

District of Fort St. James

Official Community Plan:
A Long Range Plan for the Community of Fort St. James



Prepared for: the District of Fort St. James

Prepared by: L&M Engineering Limited

January 2010

Connecting to Our Past and Defining Our Future

DISTRICT OF FORT ST. JAMES

OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN

BYLAW NO. 872, 2010

[Consolidated with amending bylaws 874 and 919]

WHEREAS the Council of the District of Fort St. James wishes to adopt an Official Community Plan pursuant to the Local Government Act of British Columbia.

AND WHEREAS a community plan is a general statement of the broad objectives and policies of the local government respecting the form and character of existing and proposed land use and servicing requirements in the area covered by the plan.

AND WHEREAS a community plan shall be in writing and may include plans, maps, tables or other graphic material and shall include statements and map designations for the area covered by the plan respecting:

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

AND WHEREAS a community plan must include housing policies of the local government respecting affordable housing, rental housing and special needs housing.

AND WHEREAS a community plan may, in accordance with Section 921 of the Local Government Act, designate areas where temporary commercial and temporary industrial uses may be allowed, and may specify general conditions regarding the issue of temporary commercial and temporary industrial use permits in those areas.

- a) A temporary commercial or industrial use permit may, notwithstanding a zoning bylaw;
 - i. The case of a commercial use, the provision of temporary tourist accommodation; and,
 - ii. In the case of an industrial use, the processing of natural materials, as specified in the permit.
- b) Allow any commercial or industrial use, including:
- c) Permit the construction or use of buildings or structures to accommodate persons who work at the commercial or industrial enterprise in respect of which the permit is issued; and,
- d) Specify conditions under which the temporary commercial or industrial use may be carried on.

AND WHEREAS a community plan may, for the purposes of Section 878, of the Local Government Act, designate areas for the

- a) Protection of the natural environment, its ecosystems and biological diversity;
- b) Protection of development from hazardous conditions;
- c) Protection of farming;
- d) Revitalization of an area in which a commercial use is permitted; or,
- e) Establishment of objectives and the provision of guidelines for the form and character of commercial, industrial, or multi-family residential development.

and the plan shall, with respect to those areas,

- f) Describe the special conditions or objectives that justify the designation; and
- g) Specify guidelines respecting the manner by which the special conditions or objectives will be addressed.

AND WHEREAS a community plan may, in accordance with Section 923 of the Local Government Act, designate areas of land that it considers may be subject to flooding, erosion, land slip or avalanche as tree cutting permit areas.

- a) A tree cutting permit may, in respect of an area designated, regulate or prohibit the cutting down of trees and require the owner to obtain, on payment of a fee fixed by the bylaw, a permit before cutting down a tree; and,
- b) A tree cutting permit bylaw may allow the local government, at its discretion, to require an applicant to provide at their expense, a report certified by a qualified person, agreed upon by both parties, that the proposed cutting of trees will not create a danger from flooding or erosion.

AND WHEREAS this Plan has been referred to the Board of the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako for comment;

AND WHEREAS a Public Hearing has been held pursuant to the requirements of Section 890, 891, 892 and 893 of the Local Government Act.

NOW THEREFORE the Municipal Council of the District of Fort St. James in open meeting enacts as follows:

- 1) This bylaw may be cited as “Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 872, 2010.”
- 2) This bylaw consists of
 - a) Schedule “A” – Text.
 - b) Schedule “B” – Land Use Map.
 - c) Schedule “C” – Land Use Map, Townsite.
 - d) Schedule “D” – Environmental Development Permit Area.

- 3) If any section, subsection, sentence, clause or phrase of this bylaw is for any reason held to be invalid by the decision of any court of competent jurisdiction, the invalid portion shall be served and the decision that is invalid shall not affect the validity of the remainder.
- 4) The District of Fort St. James Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 737, 2001, as amended, is hereby repealed.

READ A FIRST AND SECOND TIME THIS 13TH DAY OF JANUARY, 2010.

PUBLIC HEARING HELD ON THE 10th DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2010.

READ A THIRD TIME THIS 10TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2010.

ADOPTED THIS 24th DAY OF MARCH, 2010.

Mayor

Chief Administrative Officer

Certified a true copy of "Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 872, 2010."

Chief Administrative Officer

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PART A

A VISION FOR THE DISTRICT OF FORT ST. JAMES



Background

1.1 Purpose of an Official Community Plan

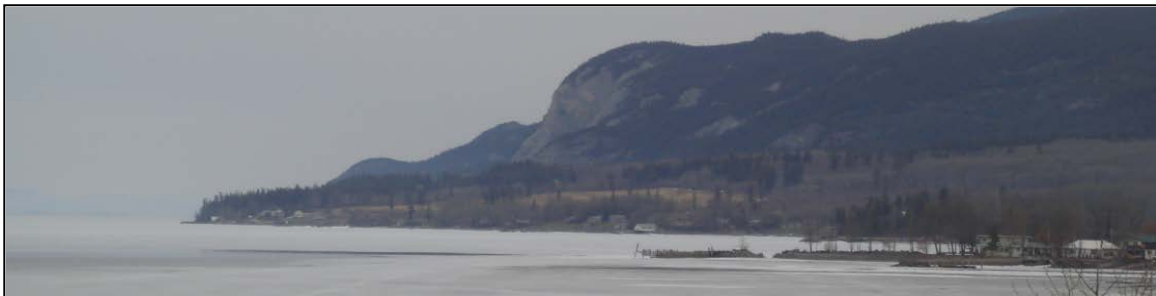
Official Community Plans (OCP's) provide the long-range policy direction for land use decision making in British Columbia. The *Local Government Act*, Section 875, outlines the purpose of an OCP as the following:

- (1) An official community plan is a statement of objectives and policies to guide decisions on planning and land use management, within the area covered by the plan, respecting the purposes of local government.
- (2) To the extent that it deals with these matters, an official community plan should work towards the purpose and goals referred to in section 849 [regional growth strategy goals].

OCPs are the senior land use policy tool for regional and municipal governments. All bylaws enacted subsequent to the adoption of an OCP must be in conformity with the Plan. For example, if an area is designated as Residential within the OCP, a rezoning application for a commercial use would be inconsistent and would therefore require a formal amendment via a bylaw to the OCP. OCPs are guiding documents that should not be amended without serious consideration. In addition, the Plan will serve to inform senior government authorities on the interests of the community, thereby encouraging the undertaking of federal and provincial actions that are consistent with the Plan.

Including clear objectives and policies within an OCP can increase certainty for investors and residents of the community. It is essential that the document remains flexible and responsive to community interests.

It is understood that OCPs should be updated approximately every five (5) years. The OCP for the District of Fort St. James strives to provide a clear vision of future development within the municipality. This plan has been informed by local knowledge, professional expertise and public opinion and is grounded by a clearly defined policy framework.



1.2 Legislated Requirements

The OCP is an enunciation of objectives and policies regarding land uses within a specified geographic area. An OCP should project community needs and interests for a timeframe of 10 to 15 years. To ensure that community objectives respecting land use are fulfilled, the *Local Government Act* (Section 877) requires that:

- (1) An official community plan must include statements and map designations for the area covered by the plan respecting the following:
 - (a) The approximate location, amount, type and density of residential development required to meet anticipated housing needs over a period of at least 5 years;
 - (b) The approximate location, amount and type of present and proposed commercial, industrial, institutional, agricultural, recreational and public utility land uses;
 - (c) The approximate location and phasing of any major road, sewer and water systems;
 - (d) Restrictions on the use of land that is subject to hazardous conditions or that is environmentally sensitive to development;
 - (e) The approximate location and phasing of any major road, sewer and water systems;
 - (f) The approximate location and type of present and proposed public facilities, including schools, parks and waste treatment and disposal sites; and,
 - (g) Other matters that may, in respect of any plan, be required or authorized by the Minister.
- (2) An official community plan must include housing policies of the local government respecting affordable housing, rental housing and special needs housing.

It is important to distinguish between an Official Community Plan and a zoning bylaw. The Official Community Plan is seen as land use direction over a macro-scale, where a zoning bylaw articulates permitted land uses and specific site requirements, including setback requirements, building heights and permitted lot sizes, among others, while respecting the policies and designations of the Official Community Plan on a micro-scale. For example, an Official Community Plan

may establish a block of land as being designated for commercial development whereas the corresponding zoning bylaw may further break down the uses into specific commercial uses, such as General Commercial, Tourist Commercial etc., with uses specific to the intent of the zone.

1.3 History of the Planning Process

There have been significant amounts of planning studies that have been conducted for the Fort St. James community in the last few years. These reports and studies have contributed to the revision of the Fort St. James Official Community Plan. Briefly, the reports and studies include the following:

- a) The District of Fort St. James Community Annual Report (2006) set out key objectives, goals, accomplishments and priorities for the District;
- b) District of Fort St. James Community Profile (2006) provided data and local descriptions of the community;
- c) The Community Vision Forum (2007) hosted for community members of Fort St. James created a Top 10 Priorities to achieve the local vision;
- d) In December of 2007, community leaders in Fort St. James gathered for a workshop to learn and plan for developing a tourism brand for Fort St. James. The final document is the Development Tourism Branding (2007);
- e) Local Inventory Study (2007);
- f) Community Tourism Development Plan (2007).

At the start of this planning process, a visioning session was held with District Council that reinforced their direction for this OCP. Council's vision includes the importance of attracting investment, diversifying the economy, providing an appropriately light designated industrial land base, improving development permit guidelines, protecting the environment and focusing on the importance of concrete methods of implementing the OCP.

In addition, the OCP planning process included stakeholder consultation and a public meeting to actively engage members of the community in the long range planning of Fort St. James. The stakeholder consultation invited a mix of community members representing a variety of interests including education, industry, business, health, and First Nations to discuss how the OCP can achieve the community vision. Within the scope of land use planning, discussions included a reiteration of the community vision focusing on capitalizing on local

assets, community pride, celebrating diversity, promoting a safe, healthy and friendly community and creating opportunities and options for economic diversification, employment, recreation, education and housing.



Context

2.1 Description of the Area

The District of Fort St. James is located on Highway 27 North and situated on Stuart Lake in north-central British Columbia. The District Municipality is within the Regional District of the Bulkley-Nechako and is adjacent to the Nak'azdli Indian Reserve (IR No.1) to the south, the Williams Prairie Meadow Reserve (IR No. 1A) to the northwest and the Utza Nahounli Creek Reserve (IR No. 4) to the west. The District has a total land area of 22.10 km².

Statistics are able to illustrate the overall trends within the District of Fort St. James, including the in-migration and out-migration of residents and the relative age of the population (aging, young workforce, etc.). Therefore, it is worthwhile to analyze the statistical trends over time to determine the needs of the community, such as land requirements.

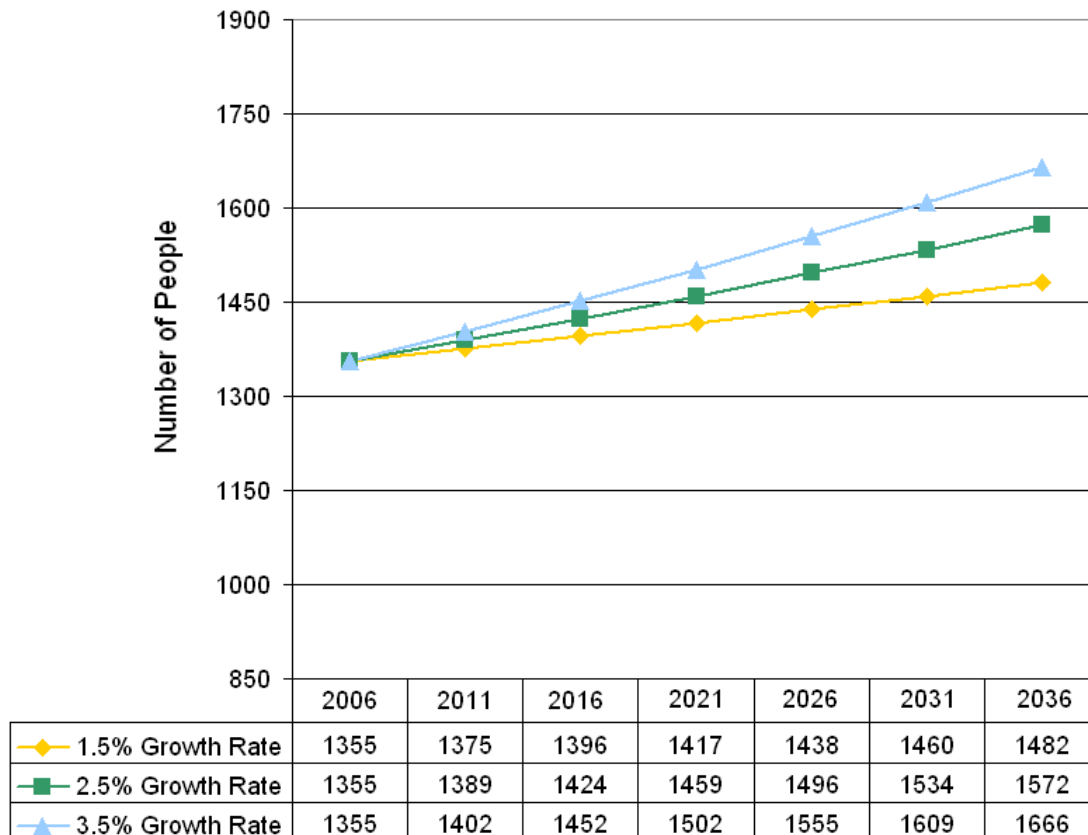
2.2 Demographics and Population Projections

According to Statistics Canada (2006), the population of the District of Fort St. James is 1,355 residents. The land use and development dynamics of the District are influenced by development trends and growth. Demographic changes have a major bearing on how the District developed in the past and how it may change in the future. Historically, the region has had a fluctuating population growth rate typical of resource-based communities. The population growth in the District of Fort St. James has waned over the years and especially most recently due to economic factors such as the closure of Stuart Lake Lumber and Pope & Talbot mills and the reduced work week of Apollo Forest Products. In fact, between the years 2001 and 2006, Fort St. James experienced the most significant population decrease in 30 years (-29.7%) according to Statistics Canada as illustrated in **Table 1: Population and Dwelling Density**. However, the community has not felt such a significant decrease. For example, the school enrolment has not decreased significantly during this time.

