

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

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### **General**

- Looks great. You're hit on the key items on my mind:
  1. Promoting walking/cycling paths;
  2. Diversity in housing options with a focus on affordable housing;
  3. Keeping a friendly downtown vibe and making sure that "big box" developments are located and constructed appropriately.
- We are never going to be the shopping capital of the North. We need to play on our strengths and use them to make us successful.
- Heritage buildings – can we identify, designate, and preserve?
- Keep the buildings on corner lots in downtown to two stories.
- If this document becomes a bylaw even as is, I think it will represent a real achievement for you, the others who worked on it and the Town.
- It is great to see Smithers and the Bulkley Valley working towards a long-term vision.
- Is there something in place to build a recycling facility in the area? Right now (as far as I know) recycling is being shipped to Vancouver (which is hardly green and clean).

### **I like...**

- Higher density housing in downtown area.
- Apartments above core stores.
- Support for a curbside recycling program.
- Community design plan, more housing above retail, town houses for people who are retiring.
- Clarity of the plan.
- Goals and key directions under those goals.
- Focus on the downtown.
- No to "big box" and integrating "medium" box into downtown.
- The consideration for sustainability, green space, low impact big box (prefer), no big box.
- The overall key themes provided by community members as our long-term vision (i.e. 1. The majority of respondents indicated that in the next 15-20 years they want to see Smithers as a leader in being a sustainable community 2. Residents also indicated that they would like to see Smithers as a leader in stewarding Smithers' social, economic and environmental assets).

- The comprehensive nature of the document.
- The community vision and goals.
- The key direction on Land Use and Growth Management to focus new growth on the downtown and existing areas.
- Re-designating municipal land from “Large Format Retail” to “Industrial”.
- Preventing new uses in the auto-oriented commercial areas if the uses are more appropriate for downtown.
- The commitment to the existing perimeter trail system and connectivity of parks, open spaces and trails.
- Recognizing the role of Wet’suwet’en in shaping the future of Smithers.
- Fostering an active music and arts community.
- Exploring post-secondary and community educational opportunities. Smithers would be an ideal college town.
- The attention given to collaboration and engagement (Governance goal).
- The intent to go beyond the Alpine theme. It got us to a good spot to mature from.
- The wrap and cap concept for large format stores downtown.
- Reducing the aesthetic impact of large parking lots through small retail units along the street and dedicated pedestrian paths through the parking lots.
- The concept of development permit areas for sensitive areas.
- The idea of big box stores incorporated into the downtown area. I think there should also be more seniors housing incorporated into the downtown area. These are the people who are less mobile and need to be near services and could perhaps be housed on the upper level of big boxes or other businesses.

### **I would like to change....**

- Zoning in residential areas to allow for small scale light commercial development e.g. A little coffee shop, corner store, a place in the neighbourhood for people to walk to, particularly older people. E.g. Silverking area, 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue/Fulton area to pick up bread, a paper, etc. Just allow the zoning so this is possible.
- Transportation options (Telkwa – Smithers – Moricetown).
- Nothing.

