

Official Community Plan

BYLAW NO. 1614

CONSOLIDATED DECEMBER 11, 2019

For Convenience Only



Updated by the Town of Smithers, the Community of Smithers, and HB Lanarc Consultants Ltd.

List of Amendments

<u>BYLAW</u>	<u>ADOPTION DATE</u>	<u>CONTENT</u>	<u>APPLICANT</u>
1655	April 26 th , 2011	Map Amendment Redesignate from Civic/Community Use to Single Family Residential for Lots 6 and 31, Block 140 (LB Warner Site)	Town of Smithers
1663	September 13 th , 2011	Map Amendment Redesignate Lot 1, Section 30, Township 4, Range 5, CD Plan 5671 (portion of 2123 Riverside) from Single Family Residential to Rural Lands.	Saddle Creek Ventures
1681	May 8 th , 2012	Map Amendment Redesignate Lot 72, DL 865, Range 5, CD Plan 5258 (4035 Walnut Dr.) from Civic/Community Use to Mixed Residential.	Aurora Resorts Ltd. & Celestial Homes
1689	June 12 th , 2012	Map Amendment Redesignate Lots 1-8, 41-48, Block 36, Plan 1054 from Single Family Residential to Mixed Residential.	Grendel Group
1691	June 12 th , 2012	Map Amendment Redesignate Lots 1-4, Block 144, Plan 1054, DL 865, Range 5, Coast Range 5 Land District from Single Family Residential to Downtown Commercial	Town of Smithers
1693	June 12 th , 2012	Map Amendment Redesignate portions of Parcel B, Section 30, Township 4, R5, CD Plan 1104 except Plan 5958, 6154, 6197, 7046, 9678, 10229, and PRP14843 and Sub Lot 1 of Block A, Section 30, Township 4, R5, CD Plan 1104 from Single Family Residential to Mixed Residential and Parks, Open Space and Trails.	Ambleside Projects Ltd.
1712	February 12 th , 2013	Text Amendment Text regarding GHG reduction targets.	Town of Smithers
1713	March 12 th , 2013	Text Amendment Text regarding Temporary Use Permits.	Town of Smithers
1719	May 14 th , 2013	Map Amendment 4025 Walnut Dr. legally described as Lot 72, District Lot 865, Range 5, Coast District Plan 5258 from Mixed Residential to Civic/Community Use.	Smithers Christian Reform Church

1737	December 10 th , 2013	Map Amendment 3684 Princess Crescent legally described as Lot 39 & 40, DL 5289, R5, CD Plan 5980 from Highway 16 Commercial to Mixed Residential.	NGC Mgmt. & Ray-Lin Holdings
1730	January 28 th , 2014	Map Amendment Proposed Lot A, Part Remainder Lot B, Section 18, Plan Number BCp 11450, Land District 14, Township 4, Except Part Subdivided by Plan EPP 548 from Heavy Industrial to Rural Lands.	D. Mackenzie
1739	February 11 th , 2014	Text Amendment Include multiple detached dwellings in the Form and Character Development Permit Area.	Town of Smithers
1740	March 11 th , 2014	Text Amendment Add Development Permit guidelines for detached dwellings (incl. carriage homes).	Town of Smithers
1764	December 9 th , 2014	Text Amendment New Policy 7 to Section 14.2.3 (Industrial).	Mark Weme
1792	July 12 th , 2016	Text & Map Amendment Redesignate 3239 Third Avenue, legally described as Lot G, Section 30, Township 4, Range 5, Coast District Plan BCP23323 from Single Family Residential to Mixed Residential.	Shannon & Kevin Bolen
1782	October 25 th , 2016	Map Amendment Redesignate Lot 1, Section 19, Township 4, R5, CD, Plan 8848 & all that part of the Southwest ¼ of Section 19, Township 4, R5, CD, lying to the Southwest of District Lot 5714 as shown on Plan 1231, except Plans 6428, 7747, 8848 and 8895 from Rural Lands to Heavy Industrial.	Pacific Inland Resources (PIR)
1798	November 8 th , 2016	Map Amendment New Map 5: Road Network Map	Town of Smithers
1801	January 10 th , 2017	Text Amendment Amend Policy 1 in Section 10.2.4 (Downtown Parking)	Town of Smithers
1820	November 28 th , 2017	Map Amendment Redesignate 1736 Princess Street, legally described as Parcel A (see H17743) Block 177 Section 30 Township 4 Range 5 Coast District Plan 1054 from Single Family Residential to Mixed Residential.	Barrie Carter

1822	January 9 th , 2018	Text Amendment Amendment to definition of Downtown Commercial (Flex Use) to include supportive and social housing.	Town of Smithers
1838	September 28, 2018	Map Amendment Re-designate 3575, 3581, Victoria Drive from Light Industrial to Single Family Residential	J. & C. Wright and W. Ede
1855	March 12, 2019	Map Amendment Re-designate Lot 1, District Lot 1053, Range 5, Coast District Plan PRP42257 from Civic/Community Use to Mixed Residential and amend the Form & Character Development Permit Areas map by adding Lot 1, District Lot 1053, Range 5, Coast District Plan PRP42257 to the Multi Family Residential Area.	West Fraser Concrete Ltd.
1860	April 23, 2019	Map Amendment Re-designate Lots 7-19 and a portion of Lots 23-30 in Block 140, Range 5, Plan 1054, District Lot 865 and add to the Multi Family Residential Area of the Form & Character Development Permit Areas Map.	Town of Smithers
1866	June 11, 2019	Map Amendment Re-designate property legally described as Lot 7, Section 30, Township 4, Range 5 Coast District, Plan PRP42839 from Highway 16 Commercial to Mixed Residential and add to the Multi Family Residential Area of the Form & Character Development Permit Areas Map.	W. Vandenberg
1880	December 10, 2019	Map Amendment Re-designate property legally described Lot 1 Block 138 District Lot 865 Range 5 Coast District Plan EPP71874 from Civic / Community Use to Mixed Residential and add to the Multi Family Residential Area of the Form & Character Development Permit Areas Map.	David Nairne + Associates & The Designery

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The Town of Smithers Official Community Plan (OCP) is the principal planning document that provides guidance on future growth and development in Smithers. The creation of this plan has been a collaborative effort with the OCP steering committee, the community of Smithers, Town of Smithers staff & Council, and the consulting firm HB Lanarc. This OCP has four main parts:

Part I: The Foundation

This section provides the community vision and goals, planning context, OCP background, climate change considerations and the land-use plan overview.

Part II: Community Objectives & Policies

This section provides objectives and policies for eleven main policy areas: land use and growth management, housing, environment, parks and open space, food and agriculture, transportation, infrastructure, utilities and green buildings, arts, culture and education, economic development, and governance.

Part III: Development Permit Areas (DPAs)

This section outlines DPAs for areas that require special treatment for development. This includes DPAs for Form and Character and the Environment.

Part IV: Maps & Schedules

This section includes maps and schedules that support the policies in the plan. These include a context map, land use designations, parks and open space, infrastructure, road network, sensitive ecosystems and hazardous areas.

1.2. What is an OCP?

The Official Community Plan (“the plan”) does two important things - it presents a long-term vision for the Town of Smithers and, at the same time, it sets out carefully worded policies, priorities and regulations that guide land use, growth and municipal spending decisions. The plan also contains a series of schedules and maps that are often referred to when zoning or subdivision applications are being considered. These depict many of the plan’s statements in geographic form.

Who Uses the OCP?

The OCP is an essential guide for residents, landowners, businesses, community organizations and governments that may be contemplating any changes related to land use, building and property services in Smithers. This includes decisions about zoning, subdivision, density, services and capital spending. In this way, the plan provides a high degree of predictability for residents, businesses, neighbouring municipalities, as well as other levels of government.

Key Issues that emerged during the OCP update include: climate change, housing affordability & choice, an aging population, large format retail stores, sensitive areas and agriculture, recycling, arts & culture, social diversity and the relationship with the Wet’suwet’en First Nation.

The OCP update process included the following stages:



The plan does not commit or authorize the Town to proceed with any project specified in the plan. Achieving the policies of the plan will be determined by future decisions of Council regarding priorities, funding and implementation.

Specific aspects of the plan may be amended from time to time. This should be viewed as an exception rather than a regular occurrence. But like the plans that went before it, the plan as a whole will gradually slip out of date. For this reason, the plan should be comprehensively renewed on a regular basis, ideally five to six years after it is adopted.

1.3. How has the Plan Been Updated?

The 2009 OCP is an update of its predecessor, approved in 2000. Many of the statements have their foundations in earlier versions, while others have been added or reworded to respond to changing circumstances and emerging issues. In addition to a technical analysis of existing policies, community input was a central focus of the update process and included the following:

- **OCP Steering Committee:** One of the primary points of community input into the OCP was through the dedication and commitment of the OCP Steering Committee. The 16-member Steering Committee represented community perspectives and provided policy direction and guidance throughout the development of the OCP.
- **Community Survey:** A community survey conducted at the beginning of the OCP review was the starting point to identifying key issues and formulating a community vision. Over 350 individuals responded to the survey. A survey method was also used with a closed audience to review draft OCP objectives. This survey went out to the OCP Steering Committee, Town Staff, and Town Committees.
- **Public Events:** Three (3) public events outside of the formal public hearing provided an opportunity for the community to participate in the OCP update. A *Community Dialogue Session* asked participants to identify key elements for the updated community vision. The three-day *Downtown Charrette* focused on the future of the downtown core and strategies for long-term vitality of the downtown. The *Public Forum* was an opportunity for the community to review and comment on the first OCP draft.

1.4. What are the rules and guidelines for the plan?

The OCP is intended to be a usable and accessible document. This means that the community must easily understand the Plan and yet at the same time it also should be an efficient, robust document for Council and staff. An effective OCP balancing both usability and accessibility has the following characteristics:

- Reflects the ideas and input of residents, stakeholders, professionals and staff who participated in the preparation of the Plan.
- Integrates land use, economy, environment, transportation, community facilities and services, and creates a broad strategy to direct growth and development.
- Organizes a response to global, regional and local challenges of sustainability such as climate change and ecosystem health, social development, and changing economic patterns.
- Provides a clear guide and direction to decision-making, but does not preclude amendments to the plan based on changing circumstances.

The *Local Government Act* governs the process whereby a community can prepare and adopt an Official Community Plan (OCP). According to the *Local Government Act*, an OCP **must** contain policy statements and map designations for the following:

- The approximate location, amount, type and density of residential development required to meet anticipated housing needs over a period of at least five years;
- The approximate location, amount and type of present and proposed commercial, industrial, institutional, agricultural, recreational and public utility land uses;
- The approximate location and area of sand and gravel deposits that are suitable for future sand and gravel extraction;
- Restrictions on the use of land that is subject to hazardous conditions or that is environmentally sensitive to development;
- The approximate location and phasing of any major road, sewer or water system;
- The approximate location and type of present and proposed public facilities, including schools, parks, waste treatment and disposal sites;

The Local Government Act governs the process whereby a community can prepare and adopt an Official Community Plan (OCP).

***Required consultation:** In addition to requirements for a formal public hearing prior to adoption of the OCP, Council must provide one or more opportunities for consultation with persons, organizations and authorities that will be affected by the plan.*

Bill 27: The provincial government passed Bill 27 in May 2008, amending the Local Government Act to require that municipalities include targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions within their OCP's by May 21st, 2010.

- Other matters that may, in respect of any plan, be required or authorized by the Minister;
- Housing policies of the local government respecting affordable housing, rental housing and special needs housing; and
- Targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the area covered by the plan, and policies and actions of the local government proposed with respect to achieving those targets.

An OCP **may** contain policy statements for the following:

- Policies relating to social needs, social well-being and social development;
- Policies respecting the maintenance and enhancement of farming on land in a farming area or in an area designated for agricultural use in the community plan;
- Policies relating to the preservation, protection, restoration and enhancement of the natural environment, its ecosystems and biological diversity; and, in cases where a matter is not within the jurisdiction of the local government, the plan may only state the broad objectives unless the Minister has required or authorized the local government to state a specific policy.

Part I: The Foundation

Visioning is a planning process through which a community creates a shared vision for its future. The vision is a description of what the community wants to become in the next 20 years. The vision and goals provides an overlay for the objectives and policies as well as future plans.

Community input indicated that planning for a more sustainable community should be a key focus of the 2009 OCP.

Sustainability is the practice of designing and creating complete, attractive, ecologically resilient, and prosperous communities for current and future generations.

2. Community Vision & Goals

2.1. Community Vision

Smithers is a thriving northern community that values its community vitality, economic diversity, and exceptional natural amenities. The Town is located within Gitdumden, the traditional territory of the Wet'suwet'en First Nation and is an important centre for their members.

Arts, cultural and recreational activities are an important part of community life. As a regional centre, the community of Smithers extends beyond the Town's legal boundaries. It is a friendly and desirable place to live, work, learn, and play. Downtown Smithers is the heart of the community and is defined by pedestrian friendly streets, animated public spaces, unique alpine architecture, and supports a mix of businesses, housing and community facilities.

Smithers is committed to ensuring a high quality of life for both current and future generations. Smithers uses collaborative and creative solutions to minimize negative effects on the environment and tackles the challenges of climate change and rising energy prices with innovation and awareness. The collective knowledge, wisdom and spirit of our citizens, neighbours, and the Wet'suwet'en First Nation guides Smithers toward a socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable future.

2.2 Goals

1. **Land Use and Growth Management: Maintain a complete and liveable community.** Smithers maintains a balanced approach to growth that respects the surrounding environment and supports our desire to be a complete, vibrant and unique community. By keeping our community compact we will maintain the integrity of our natural setting, use resources efficiently, encourage community health, and maintain our focus on improving our unique downtown and neighbourhoods.
2. **Environment: Maintain the health and integrity of our environment.** Smithers has a deep appreciation for the Bulkley Valley and watershed that sustains and defines our community. We are committed to living, working and playing in a manner that does not compromise the health of our environment and our community now or in the future. Our intention is to demonstrate leadership in the development and implementation of sound environmental practices.

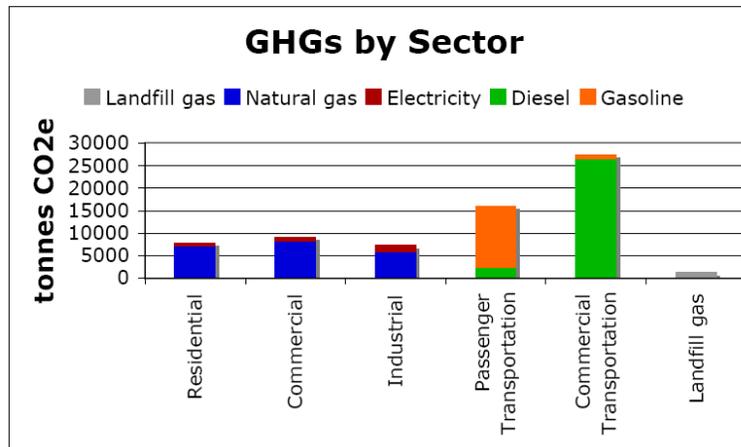
3. **Housing: Support access to a diversity of housing choices.** Smithers strives to provide a mix of housing options, ensuring that people of all ages and incomes have an opportunity for housing that is well built, safe, and located in liveable neighbourhoods. We encourage the efficient use of land to limit growth and cost of housing, the use of environmentally sound building approaches, the conservation of energy, water, material, and other resources in the building and upgrading of our residential buildings.
4. **Parks and Recreation: Protect and enhance our open spaces.** Smithers is proud of its parks, waterways, green spaces and trails, and its close proximity to world-class outdoor recreation areas, such as the Bulkley River and Hudson Bay Mountain. We will continue to improve connections to trails, parks and open spaces near our neighbourhoods. We will provide a range of outdoor parks, playgrounds and recreational facilities necessary to meet the current and future needs of our community as well as provide affordable access to these amenities.
5. **Food and Agriculture: Support sustainable farming and maintain rural values.** Smithers values its local agricultural lands and rural setting. We will protect these important features by encouraging appropriate land management practices that maintain their agricultural and rural attributes, and that are supportive of the local community and environment. To achieve greater local self-sufficiency we support and encourage efforts that increase the amount of food grown, processed and consumed locally.
6. **Transportation: Provide a diversity of transportation choices.** Smithers provides a range of transportation networks, facilities and modes necessary to support the Town's economy and environmental efforts. We support the development of an integrated and connected network of trails and pathways that encourage walking and biking as viable local transportation options. We support the development of regional transportation options and strategies to improve community health and wellbeing with the support of all stakeholders.
7. **Infrastructure: Plan for energy and investment efficiency.** Smithers is supported by an infrastructure system designed to meet the existing and future needs of the community. The Town provides high quality, dependable and cost effective support necessary for the proper management of this system. The management and delivery of associated services demonstrates our commitment to sustainable municipal infrastructure development and servicing. We are committed to avoiding, minimizing and recycling waste as well as encouraging the use of clean and efficient proven technologies and services.