Table 1 - Population and Dwelling Density			
	District of Fort St. James	Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako	Province of British Columbia
Population 2006	1,355	38,243	4,113,487
Population 2001	1,927	40,856	3,907,738
Population Change (%)	-29.7	-6.4	5.3
Total private dwellings	756	16,923	1,788,474
Population density per km ²	61.3	0.5	4.4
Land area (km ²)	22.10	73,440.95	924,815.43

For planning purposes, population projections have been prepared for the period extending to the year 2036. This comprises the basic forecast period for the Official Community Plan, as illustrated on Graph 1.

Graph 1 – Population Projection for the District of Fort St. James



The projections on which the OCP is based reflect different percentage growth rates, varying from a stable 1.5% rate to a relatively high 3.5% annual growth rate. Projected rates are illustrated in **Graph 1: Population projection for the District of Fort St. James**. In addition to growth, it is understood that the population of Fort St. James could stabilize or decline. Thus, the policies of this

plan do not commit the District to significant capital expenditures or expansion of services.

The projected additional population is determined by subtracting the projected population for a specific year from the base population. For example, the projected additional population using a medium estimate of 2.5 percent for the year 2011 is 34 additional residents. The average household size in Fort St. James is 2.5 persons per household. Therefore if the population of the District of Fort St. James increases by 34 residents by the year 2011, an additional 14 dwelling units will be required over the next 5 years for this additional population.

Table 2 - Projected Residential Demand below summarizes the range in potential housing demands depending upon the growth rate of the area.

Table 2 - Projected Residential Demand			
Time Frame	Low Growth	Medium Growth	High Growth
	Number of New Residential Units		
5 years	8	14	19
10 years	16	28	39
15 years	25	42	59
20 years	33	56	80

The projected residential demand can be converted into land area by utilizing the assumption of 10 new residential units per hectare. This assumption takes into account that some residential areas have greater residential density than others.

Table 3 - Projected Land Requirements below illustrates the range of land requirements associated with the projected residential demand.

Table 3 - Projected Land Requirements			
Time Frame	Low Growth	Medium Growth	High Growth
	Land Requirement (Hectares)		
5 years	1	2	2
10 years	2	3	4
15 years	3	5	6
20 years	4	6	8

Accordingly, **Section 5 – Residential** identifies priority areas for future residential development based on the above projected land requirements of 2 hectares based on the medium population growth potential. In relation to this, the District of Fort St. James has a total of approximately 115 hectares of undeveloped land within the Urban Containment Boundary. This is more than sufficient for future urban residential development. Therefore, no additional land needs to be designated for residential purposes.

It is also imperative that a variety of housing options are available for existing residents. Accordingly, the residential areas identified on **Schedule C – District**

of Fort St. James OCP Land Use Map Townsite and in Section 6 - Residential meets the needs of new and existing residents for residential land uses.

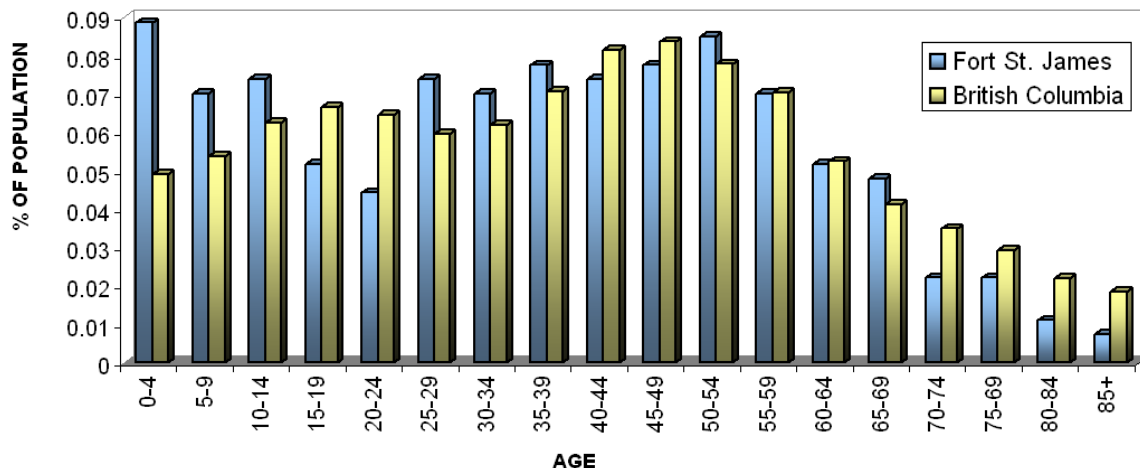
2.3 Housing Data

The need for future housing in Fort St. James will be driven by two major considerations: demographic characteristics and economic growth. Housing demand, and the corresponding need for land supply, is linked to many factors, including:

- The relative age of the community;
- Investment in employment activities;
- Income levels;
- Interest rates; and,
- In-migration.



The age categories 0 to 4 years old, 5 to 9 years old and 10 to 14 years old are significantly above the provincial average, while there are noticeably fewer citizens in the 70+ year old range. In general, the community of Fort St. James is a very young community. Although the number of seniors in Fort St. James is lower than the provincial average and does not represent the majority of people in the community, the “baby boomer” generation is evident in Fort St. James and is aging, leading to the conclusion that the community must plan for senior living in the future so that the District can retain all ages of the population.



In Fort St. James, 66% of residents have lived in the same address for the last 5 years, compared with the provincial average of 53%. The low mobility rate and lack of first time home buyers within Fort St. James has limited the demand for housing mainly to in-migration.

In order to meet the short to medium term demand for housing in Fort St. James, it is essential that there are housing lots available to meet the future demand. A

key area identified to meet future demand is in the north end of the District north and east of Heathmont Street as illustrated on **Schedule C**). This area of the community is already designated by the current OCP as UR - Urban Residential and will support the residential demand in Fort St. James. In addition, the OCP designation for Urban Residential land located in the Pineridge Neighbourhood of the District has great potential for high-end viewscape homes.

Housing types in Fort St. James are predominately Single Family Residential. There are some multi-family dwellings in the forms of apartments and condominiums that provide the District with affordable housing options within the community; however, the housing stock is aging. The majority of dwellings in Fort St. James (78%) were constructed prior to 1986. A variety of housing forms, including either new or redeveloped, is needed for the Fort St. James community.

Fortunately, there have been new housing developments within the District of Fort St. James that are a mix of quality Single Family Residential and Multi-Family Residential dwellings. An example is the new Multi-Family Residential homes (four-plex) dwellings located on a new neighbourhood section of Murray Road in the District. Not only do these homes provide an alternative housing option for local residents, the building forms complement the surrounding Single-Family homes. In addition, these Multi-Family homes reduce the building footprint on the landscape, increase the densification of the urban area, and mix different socio-economic demographic groups in the same complete neighbourhood.

The District of Fort St. James also has a new seniors' housing complex, which is an important contribution to the variety of local housing while, at the same time, providing for the changing housing demand of the baby boomers. In addition, there is also the generation of "mobile seniors", those residents who wish to live closer to the town centre or no longer require a large home but do not necessarily require assisted living. These residents will increase the demand for housing types such as strata development or rancher style homes in Fort St. James. Including these alternative forms of housing within the District of Fort St. James is an important part of providing places to live for people at different stages of their lives. Otherwise, locals may search for different "retirement" communities that offer the lifestyle opportunities specific to their needs.



2.4 Economic Indicators

The economy in Fort St. James has traditionally been resource-based with a focus on forestry - timber harvesting and sawmill operations, with the tourism industry adding some resilience. Communities such as Fort St. James that are dominated by one economic sector, especially forestry, tend to have a specialized workforce. In the case of Fort St. James, 21% of the population is employed in trades, transport and equipment operator positions, 10% is employed in unique processing, manufacturing and utilities positions, and 7% are employed in unique positions in primary industries. Table 4 summarizes the total experienced labour force 15 years and older for the District of Fort St. James.

Table 4 - Total Experienced Labour Force 15 Years and Older	
Labour Type	Percentage of Population
Sales & Service	22%
Trades, Transport & Equipment Operators	21%
Business, Finance & Administration	11%
Social Science, Education, Government & Religion	11%
Unique to Processing, Manufacturing & Utilities	10%
Natural & Applied Science	9%
Unique to Primary Industry	7%
Health	6%
Management	3%
Art, Culture, Recreation & Sport	0%

- Statistics Canada

The dominating forest sector has been experiencing economic challenges in recent years, resulting in a significant number of people with specialized work skills without jobs. Residents of Fort St. James have recognized the economic issues in their community and have been working towards revitalizing all sectors of the economy including forestry. In addition, the importance of diversification of local industries such as mining and tourism has been recognized and is supported by this document.



The mining sector has been discussed as a potential economic opportunity for the District of Fort St. James and region. Terrane Metals, for example, have been rapidly advancing the Mount Milligan Project towards production since acquiring the property in July of 2006, 90km north of Fort St. James. To date, the provincial Environmental

Impact Assessment has been approved and the Mines Permit is in place. As of January 2010, the project has also received federal environmental approval. Projects such as this one are encouraged by the District of Fort St. James and are supported by its hosting of the Minerals North Conference in 2009.

It is important to identify the economic trends of a community in order to best translate the trends into the supply and demand of specific land uses such as the amount of land required for industrial purposes, commercial purposes, and so on. The opening of a mine, for example, could bring an influx of residents moving to the District of Fort St. James. As many as 300 new residents could move to the community, which would significantly change the population demographic. However, even with an additional 300 residents in Fort St. James in the next 5 years, the District has more than a sufficient amount of land dedicated for urban residential uses. The following table summarizes the potential increase in population and the associated land requirements:

Table 5 - Projected Residential Demand if a significant increase in population occurs as a result of a mine opening and operating			
Time Frame	Projected Population	Number of New Residential Units	Land Requirement (Hectares)
5 years (2011)	1689	134	14

If the District of Fort St. James experienced an increase of 300 residents in addition to the increase of 34 residents from a medium growth rate of 2.5% in five years, then the total population of the community would be 1,689 residents. This would require 134 new residential units and 14 hectares of land. As discussed previously, the District has approximately 115 hectares of undeveloped land in Fort St. James, therefore more than enough urban residential land to accommodate the potential influx of residents due to mining activity.

Building permit information is also an indicator of economic activities at the community level. Between the years 2003 and 2007, the District of Fort St. James has seen a consistent number of small home renovation permits such as roof upgrades and carport constructions. In addition, there have been a few significant capital investment projects within the community during the past 5 years which include mill expansions at Conifex and Apollo Forest Products, the addition to Pioneer Place Seniors Complex, and the addition to Stuart Lake Hospital. In addition, the District of Fort St. James had 2 significant civic projects over the last few years including the construction of the new Municipal Office and the construction of the new Bicentennial Library. With the exception of the local mill projects and additions to the hospital and seniors housing, there has not been significant new private development investment in Fort St. James within the past 5 years.

The Vision

3.1 Community Goals

Residents of the District of Fort St. James have a clear vision of how they want the community to develop and grow in the long term. Residents of the community envision a beautified downtown core, connectivity to the waterfront, indoor and outdoor recreational opportunities, a diversified economy, and entertainment options during the evenings.

In May of 2007, the District of Fort St. James hosted a Community Vision Forum to determine how community members would like to see Fort St. James ten years from now. As a result, a *Top 10 Priority Projects to Achieve the District of Fort St. James Community Vision* was created, and is listed as follows:

- 1) Downtown and community revitalization project, including signage, appearance beautification, and developing the lakeshore/bringing the lake into the forefront;
- 2) A recreation/community facility including a pool and multi-use hall, such as a community museum and gallery;
- 3) Development of trails: walking trails, historic information, boardwalk at Sowchea Swamp, recreational trails for hikers and bikers, self-guided walking path, etc.;
- 4) Develop a Community Plan, which would include branding, themes, lakeshore development, business plans, economic diversification etc.;
- 5) Market Fort St. James to the outside world;
- 6) Upgrade the ski hill such as snow making and a chairlift;
- 7) Recreation coordinator to assist with the integration/development of all community service, events, etc.;
- 8) Enhanced education opportunities;
- 9) Attract another restaurant and hotel;
- 10) Eco-tourism/tourism promotion in general.

The community vision defined by these priorities and reinforced by Council, stakeholders and the public, has set the tone for the guiding principles, objectives and policies of the District of Fort St. James Official Community Plan.

Connecting to Our Past and Defining Our Future

3.2 Guiding Principles

The development of the District of Fort St. James Official Community Plan is based upon the fundamental principles of land use planning including the protection of natural environmental features, increasing economic opportunities for residents and enhancing the quality of life for residents of the District of Fort St. James. The principles serve as the basis for the identification of several objectives of this Plan, including utilizing public infrastructure in a cost-efficient manner.

