the effects of snow and ice buildup, if improperly handled, can be destructive to buildings as well as imposing risks

to pedestrians and vehicles. The heavy snows and extreme freeze/thaw cycle of Smithers combine to make snow management an important design consideration. Snow must either be positively shed or positively retained. Shedding snow must be deflected from pedestrian areas by dormers, hipped roofs, angled roofs, canopies or other means. All steps and wheelchair ramps must be covered or otherwise protected from ice and snow buildup.

(f) Building Materials

Building materials shall be used which are small in scale and reflect the fact that they are located within a pedestrian environment. The use of building materials shall emphasize durability, naturalness and compatibility. Red brick, red roofing tiles, wood and stucco are examples of building materials, which are acceptable. The use of large expanses of any one material such as glass, stucco, concrete brick or concrete is not acceptable unless broken by other architectural materials and/or details. Foundation walls should blend into the façade of the building walls by the use of materials and colour to further enhance the pedestrian environment.

Building materials must be complementary to those of adjoining buildings. Primary exterior materials include stone, wood, stucco, red tiles, red brick and concrete. The use of stone is encouraged at ground level; both for building base and for streetscape elements. The use of wood is encouraged. Stucco must be acrylic based and integrally coloured rather than painted. Exposed aluminum shall be anodized. Exposed concrete must be coloured if used as a principal material; either integrally or with another finish. Special finished concrete block may be used in limited areas with complementary materials but standard concrete block shall not be exposed.

Red tiles, cedar shakes or shingles, and organic red or brown coloured metal roofs are preferred roofing materials.

(g) Lighting

Indirect incandescent or other warm coloured lighting is preferred. Illumination levels should be of sufficient intensity to provide security but not overpower the nightscape. Illumination should be low level and low glare.

(h) Colour Coordination

Appropriate natural and muted colours include those found in the natural setting of Smithers. Preferred colours for roofing materials are the organic reds and browns. The colours used in adjoining buildings must be considered when selecting colours. Avoid using strongly contrasting or conflicting colours. The use of bright, glossy colours shall be limited to focal points such as doorways, signs, graphics, storefronts or displays.

(i) Parking

Paved off-street parking areas are required at the rear or side of buildings. Where it is necessary that parking be located adjacent to a sidewalk or roadway, it must be adequately screened by solid fencing, landscaping or a combination of the two.

Bicycle storage for use by the general public must be provided near entries to commercial space such as stores and restaurants and located so that they do not impede pedestrian movement.

(j) Screening

Roof mounted equipment such as satellite dishes and mechanical equipment must be concealed from all pedestrian viewpoints.

Garbage receptacle areas and utility service connections must be screened.

(k) Signs

Regulation of sign size and type is necessary in order to set upper limits on sign business competition and to prevent an escalation of sign size, animation and flash at the expense of human scale, architectural character and townscape. When new signage is applied to existing buildings, it must provide the appearance that the signage was part of the original building design.

(l) Linking the Highway to Downtown

New developments should use architectural design elements, pedestrian links and landscaping to reinforce their relationship to the Downtown. This is particularly important for the Smithers Shopping Centre and future development of the “Golden Triangle”. In addition to the general guidelines, development of these sites shall:

1. Consider appearances from all visible building faces, and ensure that some texture, building articulation, and/or mature landscaping is provided along any large building walls.

2. Provide signage that is simple, consistent and distinctive and provides an orderly approach to multi-tenant sites, rather than many individual signs, which create visual, clutter, and competition between signs.
3. Provide clear pedestrian linkages between the commercial sites and the Downtown, across Highway 16, and internally within the commercial site. Full sidewalks on all frontages are required with any new development.

(m) Other Permits Required

The issuance of Development Permits shall be subject to obtaining other required permits as specified by applicable Zoning, Subdivision, Parking, Building, and Sign Bylaws. However, the requirements under these other Bylaws may be varied when necessary to meet the above guidelines for a Development Permit.

Application Submission Requirements

Every submission for a Downtown Smithers Development Permit shall include:

- (a) A site plan showing buildings and structures, unenclosed storage areas, garbage areas, parking and loading areas, circulation elements and access.
- (b) Floor plans.
- (c) Drawings, including building elevations and perspectives, illustrating all sides of the building(s).
- (d) Drawings showing proposed signage details.
- (e) Exterior building colour samples.
- (f) A landscaping and screening plan showing existing and new plantings, trees and fencing. Native species shall be so identified. Details shall be provided on the screening of garbage and loading areas located outside building. The landscaping plans are to be prepared by a professional landscape architect. Where existing trees are to be retained an arborist report on the trees' condition and proposed retention shall be required.
- (g) Other information as may be necessary to assess the development proposal.