- 8. Heritage, Arts and Culture: Celebrate our history and culture.** Smithers is an important cultural centre for the Northwest. We will continue to encourage an array of arts and educational opportunities to our residents, neighbours and visitors and actively encourage participation and appreciation through our festivals, courses, workshops, shows, openings and events. We recognize the importance of arts and culture to diversifying the town and improving quality of life, and support developing infrastructure to encourage more opportunities. We value, protect and celebrate our heritage. We also acknowledge the connection that the Wet'suwet'en First Nation has to the lands on which Smithers lies.
- 9. Community Services and Facilities: Support our health and wellbeing.** Smithers supports and seeks a range of accessible and affordable community health, youth, seniors, special needs, and educational services and facilities for our citizens, neighbours and guests. Facilities and services are designed and managed to cater to a wide variety of users and address the required needs. Their nature and quality is regularly assessed to ensure they meet established standards and to respond to the changing needs of the community.
- 10. Economic development: Build a healthy and resilient local economy.** Smithers provides a diversity of living and working choices, supported by a resilient, diversified economy. Commercial growth is encouraged downtown in order to ensure ease of access for our citizens and to support the vitality of our downtown core.
- 11. Governance: Concentrate on collaboration and engagement.** Smithers uses collaborative and creative governance systems to address local and regional opportunities for planning sustainable communities. The community of Smithers, the Town of Smithers, and other levels of government work together to meet community goals.

3. Climate Change Considerations

Smithers is committed to addressing climate change through setting green house gas emission (GHG) targets and undertaking the strategic planning to be able to meet those targets. Key mechanisms to reduce GHG emissions may include:

- Demonstrate commitment by participating in programs such as the Partners for Climate Protection Program and the BC Climate Action Charter;
- Set a strong community vision and goals that embody principles of climate change mitigation and adaptation;
- Develop OCP land-use policy and urban form that supports walkable, compact, communities;
- Adopt policies to mitigate and adapt to climate change such as limiting deforestation for development and carbon sequestration programs;
- Focus infrastructure and green building plans on GHG emission reductions and energy efficiency;
- Adopt a corporate strategy to reduce GHG emissions. For example, retrofitting existing municipal facilities and fleets;
- Develop green purchasing and anti-idling policies/ bylaws; and
- Implement innovative technologies and strategies such as district energy systems and carbon offset programs.



Smithers GHG Emission by Sector (Smithers Community Energy Plan 2007)

Climate Change is any long-term significant change in the “average weather” that a given region experiences. Average weather may include average temperature, precipitation and wind patterns. It involves changes in the variability or average state of the atmosphere.

There are two responses to Climate Change:

- 1) **Mitigation:** Intervention or policies to reduce the emissions or enhance the sinks of greenhouse gases.
- 2) **Adaptation:** Responses to the changing climate and policies to minimize the predicted impacts of climate change.

As climate change requires an integrated approach, climate change policy is incorporated into each chapter of the updated OCP. As indicated by the GHG by sector graph, transportation of people and commercial goods using gas and diesel represent a key opportunity to reduce emissions.

Population decline may be directly and indirectly attributable to:

- *Varying economic conditions in the forestry industry, which has impacted many Northern communities, including Smithers.*
- *Trend of people moving towards having smaller households.*
- *Aging population.*
- *Increase in the purchase and construction of second homes (i.e. accounts for housing starts but not population increase).*

One of the main implications of slow population decline is the renewed need and desire to maintain Smithers as an attractive place to settle and to conduct business.

4. Demographic Information & Projections

The Town of Smithers is a community of 5,217 residents situated approximately 371 kilometers west of Prince George and approximately 350 kilometers east of Prince Rupert (see Map 1: Provincial Context). Smithers was founded to service the development and expansion of the forestry, mining and transportation industries in northern BC during the 1900's.

The population of Smithers has been slowly declining at an average annual rate of 0.7% over the past decade. The Smithers region, as represented by the boundaries of School District 54 (Bulkley Valley), declined a slightly slower average of 0.4% annually. Population decline in Smithers has tended to occur in the younger age groups (44 and younger), primarily the 25-44 year old group. In contrast, declines in these younger age categories were mitigated somewhat by gains in the older (45 and above) age categories.

Smithers Population Change By Age Group 2001-2006 (Census)			
Age	2001 Population	2006 Population	% Change
< 19	1,760	1,580	-10.2%
20-24	340	315	-7.4%
25-44	1,665	1,397	-16.1%
45-64	1,123	1,340	19.3%
> 65	525	585	11.4%

Demographic trends indicate that the community is aging. Between 1996 and 2006, the median age of the Smithers increased by 4.5 years from 31.6 to 36.1. This is faster than the provincial average of 3.5 years.

According to BC Stats, the population of Smithers is projected to grow, but only modestly, in the range of 0.1% to 0.3% until 2031. Historically, the Town of Smithers has represented between 29 and 32% of the total population within the Bulkley Valley School District. Therefore, assuming that this proportion is maintained, the growth projections prepared by BC Stats indicate the potential for an additional 190 to 210 additional town residents by 2031. This would see the population of the Town increase to approximately 5400 residents by 2031. However, this projection does not take into account the potential growth or decline associated with resource-based industries and tourism development.

As a regional service centre, the local economy of Smithers is made up of a mix of service-related occupations that largely support the resource-based industries of forestry, mining and agriculture.

Smithers Employment By Occupation in 2006 (Census)	
Occupation	%
Sales & Service	27%
Trades & Transport	15%
Business, Finance & Administration	13%
Government & Education	10%
Management	9%
Natural & Applied Sciences	7%
Primary Industry	6%
Processing, Manufacturing & Utilities	5%
Health	5%
Arts, Culture, Recreation & Sport	3%

The high quality of life is a reason new people settle in Smithers. Amenity migration research conducted out of the University of Northern BC indicates that new residents move to Smithers for non-economic reasons, such as for the natural beauty and outdoor recreation opportunities. It is estimated that approximately 12% of the total Smithers population are amenity migrants.¹

¹ Chipeniuk, Ray (2006). Some tools for planning for amenity migration in remote rural settlements: lessons from participatory action. Oxford University Press and Community Development Journal. 2006

Smithers quick facts from the 2006 Census:

- In 2006, the population was 5,217, a decrease of 3.6% from 2001.
- Average family size is 3 people and average household size is 2.5 people.
- Median family income is higher than the provincial average at \$64,124. Overall average income is \$51,937.
- Unemployment rate is 8.5%, which is higher than the provincial average of 6%.
- Between 2001 and 2006, the aboriginal population living in Smithers grew by 41.1%, from 535 to 760. Aboriginal people now constitute roughly 14% of the total population of Smithers.

Part II: Community Objectives & Policies

5. Land Use & Growth Management

5.1. Background

The Town's physical boundaries of the Bulkley River, Hudson Bay Mountain, and railway have naturally shaped land use patterns and growth in the Town of Smithers. With a land area of 15.69km² (1,569 ha) or 3,877 acres, a street grid pattern, established in 1913, is still evident today. Commercial development is oriented along Main Street and Highway 16 with residential development radiating outwards. Industrial areas are concentrated along Tatlow Road, Victoria Drive and Nineteenth Avenue with parks, open spaces, and trails connected and integrated throughout, and beyond, the town boundaries. All serviced residential neighbourhoods are within 1,200 meters of Main Street and Highway 16 and are within walking distance to its downtown core, civic and recreational facilities (see Map 2: Planning Area).

Accommodating growth within the existing town boundary helps to maintain the compact character and identifiable downtown core. This approach to growth management focuses on encouraging land use patterns that use land, infrastructure, and resources efficiently. While the demand for new housing remains stable, mining exploration activities, the redevelopment of Hudson Bay Mountain, and the expansion of Smithers airport all have the potential for Smithers to experience growth.

The existing land supply has the capacity to accommodate residential growth for a range of housing types and tenures over the lifespan of this OCP (5-10 years). This can be achieved through the development of the Willowvale neighbourhood, infill in existing neighbourhoods and by mixed-use developments in the Downtown area. There is also capacity within the town boundary to accommodate growth in commercial and industrial sectors.

The Town's ability to realize land use and growth priorities is intrinsically related to how lands outside of the town boundaries are managed. As a regional centre, Smithers serves a large out-of-town population who come to shop, work and recreate, although do not directly pay for these services. Funding is collected and dispersed by the Regional District with tax rates less than those properties within the Town proper. As such, 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. Therefore, it is important that growth management decisions are coordinated to ensure they address objectives of each of these two entities.

OCP Goal: Maintain a compact and liveable community.

Community Survey Results:

When asked to identify priorities for growth initiatives, survey results indicated the following as priorities (ranked):

- 1. Revitalize the downtown;*
- 2. Protect sensitive areas on private land;*
- 3. Preserve the agricultural land reserve;*
- 4. Beautify the community;*
- 5. Control the appearance of commercial and industrial developments.*

Community input identified concerns about the loss of key businesses from Main Street. Reasons for this have been identified as:

- Land assembly;*
- Site size;*
- Exposure to regional traffic and customers;*
- Available parking.*

Boundary expansions are initiated by the Municipality and approved by the Province. The Local Government Act requires public consultation as part of the boundary expansion process.

Density refers to the number of units per area of land. The most common measure of density is dwelling units per acre (DUA).

Schedule A: Land Use provides the land use framework for managing the Town's growth. Any change in land use (i.e. rezoning) must be consistent with the OCP.

Boundary expansion may be needed in the future as the economy of Smithers continues to diversify. In the past, the area between Lake Kathlyn and the Town was the subject of a municipal boundary extension study, which concluded that utility-servicing constraints did not support extension into this area at that time. It was also recognized that rural residents live there as a lifestyle choice and may not wish to become incorporated into municipal boundaries.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction initiatives and strategies are outlined in the Community Energy & GHG Emissions Plan. The goal of the plan is to achieve the reduction target outlined in Policy 1 in Section 5.3.5.

In 2007 the Province of BC established the following goals:

- By 2010, the BC public sector will be carbon neutral.
- By 2020, BC will reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 33%, compared to 2007 levels.
- By 2050, GHG emissions in the Province will be reduced by at least 80% below 2007 levels.

5.2. Land Use Plan & Designations

The following land use designations are intended to guide future development in Smithers. The areas to which these designations apply are shown on Schedule A: Land Use.

Residential Single Family: The intent of the Residential Single Family designation is to encourage single-detached housing development at a range of densities up to 10 DUA, to encourage the creation of secondary suites for use by extended family, and to add to the community's stock of rental housing. The intent of this designation is also to support home-based businesses. Supported uses and housing types include:

- Standard single-detached homes.
- Small lot (intensive), single detached homes.
- Secondary suites at a maximum of 1 secondary suite per principal dwelling at a maximum size of 40% of the principle dwelling unit if contained within the principal residence.
- Home based businesses.

Mixed Residential: The intent of the Mixed Residential designation is to encourage a compact mix of housing types and tenures with densities of up to 30 DUA that are within walking distance of the downtown and key amenities. Supported uses and housing types include duplexes, street fronting town homes, low-rise apartments and home based businesses.

Downtown Commercial (Flex Use): The intent of the Downtown Commercial designation is to encourage a greater intensity and mix of uses (commercial and residential) with pedestrian oriented streets to provide adaptability and flexibility in use over time. Service based businesses, such as retail, restaurants, cafés, as well as professional services, civic facilities, parks, public gathering spaces, appropriate light manufacturing, and a variety of residential uses are supported. More specifically, this designation is to:

- Reinforce Main Street’s status as the downtown core by supporting commercial as the principal use permitted on the ground floor with commercial or residential uses encouraged on upper floors.
- Support the areas between King and Queen streets to include a mix of commercial and/or residential as principal or accessory permitted uses.

Highway 16 Commercial: The intent of the Highway 16 Commercial designation is to provide a mix of highway oriented commercial uses such as automotive sales and services, lumber supply, and home improvement. It is also intended to provide services to tourists and the traveling public. Supported uses include tourist accommodation, restaurants, personal services and service stations. This area is not intended for general retail sales, including the sale of general household goods, clothing or groceries that are considered more appropriate in the downtown area.

Parks, Open Space & Trails: The intent of the Parks, Open Space and Trails designation is to provide a network of active park space, passive open space and trails for users of all ages and abilities.

Recreational: The intent of the Recreational designation is to provide civic and community recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. Examples of supported uses include, but are not limited to curling rinks, arenas, pools, fair grounds and golf courses.

Agricultural: The intent of the Agricultural designation is to preserve land in the agricultural land reserve for agriculture. Only agricultural activities are supported in the area designated Agricultural with the exception of the airport and its operations.

The following design considerations should be addressed when zoning supporting these designations is developed:

- *Buildings may be sited with a 3-metre setback from the fronting street to allow for a transition area between the building face and the fronting public street.*
- *Buildings may incorporate upper storey set backs to minimize shadowing on, and view impacts from, the fronting street. A building height of up to three¹ storeys is allowed, with lot coverage to be no greater than 80%.*
- *The ground floor should be designed for use as a commercial retail space by incorporating large shop front windows, awnings, etc., to allow flexibility in use (residential/retail/office) of the ground floor.*
- *The building should be designed to allow ground floor retail uses to expand horizontally into the ground floor of adjacent buildings/units.*

Rural: The intent of the Rural designation is to maintain the rural character in Smithers by limiting development and infrastructure investments on rural lands. The development of land designated Rural is discouraged. The subdivision of land into parcels less than sixteen hectares within areas designated Rural will not be supported 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.

Civic/Community use: The intent of the Civic/Community designation is to support a broad range of public and institutional facilities, which serve the educational, health and safety, and cultural needs of the community. Supported uses include, but are not limited to schools, churches, hospital and police stations, as well as, land required to service the municipal utility infrastructure (i.e. sewage treatment facilities and water reservoirs). Civic uses, such as the library, Museum and Town Hall are also included as Community Uses.

Light industrial: The intent of the Light Industrial designation is to provide lands for enclosed manufacturing, processing, assembly, construction trades or similar.

Heavy industrial: The intent of the Heavy industrial designation is to provide appropriate places for activities such as resource processing, manufacturing, warehousing, sand and 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. Retail and office use will be restricted to a minor role on these sites, and must be associated with the primary business.

CN Lands: The intent of the CN Lands designation is to illustrate where CN lands exist in the town. Future lands may be available to the community for parks, recreation or trails.