In addition, the District of Fort St. James is committed to communicating and working with the neighbouring Nak'azdli Band community immediately south of the District. The Nak'azdli Band is a positive part of the Fort St. James community, and there are many opportunities for partnerships between the two communities, such as servicing, infrastructure, education, social support services, community pride, and so on. The District of Fort St. James OCP supports collaboration between the two levels of government.



3.3 Growth Management Strategy

Growth Management is an essential component of a well planned community as it enables a community to direct growth in a manner that: protects quality of life; protects environmentally sensitive areas; and utilizes resources and infrastructure efficiently. Within the District of Fort St. James, the principle of

growth management is achieved by the delineation of an Urban Containment Boundary, utilizing existing infrastructure, the designation of specific industrial areas, commercial and tourism areas and policies aimed at economic diversification and investment opportunities as well as a strong environmental protection focus. The quality of life, environmental and economic objectives outlined in the following strategy are key components of the District of Fort St. James Growth Management Strategy.

3.4 Quality of Life Objectives

Quality of life refers to a feeling of well-being, fulfillment, or satisfaction resulting from factors external to the individual living within the community. For example, quality of life can include economic, social, artistic, cultural, health, psychological, attitudinal and environmental well-being. The following list represents the District of Fort St. James Quality of Life Objectives taken from ideas expressed by the District Council, local stakeholders and the public:

- a) To recognize the need for a variety of housing choices to meet the needs of area residents;
- b) To work with First Nations and other governments, and the public to minimize land use conflicts by planning for compatible adjacent uses which respect the use and scale of their surroundings;
- c) To engage citizens to participate in community life and decision-making;
- d) To direct settlement to areas free of geotechnical hazards and extreme fire hazard areas unless mitigation measures reduce risk to acceptable levels. Acceptable levels can be considered the absence or presence of a geotechnical or fire hazard wherein physical, social and economic implications are deemed to be sufficiently low consequence;
- e) To conserve and protect natural environmental features and special places in the community;
- f) To seek to enhance viewscales and open space;
- g) To retain the local population by providing more opportunities for young people and more reasons for seniors to remain living in the community;
- h) To encourage the protection and preservation of the historical character of the Plan area;
- i) To encourage community infrastructure such as a swimming pool, an arts centre, a skateboard park, and several community events;

- j) To provide a safe place for residents to live and visitors to experience;
- k) To provide sustainable and prosperous employment for residents living and working in Fort St. James;
- l) To have a mix of businesses in the commercial core that are attractive and welcoming.

PART B

Land Use Designations



The Natural Environment

4.1 Background

Natural areas are important to residents and have a direct impact on the quality of life for residents in the District of Fort St. James. There are significant natural features within this community, including Stuart Lake and Nahounli Creek that need to be considered for protection and conservation during future development. In addition, the natural environment contributes significantly to the quality of life for residents and visitors of Fort St. James because of the natural beauty and unspoiled landscape. Protection of the natural environmental features of the community is an inherent value and asset for everyone.

The purpose of the policies contained within the Natural Environment Section is to guide decision-makers in the protection of the natural environment and providing long-term stewardship of the important natural features in the District. Schedule D of this Plan identifies the Environmentally Sensitive Areas such as the Stuart Lake lakeshore and Nahounli Creek. In addition, the OCP has designations to protect greenbelts and hazardous areas from inappropriate development. *Greenbelts* include areas that are deemed to be unsuitable for development due to environmental considerations, such as; steep slopes or sensitive habitat. Greenbelts can be utilized for recreational purposes, but use of these areas should be limited to trail development and viewscape resting areas. *Hazardous lands* includes those lands which, on the basis of slope, soil conditions, or flood hazard potential may not ordinarily be used for any building or development. Known hazardous lands within the District of Fort St. James conditions have been designated as Greenbelt in the Official Community Plan in order to deter development and protect the natural environmental features of the area and those areas located in the floodplain are protected by Environmental Development Permit Areas.

One method to balance development with the protection of important natural environmental features in Fort St. James, such as Stuart Lake, is the establishment of Environmental Development Permit Areas within the District. When land is designated as a Development Permit Area, no land within the designated area shall be subdivided nor construction of, addition to or alteration of a building or structure commenced unless the owner first obtains a Environmental Development Permit from the District or is exempted under a condition that specifies when a Development Permit would not be required. Land within the Environmental Development Permit Areas will have protection priority that is in accordance to the community's environmental and quality of life vision.

The protection of air quality is also an environmental consideration. There are many factors that can affect air quality within the District includes (i) road dust; (ii)

major industries; (iii) open burning from land clearing; (iv) residential wood burning stoves; (v) residential yard waste burning; and, (vi) vehicle exhaust. Fortunately, the major industries are located on a plateau northeast of the Urban Containment Boundary. It is important to encourage non-polluting activities within the community in order to maintain healthy air quality in the community. Policies in the Official Community Plan can help reduce emissions by the appropriate siting of industrial land, screening requirements, and development standards for new industrial developments.

Climate change is also an environmental constraint facing communities throughout British Columbia. The District of Fort St. James is a signatory to the BC Climate Action Charter for communities committed to reducing their green house gas emissions. Signatory Local Governments commit to developing strategies and taking actions in order to achieve three goals: becoming carbon neutral in respect to their operations by 2012; measuring and reporting their community's GHG emissions profile; and creating complete, compact, and more energy efficient rural and urban communities. The District is committed to reducing green house gas emissions and, through the BC Climate Action Charter, is able to apply for grants to offset their carbon tax costs.



4.2 Objectives

- a) It is the objective of Council to recognize the importance of the shoreline riparian area for such purposes as to reduce shoreline erosion, to filter contaminants from entering a water body, to function as habitat, and to provide shading and protection for fish stocks;
- b) It is the objective of Council to encourage heavy and intermediate industrial land uses in the northeast of the District and away from the Urban Containment Boundary.
- c) It is the objective of Council to preserve open spaces, natural beauty, and environmentally sensitive areas.
- d) It is the objective of Council to encourage design that enables public access to Stuart Lake;
- e) It is the objective of Council to encourage all new buildings within the Commercial Core to be certified under *Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design* (LEED);
- f) It is the objective of Council to discourage development at locations that are subject to steep slopes, hazardous lands, or flooding.
- (g) It is the objective of Council to reduce greenhouse gas emissions generated by buildings and vehicles to meet greenhouse gas emission targets.
- (h) It is the objective of Council to improve energy efficiency and green building development for new buildings.
- (i) It is the objective of Council to improve the energy efficiency and environmental performance of existing buildings through retrofits or redevelopment.

[Bylaw No. 874, 2010]

4.3 Policies

- a) It is the policy of Council to recognize the designated lands as “Greenbelt” on Schedules B and C. These lands should remain largely in their natural condition because they are located on floodplain areas, on steep slopes, in ravines, directly adjacent to creeks and rivers and are considered to be Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA). According to Environmental Best Management Practices for Urban and Rural Land Development (MOE, 2004), an ESA is defined as:

“any parcel of land that already has, or with remedial action could achieve desirable environmental attributes. These attributes contribute to the retention and/or creation of wildlife habitat, soil stability, water retention or recharge, vegetative cover and similar vital ecological functions. ESA’s range in size from small patches to extensive landscape features. They can include rare or common habitats, plants and animals.”

According to best management practices for land development, ESA’s should be protected from adverse impacts related to development;

- b) It is the policy of Council to acknowledge that the types of permitted uses within the Greenbelt designation areas can include trails, interpretive facilities, habitat protection and restoration, habitat enhancement, dikes and erosion control works, fencing, signage and other uses that do not result in unacceptable degradation of the natural environment within the area;
- c) It is the policy of Council to utilize professional advice, either through the Ministry of Environment or through qualified private professionals, in determining the exact boundaries of riparian areas;
- d) It is the policy of Council to provide clear signage to discourage inappropriate use of significant natural areas (i.e. dumping of garbage, all-terrain vehicle use, etc.);
- e) It is the policy of Council to encourage developers to utilize the Land Development Guidelines for the Protection of Aquatic Habitat throughout the construction process to control erosion and preserve the riparian areas near streams, water bodies and wetlands;
- f) It is the policy of Council to consider Comprehensive Development Zones where the existing Zoning Bylaw does not provide the flexibility needed to respond appropriately to individual site constraints;
- g) It is the policy of Council to consider creating a Cluster Zone to facilitate the development of appropriate portions of a site in exchange for protection of sensitive areas onsite;
- h) It is the policy of Council to work with the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako to improve the air quality, promote environmental protection, address geotechnical issues, and prevent fires;
- i) It is the policy of Council to work with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) to ensure the appropriate environmental setback

standards are implemented for development near identified watercourses within the District of Fort St. James.

- (j) It is the policy of Council to ensure all operations, planning processes, initiatives and decision making include consideration towards moving the District of Fort St. James's *per capita* greenhouse gas emission levels toward the following targets:
 - 15% below 2007 levels by 2012
 - 33% below 2007 levels by 2020
 - 80% below 2007 levels by 2050.
- (k) It is the policy of Council to enact a bylaw regulating idling vehicles within the District of Fort St. James.
- (l) It is the policy of Council to consider inclusion of district energy systems (possibly geothermal systems) when planning subdivision development, and if a district energy system is established, to enact a service area bylaw that requires connection of buildings to the district energy system.
- (m) It is the policy of Council to encourage owners of industrial operations to develop green methods of energy production to heat and power their operations, including utilizing biomass fuels.
- (n) It is the policy of Council to enact amendments to the subdivision servicing bylaw and building bylaw to introduce improved energy efficiency standards for new construction.
- (o) It is the policy of Council to encourage owners of residential and business properties to retrofit existing buildings with green heating and lighting options, and more efficient insulation systems.
- (p) It is the policy of Council to work with local environmental groups to support the dissemination of information about sustainable living to residents and businesses in Fort St. James.

[Bylaw No. 874, 2010]

4.4 Environmental Development Permit Areas

Council hereby designates the riparian area immediately adjacent to the natural boundary of water bodies, including Stuart Lake and Nahounli Creek, are designated as Environmental Development Permit Areas as illustrated on Schedule D. These areas will generally remain free of development and in their natural condition except for fencing, trails, and works or plantings to control erosion, protect banks, protect fisheries or otherwise preserve and enhance the

natural water course. The exact boundary will be set out in the development permit based on the area required to preserve the streamside habitat and the existing condition of the streamside area. Protective measures are essential if such areas are to be preserved.

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans of Canada (DFO) have standards for development near identified watercourses. The setbacks are:

Table 6 - Department of Fisheries and Oceans Setback Standards	
Non-fish Bearing (Blue) Watercourses	15m from Top of Bank
Fish-bearing (Red) Watercourses:	
Low density residential developments (less than or equal to 7 gross units per acre)	15m from Top of Bank
Low density residential housing developments (Less than or equal to 7 gross units per acre) or open space park developments on the Fraser or Nechako Rivers	30m from Top of Bank
High density residential developments (greater than 7 units per acre gross)	30m from Top of Bank
Industrial, institutional, commercial developments	30m from Top of Bank
Any developments adjacent to banks of the Nechako or Fraser River in areas which are not fully treed, and are showing signs of active slumping or erosion (to be determined by an appropriately qualified professional)	50m from Top of Bank
All new trails	15m from Top of Bank

All new buildings or expansion of existing buildings within the designated Environmental Development Permit Area shall be required to apply for a Development Permit. Development permits issued in this area shall be in accordance with the following guidelines:

- 1) Leave strips, which are areas of land and vegetation adjacent to watercourses, shall be maintained to protect fish and wildlife habitat;
- 2) Lesser or greater leave strips shall be considered where the size is determined on the basis of an assessment report provided by a qualified professional in respect of a development proposal;
- 3) Construction of buildings and structures should avoid the floodplain;
- 4) Deposition of materials, surface runoff and subsurface drainage should not negatively affect any wetland, pond or watercourse;
- 5) The setback of buildings along watercourses are to follow the general standards identified in the Streamside Protection Regulation;
- 6) Protection measures, including the installation of a fence in an agricultural, commercial, industrial, institutional and multiple-family residential areas,

and the planting or retention of vegetation and trees, may be required to preserve, protect, restore, or enhance riparian protection development permit areas, control drainage, or control erosion or protect banks.



Residential Land Use

5.1 Background

The small town character of Fort St. James is reflected in the residential neighbourhoods within the District that surround the downtown Commercial Core. The close proximity of the neighbourhoods to the Commercial Core enhances the walkability between the different parts of the community. In addition, the neighbourhoods have excellent access to parks and recreational uses. The neighbourhood surrounding Dogwood and Birch Street, for example, contains a centred school and field that are within easy walking distance for residents in that area.

The Heathmont neighbourhood, located north of Elm Street West and east of Highway 27 North, is where the concentration of most new home construction is occurring. Adjacent to the Heathmont Neighbourhood west of the Mackenzie Highway is also known as the *Mission Lands* and is outside of the Urban Containment Boundary. The property is owned by Ranchery Holdings (Nak'azdli Band) and is currently in the process of having the property made into Indian Reserve. It is the intention of the Nak'azdli Band that the Mission Lands be planned to achieve land use harmony with surrounding land uses.

There are different types of residential designations within the community in order to provide a variety of housing types for residents at different stages of their lives as well as a range of lifestyles. The Rural Residential designation includes unserviced, large lots that provide an option for those seeking a rural lifestyle. Residential areas that are defined as urban can be either Single Family Residential or Multiple Family Residential. The urban designation allows for fully serviced residential housing ranging from the least dense Single Family option to the highest density of 3 storey apartments. The combination of rural, single family and multiple family housing options is key for providing a variety of housing types for residents in Fort St. James.