Map DP-1: Development Permit Area One

HIGHWAY 16 COMMERCIAL – DPA No. 2

PURPOSE

The Highway 16 Commercial Development Permit Area is designated under the authority of the Municipal Act, Section 879 (1) (e) for the purpose of regulating the form and character of commercial development along Highway 16.

Area

The extent of the Highway 16 Commercial Development Permit Area is shown on Exhibit 13. The following development permit guidelines apply to all new development and redevelopment on parcels within the Highway 16 Commercial Development Permit Area subject to the following exemptions.

Exemptions

A Development Permit is required prior to issuance of a Building Permit except for:

- interior renovations
- construction that amounts to less than a 50% increase in total floor area or a maximum of 232 square metres (2500 square feet) of new floor area whichever is greater.
- exterior painting, maintenance or replacement of existing siding and fascia.
- corporate signage.

Existing businesses are encouraged to upgrade their site according to the guidelines established for properties within the Highway 16 Commercial Development Permit Area.

Justification

Current Highway 16 land uses are typical of many commercial “strips” found in smaller communities with older buildings mixed with newer ones. These land uses have historically not had any design guidelines often resulting in a commercial district that does not attract or encourage consumers to stop and shop. Coordinated parking, access/egress, landscaping and screening may enhance business opportunities and reduce functional problems.

The premise of designating commercial properties along Highway 16 is the belief that this commercial district should be a vital and valuable part of the entire Smithers community, and should strive to achieve a more marketable and business like appearance. Enhanced guidelines should promote the

viability of the commercial district, promote community pride and fairness in development. The main objective of the development permit area designation is to promote a more marketable and business appearance that is attractive to the public and that promotes the viability of the commercial district, fosters community pride and achieves fairness in development.

GUIDELINES

Development permits issued in the Highway 16 Commercial Development Permit Area are to address, where possible, the following guidelines:

(a) General

1. All new buildings should be developed to a standard, which presents an attractive image to the community, and be assessed individually through the Development Permit process to ensure a positive contribution to the appearance of Highway 16 as the primary arterial and main entrance to the Town.
2. In order to prevent the appearance of strip development, new developments are encouraged to contribute a more unique appearance to the Smithers commercial area.
3. Building form and character should, wherever possible, reflect common building elements of the community. Such elements may include some or all of the following: pitched roofs, use of large dimension timber for posts, beams or other visible supports, and use of design elements such as dormers for long roof areas.
4. Building design should provide some articulation or trim details on walls where possible. Canopies and other covered entries may also be used.

(b) Building Materials

1. Where possible, buildings should be constructed with materials that reflect the community. Preferred building materials include wood siding, stucco or textured concrete.
2. The building exterior may be complemented by additional trim or architectural details to avoid plain “boxy” appearance. Alternatively, the visual appearance of a building may be modified by extensive landscaping.

(c) Parking Areas

1. For new developments, all parking areas are to be paved, with painted parking spaces and loading stalls, and curbs or wheel stops which define the pavement edge and be landscaped.

(d) Signage

1. In order to create a more attractive entry to the Town of Smithers, new and existing businesses are encouraged where possible, to have signage that shows evidence of craftsmanship and reflects both the individuality of the business, and it's setting in the community. Examples include stone and carved wood.

(e) Landscaping

1. Landscape design should include hardy native species, and plant materials should be of sufficient planted size and massing so as to provide an immediate finished appearance to the development.
2. Mature trees should be preserved and, where possible, integrated with new landscaping. The planting of new trees is strongly encouraged.

(f) Compatibility with Adjacent Uses

1. Building and site design, landscaping and screening should be used to minimize a commercial building's visual and noise impacts on adjacent residential lands.
2. Headlights from vehicles in the commercial parking areas shall be screened wherever possible to prevent shining into adjacent residential areas.
3. Exterior lighting shall be restrained and directed so as not to shine into adjacent lands.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Every submission for a Highway 16 Commercial Development Permit shall include:

- (a) A site plan showing buildings and structures, unenclosed storage areas, garbage areas, parking and loading areas, circulation elements and access/egress.
- (b) Drawings, including building elevations and perspectives, illustrating all sides of the building(s).
- (c) A landscaping and screening plan showing existing and new plantings, trees and fencing. Details shall be provided on the screening of garbage and loading areas located outside building. The landscaping plans may be prepared by a professional landscape architect or an individual with landscaping experience.
- (d) Other information as may be requested to assist Council with expediting development approval.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS - DPA No. 3

Purpose

The Natural Environment and Hazardous Conditions Development Permit Area is designated under the authority of Section 879 (1) (a) and (b) for the protection of the natural environment and for the protection of development from hazardous conditions.