Airport Lands: The intent of the Airport Lands designation is to provide lands for the airport use. A separate land use plan for the airport will be developed.

5.3. Objectives & Policies

5.3.1. LAND SUPPLY

- Objective:* To ensure an adequate supply of suitable land to accommodate population growth in a managed, thoughtful manner.
- Policy 1 The land use designations on Schedule A: Land Use provides the land use framework for managing growth in the Town. Changes of land use (re-zonings) will only be permitted in accordance with Schedule A: Land Use.
- Policy 2 An assessment of residential and commercial capacity and projected growth will be conducted every five years to ensure there is adequate supply of land to accommodate the anticipated housing, service, and employment needs of the community.

5.3.2. LAND USE, INFRASTRUCTURE & RESOURCE EFFICIENCY

- Objective:* To encourage compact settlement patterns that:
- Ensure efficient use of the land base in order to preserve open space and conserve natural resources.
 - Ensure the efficient, cost effective and contiguous provision of municipal infrastructure, public facilities and transportation systems.
- Policy 1 The majority of new growth and development will be accommodated through sensitive infill and intensification (redevelopment) of existing built and serviced areas. These forms of development will be given priority over development proposals on previously undeveloped (greenfield) sites within the Town boundaries.
- Policy 2 The majority of new residential growth should occur within the Downtown and the adjacent mixed residential neighbourhoods as shown in Schedule A: Land Use.
- Policy 3 Commercial, mixed-use and multi-family development proposals shall demonstrate how they meet the Development Permit Area design guidelines.

Infill development is the use of land within a built-up area. It focuses on the reuse and repositioning of obsolete or underutilized buildings and sites.

Greenfield is a term used to describe a piece of undeveloped land, either currently used for agriculture, landscape design, or just left to nature.

Brownfield is a term used to describe abandoned or underused industrial and commercial facilities available for re-use.

A Comprehensive Development Zone (CD) provides for the development or redevelopment of a larger site that allows for a variety of land uses and development approaches as part of a comprehensive development plan. This form of zoning enables a municipality to negotiate detailed guidelines and specifications for all aspects of a development in an integrated manner.

- Policy 4 Undeveloped greenfield sites currently designated for residential use are given a designation consistent with their current zoning until such time as there is a need for additional capacity to meet the housing needs of the community.
- Policy 5 Town Boundary expansion considerations must include a thorough assessment of the development capacity within the Town boundaries, cost feasibility, and established need for additional land to meet the needs of the community. Prior to considering municipal boundary expansions, the Town shall undertake a study that addresses the implications for land use, servicing, fiscal and municipal taxation, and governance issues. The Town will conduct consultation with affected local governments, residents and businesses.
- Policy 6 Municipal infrastructure shall not be extended beyond municipal boundaries.
- Policy 7 Smithers will work closely with the Regional District to ensure regional growth is managed to achieve goals and objectives, and address issues, of mutual interest and concern to each jurisdiction.
- Policy 8 The Town, Regional District, and Hudson Bay Mountain Adventures Inc. will work cooperatively to locate employee housing, tourist accommodation as well as determine the appropriate scope of commercial uses associated with the expansion of Hudson Bay Mountain Resort.
- Policy 9 Encourage mixed land uses through zoning and comprehensive development.

5.3.3. DOWNTOWN

Objective: *To concentrate new residential, commercial, and community uses within the downtown area in order to:*

- *Reinforce the downtown as the heart of the community.*
- *Create well defined, pedestrian-oriented streets.*
- *Support continued downtown revitalization.*
- *Provide a balance of jobs, amenities & housing for all stages of life.*

- *Create a compact, complete and walkable downtown.*

- Policy 1 Downtown is the preferred location for multi-unit residential buildings, mixed-use commercial and residential buildings, office buildings, institutional buildings, arts and cultural facilities, and retail.
- Policy 2 Mixed use development, specifically residential uses located above commercial uses, is strongly encouraged.
- Policy 3 Encourage the concentration of retail activity on Main Street.
- Policy 4 Encourage new commercial development proposals in areas designated for mixed use commercial/residential uses to be designed and constructed to accommodate a future residential component.

Mixed-use development is the practice of allowing more than one type of use in a building or set of buildings. In planning terms, this can mean some combination of residential, commercial, industrial, office, institutional, or other land uses.

5.3.4. INTEGRATED & ACCESSIBLE LAND USE

Objective: To integrate community land use and accessibility elements to ensure users have access to healthy, safe, and alternative mobility options that are convenient and connected.

Objective: To encourage compact settlement patterns and mixed land uses where appropriate.

Policy 1 Support partnerships with the non-profit, building, and business community to leverage town-owned land for attracting commercial and development opportunities consistent with the community vision and goals. These projects and activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Affordable housing;
- Under-represented industries;
- Green buildings;
- Open space; and
- Recreation facilities.

5.3.5. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Objective: For the purpose of complying with Section 877(3) of the Local Government Act and meeting the commitments under the Climate Action Charter, the Town of Smithers commits to a visionary greenhouse gas reduction target to contribute to the provincial effort of mitigating climate change.

Policy 1 Establishing a baseline at 2007 emission levels, the Town of Smithers strives to achieve a Community Greenhouse Gas Reduction Target of 13% by 2017.

6. Environment

6.1. Background

Smithers is a place of stunning natural beauty. The Town is located in the Bulkley Valley, a lush 100 km long, 10 km wide strip of land at the eastern edge of British Columbia's Interior Mountains. The mountains, lakes, rivers and vast wilderness areas that surround Smithers are an important part of local heritage and identity as well as the basis for local economic activities.

Environmentally sensitive areas include a number of riparian areas, which provide wildlife habitat as well as contain watercourses essential for salmon and steelhead spawning. The Town's natural drainage watercourses include Chicken Creek, Kathlyn Creek, Dahlie Creek, Bigelow Creek and Seymour Creek, all of which eventually feed into the Bulkley River.

Two rare and endangered ecosystems (Red Listed) were identified in the 1998 Rare Plant Communities and Plant Species inventory of the Bulkley Valley. These include Saskatoon-Slender Wheatgrass (found on Southwest-facing slope complexes) and Black Cottonwood-Red Osier Dogwood (found on floodplain and swamp forests). Areas where these ecosystems may exist are shown on Schedule B.

There are a number of natural hazards within the Town boundaries. These include:

- *Floodplain areas* (approximately 90 hectares designated by the Province) exist adjacent to the Bulkley River. As the Province has not delineated floodplain limits for side streams and tributaries of the Bulkley River; there may be additional lands prone to flooding adjacent to local watercourses.
- *Steep slopes* exceeding 20% are generally limited to two broad areas within the Town boundaries, which include 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.
- *Interface wildfires* are a concern to the community in areas of close proximity to forested areas.

OCP Goal: Maintain the health and integrity of our environment.

Smithers has a moderate climate that supports all-season recreation opportunities. Summers are warm and bright with snowy winters, rainy springs and cool autumns. On average, Smithers gets:

- 292 days of sunshine.
- 354 mm of rain a year.
- 204 cm of snowfall a year.

The Bulkley River is a provincially significant river for fishery resources. Known for world-class steelhead fishing in Canada, the Bulkley River is 257 km long with a drainage basin covering 12,400 km².

Ecologically significant areas include streams, lakes, wetlands, mature trees, and known habitat areas.

Community input identified the following opportunities for improvement:

- *Manage future mining so that the environment & social impacts are minimized while at the same time recognizing the economic potential of these resource industry ventures.*
- *Strengthen regulations that protect environmentally sensitive areas.*
- *Maintain and enhance the existing natural areas surrounding the community.*
- *Protect sensitive and rare natural areas.*
- *Improve air quality.*

Air quality levels are an ongoing issue in Smithers. According to the 2008 BC State of the Air Report, Smithers has the third highest levels of fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) across British Columbia, behind Prince George and Quesnel. Leading contributors of the poor air quality in Smithers are smoke and road dust.

Prominent natural features form the visual backdrop of Smithers. Most outstanding are Hudson Bay Mountain to the west and the Babine Mountains to the east. Crown lands that surround Smithers are managed through the Bulkley Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP). Maintaining the surrounding visual landscape requires a collaborative effort by the Town, adjacent property owners and other levels of governments. This includes ongoing work with the Wetzin'kwa Community Forest.

6.2. Objectives & Policies

6.2.1. PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

Objective: *To identify, protect and, where possible, enhance ecologically significant areas for the long term benefit and enjoyment of residents and visitors to Smithers.*

Objective: *To minimize the negative impacts on the environment.*

Objective: *To support development that avoids unnecessary impacts to the environment.*

Policy 1 Protect and conserve sensitive terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems identified in the Ministry of Environment Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory. Protection may take the form of regulation, parks acquisition, or conservation covenants.

Policy 2 Protect important terrestrial habitats through the application of a Development Permit Area over sensitive terrestrial ecosystems located within the Town's boundaries as per Schedule B.

Policy 3 Protect fish and aquatic habitats through the application of a Development Permit Area over wetlands, watercourses, and riparian areas as per Schedule B.

- Policy 4 Encourage the stewardship of ecologically significant areas on private lands by supporting the application of conservation covenants on private lands.
- Policy 5 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 the Bulkley Valley.
- Policy 6 Ensure lighting supports a safe and secure environment and minimizes impacts on adjacent properties and the night sky.
- Policy 7 Continue to support the woodstove exchange program.
- Policy 8 Support the Community Action Plan for Clean Air.
- Policy 9 Continue to encourage development and support the objectives of the *Land and Resource Management Plan (1997)* to maintain the visual quality of mountain views. The maintenance of the visual quality of all mountain areas surrounding the Town is supported, including the Babine Mountains. This may include requesting Provincial agencies, Regional District, BC Hydro, CN Rail and others to consider views when planning projects.

6.2.2. PROTECT THE PUBLIC FROM NATURAL HAZARDS

- Objective:* To reduce the risk of harm to public health and property by restricting development in areas prone to floods, wildfire and erosion.
- Policy 1 Protect against the loss of life and minimize property damage associated with flood events by encouraging flood-susceptible lands to be used for agricultural, park, open-space and recreation as the threat to life and property is lower with these uses than with residential, commercial and industrial land uses.
 - Policy 2 Implement site management and/or building design approaches that minimize the risk of wildfires in high-risk areas. The implementation of these approaches within Development Permit Areas is subject to Town review and approval, particularly within Development Permit Areas established to protect and maintain important, sensitive or rare ecosystems.

Dark Skies: Movement to preserve and protect the nighttime environment and our heritage of dark skies through quality outdoor lighting.

The Home Owners Fire Smart Manual offers suggestions for site and building design to decrease the risk of wildfires.

The Provincial Emergency Program (PEP) works with local governments and other provincial and federal agencies year round, providing coordination and support before, during and after emergencies. PEP is administered under the Emergency Program Act.

Policy 3 Remove and replant, where practical, any beetle-infected indigenous trees. In the event of large amounts of infected trees needing to be removed, Smithers will offset this cost by applying to Federal aid programs such as the *Federal Mountain Pine Beetle Program*.

6.2.3. EMERGENCY PLANNING

Objective: To ensure the community is prepared and able to respond, recover from, and be aware of the effects of a major disaster or emergency.

Policy 1 Work with the Regional District and the Provincial Emergency Program to identify and coordinate available and needed resources and to continue refining and exercising the emergency plan in accordance with the *Emergency Program Act* and *the Local Government Act*.

Policy 2 Encourage public preparedness for disasters through public awareness and education, including encouraging residents to be personally prepared in the event of a major disaster.

Policy 3 Support local neighbourhood efforts to establish Neighbourhood Emergency Preparedness Programs and to become self-reliant following a disaster or emergency.

Policy 4 Require developers to comply with the provisions included for Development Permit Areas, specifically for hazard lands and the storage and transport of hazardous materials.

7. Housing

7.1. Background

Housing that serves people of different ages, incomes, family structures, and physical and social needs are key elements in creating and maintaining a healthy, inclusive, and sustainable community. As the population of Smithers changes and as family and household characteristics change, a range of housing will be needed to accommodate new residents, meet the changing needs of an aging population and provide lifestyle choices.

The housing mix in Smithers is comprised mostly of single detached homes with relatively few medium/high-density housing units. Most dwellings are owned (68%) and about 70% of the housing stock is more than 20 years old.

Privately Occupied Homes (2006 Census)		
	Smithers	BC
Single detached	66.3%	49%
Apartments	17.3%	38%
Semi-Detached/Row Homes	8.4%	10%
Other	8.4%	2.8%

Aside from single detached homes, the local housing mix includes:

- *Multi-family buildings*, which are concentrated along the Main Street north corridor, Fulton Avenue, and the areas generally east and west of downtown Smithers.
- *Three mobile home parks*, which are dispersed in different neighbourhoods of Town.
- *Secondary suites*, which are permitted in single detached homes in specific zones.
- *Non-market housing*, which includes a mix of emergency, supportive, transitional and subsidized. Different housing providers manage these units.

OCP Goal: Support access to a diversity of housing choices.

Community input indicated recognition that types of housing beyond the single family home are necessary, as is residential intensification, particularly in and adjacent to the downtown core.

The Downtown Charrette concluded that encouraging residential growth within and immediately adjacent to the downtown core is key to downtown revitalization and overall community sustainability.

Community input indicated support for:

- Seniors housing;
- Mixed-use developments in the downtown area;
- Different housing types and tenures;
- Housing quality.

Secondary suite is a planning term for an additional separate dwelling unit on a property that would normally accommodate only one dwelling unit. A secondary suite is considered “secondary” or “accessory” to the primary residence on the parcel.

Housing affordability and access are important issues for the community. Very little rental housing is being built and the Town’s vacancy rate generally remains low. Housing costs, although perceived by the community as being high, are considerably lower than the provincial average. However, according to MLS listings and the Northern Real Estate Board, there has been a steady decrease in homes sold for under \$200,000 over the last four years.

Housing quality contributes to the overall identity and character of the Smithers community. More specifically, medium density residential buildings (i.e. town houses and apartments) influence neighbourhoods in terms of size, scale and design. As such, Development Permit Area guidelines have been established for multi-family buildings in order to maintain a degree of consistency in the overall form and character (see Development Permit Areas for more information).

7.2. Objectives & Policies

7.2.1. HOUSING MIX

Objective: *To create a diverse mix of housing types, tenures, and densities to accommodate the various housing needs of existing and future residents.*

- Policy 1** Give priority to multi-family residential proposals that allow people to remain in the community as they age, including various forms of supportive housing and multi-level care facilities.
- Policy 2** Amend the Zoning Bylaw to allow secondary suites in the single family detached residential zone at a maximum of 1 secondary suite per principal dwelling and a maximum size of 40% of the principle dwelling unit if contained within the principal residence.
- Policy 3** Home based businesses are welcomed being that it is owner occupied only.
- Policy 4** Amend the Town’s land use designation and associated zones regulating detached single-family developments to allow small lot sub divisions up to a density of 10 (principal) dwelling units per acre. Lane access is strongly encouraged for these small lots.
- Policy 5** Housing types, sizes and tenureship arrangements should be mixed wherever possible to encourage a social mix within individual

neighbourhoods.

Policy 6 Where appropriate, some forms of ground oriented live-work buildings and uses may be permitted in areas currently designated Industrial. Proposals for work /live buildings and uses must demonstrate appropriate levels of livability for the residential uses and not significantly reduce the capacity for commercial or industrial uses in these areas.

Policy 7 Appropriate temporary residential uses are supported on lands within the Town of Smithers.

7.2.2. HOUSING AFFORDABILITY & ACCESS

Objective: To encourage a range of safe and affordable housing options which meet the needs of individuals and families of varying income levels, age groups, and needs.