The existing housing types in Fort St. James are predominately detached Single Family Residential. There are some multi-family dwellings in the forms of apartments and townhouses that provide the District with affordable housing options within the community. In addition, there have been new developments within Fort St. James of mixed Single Family Residential and Multi-Family Residential including a new seniors housing complex. These types of residential developments in Fort St. James are important in order to accommodate the changing demographics of the region. For example, "mobile seniors", those residents who wish to live closer to the town centre or no longer require a large home but do not necessarily require assisted living, have increased the demand for strata development and rancher style homes.

The District of Fort St. James has the opportunity to provide a variety of lot sizes in the community that reflect the various lifestyles of local residents. The density objectives that are outlined in **Table 7 – Housing Densities** below provide for a range of rural and urban lot sizes. Within the rural designation, clustering of homes is permitted in order to retain Environmentally Sensitive Areas and open spaces provided the overall density objective is not surpassed.

Table 7 - Housing Densities		
Residential Designation	Maximum Density or Minimum Lot Size	Overall Intent
Rural Holdings	1 lot per 20 hectares	Areas to be maintained in resource use such as forestry and agriculture, as well as natural open spaces
Rural A – Large Rural Residential	1 lot per 10 hectares	Rural A is a low density rural residential development, including hobby farms.
Rural B – Small Rural Residential	1 lot per 2 hectares	Rural B is a moderate density rural residential development.
Rural C – Existing Rural Residential	1 lot per 1300m ²	Rural C reflects those areas within the District where areas of smaller rural residential lots already exist.
Urban	<u>Maximum 100 units per hectare</u> <u>[Bylaw No. 919, 2012]</u>	Within Urban Containment Boundary to provide a mix of 75% single-detached homes and 25% Multi-Family Homes

New neighbourhood developments within the District that are designated as Urban –Residential will be encouraged to have an overall housing ratio of 75% single family dwellings and 25% multiple dwellings, with a maximum of 65 dwelling units per hectare. These neighbourhoods will be predominantly single-detached homes with duplexes located on a scattered site basis. Low-rise apartments shall be located adjacent to major roads and close to parks and schools. In order to achieve an attractive neighbourhood, it is encouraged that the 2 units of a duplex home do not mirror-image each other.

The objectives and policies in the Residential Designation of the Official Community Plan are intended to provide a variety of housing forms for all community members while respecting neighbourhood and small town character of Fort St. James.


5.2 Objectives

- a) It is the objective of Council to direct future residential development in such a manner as to fully utilize existing municipal services prior to initiating service extensions;
- b) It is the objective of Council to encourage the infilling of vacant lots within existing residential subdivisions;
- c) It is the objective of Council to encourage comprehensive neighbourhood plans in order to ensure the development of well planned and safe residential neighbourhoods;
- d) It is the objective of Council to strengthen pedestrian connectivity and safety between neighbourhoods, schools, and places of public interest;
- e) It is the objective of Council to encourage the development of secondary suites and rental accommodations within existing and future urban residential areas and mixed use developments within the downtown commercial area;
- f) It is the objective of Council to encourage appropriate and affordable accommodation for seniors. The District will support initiatives that will utilize “aging in place principles”, graduated care facilities and principles that support retention of family members of all ages within the community;
- g) It is the objective of Council to encourage a well balanced mixture of housing types, tenure options and prices that will strive to meet the accommodation needs of all socio-economic groups. Council will encourage initiatives to supply affordable forms of accommodation. These initiatives could include the utilization of public/private partnerships for specific types of housing such as subsidized housing or assisted living.
- h) It is the objective of Council to undertake a review of the District’s subdivision and development servicing standards in order to explore the incorporation of Alternative Development Standards into the Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw.

5.3 Policies

- i. It is the policy of Council to contain urban development and municipal services to the Urban Containment Boundary;
- ii. It is the policy of Council that the future residential land uses of the District shall be developed and staged in a manner that most efficiently utilizes existing infrastructure.
- iii. It is the policy of Council to cooperate with the Nak'azdli Band and the Integrated Land Management Bureau (ILMB) in order to acquire Crown land and encourage the development of serviced residential lots with the objective of providing reasonably priced building lots;
- iv. It is the policy of Council to require comprehensive planning of new residential development. Comprehensive planning should include the consideration of the following where applicable:
 - i) Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA's);
 - ii) Local and Major Roads;
 - iii) Approximate Lotting Patterns;
 - iv) Residential housing mix and densities, including social housing;
 - v) Commercial land allocation;
 - vi) Public use sites including parks and schools; and,
 - vii) Trail linkages.
- v. Urban residential lands will be serviced with full urban services installed at the cost of the developer. Rural Residential developments may be served by private water and sewer services, installed at the cost of the developer, and meeting all municipal and provincial regulations and guidelines.
- vi. It is the policy of Council to ensure sidewalks are provided for all new urban residential development.
- vii. It is the policy of Council to permit secondary suites within Single Family Residential dwellings;
- viii. It is the policy of Council to provide limited utility services to Rural Residential areas within the District, and will not include District water and sewer. New rural residential subdivisions in this designation shall, be

served with paved roads. The minimum lot size shall be as indicated on Table 7;

- ix. It is the policy of Council that the Rural C designation will not be expanded;
 - x. It is the policy of Council to support Rural Cluster Development under the Rural Residential land use designations, in order to preserve viewsapes, recreational features or special environmental characteristics;
 - xi. It is the policy of Council that in order to provide District residents with access to a wide range of housing opportunities, the Official Community Plan has designated land within the District boundaries for all residential housing requirements sufficient to meet the anticipated housing needs of at least five (5) years;
- 
- xii. It is the policy of Council to allow for a residential mix of 75% Single Family Residential and 25% Multiple Family Residential in all new areas designated as Urban;
 - xiii. It is the policy of Council that the siting criteria for Multiple Family dwelling units within the Urban designation should meet one or more of the following:
 - a. Within or immediately adjacent to the commercial core;
 - b. Immediately adjacent to major parks or recreation areas;
 - c. Immediately adjacent to main roads;
 - d. Take advantage of unique viewsapes or topographical features; and
 - e. Apartments and townhouses will be considered only where the capacity of the municipal water and sewer services are available to meet the needs of such development;
 - xiv. It is the policy of Council that the District of Fort St. James shall assess all residential development proposals on the basis of the following guidelines:
 - a. Need for housing, employment and improvement of environmental and living conditions in Fort St. James;
 - b. The supply and demand of land to meet the needs of commerce, industry, residential development and public uses;

- c. The need for parks, and recreational land or open space recognizing the value of land for natural and historical reasons;
 - d. The need for special needs housing;
 - e. The need for orderly and economic provision of access, sewage disposal, public facilities, including roads, water, sanitary sewer, storm drainage, schools, recreation facilities, and solid waste disposal;
 - f. The protection and enhancement of watersheds, fish and wildlife habitat and the protection of land areas subject to hazardous conditions; and,
 - g. Conformity with the Zoning, Subdivision Servicing and all other regulatory bylaws of the District.

- xv. It is the policy of Council to explore partnership opportunities with the private sector and other governing bodies, such as the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako, the Crown, and First Nations, for the development of future residential developments, and the provision of future infrastructure and recreational development;

- xvi. It is the policy of Council to consider negotiating development amenities as part of a development approval, as supported by Section 904 of the *Local Government Act*.
 - a. In recognition of the increased value conferred on land through the course of development approval, and in recognition of the need for new development to contribute to amenities and services, development proposals will generally be requested to include some public amenity as part of the completed project.
 - b. Amenities to be considered include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Extra road dedication and construction;
 - Sidewalk and pathway improvements;
 - Affordable housing units;
 - Parkland;
 - Landscaping;
 - Protection of open space or environmentally significant areas by means of dedication or conservation covenants;
 - Recreational space facilities; and,
 - Extraordinary design features.

5.4 Residential Development Permit Areas

In accordance with Section 879 of the Local Government Act, Council hereby designates all Multi-Family Residential Developments as Development Permit Areas.

All new buildings or expansion of existing buildings within the designated Development Permit Area shall be required to apply for a Development Permit. Development Permits issued in this area shall be in accordance with the following guidelines:

- 1) The size and shape of apartments and townhouses should relate well to surrounding buildings and provide a transition between the single family dwellings. Gabled roofs are preferred;
- 2) Buildings should be oriented toward Stuart Drive West and Stuart Lake in order to take advantage of these amenities and sunlight exposure;
- 3) The shape and siting of buildings, roof line and shape, and exterior finish should be sufficiently varied to avoid a monotonous appearance;
- 4) Parking should be provided predominantly to the side and rear of buildings in order to make these areas less obtrusive;
- 5) Buildings with large parking requirements should provide several parking areas instead of a single large parking lot;
- 6) Areas not required for buildings and parking and access should be landscaped using a combination of trees, shrubs and grass;
- 7) Parking lots including accesses, manoeuvring aisles and loading areas should be surfaced with asphaltic or cement pavement. The layout, surfacing and drainage of all parking areas should facilitate quick drainage and easy snow removal;
- 8) Townhouses and/or rowhouses shall be clustered to take advantage of open space and views. Small clusters are preferred and shall not exceed 8 dwelling units in a row;
- 9) The repetition of facades is strongly discouraged;
- 10) Façade colours should be chosen with consideration to providing colour in winter;
- 11) Garbage containers shall be screened from view on three sides.

Commercial Land Use

6.1 Background

Commercial land use allows for activities that provide the necessities and amenities for residents and visitors in Fort St. James. In the District, commercial land use is divided into 2 designations: (i) the Commercial Core; and, (ii) Tourist/Highway Commercial. The *Commercial Core* is the central commercial district in Fort St. James where most of the commercial uses within Fort St. James are concentrated, situated along Stuart Drive West between Douglas Avenue and Ash Street West. The majority of commercial developments are located along this corridor, with some additional commercial areas located along Douglas Avenue and Stuart Drive East. The typical uses in the Commercial Core, for example, include a grocery store, retail, and offices. *Tourist/Highway Commercial* designations abuts the west side of Douglas Avenue from the Nak'azdli Reserve connecting to the downtown Commercial Core and extend between 2nd Avenue East and Stuart Drive East and also connect tourist commercial areas such as the Fort St. James National Historic Site. Tourist and Highway Commercial uses are intended to serve the travelling public and include businesses such as gas stations and restaurants.

Tourism has been identified through visioning sessions and existing research documents as a major commercial opportunity in Fort St. James. The objectives and policies outlined in the Commercial Land Use section of the District of Fort St. James Official Community Plan support the tourism potential of the community while also ensuring appropriate land uses for the needs of local residents. For example, land designated as Tourist/Highway Commercial (those



highway, tourist, service and waterfront commercial uses including marinas, motels, restaurants, automotive sales and service, building supply, and retail uses) are intended to serve the traveling public and generally require direct visual exposure from main roads. These areas are currently located along Douglas Avenue at the entrance of the community before the Commercial Core.

There is opportunity to have mixed-use commercial and residential buildings within the Commercial Core of the District as well as the transition area between the Commercial Core and residential neighbourhoods. An appropriate size for these buildings can be 3 stories in height with a commercial business on the ground floor and a residential suite on the second and third floors. Providing places to live within or close to the downtown increases the vitality of the downtown and allows for an increase in business, creates a more affordable and walkable community and less reliance on vehicle use.

The District of Fort St. James also has the opportunity to create a Community Gateway into the municipality from Highway 27 to Douglas Avenue. A gateway into the community would define the Commercial Core and retail area of the District to visitors and tourists, create economic benefits, as well as enhance the attractiveness of the downtown. This can be achieved through colourful banners, landscaping such as tree-lined streets, as well as a defined pedestrian link with sidewalks. In addition, the District can work with the Nak'azdli Band to continue the gateway on the reserve along Highway 27 in order to link the communities together as well as be consistent along the corridor.