- Council's adherence to OCP.
- Noise on Main Street and Hwy 16 – acoustic environment is not adequately addressed. Pedestrian level air pollution from stop and go car traffic unaddressed. Is there an anti-idling policy in there? I didn't see it. Pedestrian and bicycling commuter routes need to be in the mix – including the new Bulkley pedestrian bridge.
- Parks and open space designation should include the perimeter trail and links to north face trails.
- If Riparian development permit areas are current, then they are being pushed to the limit by “waste management” on the corner of 19<sup>th</sup> and Carnaby Street. Use Riparian DPA's as green parks and open space. Talk to Golf Club regarding making riparian area's park of trail system officially.
- Take out mixed residential 2 at the edge of Elks Park. Push it into single family or second stage of Willowvale. Take West corner off Willowvale phase 2.
- Add a priority action list at the end to define specific actions that council can take.
- I'm not sure if the “multifamily” DPA is necessary now. Maybe this should be allowed, but not required?
- There should be free public washrooms and drinking fountains in the downtown core. I always like Clinton, because there are free, clean public washrooms that are clearly marked. Location? Daytime: town office, extra foods, Safeway mall.
- Changing the land use designation on Town-owned land on North Tatlow to a protected area/park (piece between pull out).
  - Formally a teaching area;
  - Zonal subboreal space (SBSDK);
  - Wildlife value as a corridor.
- The vision should be expressed as what Smithers wants to be, not what it is.
- Population trend estimates for Smithers should NOT be tied to the Regional District estimates – the different communities within the RD have had and will have wildly different population fates – nor should BC Stats estimates be used, because of poor methodology.
- The OCP should refer to the dangers of runaway resort and second home development if Hudson Bay Mountain Resort plans are successful (all resort community experts agree on these dangers).
- Some reference should be made to the need to ensure that gravel pits near the Town are developed in such a way that eventually they can be reclaimed for housing purposes.
- On page 104, possibly, reference might be made to the need to ensure hedonic real estate values are preserved when resource extraction, especially forestry, occurs near Smithers.

- The OCP will be the guiding document for planning and development processes in the Valley region. The current outline is really good, there are just a few additions needed:
  - Ensure that a commonly agreed upon definition of sustainability is outlined to avoid confusion of the term in the future.
  - Outline policy in each objective area that creates the establishment of specific targets for improvement. This policy must also enable the implementation of annual measurement techniques to track progress.
  - Enable flexibility in the Official Community Plan so it becomes a living document, enabling modifications to be made annually in objective areas that are off target.
  - Provide guidance for social and environmental considerations in procurement policy in all areas.
- Although the Community Vision recognizes that “the community of Smithers extends beyond the Town’s legal boundaries” and that there is a need to coordinate with the regional district, I feel the plan is deficient in addressing the issue of land use and growth management in the urban-rural interface. Although it is technically Regional District jurisdiction, their planning perspective will not be able to address the needs of Smithers. As the draft OCP says on page 22, *“Decisions regarding land use and growth management within the Regional District have a significant impact on growth management strategies within Smithers related specifically to housing supply, demand and uptake.”* Jurisdiction and mandate in these areas is problematic but the options should not be limited to town boundary extension or not. The draft plan has innovative approaches for other issues including some that would never normally be within a town’s mandate; like climate change. So it should be possible to come up with an innovative approach for managing the populated areas surrounding the town. Can the plan commit to proactive involvement in the planning of these areas? Is there or could there be a memorandum of understanding with the regional district that can be referenced? Hopefully, the planning experts will have some good ideas.
- Referring to policy 10.1 at the bottom of the page is mention of a community garden on Railway Avenue. More land needs to be designated within the town boundaries for these gardens to assist with food sustainability. Perhaps part of the old Ministry of Highways property could be set aside for this or current vacant lots downtown.

### **Do you think the OCP Draft #1 establishes a clear strategy for meeting our long-term vision and objectives as identified in the plan?**

- Downtown strategy is good. Neighbourhood strategy needs more focus on social, green space needs of neighbourhood. New subdivisions planning with small green space or a little “general store”. Is zoning appropriate?
- I am concerned about the Town taking in the rural areas and allowing town density housing in acres. Keep town density in town area.
- Yes, but would like to see action in the next 3-5 years. I don’t want to wait 20 years.
- Inadequately assessed.
- Yes.

# PLANSmithers

## O C P R E V I E W

- I think the OCP Draft is close to this goal but is still missing some fundamental points that will ensure success of the long-term vision. My recommendation would be to consider the award winning work done by the community of Whistler for their 2020 vision. [www.whistler2020.ca](http://www.whistler2020.ca) They are several years ahead of the Smithers process and provide some great insights and experiences.
- From what I have been able to read and absorb, and with my one reservation about land use planning in the surrounding areas, I think the draft OCP does a very good job of establishing a strategy to meet the community's long-term vision.
- I think there are lots of good ideas. I really would like to see more green belts and parks in subdivisions as these often help build neighbourhoods for families.