Policy 1 Give priority to development proposals for small and compact forms of housing such as small-lot single detached homes, town homes, and apartments.

Policy 2 Encourage alternative housing tenures within residential areas such as co-housing, cooperative housing, and fee-simple town homes, especially where these meet an affordable housing need.

Policy 3 Integrate seniors and special needs housing into the community where there is good access to public transit and basic support services.

Policy 4 Support the creation of new, and the retention of existing, rental housing and discourage the conversion of rental housing to strata ownership.

Policy 5 Support the location of supportive or transitional housing within the Town for special needs groups, such as the physically or mentally disabled, young people and others who have unique social needs. (The provisions of the Community Care and Assisted Living Act govern many aspects of these homes.)

Policy 6 Encourage the retention and creation of mobile home parks, in appropriate locations, as a viable and important source of affordable home ownership in

Live-work refers to buildings that are primarily for the purpose of commercial/industrial activity, but also allow the business owner or an employee to reside there.

Town homes generally have two or more floors and are attached to other similar units via party walls. Town houses are often used in strata developments, which provide for clustered or attached housing and common areas. They can also be fee simple.

Cohousing is a type of intentional community composed of private homes, supplemented by extensive common facilities. A cohousing community is planned, owned and managed by the residents who value more interaction with their neighbours.

A housing cooperative is a legal entity, usually a corporation that owns real estate, consisting of one or more residential buildings. Each shareholder in the legal entity is granted the right to occupy one housing unit, sometimes subject to an occupancy agreement, which is similar to a lease.

At its most basic, **affordable housing** refers to when the cost of adequate shelter exceeds 30% of household income. However, affordable housing may take a number of forms that exist along a continuum of housing types and tenures.

Density bonusing is authorized under the Local Government Act. Municipalities can adopt a density bonus scheme to create incentives for developers to provide an amenity, such as affordable housing or cash-in-lieu contribution, in exchange for variations in zoning requirements (i.e. higher density).

Smithers. New, stand alone, mobile home parks will be considered subject to the following conditions:

- Connection to municipal water, sanitary sewer and storm 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.
- Sensitive integration into the existing neighbourhood and with adjacent residential uses.
- The development of and compliance with a bylaw regulating their form and appearance.

- Policy 7 Explore the possibility of strengthening security of tenure for residents of mobile home parks and other protections that address issues related to the displacement of mobile home park residents. This may include requiring the development of a tenant relocation plan as a mandatory element of any application to re-zone/re-develop a manufactured home park.
- Policy 8 The Town will continue its role in developing Town land by inviting private developers to bid on developing the land. Lot prices will, generally at a minimum, recover the actual costs of development, but will also be used to shape and focus housing in particular areas of town.
- Policy 9 Work with local housing providers to establish affordable housing strategies, such as participating in a housing organization.
- Policy 10 As an incentive, consider density bonusing for residential projects that help achieve specific housing goals such as the creation of additional seniors housing or affordable rental housing.
- Policy 11 Encourage large-scale hotel and resort developments to ensure there is an affordable supply of rental housing for employees, and where required, include the provision to provide employee housing.
- Policy 12 Encourage the development of partnerships among community groups, non-profit organizations, the business community, professionals and all levels of

government to provide affordable and special needs housing.

7.2.3. HOUSING QUALITY

- Objective:* To encourage high quality residential design that creates a positive interface with the public realm and that reinforces the unique history and character of Smithers.
- Policy 1 All proposals for mixed-use and multi-family development must demonstrate how they address the Development Permit Area guidelines.
- Policy 2 Encourage residential development, both new and existing, to present a ‘friendly face’ to the fronting public right of way (street or walkway). This can be achieved by ensuring entrances are well defined, welcoming, and clearly visible and accessible from the fronting street, by locating servicing, parking and access off the rear lane, and through the creation of street edges which are characterized by low, neighbourly fences, combined with extensive landscape materials at the private edge (cross reference Development Permit Area guidelines).
- Policy 3 Multi-family developments are encouraged to provide edible landscaping and opportunities for fruit and vegetable gardening.
- Policy 4 Encourage innovative and site-sensitive housing and subdivision designs that reduce storm water run off, demonstrate energy efficiency in building performance, and demonstrate a sensitive response to the site and its context. In particular, encourage proposals that use energy efficient design and incorporate alternative forms of energy including earth energy (geo-exchange) and solar thermal energy sources.
- Policy 5 Alternative building design strategies are permitted provided they are designed, certified and inspected by registered engineers and pass building inspection.

OCP Goal: Protect and enhance our open spaces.

Community input identified the following areas of interest:

- *Enhance public spaces with great outdoor gathering & activity areas.*
- *Increase the provision of recreation services.*
- *Continue to provide a high standard for facilities.*
- *Improve & expand the perimeter trail system.*

Partnerships with community groups continue to play an important role in the continued development and improvement of these areas. Examples include:

- *Kinsmen's Kiddies Park in Heritage Park;*
- *Smithers Mountain Bike Association's Bike Park in Elks Park;*
- *Ducks Unlimited Wetland Detention Area.*

8. Parks, Open Space & Recreation

8.1. Background

The Town's extensive network of parks, open spaces and recreation facilities contributes to the high quality of life local residents have come to enjoy. Local recreation amenities for all ages appeal to both residents and visitors alike and are an important reason why many people come to and stay in Smithers,

Parks and open space areas are integrated throughout Smithers, totalling 87 hectares of which 26.5 hectares is dedicated active park use (excluding special use areas, such as the Fall Fair Grounds, and school grounds). Natural open space comprises a significant component of the overall parks system and helps maintain the environmental integrity of the Town. These open space areas may or may not incorporate areas for passive recreation, such as wildlife viewing and informal pathways.

The Perimeter Trail system offers residents a circular trail system around the edge of Town for a variety of activities such as walking, jogging, hiking, biking, and cross country skiing. The trail system connects major community parks with smaller neighbourhood parks, residential neighbourhoods and downtown Smithers. This also includes access links to trails and recreation areas beyond the Town Boundary, such as the Hudson Bay Mountain Trail to Town, Seymour Lake Trails, local mountain bike trails, and commuter routes, such as the Lake Kathlyn Connector.

Smithers has a large number of recreation facilities, most of which are in public ownership. Public facilities include: Civic Centre, LB Warner Centre, Ranger Park, Smithers Public Library, tennis courts, Central Park Building, Archery Grounds, Fall Fair Grounds, Pool & Recreation Centre (owned by the Regional District).

8.2. Objectives & Policies

8.2.1. PARKS & OPEN SPACE

Objective: To provide a system of accessible, safe, and connected parks and open areas for the enjoyment of both residents and visitors to Smithers.

Policy 1 Maintain undevelopable areas as natural open space. Where appropriate,

passive and active recreational uses and informal walkways may be incorporated into the open space.

- Policy 2 A Parks, Open Space, and Recreation Master Plan may be developed to assess and guide the expansion, improvement and management of the Town's public park system.
- Policy 3 Comprehensive plans may be developed for the Central, Heritage and Veteran's Peace parks to improve the design, function and services provided by these important and valued civic spaces.
- Policy 4 Support the creation of additional neighbourhood park space, particularly in or adjacent to areas of new residential development. Potential areas that could accommodate new parks space are identified in Schedule A: Land Use.
- Policy 5 Funds raised by the sale of parklands should be used to acquire new parks and open space areas of equal or greater area and quality, where possible, or be used to improve existing ones.
- Policy 6 Incorporate CPTED principles into the design of open space and trails.
- Policy 7 Pursue the land acquisition and development of a town square that is located on Main St.
- Policy 8 Plan for connectivity of the parks, open space and trails to enhance pedestrian/cyclist connections and biodiversity.

8.2.2. RECREATION

Objective: To provide recreation opportunities for community members of all ages and abilities and to enhance tourism opportunities.

- Policy 1 Place a high priority on developing the Town's outdoor recreation facilities such as the development of:
- Multiple ball field/soccer field facility within Town boundaries.
 - Affordable community sports and recreational facilities.
 - A multi-use, multi-purpose recreation centre for year round use.
- Policy 2 Support community initiatives to improve recreation opportunities.

Community Parks:

- Heritage Park (7 ha)
- Elks Park (5.8 ha)
- Chandler Park (3.3 ha)
- Veterans Peace Park (0.6 ha)
- Central Park (2 ha)

Neighbourhood Parks:

- Dogwood (1.9 ha)
- Wildwood (0.1 ha)
- Yorke Hardy (0.2 ha)
- Ranger (3.7 ha)
- Lake Kathlyn (1.5ha)
- Silverking/Reisiter (0.3 ha)

Open Space Areas:

- Riverside Park (45.9 ha)
- Wetlands (14.7 ha)

Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) is the proper design and effective use of the built environment to reduce fear and incidence of crime.

British Columbia (BC) Parks is responsible for the designation, management and conservation of a system of ecological reserves, provincial parks and recreation areas. In relatively close proximity to Smithers are:

- Call Lake (62 ha)
- Driftwood Canyon (21 ha)
- Tyhee Lake (33 ha)
- Netalzul Meadows (297 ha)
- Babine Mtns (32,400 ha)

- Policy 3 Support the cooperative efforts of the Town and School District No. 54 towards the location of ball diamonds and soccer fields on future school sites. 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 4 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.

8.2.3. TRAILS

- Objective: To improve the existing trail system in order to encourage alternative transportation, promote community health and wellbeing, and to minimize wildlife encounters.*
- Policy 1 Improve connectivity by connecting and expanding the Smithers' Perimeter Trail system to encourage non-motorized commuting and recreation opportunities throughout the Town.
- Policy 2 Maintain a natural, vegetated landscaped buffer along trail edges wherever possible, while addressing CPTED concerns.
- Policy 3 Maintain and create trail connections to community facilities, neighbourhoods, and features of interest.
- Policy 4 The Town will address ongoing development and management of trails as part of the Parks, Open Space, and Recreation Master Plan.
- Policy 5 Integrate trail connections as part of any transportation infrastructure planning discussions, decisions, or plans.
- Policy 6 Require new development to include trails through or adjacent to their development in accordance with the Parks, Open Space, and Recreation Master Plan.

9. Food, Agriculture & Rural Lands

9.1. Background

Smithers is fortunate to be in close proximity to the agricultural activities of the Bulkley Valley. Farms in the Bulkley Valley are generally large, averaging 285 hectares in size. Production is largely focused on forage crops, cattle and dairy as confirmed by the 2001 and 2006 Census. In town, many residents maintain backyard gardens and a popular Farmer's Market takes place throughout the growing season. An active community garden is established along Railway Avenue and a neighbourhood garden is located on Princess Street.

Areas of Town are located within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). The majority of these areas are found in the northwest portion of the Town boundary, encompassing the airport and associated airport lands, as well as pockets along the Bulkley River. Lands associated with the airport are no longer farmed and with the transfer of ownership of the Airport to the Town there may be a possibility to apply to have these lands removed from the ALR. The Airport Land Use Business Plan provides guidance on ALR exclusion and future airport land use plans.

Rural land is located on the edge of Town, most of which is not fully serviced with municipal sewer and water. The majority of rural land and agricultural operations in the Bulkley Valley are under the jurisdiction of the Bulkley-Nechako Regional District. Large residential lots, exceeding 0.4-2 hectares (1-5 acres), are limited within the Town boundary, however, available in the Regional District close to Town.

9.2. Objectives & Policies

9.2.1. PRESERVE AGRICULTURAL LAND

Objective: To preserve lands with potential for agricultural production and to protect them from incompatible land uses.

Policy 1 Continue to maintain and identify Agricultural Land Reserve areas within the Town boundaries as shown on Schedule A: Land Use.

Policy 2 Only agricultural activities are supported in the area designated Agricultural with the exception of the airport and its operations.

OCP Goal: Support sustainable farming and maintain rural values.

Food security refers to the availability and access to food. A household is considered food secure when its occupants do not live in hunger or fear of starvation.

Community input indicated support for:

- *Local food production;*
- *Protecting the unique farming landscape of the Bulkley Valley;*
- *Improving food security & sustainability;*
- *Limiting sprawl outside Town boundaries.*

Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) is a provincial zone in which agriculture is recognized as the priority use. Farming is encouraged and non-agricultural uses are controlled.

Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) is responsible for the regulation of land found within the ALR. Regulations and Commission resolutions take precedence over municipal land use bylaws, including Official Community Plans.

Right to Farm Act protects farmers that are using normal farm practices from nuisance lawsuits and nuisance bylaws

- Policy 3 The existing airport and its current operations are currently supported as non-farm uses within the Agricultural Land Reserve. The land area covered by the airport is shown graphically on the Schedule A: Land Use.
- Policy 4 Notwithstanding the above policy the Town may make application to the Agricultural Land Commission to exclude the airport lands from the ALR. Exclusion may be necessary to enhance future airport operations, which are now managed by the Town.
- Policy 5 For lands situated within the ALR, the regulations of the Agricultural Land Commission Act and the Local Government Act, must be taken into account in any land use or building application being reviewed by the Town.

9.2.2. SUPPORT AGRICULTURE

Objective: *To ensure the sustainability and economic viability of the local farm community continues as an important and sustaining element of Smithers and the Bulkley Valley community.*

- Policy 1 Recognize and support normal farm practices as defined by the Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act in the vicinity of residential areas. Certain uses with possible undesirable side effects, such as odours from fertilizers and animal noises are to be expected in agricultural areas. In the case of conflict with adjacent development, the agricultural use will generally be favoured.
- Policy 2 Support and encourage agricultural activities in the Smithers area by encouraging the Regional District to develop an Agricultural Area Plan for the Electoral Area A of the Bulkley Nechako Regional District. This plan may, among other things, address factors that are increasing the cost of farmland, determine how to encourage farming, improve local food security, maintain supporting agricultural infrastructure such as feed companies, auction houses, abattoirs, and cold storage or processing facilities, value-added food production, and address the environmental management of farms.
- Policy 3 Support the diversification of the local agriculture economy as well as efforts to increase local food production that service the Town. This includes participating in regional discussions on issues affecting the local

agriculture community (i.e. on-farm housing, agro-tourism, changes to BC's Assessment's farm classification, etc.).

Policy 4 Encourage the diversification of agricultural activity and products that show potential for economic viability.

Policy 5 Continue to allow and support the development of farmers' markets.

9.2.3. ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Objective: To encourage and support the implementation of environmentally considerate farming practices.

Policy 1 Encourage the local agricultural community to provide leadership in the protection and conservation of the environment and natural resources as it relates to farm practice.

Policy 2 Encourage participation in the BC Environmental Farm Plan Program as it relates to agricultural and farming practices. The Environmental Farm Plan Program gives participating farmers a better understanding of existing environmental legislation, regulations and policies over farm activities and provides a range of preferred beneficial farm management practices as well as assistance with their implementation.

Policy 3 Support the beneficial application of recycled organic matter and compost to local farm lands in order to reduce the Town's contribution to the waste stream, and improve the health and fertility of local soils.

9.2.4. MAINTAIN RURAL CHARACTER

Objective: To maintain rural lands for rural uses and provide a rural boundary to the community.

Policy 1 The areas designated as Rural on Schedule A: Land Use are intended to be retained for rural residential, agricultural and forestry uses over the long-term.

Policy 2 Support agricultural and forestry uses on rural lands.

Policy 3 Encourage the Bulkley Nechako Regional District to maintain the rural and agricultural zoning in the areas adjacent to the Town's boundary.

*The concept of **agrotourism** is a direct expansion of ecotourism, which encourages visitors to experience agricultural life at first hand. Agrotourism is gathering strong support from small communities as rural people have realised the benefits of sustainable development brought about by similar forms of nature travel.*

*The **BC Environmental Farm Plan Program** provides an opportunity to encourage farmers and those connected with the agricultural industry to employ more environmentally considerate practices.*

OCP Goal: Provide a diversity of transportation choices.