6.2 Objectives

- a) It is the objective of Council to create an environment for commercial development which will preserve and enhance the vitality of the downtown Commercial Core as a major centre for business, retail trade and other services;
- b) It is the objective of Council to encourage the provision of a range and distribution of shopping facilities and office space accommodation to meet the needs of the community;
- c) It is the objective of Council to encourage the development of Fort St. James as a tourist destination and to support tourist commercial and highway commercial developments;
- d) It is the objective of Council to encourage the infilling of vacant commercial lots adjacent to Highway 27 and in the Commercial Core area;
- e) It is the objective of Council to encourage mixed-use development with commercial use on the main floor and residential use on the above in the downtown core,



- f) It is the objective of Council to encourage beautification of the Commercial Core;

- g) It is the objective of Council to recognize the critical importance of the Commercial Core to the economic well-being of the District, to enhance Stuart Drive Commercial areas and the Douglas Avenue access to the Commercial Core;
- h) It is the objective of Council to implement the action items listed within the *Tourism Development Plan (2007)* when feasible.
- i) It is the objective of Council to encourage community development by supporting economic opportunities that will provide secure local employment with the potential for career advancement. The District will continue to support the local Chamber of Commerce in their efforts to encourage suitable economic development. The District will create an environment that will encourage appropriate forms of development and growth that will offer opportunities for local residents.
- j) It is the objective of Council to improve access to the Commercial Core through various modes of transportation including walking, cycling, automobile and others;
- k) It is the objective of Council to continue to improve the pedestrian environment in the Commercial Core;
- l) It is the objective of Council to encourage the development of fine-dining restaurants, hotels and convention centres;
- m) It is the objective of Council to promote Douglas Avenue and the Commercial Core as the “Gateway” into the municipality through the use of banners, landscaping and a well defined pedestrian link;
- n) It is the objective of Council to work with the Nak’azdli Band to promote an attractive and consistent Gateway along Highway 27;

6.3 Policies

- a) It is the policy of Council to encourage the development of a strengthened Commercial Core area which contains central commercial, tourist commercial, highway commercial uses and mixed-use properties and will become the District’s focus of economic and service activities;
- b) It is the policy of Council to issue **Temporary Commercial Permits** in accordance with Section 921 of the *Local Government Act*. A Temporary Commercial Permit will not be issued unless the Ministry of Transportation

and Infrastructure concurs with the terms of the permit with respect to highway access;

- c) It is the policy of Council to improve the centralized shopping areas and to create a community focal point by utilizing all appropriate grant programs;
- d) It is the policy of Council to promote an attractive pedestrian-scale Commercial Core, including providing places to support display of local artwork within the Commercial Core;

- e) It is the policy of Council to allow for multi-family residential development within the Commercial Core Designation only when the ground floor contains commercial uses;



- f) It is the policy of Council to ensure that parcels designated Tourist/Highway Commercial are adequately buffered or screened from residential, recreational, and institutional uses;
- g) It is the policy of Council to require owners of vacant properties or buildings to maintain the aesthetic quality of the land and structures, including maintaining parking and exits free of snow, and enforce the District's Unsightly Premises Bylaw No. 757.
- h) It is the policy of Council to encourage architectural and urban design that reflects Fort St. James's natural environment and history;
- i) It is the policy of Council to discourage elongated highway strip development and encourage highway commercial development to be concentrated in nodes where possible, and commercial buildings not situated along Highway 27 shall where practical be sited directly along property lines to encourage a pedestrian friendly shopping environment and streetscape;
- j) It is the policy of Council to encourage landscaping and screening that presents an attractive appearance to motorists;
- k) It is the policy of Council to ensure that freestanding signage that advertises uses on the site are not visually intrusive and are at the scale that is consistent with highway commercial use;

- l) It is the policy of Council to develop a Scenic Driving Route within the District of Fort St. James and surrounding area through the use of signage.

6.4 Commercial Development Permit Areas

In accordance with Section 879 of the Local Government Act, the Council hereby designates all commercially zoned property as Commercial Development Permit Area.

The Commercial Core, Stuart Drive Commercial areas and the Douglas Avenue access to the Commercial Core contain the largest concentration of restaurants, tourist accommodation facilities, commercial retail, office and service uses in the District. The Development Permit Area provides access to the District's most important tourist attraction and historic landmark, the National Historic Site. The Douglas Avenue access to the Commercial Core provides a crucial first impression to all visitors to the District. A number of properties within the Development Permit Area are vacant or under-utilized. All of the foregoing justifies this Development Permit designation.

All new buildings or the expansion of existing buildings within the designated Development Permit Area shall require a Development Permit. Development permits are issued in this area shall be in accordance with the following guidelines:

- 1) The development of new buildings shall be complementary to existing buildings. Construction materials such as stained wood, logs, brick, stone, and shingles and shakes will be preferred. Gabled roofs will be encouraged;
- 2) Signs should be scaled to the size and shape of the building. In general, signs should be applied to the façade of the building and integrated with it. Flashing, rotating, portable and rooftop signs should be avoided;
- 3) Vehicular accesses should be created at right angles to connecting roads and away from intersections;
- 4) Parking lots including accesses, manoeuvring aisles and loading areas should be surfaced with asphaltic or cement pavement;
- 5) Areas not required for buildings and parking should be landscaped using a combination of trees, shrubs and low ground cover that complement Fort St. James as a winter community by providing colour throughout the year;

- 6) Pedestrian weather protection shall be incorporated in building and site design through the use of awnings, canopies and similar screening from inclement weather;
- 7) All commercial sites in excess of 2000m² must include provision for bicycle racks;
- 8) Where residential use is permitted in conjunction with commercial use (mixed-use buildings) such residential accommodation shall have a completely separate entrance way.

Industrial Land Use

7.1 Background

Industry plays a vital role in the overall economic health of Fort St. James. The District of Fort St. James welcomes industry and recognizes the role that industry plays in achieving a balanced quality of life for residents by providing economic diversity and a stable employment base.

The majority of existing heavy industrial activities in the District of Fort St. James are located at the north end of the District near Highway 27 and Tachie Road. This area of Fort St. James is the largest area of occupied industrial land. *Heavy Industrial* includes land, buildings, or areas for major processing, manufacturing, fabricating, assembly, storage, transshipment, recycling, or salvaging of goods and materials, and may include ancillary office and retail sales. The area is well serviced with rail and highway access. There are no municipal services in this location nor are services required for Heavy Industrial development. The heavy industrial land base is appropriately located in the northern area of the community away from urban residential areas and where the prevailing wind pattern moves away from the main town site.

New to the District of Fort St. James Official Community Plan is the *Intermediate Industrial* designation. This designation has been included because, although sufficient Heavy Industrial land is available, there is a lack of land designated for intermediate and light industrial uses. The purpose of the Intermediate designation is to provide additional industrial land outside of the urban containment boundary to minimize off site impacts from industrial development, such as air quality issues, noise, and dust. The uses permitted within the Intermediate Industrial designation should have minimal off-site impacts and may impact areas in close proximity, but not beyond. The uses include many logging and forest industries, service industries incidental to mineral extractions, primary manufacturing, beverage, machinery, electrical or electronic industries, warehousing, wholesaling, distribution, testing, servicing or repairing of goods and materials, and may include ancillary retail and office uses. The development of land within this designation shall not require urban services. Properties designated Intermediate Industrial that front Highway 27 or Tachie Road are included as an Industrial Development Permit Area.

Existing Light industrial activities at the south end of the District include the light industrial service area along Second Avenue East and Portage Street East. *Light Industrial* includes land uses, buildings, or areas for the warehousing, wholesaling, distribution, testing, servicing or repairing of goods and materials, and may include accessory retail stores. These uses can require smaller lots and full urban services and therefore must be included within the urban boundary. The District would like to see the aesthetics of this area improved as it

is the southern gateway to the community. Accordingly, this area is designated as an Industrial Development Permit area.

As a part of the OCP planning process, a light industrial lands inventory was conducted in order to identify opportunities for redevelopment and infill in the south gateway area of the District. This area includes Douglas Avenue, Stuart Drive East, 2nd Avenue East, 3rd Avenue East and Alexander Street. The inventory revealed that the development opportunities in the study area are limited. Mainly, the majority of the area has been developed. The remainder of vacant parcels are small and are unable to accommodate many industrial businesses that require large building footprints for warehousing and loading bays. In addition, the vacant parcels have infrastructure constraints including limited property access.

Although the south gateway area has limited infill and development opportunities, the area north of the District along Highway 27 has potential for future development. These additional lands are anticipated to be used for unserviced intermediate industrial purposes, thus providing the community with the designated lands required to expand Fort St. James industrial base in the future.

The minimum lot sizes for industrial designated properties within the District of Fort St. James are as follows:

- Heavy Industrial – 16,000m²;
- Light Industrial – 450m²; and
- Intermediate Industrial – 16,000m², with the following exceptions that may be considered through the evaluation of a rezoning process:
 - (i) where land is suitable for on-site sewage disposal on parcels smaller than 1.6ha, the minimum parcel size may be reduced to 0.8ha; or
 - (ii) where a community sewer system with adequate capacity exists, or, if constructed, would solve servicing problems associated with on-site sewage disposal, the parcel size may be reduced to 0.45ha.

Land use planning for the industrial base in Fort St. James has been carefully considered in the District of Fort St. James OCP. Allowing for industrial diversification provides the opportunity for investment and stabilization of employment levels. The objectives and policies of the Industrial Land Use section focuses on land use allocation for a variety of industries, including a variety of parcel sizes, tailored to value-added forest industries, promotion of mining businesses, promotion of alternative industries such as bioenergy, and to foster a healthy community environment.

7.2 Objectives

- a) It is the objective of Council to concentrate industries of similar types, service needs and performance characteristics within the designated industrial areas;
- b) It is the objective of Council to reserve suitable land for long range industrial development;
- c) It is the objective of Council to encourage industrial expansion in order to provide increased job opportunities, economic diversification and the stabilization of the economic base of the District;
- d) It is the objective of Council to provide opportunities for industrial expansion at locations that do not conflict with adjacent land uses;
- e) It is the objective of Council to work with the Integrated Land Management Bureau (ILMB) to make available Crown within the Heavy and Intermediate Industrial designations;
- f) It is the objective of Council to encourage the development of increased pedestrian and cycle linkages to the north industrial employment node in the District;
- g) It is the objective of Council to encourage property owners of industrial designated lands to facilitate timely development;
- h) It is the objective of Council to encourage development of value-added forest industries in the community;
- i) It is the objective of Council to encourage development of mining related industries in the community;
- j) It is the objective of Council to work with various organizations such as the Omineca Beetle Action Coalition, Western Economic Development Corporation and the Northern Development Initiatives Trust to address economic sustainability and economic diversification.
- k) It is the objective of Council to work closely with the Regional District of Bulkley Nechako when dealing with issues of mutual interest such as land uses within the rural / urban fringe areas and economic sustainability and diversification.



7.3 Policies

- a) It is the policy of Council that forest industry trends in the region will be monitored and the Ministry of Forests and Range will be encouraged to ensure that mills located in the District continue to process timber cut in the region. Council will work with the Ministry of Forests and Range to ensure that the District is the beneficiary of value-added diversification and additional processing facilities;
- b) It is the policy of Council to designate sufficient heavy, intermediate and light industrial land to accommodate the long range requirements of the District of Fort St. James. Additional serviced, light industrial areas may be required in the future based on development and market demands;
- c) It is the policy of Council to ensure that industrial uses are permitted only in those areas so designated on the Plan Maps;
- d) It is the policy of Council to ensure that all industrial lots adjacent to a Highway are adequately screened or landscaped in accordance with the Zoning Bylaw;
- e) It is the policy of Council to issue Temporary Industrial Permits in accordance with Section 921 of the *Local Government Act* for the processing of natural resources. The issuing of Temporary Industrial Permits shall only be considered for processing of natural resources where potential off site impacts, such as; dust, noise, and traffic have been mitigated by the applicant. A Temporary Industrial Permit shall not be issued unless the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure concurs with the terms of the permit with respect to highway access.

7.4 Industrial Development Permit Areas

Within the industrial employment node of the District located in the area of Tachie Road and Highway 27 North, all Intermediate Industrial designated properties within 50m of Tachie Road and Highway 27 are designated an Industrial Development Permit Area. This allows the District to have some control over the overall quality of development, including maintaining aesthetics for commuters on route to the Murray Ridge Ski Hill through the industrial corridor. In addition, all Light Industrial designated or zoned lots within the 2nd Avenue East and Douglas Avenue Light Industrial area are designated as Industrial Development Permit Areas.

All new buildings or the expansion of buildings within the designated Industrial Development Permit Areas shall be required to apply for an Industrial

Development Permit. Industrial Development Permits are issued in this area shall be in accordance with the following guidelines:

- 1) Large buildings should be designed to create the impression of small units and less bulk by encouraging architectural treatments for roof systems, façade relief and variety between sections;
- 2) Landscaping shall be provided around the perimeter of parking lots where parking is adjacent to a public right of way;
- 3) Where industrial uses occur adjacent to residential property, buffering through fencing and landscape screens or berms is mandatory;

Signs should be integrated with the building façade through colour and graphic design. No blank walls shall be permitted adjacent to roads.

Institutional

8.1 Background

The District of Fort St. James has several major institutional land uses that are recognized within the Official Community Plan, including; school facilities, medical facilities, justice facilities, as well as municipal institutions.

School District 91 operates two schools within the District: David Hoy Elementary School and Fort St. James Secondary School. Nak'albun Elementary School is located within the District and is operated by the Nak'azdli Band. In addition, the College of New Caledonia operates a satellite campus in the District.



Medical facilities within the community include: the 12 bed Stuart Lake Hospital, a dental clinic, medical clinic and ambulance station. The community has recognized the importance of providing comprehensive medical and social services to residents and is considering the creation of a Wellness District near the commercial core. The future siting of a Health and Wellness District should consider proximity to the commercial core as the primary siting criteria in order to be accessible to the majority of residents, practitioners, medical students and employees.

The facilities operated by the District of Fort St. James, include; the municipal office, the fire hall, the public works yard, ice arena, and public library. In addition, the District leases property for a curling rink, seniors centre, music makers' hall, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Fire Training facility. The

District of Fort St. James is also home to an R.C.M.P detachment, as well a Provincial Courthouse. The District recognizes the importance of a Community Centre/Conference Centre to increase the capacity to host local events.

In addition, there are also a number of Places of Worship throughout the District. Places of Worship can be located in any plan designation but should be sited generally in accordance with the siting criteria for multiple family housing as the land use requirements are similar, including screening and parking provisions.

Generally, the objectives and policies of the Public Institutional section of the District of Fort St. James Official Community Plan are intended to support existing facilities, support the cost effective expansion of services where required, and to provide an appropriate amount of land dedicated for future school sites and Places of Worship.

8.2 Objectives

- a) It is the objective of Council to facilitate the development of an orderly and efficient arrangement of public services and facilities, responsive to the needs of the public including schools, public buildings, and government facilities;
- b) It is the objective of Council to ensure that school and institutional uses are located where they will best serve the area residents;
- c) It is the objective of Council to continue to plan for multi-use activities at school sites and integrate these into the neighbourhood fabric.