Area

All lands shown on Map DP-3 are designated as a Natural Environment and Hazardous Conditions development permit area. Where Council has designated lands under this designation, as shown on Map DP-3, they are the only lands so identified to date. This Plan should not be construed to mean that all other lands are free of such environmental or hazard conditions.

Exemptions

The requirement to obtain a development permit prior to issuance of a Building Permit or Subdivision Approval shall not apply in the following instances:

- (a) Single family lots created as of February, 2000 and less than 743 square metres (8000 square feet) in lot area;
- (b) Building additions of 40m² or less that do not require retaining structures;
- (c) Fencing required by the Town or senior government agencies;
- (d) Emergency works, including tree cutting, necessary to remove an immediate danger or hazard;
- (e) Minor site clearing necessary to undertake topographic and similar surveys which aid site and servicing planning work;
- (f) Tree cutting, in one calendar year, of less than 2% of mature trees outside of watercourse setback areas and areas with greater than 30% slopes;
- (g) Land clearing for normal farm operations where a portion of the lot is in the Bulkley River flood plain.

Justification

The Town contains different areas of varied and complex topography. These include the steep slope area running parallel to the Bulkley River to a number of riparian areas, which contain watercourses essential for salmon and steelhead spawning. Steep slopes, escarpments, and ravines are common significant features, and the Town is drained by many watercourses including Chicken Creek, Kathlyn Creek, Dahlie Creek and Seymour Creek. These watercourses have been and continue to be important to the fishery resource. New developments will require careful treatment in order to achieve an environmentally appropriate form of development.

The objectives of the environment and hazardous conditions development permit area designation are to:

- Allow non-residential development while avoiding residential construction in areas with more than 30% slope
- Protect natural landforms, environmentally-sensitive habitat, significant stands of vegetation, watercourses and downstream development, including agricultural lands
- Identify hazardous conditions to development and use mitigative measures

Guidelines

Development permits issued in DPA No. 3 shall comply with the following guidelines.

- (a) No site clearing, recontouring, servicing, issuing of building permits, or subdivision may occur without issuance of a development permit for such activity unless otherwise provided for in these guidelines.
- (b) Notwithstanding the density provisions of the Zoning By-law, the density of development shall be based upon the ability of the site to accommodate development without creating a hazardous condition.
- (c) No development shall take place, which would result in erosion, sloughing, flooding, landslip, or excessive run-off and siltation, or be detrimental to the fishery resource. Mitigative measures may be used to meet this guideline.
- (d) No development shall be permitted in the area necessary to protect the fishery resource.
- (e) Regrading should provide for a smooth transition between the site and adjacent properties.
- (f) Buildings, structures, and paved surfaces shall be located:
 1. Away from areas subject to erosion, sloughing, flooding, or landslip, or damage therefrom;

2. At such a distance from a watercourse so as to prevent erosion, sloughing, flooding, landslide, excessive run-off or siltation, and protect lands and the fishery resource;
 3. To preserve the natural vegetation on the steeper slopes;
 4. To minimize cutting into slopes and avoid the use of retaining walls over 1.5m in height.
- (g) Measures shall be put into place to:
1. Direct surface run-off away from areas subject to erosion and sloughing and to handle storm water run-off appropriately;
 2. Contain any excessive run-off, erosion, or siltation at the clearing and construction stage, and for the completed development.
- (h) Retention of natural geographic formations, such as escarpments, ravines, rock promontories, or hilltops, shall be strongly encouraged. Escarpments shall not be compromised.
- (i) The sequence and timing of earthworks shall be designed to minimize run-off and avoid erosion or siltation.

Application Submission Requirements

Every development permit application shall be accompanied by:

- (a) A plan showing existing and proposed grades, (including details on retaining walls), toe of slope, top of bank, or any watercourse setback area. The boundary of the watercourse setback area shall be physically located on the ground by a BCLS, and the mapping of toe of slope and top of bank shall be based on survey data.
- (b) For areas proposed to be disturbed, a slope analysis plan at the same scale as the plan required in (a) above.
- (c) In the case of residential subdivisions, a lot layout plan superimposed on the plans referred to in (a) or (b) above. Each lot shall indicate a suitable building envelope and indicate driveway grades.
- (d) In the case of multi-family residential, institutional, and commercial projects, a site plan showing buildings and structures, parking areas, access, circulation elements, toe of slope and top of bank, and any watercourse setback areas that are located on or that abut the site.
- (e) A plan showing areas to be cleared and areas of cut and fill, and the proposed sequence and timing of the clearing and recontouring operation.
- (f) A plan showing selected cross-sections through the site.