Driving distances from Smithers:

- Prince Rupert, BC 350 km
- Prince George, BC 370 km
- Vancouver, BC 1,150 km
- Edmonton, AB 1,130 km
- Whitehorse, YK 1,257 km

Community input indicated the following opportunities for improving transportation:

- Improve pedestrian access and safety along frontage roads;
- Improve pedestrian connectivity to the downtown core;
- Improve design and development standards on the Highway 16 corridor;
- King-Main-Queen Streets should act as a “gateway” into downtown Smithers with landscaping and pedestrian improvements;
- Improve accessibility for all people in all seasons.

10. Transportation

10.1. Background

Smithers is located in close proximity to established air, rail, road, and trail networks. The street network in Smithers has been established for many decades, consisting of Highway 16 as the primary corridor with a series of local and collector roads, which serve local neighbourhoods and newly developed areas (see Map 5: Road Network). This established street grid provides for a high degree of connectivity for both vehicles and pedestrians. While most residents use a vehicle to get to work and run errands in Town, others take advantage of the pedestrian and bicycle trails.

Highway 16 (Trans Canada Yellowhead Highway) is a defining element of the overall 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, separating the northern and southern areas of the Town both visually and physically. Frontage roads provide access to the businesses located along the Highway 16 corridor. Ongoing areas for improvement include the road standards (curbs and sidewalks), access/egress, business visibility, as well as overall safety and accessibility of intersections.

Transportation options in Smithers include:

- The *Smithers & District Transit System* provides both a fixed route and door-to-door service. The Town of Smithers in partnership with the Village of Telkwa, the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako and BC Transit sponsors the transit system. The transit system is operated by Smithers Community Services Association.
- *The Perimeter Trail* links together different areas of Town. The trail is used for walking, jogging, hiking, biking and cross-country skiing.
- The *Smithers Regional Airport* offers regional and provincial connections as well as several charter airplane and helicopter operations.
- *Via Rail* runs its passenger service through Smithers en route east to Jasper and west to Prince Rupert.

- *Other transportation options* include: Greyhound Bus Lines, the winter snow bus to Hudson Bay Mountain, local taxi services, and the Northern Health Connections bus service.

Parking is located both on-street (angle and parallel) and off-street (parking lots). In the downtown area, parking is an ongoing issue where land availability is limited. Currently, businesses must provide the required parking on-site or another site, or through cash-in-lieu. Two parking studies have been completed (UMA, 1991 and Stanley, 1998) that indicated that downtown parking was considered adequate and that the Town’s parking standards were similar to those of comparable communities. However, this is a topic of ongoing debate.

10.2. Objectives & Policies

10.2.1. STREET NETWORK & PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT

Objective: To provide an efficient, safe, reliable, and connected multi-modal municipal road system for residents, visitors and businesses.

Policy 1 The overall road network for Smithers shall be in accordance with the existing and proposed roads indicated on Map 5: Road Network.

Policy 2 The following principles will be used to guide decisions regarding transportation planning:

- To promote a compact urban form 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 maintain the 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; and

The Downtown Charrette identified parking management as a key issue in terms of how current regulations are prohibitive for retail businesses and is a disincentive for any building upgrades.

The Town’s Subdivision Servicing By-law establishes the requirements related to works and services a landowner may need to complete or provide with their subdivision or development application.

- 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.

- Policy 3 Update road design standards for the hierarchy of road type as in the Subdivision Servicing By-law (1991) to allow for changes to road standards that support compact, complete, communities such as streets that:
- a) Are designed to minimize traffic impacts in settled areas;
 - b) Support and encourage alternatives to the car, and that
 - c) Reflect the unique ‘rural’ and ‘village’ character of the range of neighbourhoods and areas within the Town.
- Policy 4 Endorse the following Pedestrian Charter:
- Acknowledge that walking is a key indicator of a healthy, efficient, socially inclusive and sustainable community;
 - Acknowledge the universal rights of people to be able to walk safely and to enjoy high quality public spaces at anytime;
 - Support community design and the provision of adequate infrastructure and facilities that fosters safe, convenient, direct, and comfortable pedestrian travel.
- Policy 5 In order to provide improved pedestrian movement within the municipality, the following priorities are recommended:
- a) Provide marked crosswalks and sidewalks or walkways in the long-term on both sides of arterial or major municipal roads within urban settlement areas. These will also function as part of pedestrian routes outlined on Map 3: Parks and Open Space.
 - b) Sidewalks or walkways are recommended for one side of other roads within urban settlement areas, and on arterial routes and major municipal roads in agricultural areas of the municipality.
 - c) Support the development of recreational walkways and/or multiuse trails throughout the municipality designated as the Trail System on Map 3: Parks and Open Space. These walkways provide links between

the major park and open space areas and may be off-road or adjacent to the roadways.

- Policy 6 Continue to work with the owners of private property to upgrade sidewalks and pave gravel streets in residential neighbourhoods in accordance with current Local Area Services Charges policy and procedures.
- Policy 7 The upgrading and extension of Railway Avenue is considered to be a long-range project, subject to future boundary extensions, the future uses or development of the CN lands, and environmental considerations.
- Policy 8 Require suitable development standards for all new developments or subdivisions within the community, including those fronting on Highway 16.
- Policy 9 Expand sidewalk coverage for new and existing non-conforming sidewalks to accommodate wheelchair and low mobility access.
- Policy 10 New frontage roads constructed by the landowner in cooperation with the Town and the Province are supported in the following areas:
- Tatlow Road to Victoria Drive on the north side of the highway;
 - Toronto Street eastward on the north side of the highway;
 - Alberta Street towards King Street.

10.2.2. HIGHWAY 16

Objective: To continue towards integrating Highway 16 with the municipal road network in order to increase the compatibility of adjacent uses, enhance the appearance and gateway experience, particularly through the downtown area.

- Policy 1 Support tourist oriented off-street parking in the areas between King and Queen streets (i.e. RV parking). Any upgrades should ensure parking is designed to be safe and accessible.
- Policy 2 The development of on street parking along the frontage roads should be considered.
- Policy 3 The role of Highway 16 within the Town of Smithers is as an urban corridor that serves the needs of both the local community and the traveling public.

Local Area Service (LAS) is a neighbourhood improvement project undertaken for the benefit of the property owners whose property directly abuts the street where the work is done.

Frontage roads are roads that run parallel to a higher-speed road (i.e. Highway) and feed it at appropriate points of access.

All decisions and design standards related to Highway 16 will reflect this urban orientation.

- Policy 4 Support an urban highway corridor standard with the following key elements:
- Two-lane divided highway from the westbound gateway to Alberta Street;
 - A raised landscaped median with turning bays throughout the corridor to ensure safe pedestrian crossing, traffic separation and visual attractiveness;
 - Full pedestrian sidewalks on both sides of the highway 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; and
 - Cycle lanes on both sides of the highway.
- Policy 5 Maintain the existing frontage road system to provide access to businesses in these locations.
- Policy 6 Upgrade frontage roads to an urban standard to improve the appearance, pedestrian safety and functioning of these roads.
- Policy 7 Improve sidewalks and cycling routes on frontage roads.
- Policy 8 Utilize traffic calming approaches which may include design elements such as gateway entrances, sidewalks, curbs and gutters, landscaping, frontage road improvements including sidewalks, curbs and gutter, and a four lane divided highway from eastbound to westbound gateways.
- Policy 9 Ensure that traffic controls along Highway 16 support slower speeds.

10.2.3. TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

Objective: To emphasize walking and cycling within the community, as well as rail and transit for regional passenger travel over private vehicle use by ensuring non-automobile travel to, from, and within the community is safe, convenient and accessible.

- Policy 1 Support and encourage the use of traffic calming measures in existing neighbourhoods. Trees in boulevards along collector roads should be considered.
- Policy 2 Support and encourage the use of bicycles as a form of transportation in Smithers, and integrate the design of bikeways and related safety measures in its road, sidewalk and trail reconstruction projects, where feasible.
- Policy 3 Integrate, improve, and expand the existing trail network to provide additional, effective, and safe non-motorized off-street transportation options for residents and visitors.
- Policy 4 Support the operation and development of Smithers Transit system.
- Policy 5 Create comfortable, safe, and aesthetically pleasing transit stops to encourage ridership.

10.2.4. DOWNTOWN PARKING

Objective: To ensure there is adequate and accessible parking in the downtown for residents and visitors.

Objective: To ensure the feasibility of future downtown mixed use development while minimizing parking impacts on the public realm.

- Policy 1 All new developments, except those that include uses and areas specifically exempt by the Zoning Bylaw, will ensure that adequate off-street parking is provided for their patrons, tenants, and employees.
- Policy 2 The Town may consider cash-in-lieu payments for new development projects that can be used to provide municipally operated parking lots.
- Policy 3 Develop a comprehensive town signage plan that builds on the existing signage plan (2005) that includes parking.

Traffic calming is the slowing or reduction of motor-vehicle traffic to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists and improve the environment for residents. Measures may include a number of visual changes or physical devices.

OCP Goal: Plan for energy and investment efficiency.

Community input indicated support for:

- *Maintenance/upgrading of ageing and inadequate infrastructure is a priority.*
- *Improved recycling services.*

The key to providing an economically sustainable and effective service of future waste management lies in the co-operative efforts with the Regional District, other jurisdictions, local community partners and residents.

*The Regional District has a **Solid Waste Management Plan** with stage one currently underway. This plan aims to reduce the amount of garbage going to the landfill site through the use of increased recycling programs.*

11. Infrastructure, Utilities & Green Buildings

11.1. Background

Infrastructure, utilities and buildings are all opportunities to demonstrate leadership in energy efficient design. Where financially feasible, this includes retrofitting existing town-owned buildings and infrastructure or constructing new buildings that possess a high standard of energy efficiency. The existing services and infrastructure are shown on Map 4.

The Town's sanitary sewer system consists of a combination of a sanitary collection system and associated lift stations. The sewage treatment plant is located adjacent to the Bulkley River, south of the Smithers airport. The existing capacity of the treatment plant is approximately 8,000 residents. There is adequate land capacity associated with the treatment plan to double the capacity of the system if needed. Individual septic systems exist in areas of Town not serviced by a community sewage system.

The Town's storm drainage consists of surface drainage and underground conventional storm drains. Due to poorly draining soils, the provision of storm drainage is critical in the Town. The Town has been working to expand the system of underground storm drains, which collect excess water that is eventually discharged into the Bulkley River.

The Town's water supply and distribution system is in good condition, utilizing three wells, two storage reservoirs, and a distribution system. Chlorine is only added during a short system flushing each spring. The existing water system has the capacity to support a population of approximately 7,500. Private water systems exist within the Town boundary in low-density areas where supplying water is not economical.

The Town provides weekly garbage pick-up that is deposited in the Smithers/Telkwa Transfer Station located outside the Town boundary. Solid waste disposal is the responsibility of the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako who transports the waste to a District-owned landfill near Houston, BC. While there is currently no curbside recycling in Town, there are local recycling options available.

11.2. Objectives & Policies

11.2.1. EFFICIENT INFRASTRUCTURE & BUILDINGS

Objective: Create efficient, low impact and healthy buildings and infrastructure.

- Policy 1 Encourage energy efficient community planning and building design that incorporates energy conservation measures and alternative energy sources.
- Policy 2 Encourage the voluntary use of renewable and sustainable energy producing and recovery technologies for new and existing developments and infrastructure.
- Policy 3 Encourage the use of stormwater management strategies and technologies such as groundwater recharge systems and swales to reduce the amount of stormwater run-off and improve water quality prior to discharge.
- Policy 4 Encourage 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. In some cases, swales might be more appropriate.
- Policy 5 Protect and maintain the natural drainage courses in the Town. Day lighting of sewerage creeks will be considered where practical.
- Policy 6 Protect wetlands as a key ecological management strategy for stormwater attenuation.
- Policy 7 Ensure the treatment of all storm water (for example through biofiltration) before discharge into water bodies as required by Federal and Provincial regulations.
- Policy 8 Where financially feasible, use town-owned facilities, infrastructure and buildings as a means to showcase energy efficient buildings. Examples include retrofitting existing buildings, exploring district energy systems for new projects, and installing or retrofitting streetlights with more efficient light bulbs.

Stormwater is a term used to describe water from precipitation (including snowmelt). Stormwater either soaks into the ground or becomes surface runoff, which either flows directly into waterways or is channeled into storm sewers, which eventually discharge into the Bulkley River.

The Community Energy Plan, completed in 2007, provides a profile or “baseline” of Smithers’ energy use for 2005 and actions to reduce Smithers’ energy consumption.

Xeriscaping refers to landscaping and gardening in ways that reduce or eliminate the need for supplemental irrigation.

Examples of local recycling options include:

- *The Bulkley Valley Bottle Depot;*
- *The Smithers & Area Recycling Society;*
- *The Smithers/Telkwa Transfer Station;*
- *The Town’s Public Works Yard (compost drop-off).*

11.2.2. CAPACITY, FINANCING & INVESTMENT

Objective: To ensure that infrastructure, utilities, and building investments are planned to accommodate existing and future needs of Smithers resident and visitor populations.

- Policy 1 Properties outside of the municipal boundary shall not be allowed to connect to the municipal sewerage treatment, water and/or, garbage pick-up systems.
- Policy 2 The Community Energy Plan 2007 will provide a reference for all GHG emission reductions and energy efficiency investments.
- Policy 3 Costs of upgraded services shall be borne primarily by those property owners who benefit.
- Policy 4 Identify infrastructure investment priorities given current and projected needs.

11.2.3. WATER SAFETY & CONSERVATION

Objective: To ensure a safe water supply for the residents of Smithers that is delivered and used with water conservation in mind.

- Policy 1 Adopt strategies that reduce water consumption and wastewater generation such as: i. Outdoor technology (efficient irrigation systems, xeriscaping, etc.) ii. Indoor technology (efficient plumbing fixtures and appliances, water meters); and (iii) educating owners of households and businesses, and the general public.
- Policy 2 Implement sustainable wastewater management and treatment strategies, technologies and infrastructure delivery models to ensure a stable supply over the long term and reduce loadings on the sewer system.
- Policy 3 Encourage and promote the installation of low-flow fixtures in new development.

11.2.4. WASTE REDUCTION

Objective: To significantly reduce the amount of solid waste that is generated in

Smithers

- Policy 1 Investigate the feasibility of establishing a curb side pickup recycling program in partnership with the Regional District of Bulkley Nechako.
- Policy 2 Work towards reducing the local solid waste stream in accordance with the hierarchy of reduce, reuse and recycle.
- Policy 3 Promote residential composting programs and community composting in community gardens.
- Policy 4 Encourage multi-residential recycling facilities including on-site separation bins (paper, containers, organics, other waste).
- Policy 5 Encourage the salvaging and/or recycling of construction waste, demolition waste, and building disassembly.
- Policy 6 Encourage the use of biodegradable alternatives to non-biodegradable plastic packaging.

OCP Goal: Celebrate our history and culture.

With the mix of First Nations, 2nd and 3rd generation descendents of European settlers, along with new residents from around the world, Smithers today is a culturally rich community.

Examples of local arts & culture groups include:

- *BV Folk Music Society;*
- *Valley Youth Fiddlers;*
- *BV Community Arts Council;*
- *Smithers Public Library Association;*
- *BV Museum & Historical Society;*
- *Smithers Gallery Association;*
- *Local Vocals;*
- *Smithers Film Society;*
- *Smithers Community Band;*
- *BV Concert Association;*
- *Creative Roots Performing Arts.*

12. Heritage, Arts, Culture & Education

12.1. Background

The Bulkley Valley has long been home to generations of the Wet'suwet'en Nation, whose traditional territory extends from near Hazelton (60 km northwest of Smithers) past Burns Lake (150km southeast of Smithers), and south through what is known today as the Lakes District. The office of the Wet'suwet'en is located in Smithers with approximately 5,000 members. At present, the Office of the Wet'suwet'en is participating in the BC Treaty Process.