8.3 Policies

- a) It is the policy of Council to cooperate with School District No. 91 in selecting, acquiring, planning, and servicing school sites as required;
- b) It is the policy of Council to encourage School District No.91 to locate future schools in such a manner as to minimize walking distances to schools and to avoid the crossing of main roads;

- c) It is the policy of Council to encourage the orderly consolidation and relocation to the commercial core of Provincial and Federal offices as opportunities permit in order to provide convenient, accessible government services in attractive buildings;
- d) It is the policy of Council to investigate the need for and timing of a community cultural-recreation complex, to include meeting rooms, offices for community clubs and organization, racquet facilities and other facilities that may be identified;
- e) It is the policy of Council to encourage community groups and service organizations to initiate and develop cultural and entertainment facilities and programs. Council shall assist such groups whenever feasible by making available municipally owned facilities for their use;
- f) It is the policy of Council to consider the creation of a centralized Health and Wellness District near the commercial core to facilitate the provision of comprehensive health and social services for residents.

Parks, Recreation & Culture

9.1 Background

Parks, Recreation, and Culture are vital components of a community's overall Quality of Life and the residents of Fort St. James have clearly expressed that access to the area's unsurpassed outdoor recreation opportunities is one of the primary benefits of living in Fort St. James, as well as one of the elements that attract people to the community. As a result, there has been an increasing amount of interest for community-based recreation and cultural industry development in Fort St. James by investors, visitors and local residents.

Existing formal recreation facilities include: Stuart Lake and Cottonwood Marina, the Murray Ridge ski area, the Stuart Lake Golf course, Fort Forum, the curling rink, and the Fort St. James National Historic Park. In addition, the community has a wide range of existing parks that include soccer fields, tennis courts, baseball diamonds, playground equipment, bike park and beach facilities.

The abundance of, and easy access to, the natural surroundings of Fort St. James creates the opportunity for a wide range of outdoor recreational activities, such as; boating, swimming, fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, snowmobiling, and many more. There are a number of campgrounds and picnic areas in close proximity to the townsite and the Visitor Information Centre offers maps and guides to the many outdoor activities.

Given the variety of parks and recreation types within and surrounding the District of Fort St. James and, in order to ensure that parkland is well planned in the community, a hierarchy of Parks, as well as a description of their purpose is provided below.

Cultural Parks – Cultural Parks include areas intended to be developed for cultural purposes with facilities such as museums and amphitheatres. Existing Cultural Parks within the District include National Historic Site, as well as the Cottonwood Park.

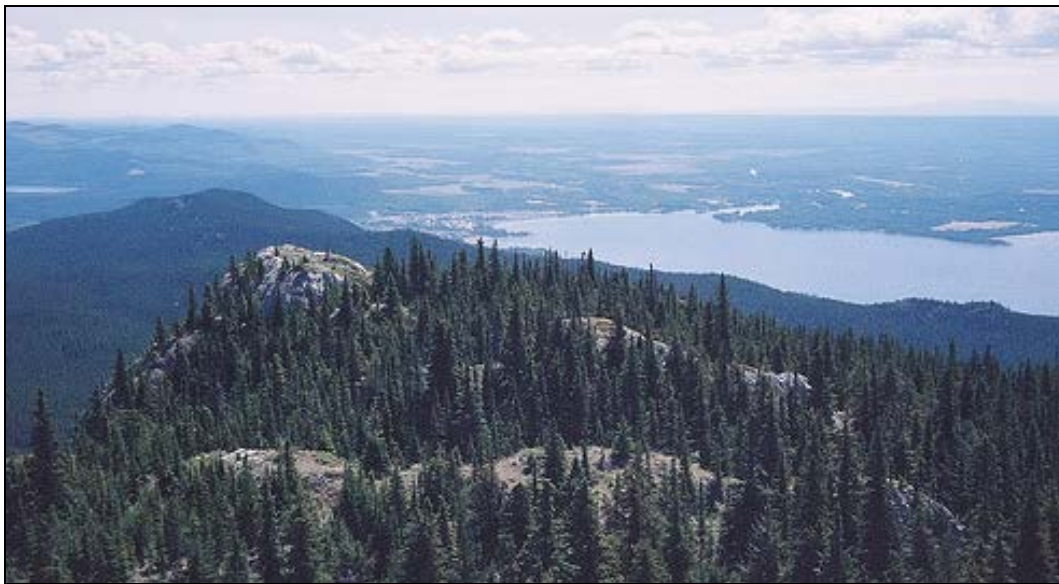
Recreation Parks – Recreation Parks include areas intended to be developed to accommodate recreational play within the District and include facilities, such as; rinks, tracks, soccer fields, and tennis courts. These parks are intended to service an area bounded by major roads and ideally should be located adjacent to a secondary school. The existing Recreation Park along Stuart Drive meets the current and projected land acquisition needs for a Recreation Park in Fort St. James.

Neighbourhood Parks – Neighbourhood Parks include areas intended to service local, residential neighbourhoods and should be centrally located within walking distance of residents. Neighbourhood Parks are ideally 2 hectares in size (including school playing fields) and should be located adjacent to

elementary schools where possible. These parks should include facilities, such as; playground equipment and playing fields and should be connected by pedestrian infrastructure, such as; a sidewalk or trail system.

Greenbelt – Greenbelt includes areas that are deemed to be unsuitable for development due to environmental considerations, such as; steep slopes or sensitive habitat. Greenbelts can be utilized for recreational purposes, but use of these areas should be limited to trail development and viewscape resting areas.

The objectives and policies outlined in the Parks, Recreation and Culture section of the District of Fort St. James Official Community Plan are intended to enhance the quality of life and leisure opportunities in Fort St. James.



9.2 Objectives

- a) It is the objective of Council to recognize the value of our heritage and to identify and enhance areas of unique historical, archaeological and paleontological significance within the District of Fort St. James;
- b) It is the objective of Council to develop a park and greenbelt system and to provide community recreation facilities and programs, in the locations required, to meet the recreation needs of all residents of the community, as well as the needs of tourists;
- c) It is the objective of Council to link parks and greenbelts through pedestrian and trail infrastructure.

- d) It is the objective of Council to pursue funding opportunities to develop a Trails Master Plan.
- e) It is the objective of Council to ensure continued public access to Stuart Lake.
- f) It is the objective of Council to provide opportunities for all residents to participate in recreation and cultural activities.
- g) It is the objective of Council to ensure the provision of park and recreation facilities to meet the needs of the community;
- h) It is the objective of Council to encourage the development of park and recreation facilities which will enhance the District's reputation as a major tourist destination;
- i) It is the objective of Council to encourage community-based recreational and cultural industry development;
- j) The District will strive to maintain the appropriate balance between the needs of the residents and the needs of the visitors in order to maintain the quality of life.



9.3 Policies

- a) It is the policy of Council to identify and protect greenbelt and future park areas as described above and to designate these areas on the Official Community Plan Maps. As the urban core develops, land is to be dedicated for park use in order to balance the increased urban environment.
- b) It is the policy of Council to acquire parkland locations (generally on Schedule B and C) with the understanding that detailed park and trail planning will occur during the neighbourhood planning and subdivision stages of development.
- c) It is the policy of Council to ensure that the variety of parkland described above is available throughout the community.

- d) It is the policy of Council that future parkland acquisition will emphasize one or more of the following criteria:
 - a. Suitable topography for park use
 - b. Compatibility with surrounding land use
 - c. Joint use with school district sites
 - d. Opportunity to link with greenbelt or pedestrian infrastructure
 - e. Locations within walking distance of residents
 - f. Significant natural or cultural amenities
 - g. Lakeshore or creek access
 - h. Viewpoints and vistas
 - i. Exposure to rights-of-way for increase natural surveillance and safety;
- e) It is the policy of Council to acquire 5% of subdivided land for park or cash-in-lieu of land dedication. The determination of whether land or cash-in-lieu is required by Council is to be based on the following:
 - a. Land dedication will be prioritized according to the provision of the different types of parkland described above.
 - b. Small areas (less than 0.5 hectares) are not acceptable for dedication, except where a significant natural/cultural feature is protected or viewscape secured.
 - c. Land that is environmentally sensitive or of significant slope is not acceptable for dedication.
 - d. Provision of trails and walkways to parks and schools may be required by Council, but land made available for this purpose is not to be included in the 5% park dedication.
 - e. Cash-in-lieu of park land shall be calculated upon the basis of the original parcel area (less the area required for public roads) and a minimum of 5% of this area will be provided as cash-in-lieu
 - f. Funds acquired from cash-in-lieu is to be utilized for acquire future parkland or toward the development of parks or trails.
- f) It is the policy of Council to maintain and develop parks in a safe manner by utilizing Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPED) principles;
- g) It is the policy of Council to seek assistance from Federal and Provincial sources, including receipt of Crown land grants, to help defray the cost of park, recreation area, and greenbelt acquisition and development;
- h) It is the policy of Council to actively cooperate with the School District, senior levels of government, and local voluntary organizations to identify the District's recreation and social needs:

- a. By recognizing the importance of open space, leisure programs and recreation facilities;
- b. By continuing the policy of joint community-school facility use;
- c. By providing opportunities that are consistent with the numbers and characteristics of the population to be served and its ability to pay;



- i) It is the policy of Council to continue to assess the ongoing need for land, space or facilities in order to meet the recreation and cultural needs of the community.
- j) It is the policy of Council to exercise its authority under the *Heritage Conservation Act* to designate buildings where appropriate;
- k) It is the policy of Council to support and encourage the development of public art for civic facilities, public areas, and in private developments;
- l) It is the policy of Council to encourage the development of commercial recreation facilities such as campsites, marinas and ski areas;
- m) It is the policy of Council to continue to encourage the development of a variety of beneficial cultural activities by responsible groups, service clubs and individuals;
- n) It is the policy of Council to support and foster opportunities that will enhance the community's creativity, culture and arts;

- o) It is the policy of Council to work with the Council of Tourism Association (COTA), Tourism BC and the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts to encourage and support tourism industries in Fort St. James,
- p) It is the policy of Council to maintain and develop a local trails system;
- q) It is the policy of Council to maintain the Cottonwood Marina and improve the infrastructure and aesthetics to cater to tourists, recreationalists and residents.

Transportation

10.1 Background

In cooperation with the Ministry of Transportation and Highways, the District of Fort St. James has developed a Major Street Network Plan. This plan reflects the location of existing and future major roads within the District of Fort St. James and surrounding areas. The purpose of the Major Street Network Plan is to identify a framework of major municipal streets and highways which will provide mobility through several cycles of land use, and permit the effective merging of existing urban development with areas of future development, into a liveable environment where travel can serve, rather than hinder, the community. The transportation network is illustrated on the land use maps (Schedules B and C), and the identification of the proposed future major roads is considered to be an important element of the Official Community Plan.

The objectives and policies outlined in the Transportation section of the District of Fort St. James Official Community Plan are intended to develop and maintain a suitable transportation network that reflects the needs of residents, visitors and industries as well as to encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation such as walking and cycling.

10.2 Objectives

- a) It is the objective of Council to provide or encourage the development of an efficient network of safe roads to serve the ongoing needs of the residents of the District of Fort St. James;
- b) It is the objective of Council to protect Highway 27 from the construction of unnecessary accesses and also from inappropriate development which will detract from the highway as a safe, convenient transportation route;
- c) It is the objective of Council to cooperate with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to ensure that Highway 27 is maintained in a good condition and remains an attractive scenic route that will provide a pleasant travelling experience for both residents and tourists;
- d) It is the objective of Council to support the upgrading of the municipal airstrip facilities when warranted by an increase in air traffic volumes.

- e) It is the objective of Council to encourage accessibility and inclusion for all residents to places in the District, such as commercial stores and recreational spaces;
- f) It is the objective of Council to promote a healthy community by providing infrastructure for walking and cycling;
- g) It is the objective of Council to undertake a review of the existing sidewalk network and develop priorities for installation and replacement of necessary sidewalk links.

10.3 Policies

- a) It is the policy of Council to coordinate the future location of major road right-of-ways with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure Major Street Network Plan. All future road systems shall be based upon this plan and arterial roads shall be separated from residential areas by appropriate buffer strips in order to prevent direct access to individual residential properties;
- b) It is the policy of Council to encourage the paving of all existing streets in the urban area, on a priority basis, in accordance with the District of Fort St. James Comprehensive Development Plan;
- c) It is the policy of Council to orient parking lots to the side or rear of buildings that are commercial, business, or multi-family residential in order to reduce the obtrusiveness of these sites;
- d) It is the policy of Council to recognize the significance of bicycle and pedestrian traffic and to plan for the future development of bicycle and pedestrian paths;
- e) It is the policy of Council to support any regional air carriers which will enhance service potential of the municipal airstrip;
- f) It is the policy of Council to seek to establish, in cooperation with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, an ongoing list of required



highway improvements within the District, including improvements in turning movements, signage, road widening and paving;

- g) It is the policy of Council to have designated under the *Highways & Scenic Improvement Act* all of Highway 27 within the District and take whatever action is deemed necessary to remedy any untidy or unsightly premises adjacent to the highway in accordance with the Act and Regulation thereunder;
- h) It is the policy of Council to ensure that sites and corridors for transmission lines and pipelines:
 - a. Create minimal conflict with present and planned land uses;
 - b. Blend well with the natural landscape; and,
 - c. Are maintained to minimize the scarring of the landscape, the siltation of creeks, and the presence of noxious weeds.
- i) It is the policy of Council to ensure sidewalks are provided for all new urban residential development.