- (g) Where the subject site includes slopes in excess of 20%, a report prepared by a Professional Engineer, with experience in soils and/or geotechnical analysis, setting out conditions and requirements appropriate to ensure slope stability.
- (h) Plans signed and sealed by a Professional Engineer, showing any works and measures to be carried out under the permit to satisfy the above-mentioned objectives. The Professional Engineer shall: (a) certify that the works and measures detailed in the plans shall be sufficient to satisfy these objectives; (b) attest that she/he will supervise, and has been authorized by the developer to supervise, the carrying out of such works and measures to ensure that they are carried out in accordance with the said plans and the terms of any development permit issued hereunder; and (c) upon completion of the said works and measures and prior to the issuance of any building permit or final subdivision approval on lands which are subject to a development permit issued hereunder, certify that all works and measures have been carried out in accordance with the plans and the terms of the development plans.
- (i) Other information as may be necessary to assess the development proposal.

Map DP-3: Development Permit Area Three

IMPLEMENTATION

Changes to the Zoning Structure

One of the reasons Smithers has a lack of definition or focus to the commercial and industrial zones is the current structure of the zoning bylaw. At present, the bylaw has seven commercial zones and four industrial zones. There is considerable overlap between many of these zones and a lack of clarity about the main purpose of the zones. In part, this has contributed to the mix of sometimes incompatible uses, particularly on the highway.

Some particular problems noted are that automotive uses are permitted in numerous zones, including the Downtown. Gas stations and fuel sales are also permitted extensively. An unusual amendment was made to the M-2 zone to accommodate retail use on a specific parcel - this amendment is in conflict with OCP policy. These zoning approaches have particularly affected portions of Highway 16, which have become a “catch-all” for all kinds of commercial and industrial activities.

Recommended Zoning Strategy

The following zoning strategy is supported by Council in order to achieve the commercial and industrial land use strategy defined in Policy 4.1:

Downtown Commercial (C-1) *To include retail, office, personal service and public/civic uses. Does not include automotive uses.*

Highway/Tourist Commercial (C-2) *Tourist commercial focus on accommodation, restaurants and some personal services.*

Automotive/Service Commercial (C-3) *Auto repairs, dealerships, gas stations, warehousing.*

Light Industrial (M-1) *Enclosed manufacturing, processing, assembly, construction trades etc. Not for automotive sales or service.*

Heavy Industrial (M-2) *Heavy processing, outdoor manufacturing & storage, food processing, auto body yards, etc.*

Subdivision and Development Control Bylaw

- Amend as necessary to reflect direction of Policy 2.8 to require planting of trees on both sides of all streets in new residential subdivisions.
- Amend, as necessary to provide for different urban and rural collector road standards as per Policy 11.2.
- Review in accordance with Policy 11.7 to ensure suitable road development standards.

Sign Bylaw

- Work with Highway 16 fronting business owners and the Chamber of Commerce to develop a comprehensive Sign Bylaw for businesses adjacent to Highway 16.

Tree Protection Bylaw

- Council will consider establishment of a Tree Protection Bylaw.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS TO EXTERNAL AGENCIES

RECOMMENDATIONS TO EXTERNAL AGENCIES

Agricultural Land Commission (ALC)

- Consult with the ALC regarding possible, additional, non-farm uses involving the Smithers Airport, which currently lie within the Agricultural Land Reserve.
- Discuss the possibility of removal from the ALR lands, which currently form part of the Smithers Airport.

Ministry of Transportation and Highways (MoTH)

- Communicate policies and recommendations contained within the Official Community Plan with respect to Transportation within the Town of Smithers.
- Continue the on-going discussions with the MoTH with respect to elements of both the Functional Plan and Preliminary Design for Highway 16 which impact on surrounding land uses, urban design details, and vehicular traffic/pedestrian movement.

Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks (MELP)

- Discuss guidelines and requirements under Development Permit Area No. 3 (protection of the natural environment and development from hazardous conditions) with the MELP to ensure this DPA meets the standards recommended by the Ministry.

Department of Fisheries and Oceans

- Discuss guidelines and requirements under Development Permit Area No. 3 (protection of the natural environment and development from hazardous conditions) with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to ensure this DPA meets the standards recommended by the Department for the protection of the fisheries resource.

Bulkley-Nechako Regional District

- Discuss with the Regional District possible long-term boundary expansion areas and criteria for consideration of boundary expansion such as utility servicing costs and future land uses.

SOURCES

SOURCES

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