The first non-aboriginal settlers to the Bulkley Valley were fur traders and missionaries in the 1860's. In 1866, the exploration team for the Collins Overland Telegraph line came through, attempting to construct an overland telegraph line connecting North America to Europe and Asia. Though their efforts failed, the trail served as an access route to gold miners heading north. Exploration resumed in the area around Smithers in 1892 when a provincial government surveying team noted the potential resources of the Bulkley Valley. By then, the old telegraph trail was known as the Dominion Telegraph line that was being extended to the Yukon.

Smithers was founded in 1913, as a town site for the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway's divisional headquarters. The Town flourished with the discovery of large mineral deposits and activities such as forestry and agriculture, which remain as important parts of the local economy. In 1921, Smithers became the first village to be incorporated in the province of British Columbia.

Arts, culture and education are defining features of the Smithers community. Local groups and associations work hard to promote and develop the cultural environment enjoyed by both residents and visitors to the Smithers area. While there is wide recognition of the social and economic benefits that arts and cultural contribute to the community, no formal comprehensive plan exists. It is also recognized that educational facilities play a valuable role in fostering a learning community, an important component of supporting local arts and culture.

12.2. Objectives & Policies

12.2.1. FIRST NATIONS

Objective: To recognize the interests and heritage of the local First Nations community.

- Policy 1 Make efforts to understand and consider First Nations’ perspective when making decisions on land-use issues within the Town’s boundaries.
- Policy 2 Build on the history of respect and mutual assistance that characterizes the relationship between the municipality and the Wet’suwet’en Nation.
- Policy 3 Work to ensure that the municipal facilities and functions are open and welcoming to members of the First Nations community.

12.2.2. HERITAGE

Objective: To protect, maintain and increase the awareness and appreciation of Smithers heritage and historical features.

- Policy 1 Support the active use of provincially designated heritage buildings for community benefit and encourage the adaptive reuse and rehabilitation of older buildings as a method of retaining a legacy of locally significant heritage buildings.
- Policy 2 Encourage initiatives by private owners to preserve the heritage characteristics of their sites.
- Policy 3 Support local efforts to preserve and promote historically significant features and knowledge of Smithers.
- Policy 4 Make use of provincial heritage legislation, including related programs as a means of preserving heritage features within the Town.
- Policy 5 Be open to discuss areas of significant cultural value that may warrant extra consideration and protection.
- Policy 6 Publicly celebrate the designation of heritage properties, keep the public apprised of heritage conservation and restoration projects, and involve and consult the public on heritage matters.

12.2.3. ARTS & CULTURE

Objective: To support and encourage the growth and appreciation of arts and culture.

Examples of local heritage buildings built in the early 1900’s include:

- CN Railway Station;
- Central Park Building (formerly the old Courthouse);
- St. James’ Anglican Church (known as the “Old Church”);
- Presence of Aladdin & Eaton “kit homes”.

Literacy Plans outline planning processes for communities as they work to increase the literacy levels of children, youths and adults. School District 54 (Bulkley) is the lead organization that works with a variety of community groups and associations.

- Policy 1 Recognize the outstanding efforts of the various cultural service organizations in Smithers and the Bulkley Valley, and continue to support efforts to promote arts and culture in the community.
- Policy 2 Encourage the development of a long-term vision and strategy by the Smithers cultural community. This work would help describe and formalize the relationship between the cultural community and the Town.
- Policy 3 Support community initiatives to provide and improve local arts and culture opportunities.

12.2.4. EDUCATION

Objective: To support the provision of relevant, educational, and training opportunities.

- Policy 1 Support community initiatives to provide additional educational opportunities and facilities.
- Policy 2 Support community initiatives that provide education opportunities and facilities that respond to the needs of students and employers and are linked to employment outcomes.
- Policy 3 Support literacy in the community through endorsing the *Community Literacy Plan* and the *District Literacy Plan*.

13. Community Services & Facilities

13.1. Background

Community services and facilities include a broad range of public and institutional facilities, which serve the educational, health, safety, and cultural needs of the Town’s residents. These include schools, churches, the hospital and police stations, as well as land required to service the municipal utility infrastructure (sewage treatment facilities and water reservoirs).

A variety of educational facilities exist in Smithers. The Bulkley Valley School District (School District No. 54) is the public school district serving Smithers. The District operates eight schools, four of which are in Smithers, with a total enrolment of 1,700. The Bulkley Valley Christian School operates two private school campuses, an elementary school and a high school with a combined enrolment of roughly 300. St. Joseph’s School is a private elementary school associated with the Catholic Church, with an enrolment of nearly 200 students. Finally, Northwest Community College (NWCC) offers local post-secondary opportunities serving a regional population of 12,000.

Civic facilities are located in or close to Downtown Smithers. Examples include the Bulkley Valley Museum, Art Gallery, Library, Chamber of Commerce, and Municipal Office. Public health and safety facilities include the Fire Hall, Royal Canadian Mounted Police detachment, British Columbia Ambulance Service (BCAS), and the Bulkley Valley Hospital. In addition, churches and community gathering places are located in Smithers. These religious institutions fulfil a number of important roles beyond their traditional religious function by providing educational, daycare services, and community meeting places. Churches and other religious institutions or facilities for community-based organizations are traditionally located within residential neighbourhoods.

The social well being of the Town’s residents is an important concern. Social issues such as poverty, crime, vandalism, and drugs, among others are essential to consider in creating a healthy community. As with many other initiatives, the key to improving the social health of the community lies in working cooperatively with other jurisdictions, organizations, and community groups.

OCP Goal: Support our health and wellbeing.

School District 54 (Bulkley) operates the following schools in Smithers:

- *Muheim Memorial Elementary*
- *Walnut Park Elementary*
- *Lake Kathlyn Elementary*
- *Bulkley Valley Learning Center*
- *Smithers Secondary*

Planning for future public schools is the responsibility of School District No. 54.

13.2. Objectives & Policies

13.2.1. SCHOOLS

Objective: To support the provision of school facilities that meet the current and future needs of the community.

Policy 1 Work with education administrators to provide education, joint recreation and community facilities and activities within the Town's boundaries.

Policy 2 Reserve and maintain future school sites as school reserves to allow for, when the population warrants, the construction of new schools.

Policy 3 Work with School District 54 to develop schools as fully integrated parts of their surrounding neighbourhood and ensure that school facilities are accessible for community use after hours.

13.2.2. CIVIC FACILITIES & GATHERING PLACES

Objective: To support the provision of civic facilities and gathering places within Smithers that meet the needs of the community and that maintain a vibrant thriving downtown.

Policy 1 Support the location of government offices, new civic facilities and the renovation of exiting facilities within the Downtown area, outside of Main Street.

Policy 2 The location of new places of worship should respect and support Smithers original Town grid pattern and be located near to neighbourhood areas.

13.2.3. SOCIAL PLANNING

Objective: To recognize and address social issues within the community and consider social implications during town planning processes.

Policy 1 Encourage and facilitate the provision of community and social services and facilities through co-operation, liaison, and, where appropriate, joint provision and participation with the existing Social Planning Council, among others.

13.2.4. PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

Objective: To support the provision of public health and safety services and facilities that address the current and future needs of Smithers.

Policy 1 Work with the local health authority, School District 54, Smithers Community Services Association, and the Social Planning Council, to help identify and address the community’s health and safety needs and concerns.

OCP Goal: Build a healthy and resilient local economy.

Diversifying the economy will create resiliency and new opportunities for existing and new residents.

Community input indicated support for:

- *Encouraging economic growth and employment in a responsible way to ensure long-term employment for future generations.*
- *Encouraging businesses to locate downtown.*
- *Local control over how the town develops.*
- *Maintaining the small town character in face of growth and development.*
- *Beautification of Town.*
- *Downtown revitalization.*
- *Managing the appearance of commercial and industrial developments.*

14. Economic, Industrial & Commercial Development

14.1. Background

The economic base in Smithers is made up of the primary industries of agriculture, forestry and mining, along with the service-based industries of retail, business services, and government sectors. Tourism, arts, and culture are also economic assets, providing year round support for local businesses and community residents. Home-based businesses also exist in Town, which provide owner-operator businesses with the opportunity for lower start-up costs, part-time work and lifestyle options.

Economic diversification is a recognized strategy to mitigate out migration and attract new workers. For example, the container port in Prince Rupert, the expansion of Hudson Bay Mountain Resort, and the Smithers Regional Airport runway expansion project are potential stimuli for economic growth, as are value-added industries and ecotourism. The creative economy (arts and culture), technology and knowledge based industries continue to be opportunity areas. In addition, maintaining “quality of life” factors, such as the existing level of services and infrastructure are important to the continued attraction of amenity migrants.

The downtown core (primarily along Main Street and 1 block east and west) is the centre for retail, office and civic uses, while Highway 16 supports automotive uses, tourist support services (accommodation and restaurants) and some office and retail uses. It is recognized that much of Smithers’ identity and appeal is connected to the appearance and function of its downtown core. As such, determining appropriate roles and land uses for the downtown and highway commercial areas is critical.

Industrial land in Smithers is located primarily in the south portion of the Town on both sides of Highway 16. Heavy industrial is located mainly south of Pacific Street and adjacent to the rail tracks. As the Town is a major landowner in the industrial area, there is a strong interest in ensuring that industrial lands are well utilized, and do not become a dispersed commercial area.

14.2. Objectives & Policies

14.2.1. STRENGTHEN AND DIVERSIFY THE ECONOMIC BASE

Objective: To actively support the diversification and strengthening of the local economy in Smithers by considering the needs and interests of local businesses.

Objective: To continue Smithers' historical tradition of being home to many services to the mining industry, and to mining entrepreneurs and employees.

Objective: To guide the sensitive integration of small-retail commercial stores format and chain stores.

Objective: To recognize the outstanding natural, cultural, and built amenities which not only impact the high quality of lives enjoyed by current residents and visitors, but also attracts new residents from around the world.

Policy 1 Support the Boomtown to Sustainable Town Report prepared for the Economic Development Committee as a guiding framework to support economic development in Smithers, and work to achieve the recommendations of that strategy.

Policy 2 Support community economic development.

Policy 3 Support the retention and recruitment of a qualified labour pool by supporting access to appropriate and affordable housing and other necessary support services such as child and elder care.

Policy 4 Recognize the importance of preserving and enhancing community amenities as a draw for amenity migrants.

Policy 5 Large format commercial uses must adhere to form and character guidelines for the Downtown Development Permit Area.

Policy 6 Encourage home based business as per the Zoning Bylaw.

Policy 7 Support local small scale gaming ventures operated by non-profit organizations and service clubs. Large scale destination casinos or video lottery terminals are not supported.

Policy 8 Support resort development.

Land use recommendations from the Downtown Charrette include:

- Encourage a greater intensity and mix of uses and pedestrian-oriented streets through development that incorporates a range of ground floor commercial uses such as retail, offices, restaurants, cafes integrated with residential uses above;
- Enhance Main Street's status as Smithers' downtown core by encouraging downtown activity beyond usual business hours;
- Encourage large format retail stores to locate within the downtown core subject to form and character regulations.
- Encourage all commercial ventures to be located as close to the downtown as possible, recognizing site limitations.

A Temporary Use Permit (TUP) is required for any temporary land use that does not conform to the Zoning Bylaw. The use must be clearly temporary or seasonal in nature and not create an unacceptable negative impact on surrounding permanent uses. An applicant must submit an outline detailing when and how the use in that location will be ended, the buildings to be used, the area of use, the hours of use, appearance, landscaping and site rehabilitation. The Town of Smithers may require security to ensure compliance. Town Council approves all Temporary Use Permits

- Policy 9 Continue to encourage the establishment of tourist facilities through land use designations for tourist commercial and accommodation. These facilities must adhere to the same design guidelines as the downtown core.
- Policy 10 Recognize the critical role that the railway has and will have and strongly encourage its use in transporting people and goods.
- Policy 11 Support business initiatives, which provide added value to resources and support development of compatible value-added secondary manufacturing business within Smithers' industrial areas.
- Policy 12 Support the protection of the fossil beds in Driftwood Canyon Provincial Park as a key community resource.
- Policy 13 Appropriate Temporary Commercial Uses are supported on lands designated commercial.

14.2.2. THE DOWNTOWN CORE

- Objective: To increase commercial activity in the downtown core to support local business by further defining the downtown as the heart of the community.*
- Policy 1 Revise the parking regulations in the Zoning Bylaw to encourage retail uses on the ground floor in the downtown. (For details, refer to the August 2008 Charrette Report).

14.2.3. INDUSTRIAL

- Objective: Secure adequate industrial lands to ensure capacity for value added manufacturing and future capacity for any tourism and/or resource based ventures.*
- Policy 1 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 while at the same time acknowledging the potential for industrial development in the future land use plan for the airport.

- Policy 2 Sell land at market value for industrial needs only if the existing capacity is maximized and/or specific industrial uses, such as secondary manufacturing, need more capacity.
- Policy 3 Existing gravel extraction sites are recognized within the areas designated as Heavy Industrial on Schedule A: Land Use. Additional gravel sites, where sufficient resources justify their creation, are supported within the area designated as Heavy Industrial.
- Policy 4 Ensure that all value-added and secondary manufacturing businesses have access to adequate industrial lands.
- Policy 5 Areas with active industrial use shall be buffered from non-industrial uses.
- Policy 6 Appropriate Temporary Industrial Uses are supported on lands designated industrial.
- Policy 7 Encourage mixed use light industrial/residential development in current industrial areas that are in close proximity to existing residential neighbourhoods and community amenities.

All sand and/or gravel extraction applications are made to the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources (MEMPR) who refer application to stakeholders (including the Town) for comment. OCP polices are considered when reviewing application referrals, however, MEMPR makes the final decision.

OCP Goal: Concentrate on collaboration and engagement.

Community input indicated support for:

- *Genuine public involvement in local land use decision-making;*
- *Implementing creative tools for community engagement;*

Public Consultation: In the event of an OCP amendment and/or re-zoning application. By law, this triggers a public consultation process. This process is a chance for the community to weigh-in on the discussion. Council is then able to consider the proposal with input from the community.

15. Governance

15.1. Background

Land use decisions both within and outside of the Town boundaries impacts residents, community groups, businesses and all levels of government. As a result, collaboration and participation are key elements in developing plans and strategies that demonstrate a greater understanding of the key issues, opportunities, and implications of land use decisions. This approach to community planning is especially important when dealing with cross cutting issues, such as community health, resource development and sustainability. Examples of governance principals that support collaboration and participation are:

- Engaging end users and opponents;
- Using efficient and effective engagement processes; and
- Respecting and responding to input.

15.2. Objectives & Policies

15.2.1. COLLABORATION WITH OTHER JURISDICTIONS

Objective: To develop collaborative relationships with other jurisdictions such as the Regional District, Provincial Government, Federal Government, and the Office of the Wet'suwet'en, as well as local community interest groups to meet the goals of the community.

Policy 1 Continue to build a partnership, identify mutual objectives, and support initiatives of common interest with the Wet'suwet'en First Nation.

Policy 2 Seek to work with the Regional District to define growth patterns and land-use policy for the lands adjacent to the town boundaries that are consistent with the Town of Smithers' growth management and sustainability goals.