Utilities

11.1 Background

The District of Fort St. James is generally fully serviced with a water distribution system and sanitary sewage collection system with several areas also serviced by a storm water disposal system.

The District's water is supplied from an artesian well, assisted by a well pump, and provides water to both the District and the neighbouring Nak'azdli Reserve. The water distribution consists of a 16.7km of mains fed from a 500,000 imperial gallon reinforced concrete reservoir that provides sufficient storage for fire protection and peak use periods. The water system also includes a small booster station with a fire pump to service the Pineridge Road area and pressure reducing stations that service the Ash Street and Lakeshore Drive residents. A 1992 and 1997 Water Feasibility Study identified deficiencies in the distribution system to provide adequate fire protection to the downtown area. The report recommended that existing water mains be twinned, new water mains installed, the existing well pump be upgraded and a new reservoir installed.

The District of Fort St. James sanitary sewer system consists of a conventional piping distribution system to a treatment facility located on the banks of the Stuart River. The treatment facility consists of the two aerated lagoons with two anaerobic cells. The facility also contains two chlorine contact chambers as well as a dechlorination cell. There are two lift stations both located near Stuart Lake. One is situated in the downtown area and the other is located on the Nak'azdli Reserve. The sanitary system services both the District of Fort St. James and the Nak'azdli Reserve.

The District's existing storm sewer system is minimal as the majority of the streets are open ditch and drain to natural drainage courses where available. The few roads that have curb and gutter have localized catch basin and storm configurations that drain to ditches or drainage courses.

Utility facilities and structures such as wells, pumping stations, treatment plants and other utility buildings that service telecommunications including transmission towers and cables would be permitted within any Plan designation. Additional or specific controls can be imposed through zoning.

11.2 Objectives

- a) It is the objective of Council to ensure that all residents and businesses located within the urban containment boundary are supplied with safe and efficient municipal services without incurring unreasonable costs;
- b) It is the objective of Council to ensure that infrastructure is developed in a planned and cost effective manner.
- c) It is the objective of Council that future growth areas be developed that take into consideration the current infrastructure capacities, accessibility, the cost of improvement, and the potential population to be served.
- d) It is the objective of Council to seek out applicable grant opportunities to upgrade the District's infrastructure.
- e) It is the objective of Council to install, when required, additional capacity in the community water supply system, and the community sanitary sewer system, and to make adequate provisions for the safe disposal of solid wastes.



11.3 Policies

- a) It is the policy of Council to support the development of municipal water and sanitary sewer systems to service all existing and future residents and businesses within the urban containment boundary;
- b) It is the policy of Council to work with the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako to ensure that solid waste facilities are adequate for residential, industrial and commercial users;
- c) It is the policy of Council to communicate with senior government, utility companies and the private sector in order to coordinate development plans with the Official Community Plan;
- d) It is the policy of Council to show the approximate location of trunk water and trunk sewer systems on the **Map 4: Existing Services and Topography**;
- e) It is the policy of Council to coordinate its Solid Waste Management Plan with that of the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako;
- f) It is the policy of Council to encourage the reduction, reuse and recycling of solid wastes;
- g) It is the policy of Council to ensure that an adequate level of fire protection be provided by the community water supply system and by the Volunteer Fire Department;
- h) It is the policy of Council to upgrade and replace sanitary sewers and water lines consistent with its financial capability and to prioritize the required replacements on the basis of age, condition, size of lines, and anticipated future demand for service;

PART C

Implementation



Implementation

12.1 Implementation

The purpose of an Official Community Plan is to provide land use policy that will govern the development and presentations of land over time. The implementation of an Official Community Plan is facilitated through the District's ongoing planning program with respect to land use, servicing, infrastructure, and capital expenditures. A number of the policies within the Official Community Plan indicate specific recommendations and requirements for future actions on the part of the District. These actions can be divided into two categories, the first are the consequential amendments to existing bylaws that must occur as a result of policy recommendations contained within this Plan and the second are more general recommendations that can occur over the five year span of this Plan.

The specific, consequential amendments that must be completed to existing bylaws in order to implement the Official Community Plan are listed below.

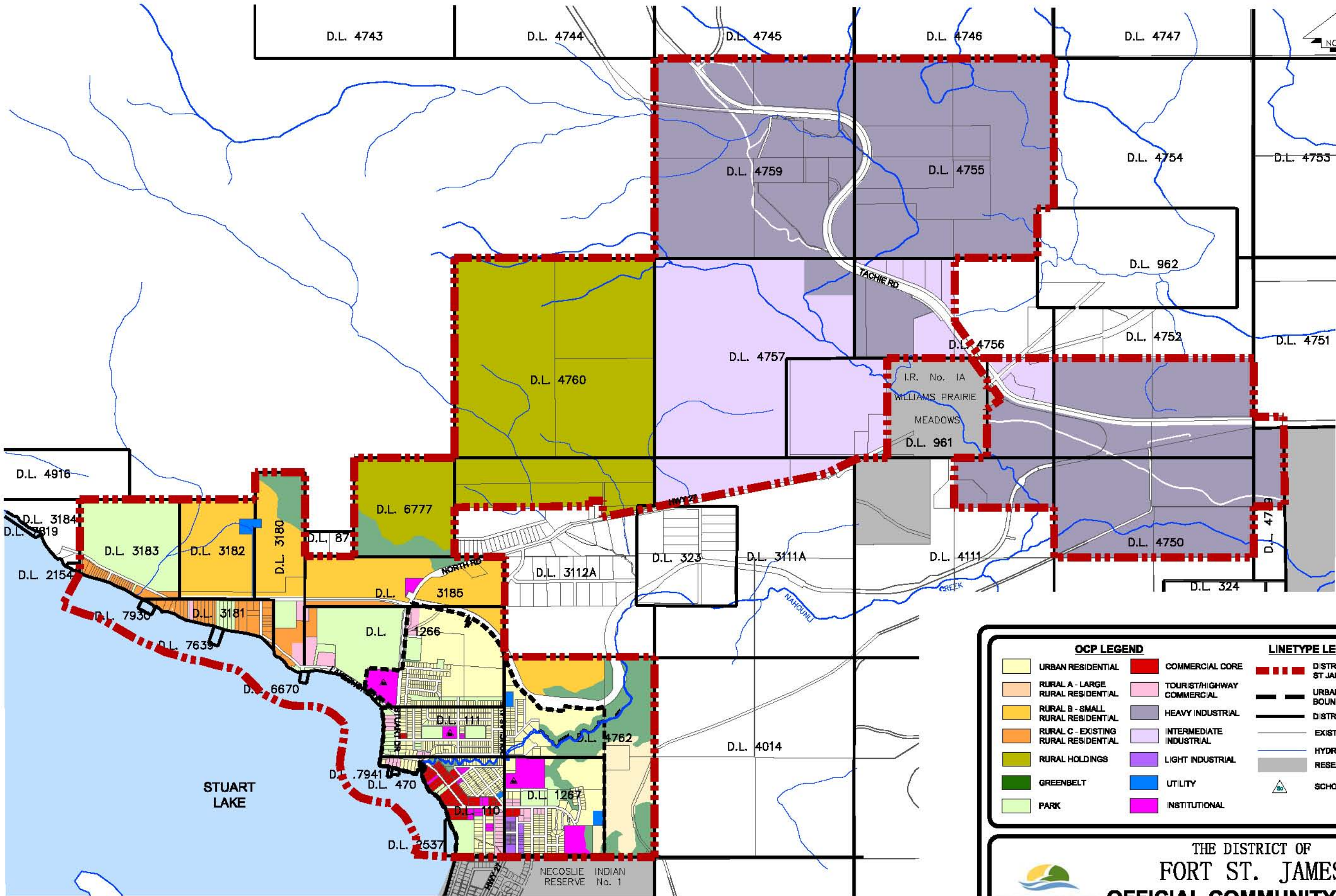
- a) Amend the minimum lot size of the RU-3 Rural Residential zoning district of the District of Fort St. James Zoning Bylaw No. 738, 2001 from a minimum lot size of 4 hectares to a minimum lot size of 10 hectares. This amendment is required to create the Rural A designation included in this Plan.
- b) Amend the minimum lot size of the RU-2 Rural Residential zoning district of the District of Fort St. James Zoning Bylaw No. 738, 2001 from 4 hectares to 2 hectares. This amendment is required to create the Rural B designation included in this Plan.
- c) Amend the District of Fort St. James Zoning Bylaw No. 738, 2001 to include Intermediate Industrial zoning districts I/Ind and I/IndR. The I/IndR zone will have a minimum setback of 100 metres from Tachie Road and Highway 27 and permit Wrecking Yards, while the I/Ind zoning designation will be permitted adjacent to Tachie Road and Highway 27 and will prohibit Wrecking Yards. This amendment is required to create the Intermediate Industrial designation included in this Plan.
- d) Amend the District of Fort St. James Zoning Bylaw No. 738, 2001 to include "Wrecking Yard" as a use defined as "The use of land, buildings and structures for the collection, demolition, dismantling, storage, bailment, recycling, reclamation, reuse, remanufacture and/or the sale of waste materials including scrap metal, inoperable vehicles, vehicle parts, tires, building materials, machinery, appliances and other used, worn out, or discarded materials. The presence on any site of two or more vehicles, which, for a period exceeding 30 days, have not been capable of operating under their own power or from which parts have been or are to be removed for reuse or sale shall be deemed to be a wrecking yard".

- e) Amend the District of Fort St. James Zoning Bylaw No. 738, 2001 to include a Greenbelt zoning district. This amendment is required to protect steeply sloped and riparian areas as included in this Plan.
- f) Amend the District of Fort St. James Zoning Bylaw No. 738, 2001 to include an Institutional zoning district. This amendment is required for consistency and clarity with the Institutional designation of this Plan. In addition, any new parcels designated institutional needs to be rezoned to the proposed institutional zoning district.
- g) Amend the District of Fort St. James Subdivision Servicing Bylaw to include storm sewer, sidewalk and curb and gutter infrastructure.
- h) Amend the District of Fort St. James Subdivision Servicing Bylaw to include underground electrical infrastructure in all new urban development.

The general recommendations for additional planning and engineering studies required to implement this Official Community Plan that can be completed at the District's discretion over time are as follows:

- a) Update the Zoning Bylaw. A thorough review of the Zoning Bylaw should be completed in order to ensure consistency with this plan and the long range planning intentions of the District.
- b) Prepare Neighbourhood Plans for future development within the Urban Containment Boundary. These plans can be completed by the District or by private interests.
- c) Update the Subdivision Servicing Bylaw No. 599, 1995. A thorough review of the Subdivision Servicing Bylaw should be completed to reflect servicing and servicing standards recommendations. In addition, this review can incorporate an exploration of Alternative Development Standards for the District.
- d) Develop a Trails Master Plan to provide long range trail planning and land acquisition recommendations.
- e) A Development Cost Charge Bylaw for the District of Fort St. James may be drafted only after sufficient infill development has occurred to warrant new land development.
- f) The Official Community Plan may be amended from time to time to reflect ongoing District policy. An in-depth review and update of this Official Community Plan may be undertaken within five years of adoption.