Policy 3 Pro-actively consult with senior levels of government on:

- The protection of Bulkley Valley ecosystems;
- Transit services;

- Highway 16 upgrades;
- Ski hill development
- Growth management in Electoral Area A; and
- The regulation of the resource industry (mining, agriculture, fisheries, forestry).

Policy 4 Collaborate and share information with local and regional non-profit associations and academic institutions on addressing local issues such as community health, affordable housing, economic development, amenity migration, arts and culture, among others.

15.2.2. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

Objective: To ensure a genuine approach to involving the community in planning and decision-making processes

Objective: To recognize the depth and breadth of knowledge and resources that the citizenry of Smithers brings to determining directions for the town.

Policy 1 Recognize that the community of Smithers extends beyond the Town Boundaries into the rural areas while remembering our responsibility to the tax payer.

Policy 2 Work to ensure that all bylaws and development procedures are readily understood by the public and the business community.

Policy 3 In addition to existing community engagement mechanisms, Council will consider new public engagement tools such as online and social networking software to target a wider range of community members.

Policy 4 Engage the community in decision-making and ensure that the community is consulted on decisions and planning that will impact the Town.

Policy 5 Consider the development of an outreach program that would educate and engage youth in learning about municipal policy.

Policy 6 Where necessary, require development approval information at the time of an OCP amendment.

15.2.3. COMMUNITY HEALTH & SUSTAINABILITY

Objective: To build the institutional capacity needed to address issues such as community health and sustainability.

Policy 1 Recognize that community health and sustainability requires an interdisciplinary approach. Town departments must collaborate in developing strategies, budgets, and plans for addressing these issues.

Policy 2 Seek out available funding to finance the development of strategies that identify and work towards achieving green house gas reduction targets.

Part III: Development Permit Areas

Development Permit Areas:

Section 919.1 of the Local Government Act allows Local Governments to designate Development Permit Areas (DPAs) for one or more of the following purposes.

1. *Protection of the natural environment, its ecosystems and biological diversity;*
2. *Protection of development from hazardous conditions;*
3. *Protection of farming;*
4. *Revitalization of an area in which a commercial use is permitted;*
5. *Establishment of objectives for the form and character of intensive residential, commercial, and industrial development;*
6. *Establishment of objectives to promote energy and water conservation;*
7. *Establishment of objectives to promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.*

16. Overview of Development Permit Areas

16.1. Background

Section 919.1 of the *Local Government Act* permits Council, in an Official Community Plan, to designate Development Permit Areas (DPAs). Council may issue a development permit that may vary or supplement a regulation of the Subdivision or Zoning Bylaw. A development permit cannot vary use, density, or flood plain specifications. Where land is subject to more than one DPA designation, a single development permit is required, however, the application is subject to the requirements of all applicable DPAs.

16.1.1. DESIGNATION

Pursuant to Section 919.1 of the *Local Government Act*, the Town of Smithers has designated Development Permit Areas for:

1. **Environmental areas** for lands shown on Schedule B.
2. **Form and Character** for lands designated as Downtown Commercial, Highway 16 Commercial, and Mixed Residential and as indicated on Schedule C.

16.1.2. APPLICATION

Within a DPA, an owner must obtain a development permit before subdividing land, constructing, adding to, or altering a building or specifications unless specifically exempted by the plan.

16.1.3. GENERAL EXEMPTIONS

A Development Permit is NOT required for:

1. Construction within a building that does not require exterior alterations.
2. Replacement of exterior finishes using the same or similar materials and colours. This also includes the replacement of signage with no change in location, size, type, or signs approved by a Sign Permit.

3. Development or alteration of land occurring outside of the Development Permit Area as determined by a BC Land Surveyor or another qualified person.
4. Planting of trees, shrubs or ground cover.
5. Use of land is for outdoor recreational purposes and does not include buildings and structures other than fencing or nets.
6. Structural alteration of legal or lawful nonconforming buildings and structures within the existing footprint.
7. Placement of impermanent structures provided that there is no site clearing.
8. Emergency actions to prevent, control or reduce erosion or other immediate threats to life, the natural environment, and property including:
 - i. Fire, flood, and erosion protection works;
 - ii. Removal of hazard trees;
 - iii. Protection, repair or replacement of public utilities;
 - iv. Clearing of an obstruction from a bridge, culvert or drainage flow; and
 - v. Bridge repairs and safety fences in accordance with the Water Act.
9. Construction of a single public or common use trail provided that the trail is designed with the most direct route of feasible passage through the Development Permit Area and designed accordingly (i.e. avoiding erosion prone areas).
10. Repair and maintenance of existing roads, driveways, paths and trails.
11. Construction of a fence.
12. The Town of Smithers as long as development adheres to all policies in the OCP.
13. Agricultural uses within the Agricultural Land Reserve.

Environmental Development Permit conditions may include:

- *Construction of permanent or temporary fencing around sensitive features;*
- *Fencing, flagging and posting of notices during construction;*
- *Limits on blasting in sensitive areas;*
- *Limits on construction timing;*
- *Provision of works to maintain or restore the quantity or quality of water reaching environmentally sensitive areas or habitat; and*
- *Restoration or enhancement of disturbed sensitive ecosystems and habitat;*
- *Variances to siting or size regulations where the variance could result in enhanced protection of an environmentally sensitive area.*

17. Environmental Development Permit Areas

17.1. Overview

17.1.1. AREA

Lands designated on Schedule B.

17.1.2. PURPOSE

The Environmental Development Permit Areas (DPA) regulates development in areas that require a degree of protection.

Objectives are to:

- Protect the natural environment, its ecosystems and biological diversity;
- Protect development from hazardous conditions;
- Protect human life and property.

17.1.3. APPLICATION

A development permit is required prior to the following activities:

- a. Subdivision (as defined in section 872 of the *Local Government Act*);
- b. Construction of, addition to, or alteration of a building or other structure;
- c. Alteration of land, such as the removal, disruption, or destruction of vegetation.

17.1.4. EXEMPTIONS

A Development Permit is **NOT** required for:

- a) Submission to the Town of a written statement from a Qualified Environmental Professional with relevant experience confirming the absence of a sensitive ecosystem within the area that would be affected by the proposed work.
- b) Land where a conservation covenant under section 219 of the Land Title Act is registered against title is granted to the Town or a recognized

conservancy and includes provisions that protect ecosystems in a manner consistent with the applicable DPA guidelines.

- c) Minor site clearing necessary to undertake topographic and similar surveys which aid site and servicing planning work.
- d) Normal farm practices protected by the Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act or other applicable provincial legislation or guidelines on properties assessed as a farm under the BC Assessment Act.
- e) Building additions of 40m² or less that do not require retaining structures.
- f) Restoration works that have obtained the required Provincial and Federal approvals.
- g) Construction of a small accessory building such as a pump house, gazebo, garden shed or play house if all the following apply:
 - The building is located within an existing landscaped area;
 - No native trees are removed;
 - The building is sited as to not compromise a hazardous area (i.e. steep slope or watercourse bank); and
 - The total area of small accessory buildings is less than 10m².

17.1.5. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Every submission shall include:

- A completed Development Permit Application and applicable fee;
- Site plan showing buildings (existing and proposed) and structures, parking areas, access, toe of slope and top of bank, and any watercourse setback areas that are located on or that abut the site.
- A plan showing existing and proposed grades, (including details on retaining walls), toe of slope, top of bank, or any floodplain area.
- A plan showing areas to be cleared and areas of cut and fill, and the proposed sequence and timing of the clearing and recontouring.
- Other information as necessary to assess the development proposal.

Disturbance means a force that causes significant change in structure or composition.

Stream includes all watercourses that provide fish habitat or flows to a water body that provides fish habitat.

Ravine means a narrow, steep sided valley that is commonly eroded by running water and has a slope grade greater than 3:1 (33%).

Riparian Area means an area of land adjacent to a stream, river, lake or wetland that contains vegetation that, due to the presence of water, is distinctly different from the vegetation of adjacent upland areas.

High Water Mark means the visible high water mark or line of a stream where the presence and action of the water are regular enough to mark on the soil of the streambed a character distinct from that of its banks, in vegetation as well as in the nature of the soil itself.

Ecosystem means the basic functional unit in ecology, the interacting system of a biological community and its non-living environmental surrounds. These are inseparable and act upon each other.

Fish Habitat means the areas in or about a stream such as, spawning grounds and nursery, rearing, food supply, and migration areas, which fish depend directly or indirectly in order to carry out their life processes.

Habitat means the natural home of a plant or an animal including all of the associated biotic and abiotic elements.

Wildlife includes animals such as invertebrates, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals.

17.1.6. JUSTIFICATION

The Environmental Development Permit Areas cover a whole range of environmental conditions such as floodplains, steep slopes, sensitive ecosystems, and land assessed as having a high risk for interface wildfires. As development in these areas require special attention, a development permit is required.

17.2. General Guidelines

The following guidelines apply to all Environmental DPA's:

- a. All development proposals shall incorporate Provincial best practice guidelines pertaining to aquatic habitats, groundwater management and drinking water protection.
- b. Buildings, structures and paved surfaces shall be located:
 - Away from areas subject to erosion, sloughing, flooding, landslide, or damage;
 - At such a distance from a watercourse as to prevent erosion, sloughing, flooding landslip, excessive run-off or siltation, and protect lands and the fishery resource;
 - To preserve the natural vegetation on steeper slopes and sensitive ecosystems;
- c. Measures shall be put in place to:
 - Direct surface run-off away from areas subject to erosion and sloughing and to handle storm water run-off appropriately;
 - Contain any excessive run-off, erosion, or siltation at the clearing and construction stage, and for the completed development.
- d. In an identified hazard area, a report certified by a professional engineer may be required by the Town in order to assist in determining what conditions or requirements are appropriate to ensure slope stability.
- e. An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for proposals within riparian areas may

be required by the Town in order to evaluate the impacts of a proposed development on the natural environment. The EIA shall include the following information:

- Information regarding potential impacts of proposed development, mitigation options and design alternatives;
 - Evidence that the development will not result in Harmful Alteration, Disruption, or Destruction (HADD) of riparian areas;
 - The width of the leave strip area which must be protected;
 - Measures required to maintain the integrity of the riparian area;
 - An indication of when the monitoring of important environmental conditions should occur.
- f. A Qualified Environmental Professional may be required by the Town to ensure:
- The Development will result in no harmful alteration, disruption or destruction of natural features, functions and conditions that support fish life in the riparian area, or
 - Protection and enhancement measures will protect the integrity of those areas from the effects of the development.
- g. Retain existing trees and vegetation to the fullest extent.
- h. Identify and protect important denning or nesting habitat areas.
- i. Apply guidelines outlined in the Home Owners Fire Smart Manual (BC Edition) to areas designated as High Fire Hazard areas.
- j. Developments in riparian areas are encouraged to follow the Provincial Riparian Area Regulations.

Leavestrip means a buffer area adjacent to a water feature intended to preserve the biodiversity of the riparian ecosystem, protect and buffer that ecosystem from surrounding activities, maintain and enhance corridors between ecosystems thus supporting the diverse needs of a range of species.

Riparian Areas Regulation (RAR) means the Regulation pursuant to Section 12, 13(1), and 37(2) of the Fish Protection Act. Currently these regulations have not yet been applied to Smithers or other Northern BC municipalities.

Qualified Environmental Professional means an applied scientist/technologist, that:

- *Is registered and in good standing with an appropriate professional organization;*
- *Area of expertise is acceptable for the purpose of providing the necessary assessment information; and*
- *Individual is acting within that individual's area of expertise.*



18. Form & Character Development Permit Areas

18.1. Overview

18.1.1. AREAS

Lands designated as **Downtown Smithers, Mixed Residential and Highway 16 Commercial** and identified on Schedule: C.

18.1.2. PURPOSE

The Form and Character Development Permit Area (DPA) regulates the form and character of commercial and multi-family residential development in Smithers.

Objectives are to:

1. Ensure that the commercial core remains the focal point of the community;
2. Contribute to the existing character and identity of Smithers;
3. Ensure new developments fit appropriately into the context of existing neighbourhoods.

18.1.3. EXEMPTIONS

A Development Permit is not required for the construction, addition, or alteration of a building, provided the following:

1. The total value of the proposed construction is less than **\$75,000** as long as it adheres to the design guidelines. Only one of these exemptions will be granted to one property in a two-year period.
2. Single-family dwellings, duplexes, and semi-detached dwellings. Any additional dwellings (detached or attached) do not qualify for this exemption.
3. Construction that amounts to **less than 20%** increase in total floor area or a maximum of 28m² (300ft²) of new floor area provided



that the appearance of the building from the street on which the development fronts are not altered, and required parking and landscaping are provided.

18.1.4. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Every submission shall include:

- A completed Development Permit Application and applicable fees;
- Building elevation drawings, illustrating all sides of the building(s);
- A site plan showing buildings and structures, unenclosed storage areas; garbage areas, parking, loading, landscaping, and access;
- Drawings showing proposed signage details;
- Exterior building colour samples.

18.1.5. JUSTIFICATION

Smithers' architectural history extends back to its roots as a farming, resource, and railway town. This is evident in several buildings of historical significance that exist today, including the Railway Station and Central Park building.

The importance of Main Street, and the immediately adjacent streets that make up downtown Smithers as the commercial center and focus of the Smithers' community was first acknowledged in the early 1970's with the establishment of the Alpine Theme. These design guidelines were in recognition of the mountain and winter sports heritage that is unique to Smithers. The definition of the alpine design theme included extended rooflines, shuttered windows, balconies, pictured exterior walls, and wooden signs.

Since then, considerable energy and money has been invested in the reconstruction of portions of the downtown, including the rebuilding and paving of streets, brick pavers, angle parking, street furniture, lighting and landscaping. A "Downtown Revitalization Area" was declared by the Provincial Government in 1981 resulting in an improved physical environment and the unique downtown that is evident today.

Initiatives to improve the downtown continue to take place. Downtown merchants and property owners have contributed enormously to the continued



"Identity is the extent to which a person can recognize or recall a place for being distinctive from other places as having a vivid and unique, or at least a particular character of its own." (Lynch, *The Image of the City*, 1960)





development of the Downtown by creating a cohesive town core in accordance with the alpine theme.

In 2008, a Downtown Charrette that occurred as part of the Official Community Plan process explored options for reinforcing the downtown’s role as the commercial, arts, and cultural heart of the community. The Charrette developed a range of urban design and policy strategies to build on the existing downtown form and character. Participants expressed a desire for a more contemporary interpretation and expression of the Alpine Theme broadened to include the rich cultural heritage, including First Nations history, as well as the natural and resource history of Bulkley Valley that have shaped the community.

The implementation of the Development Permit Areas ensures a continuity of work already completed as well as incorporates the vision that resulted from the OCP process.



18.2. General Guidelines

The following guidelines apply to all the Form and Character DPA’s, both designated by land use and as shown on Schedule C. In this section, both general and specific guidelines are given for downtown commercial, Highway 16, and multi-family residential developments.

18.2.1. BASIC DESIGN APPROACH - SMITHERS ALPINE THEME

Developments shall be in accordance with the “Architectural Design Guidelines Alpine Theme” prepared for the Town of Smithers in 1997. These design guidelines have been applied successfully to the majority of new and renovated buildings in the downtown, resulting in the unique building character and streetscape. Although not required, elements of the design guidelines have also been successfully incorporated into development in other areas of Town.

The guidelines presented below are intended to supplement the existing Alpine Theme to encourage a broader, more contemporary interpretation of the alpine theme.

18.2.2. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

All design proposals should consider the design and construction requirements posed by the area’s climate.



Wind - Hanging signs, parapet extensions, awnings and canopies should be constructed with sufficient bracing to withstand strong winds such as might be typical of the area.

Rain - Architectural elements exposed to precipitation, such as roofs, cornices, edges, canopies and decorative detailing, should be properly designed and flashed to protect the building structure and carry water away from pedestrian pathways or human-use areas.

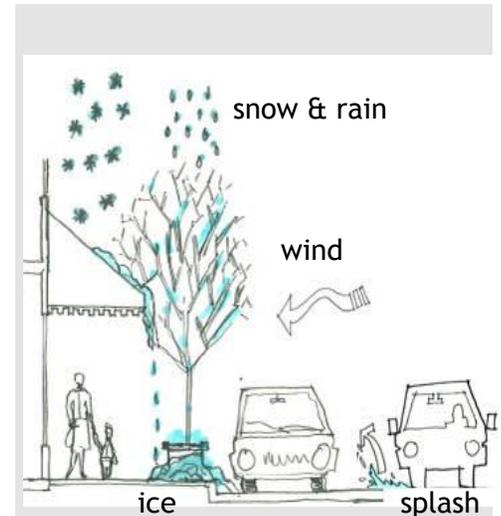
Snow - Any building structure upon which snow accumulates (canopies, awnings, roof forms) should be constructed in a manner conducive to spontaneous snow dump of accumulated loads into non-pedestrian areas. Snow must either be positively shed or positively retained. Shedding snow must be deflected from pedestrian areas by dormers, hipped roofs, canopies, or other means. All steps and wheelchair ramps must be covered or otherwise protected from ice and snow build-up.

Ice - Repeated heating and cooling of snow loads can give rise to ice accumulations. Building design should therefore consider heat loss factors as a method of controlling ice build-up. Proper flashing should be accorded to areas subject to ice accumulation. Walkways, entries, and other human use areas should be designed with the aim of minimum potential ice build-up and efficient removal of accumulations that do occur.

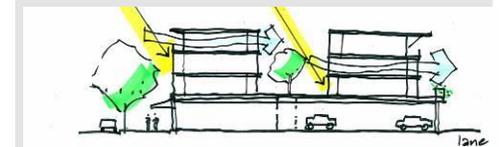
18.2.3. SITE DESIGN

Locate and design site servicing and utilities, parking and access, to maximize pedestrian safety and enhance existing properties. Guidelines include:

1. **Overall Layout.** Where feasible, “Back of house” activities should be located in the back of buildings. “Back of house” activities include but are not limited to the following:
 - Off-street surface parking, access and loading areas;
 - Enclosed and unenclosed storage areas;
 - Vents, meters and transformers.
 - When it is unavoidable to locate driveways, garages and garage entrances in the fronts of buildings, they should be located so that they are visually less dominant, by, for example, recessing them behind the main building line.



Climate sensitive design can be used to mitigate the effects of rain, snow, ice, splash and wind.



Maximizing natural ventilation and day light access





Shared driveways reduces impacts on street orientation



THIS



NOT THIS



Roof lines, windows and entrances should reflect a vertical rather than a horizontal pattern

2. **Access.** Overall site design must include provisions that address the needs of walkers, transit patrons, cyclists, and people with various mobility needs. For example, provide safe and convenient walkways between the public street system and building entrance. Shared access is encouraged.
3. **Buffers.** Screen parking areas from sidewalks and other active open spaces using materials that provide a visual buffer while still allowing clear visibility into the parking areas to promote personal safety. Screening examples include landscaping, a trellis, or grillwork with climbing vines.

18.2.4. BUILDING ORIENTATION & FORM

New development should ensure a good fit within existing or new neighbourhoods through architectural features and building proportions. Guidelines include:

- a. **Entrances.** Entrances should be reinforced architecturally to provide building identity and address. Commercial entries tend to be public, and residential entries tend to be private, and should therefore be designed accordingly. Where possible, locate entrances with access from public streets and sidewalks. Ground floor entries should be weather protected to provide comfort for pedestrians. Examples include awnings, covered entrances, or recessed entrances.
- b. **Orientation.** New projects should ensure that their siting, form, and scale does not block significant views and solar access from existing or anticipated development, and that shadowing impacts on adjacent buildings and useable open spaces are minimized.
- c. **Scale.** Building design elements, details, and materials should create a proportional and pedestrian scale building form. Where new development is taller than existing adjacent development, buildings and groups of buildings should transition in scale from larger to smaller developments.

18.2.5. LANDSCAPING

Landscaping materials help integrate new projects into the surrounding landscape while adding greenery to the town. Guidelines include:

- a. **Add greenery.** Soften the appearance of buildings using plants, shrubs and trees. Where necessary use hard landscaping treatments such as terraced retaining walls and planters. Some strategies include:
 - Planter guards or low planter walls as part of the building design;
 - Landscape open areas created by building articulation;
 - Incorporate gardens in the site design;
 - Emphasize entries with special planting in conjunction with decorative paving and/or lighting.
- b. **Retention.** Minimize the removal of existing significant trees and other vegetation. Where tree or vegetation removal is necessary, they should be replaced with new trees and vegetation.
- c. **Native Landscaping.** Incorporate native landscape materials and the use of plants resistant to Smithers cold winters.
- d. **Parking Areas.** Parking lots should be landscaped for comfort and visual interest. Rain gardens, bio-swales, and permeable materials are encouraged to absorb storm water at its source;
- e. **Functionality.** Landscaping and building design should ensure penetration of sunlight in winter, and shading of afternoon sun in summer. Evergreens and conifers are encouraged to provide year round screening for blank walls.

18.2.6. BUILDING MATERIALS

New buildings should incorporate substantial and natural building materials into their facade to avoid a ‘thin veneer’ look and feel. Guidelines include:

- a. Incorporate robust, natural materials that are local to Smithers. Examples include:
 - Masonry;

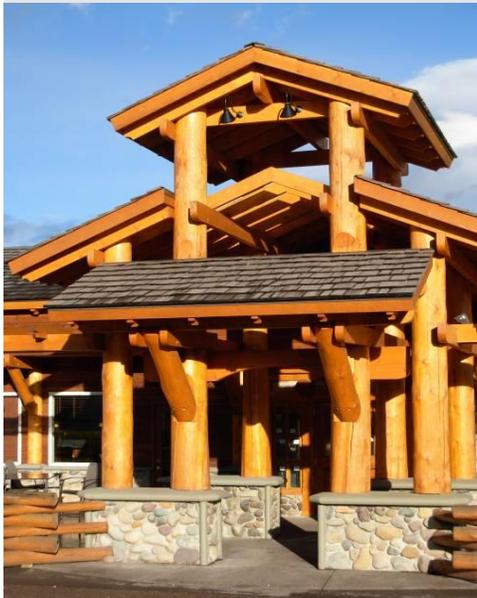


Pedestrian scaled awnings & signage





- Natural and cut stone (i.e. granite);
- Natural wood including substantial timbers both milled and not;
- Unfinished concrete;
- Colours that harmonize with these materials;
- Red tiles, cedar shakes or shingles, or organic coloured metal roofs.
- Use transparent guardrails that allow sun penetration into the building.



- Architectural Styles.** Reflect the cultural history of Smithers, including First Nations, through tasteful building styles and materials that are reflective of the local history.

18.2.7. SIGNAGE

Regulation of sign size and type is necessary to set upper limits on business sign competition and to prevent an escalation in sign size, animation and flash at the expense of pedestrian scale, architectural character and streetscape. Guidelines include:

1. **Branding.** New developments should be creative in incorporating the intent of these guidelines into corporate logos, brands and identities as expressed in the design and materials of signage.
2. **Scale & Presence.** Commercial buildings should provide signage that identifies the business and is appropriately scaled. When new signage is applied to an existing building, it should provide the appearance that the signage was part of the original building design. Signage should be in proportion to the look of the entire building.



18.2.8. LIGHTING

Lighting has a powerful effect on the overall ambience, safety and security of a building. Guidelines include:

- Location.** Directed lighting should be provided on the face of commercial buildings and at main entries to multi-family buildings.
- Safety.** Paths and entry areas should be sufficiently lit to ensure pedestrian

comfort and security.

- c. **Illumination levels.** Illumination levels should be appropriate for the function it serves while at the same time preventing light pollution. Encouraged lighting examples include downcast gooseneck lights, pot lighting, LED lighting of storefronts.

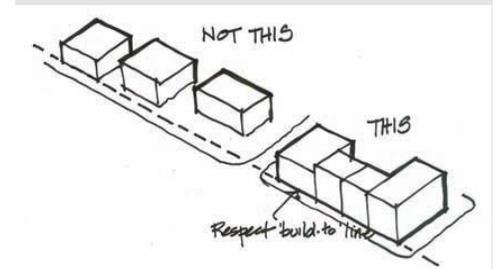
18.3. Specific Guidelines: Downtown Commercial

Downtown Smithers is the social, economic, and historic heart of the community, playing a significant role in the community's overall character and identity. Specific objectives of the Downtown Commercial area are to:

- Build on the existing pedestrian scale of development;
- Reinforce Main Street as the heart of the community;
- Sensitively incorporate residential uses into the downtown;
- Preserve/restore views to the mountains and of prominent buildings.

GUIDELINES:

- a. **Definition and Continuity.** Site buildings to frame and define public streets and open spaces. Locate buildings at the sidewalk edge more or less continuously along a street using a common set back or 'build to' line.
- b. **Vitality and Texture.** Commercial and mixed use buildings in the downtown should be oriented and designed to maximize street vitality and enhance pedestrian amenity by encouraging shops with street level entrances and transparent shop fronts where visible from the street.
- c. **Mitigate blank walls.** Expansive blank walls (i.e. over 5 metres in length) fronting public streets should be avoided. When blank walls are unavoidable, they should be mitigated by:
 - Installing vertical trellis in front of the wall with climbing vines or plant materials.
 - Setting the wall back slightly to provide room for a landscaped or raised planter bed in front of the wall, including plant materials that could grow to obscure or screen the walls surface.



Use a common "build to line" for street definition and continuity

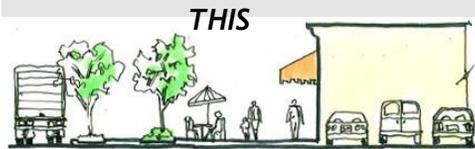




Blank walls should be screened using planters and trellises



An example of integrating large-scale retailers into the downtown



Off-street parking should not be located between the front of a building and the sidewalk

- Providing art (such as a mosaic, mural, decorative masonry pattern, sculpture, relief, etc.) over a substantial portion of the wall surface.
- Employing different texture, colours, and materials to articulate and break up the wall's surface and make it visually more interesting.
- Providing special lighting, a canopy, awning, horizontal trellis or other pedestrian oriented features that break up the size of the blank wall's surface and add visual interest.
- Incorporating them into a patio or sidewalk café.

d. **Sensitively integrate large retailers.** Large scale commercial developments are encouraged to locate within the downtown provided they sensitively integrate into the existing streetscape and established urban fabric by:

- Incorporating small shops into facades fronting public streets and open spaces;
- Incorporating frequent entrances and display windows to be consistent with the existing building and façade rhythm in the downtown;
- Locating off-street surface parking to the side or rear of the building.

18.4. Specific Guidelines: Highway 16 Commercial

Highway 16 is a key transportation corridor through the community and gateway into the downtown. A standard of design is important for this area as it provides the initial impression presented to travelers as they pass through Smithers as well as a local transportation network.

The character of development within the Highway 16 corridor should reflect certain elements of the Alpine Theme; yet acknowledge that larger scale commercial buildings should realistically interpret the Alpine Theme more broadly. Specific objectives of the Highway 16 commercial corridor are to:

- Ensure that the form and character create a pleasant and welcoming experience for both visitors and community members;
- Reinforce the relationship of Hwy. 16 as a gateway to downtown Smithers;
- Encourage designs that respect and respond positively to the surrounding natural and built environment.

GUIDELINES:

- a. **Attention to Materials.** Incorporate natural materials including heavy timbers and stone.
- b. **Site Layout & Building Orientation.** Orient buildings to front onto Highway 16 and the adjacent frontage street with parking located to the rear or side of the building. Large format buildings should try to create internal ‘pedestrian streets’ that connect to the surrounding external streets.
- c. **Mitigate Blank Walls.** Large format buildings that front onto and have their main entrance accessible from the off-street parking lot (i.e. buildings that present the side of their building to the adjacent frontage street) should be designed in a manner that breaks up the appearance of expansive blank walls.

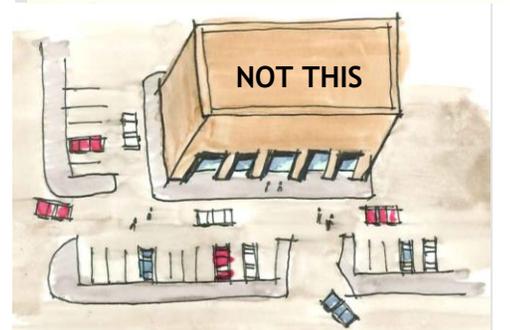
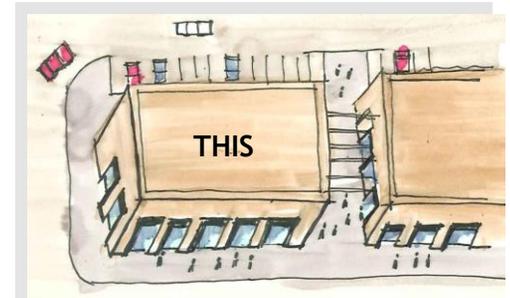
18.5. Specific Guidelines: Multi Family Residential

Multi-family residential buildings such as town houses, apartments and multiple detached dwellings play a key role in the community in terms of size, scale and design as well as being focal points of activity generation. Specific objectives of Multi Family Residential areas are to:

- Ensure the form and character of development in these areas contributes positively to the neighbourhood context and community as a whole.
- Encourage building designs that promote privacy, safety and accessibility.

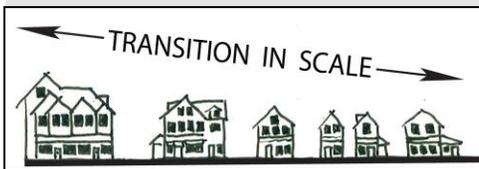
GUIDELINES:

- a. **Connections.** Site residential projects to maximize opportunities to create open spaces and networks including play areas for children according to the following guidelines:
 - Encourage green spaces and common areas as defining elements of the project. Examples include common garden areas, play spaces, courtyards, gathering places, and walkways.
 - Encourage direct access to a private outdoor space, patio or balcony, or upper level terrace for each dwelling unit.



Off-street parking should not be located between the front of a building and the public sidewalk





Maintain physical and visual access to building entrances



Entrance to these townhouses orient towards the street

- Provide natural surveillance for children’s play areas by orienting units with views onto these spaces.
 - b. **Cluster Units.** Larger residential developments should be separated into smaller groups or clusters to maintain a residential scale and image. Dwelling units in smaller groups facilitate residential interaction and neighbor surveillance.
 - c. **Scale and massing.** The scale and massing of buildings should be broken up to reduce the visual impact of buildings and to create variation and visual interest.
 - d. **Maintain a ground orientation.** Where possible, provide for direct access from the fronting street to individual ground floor units.
 - e. **Facade.** Minor visual breaks in the façade should be used to further break up building mass, to accentuate individual entrances and units, and to create variation and enhance visual interest from public and private open spaces.
 - f. **Special considerations for detached dwellings (i.e. carriage houses or cluster development):**
 - Respect the privacy of adjacent properties through appropriate placement of windows, location of decks and other features that may infringe upon the privacy of a neighbouring resident.
 - Encourage large windows and decks to face the lane or shared rear yard.
 - Use building materials that reflect the character of the principal dwelling and be built using similar architectural features.

Part IV: Maps & Schedule