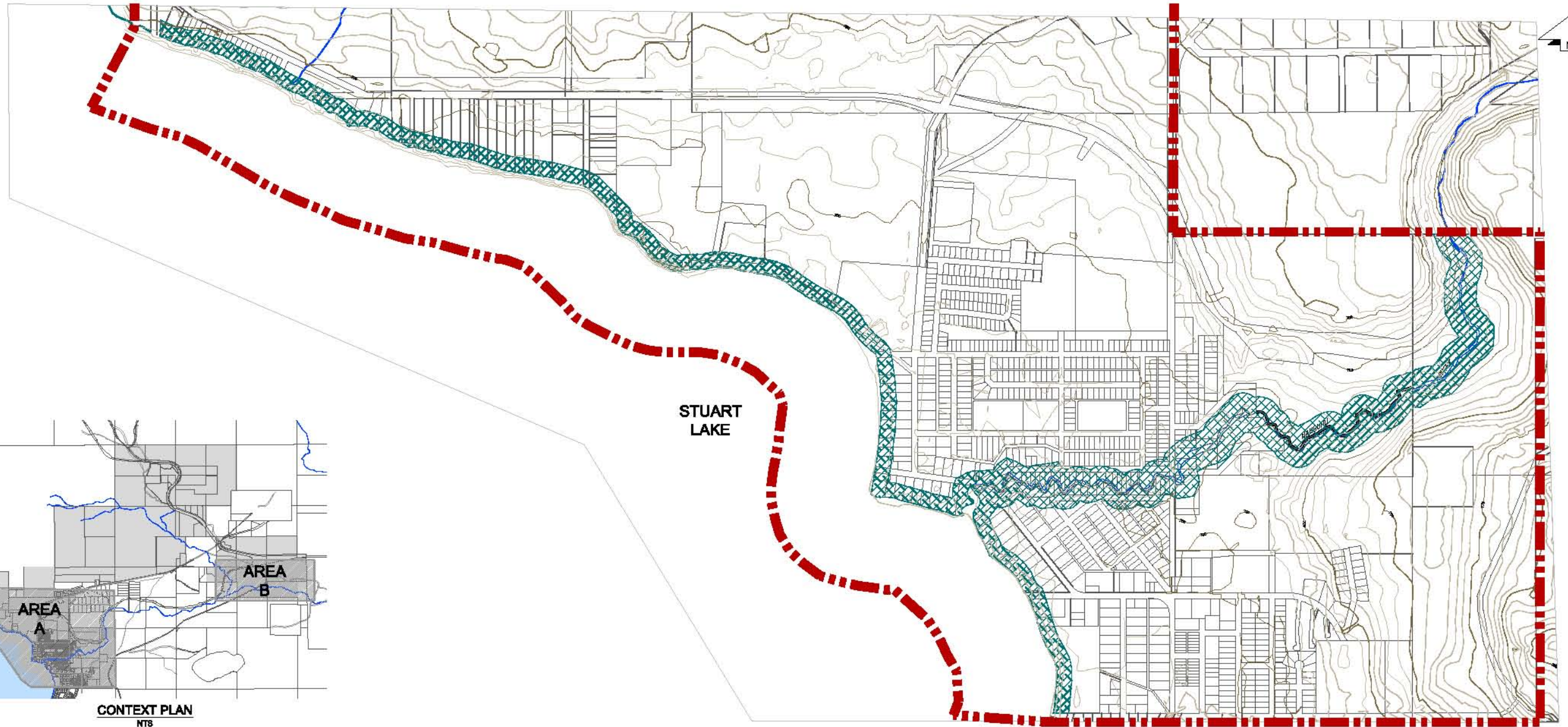


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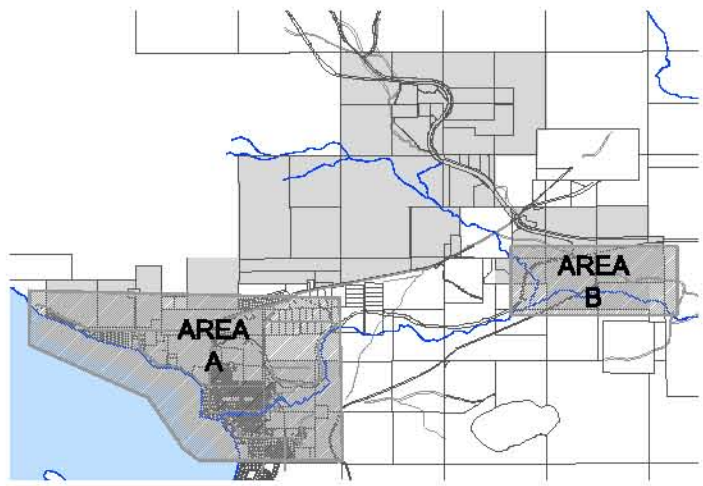
OCP LEGEND		LINETYPE LEGEND
URBAN RESIDENTIAL	COMMERCIAL CORE	DISTRICT OF FORT ST JAMES BOUNDARY
RURAL A - LARGE RURAL RESIDENTIAL	TOURIST/HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL	URBAN CONTAINMENT BOUNDARY
RURAL B - SMALL RURAL RESIDENTIAL	HEAVY INDUSTRIAL	DISTRICT LOT LINES
RURAL C - EXISTING RURAL RESIDENTIAL	INTERMEDIATE INDUSTRIAL	EXISTING LEGAL LINES
RURAL HOLDINGS	LIGHT INDUSTRIAL	HYDROGRAPHY
GREENBELT	UTILITY	RESERVE LAND
PARK	INSTITUTIONAL	SCHOOL



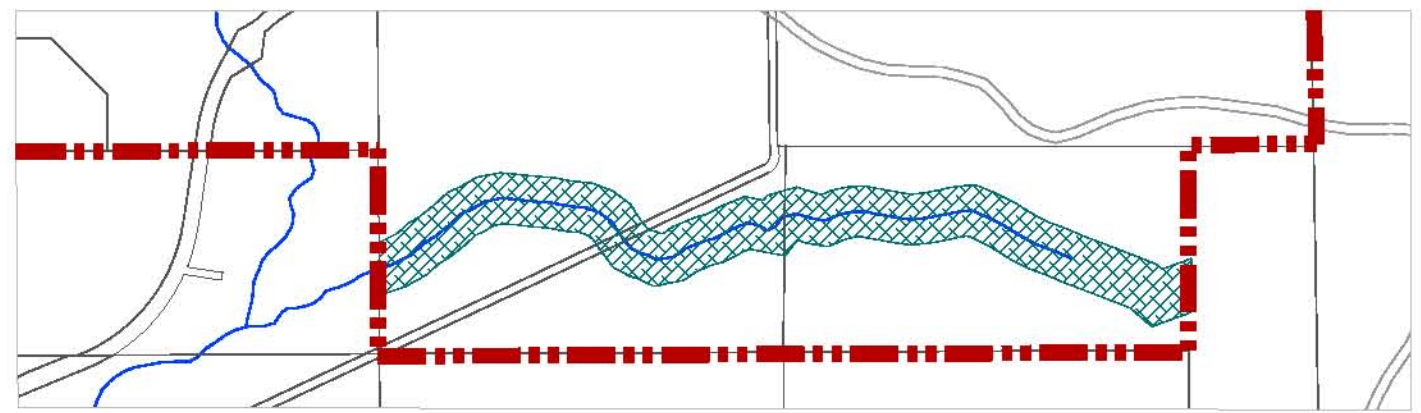
**THE DISTRICT OF
FORT ST. JAMES
OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN
SCHEDULE B
LAND USE MAP**



AREA A
SCALE 1:15,000






CONTEXT PLAN
NTS



AREA B
SCALE 1:15,000

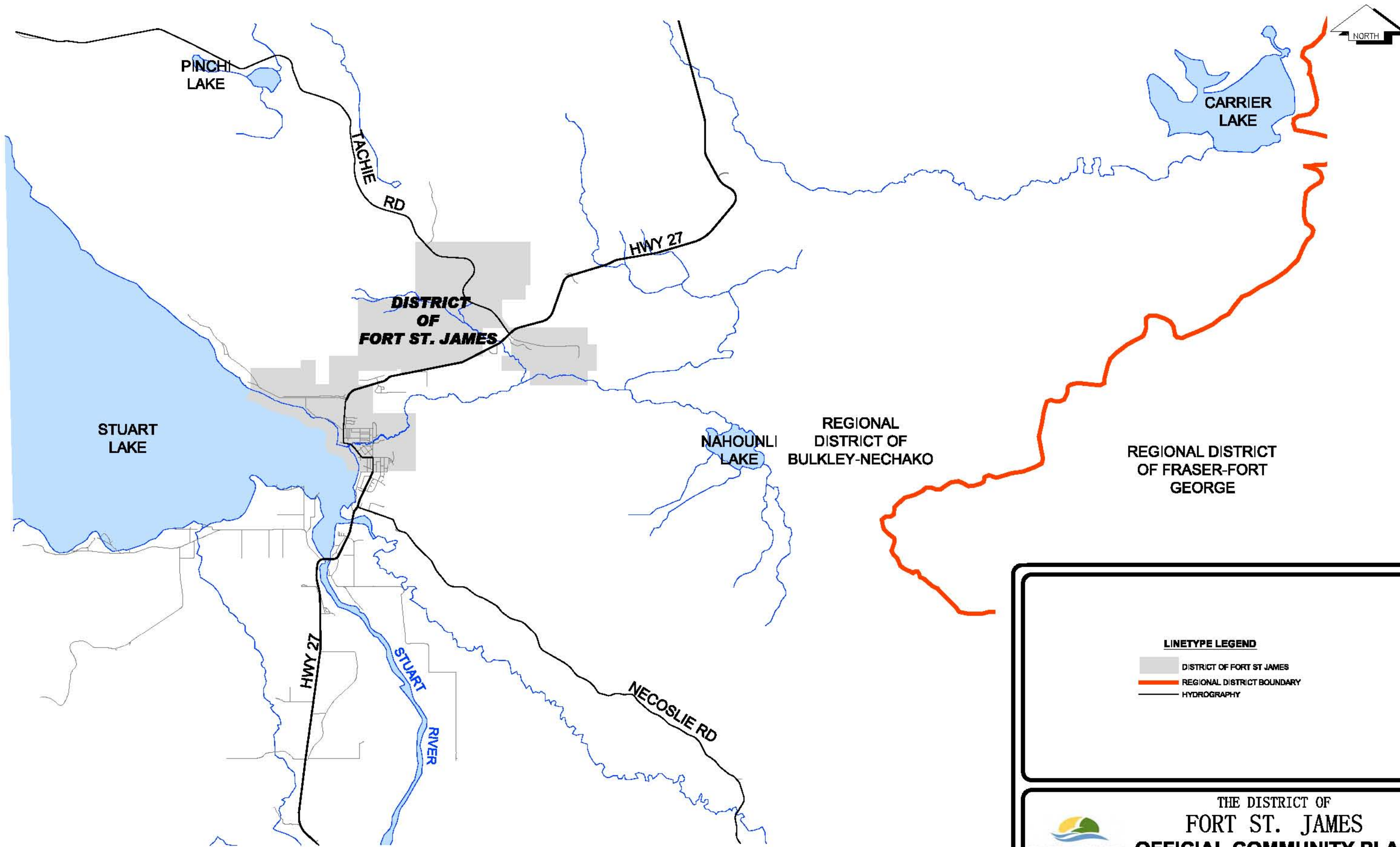


LEGEND

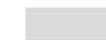


-  DISTRICT OF FORT ST JAMES BOUNDARY
-  EXISTING LEGAL LINES
-  ENVIRONMENTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT AREA



THE DISTRICT OF
FORT ST. JAMES
OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN
SCHEDULE D
ENVIRONMENTAL
DEVELOPMENT PERMIT AREA

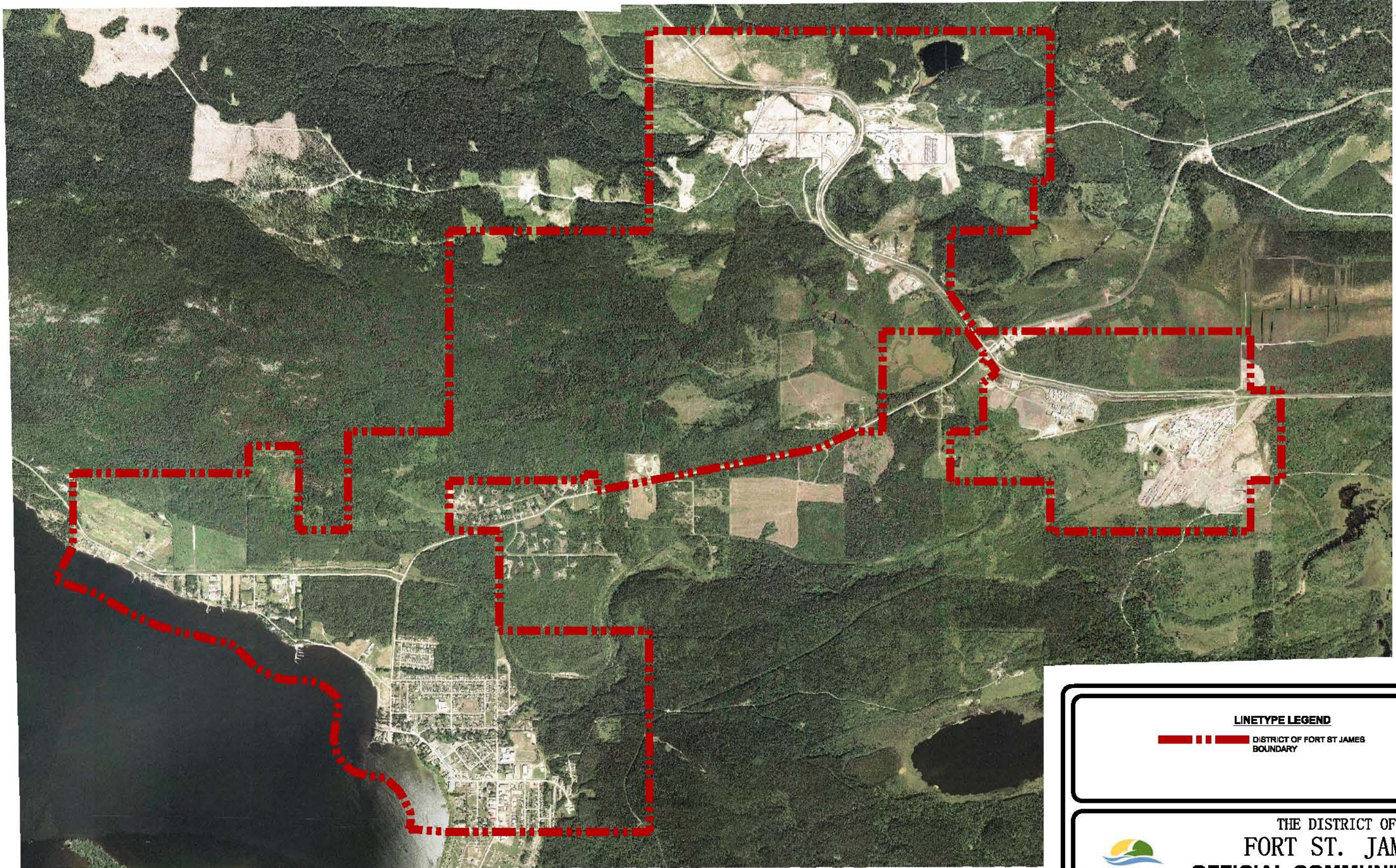


LINETYPE LEGEND

-  DISTRICT OF FORT ST JAMES
-  REGIONAL DISTRICT BOUNDARY
-  HYDROGRAPHY



THE DISTRICT OF
FORT ST. JAMES
OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN
MAP 1
LOCATION MAP



LINETYPE LEGEND

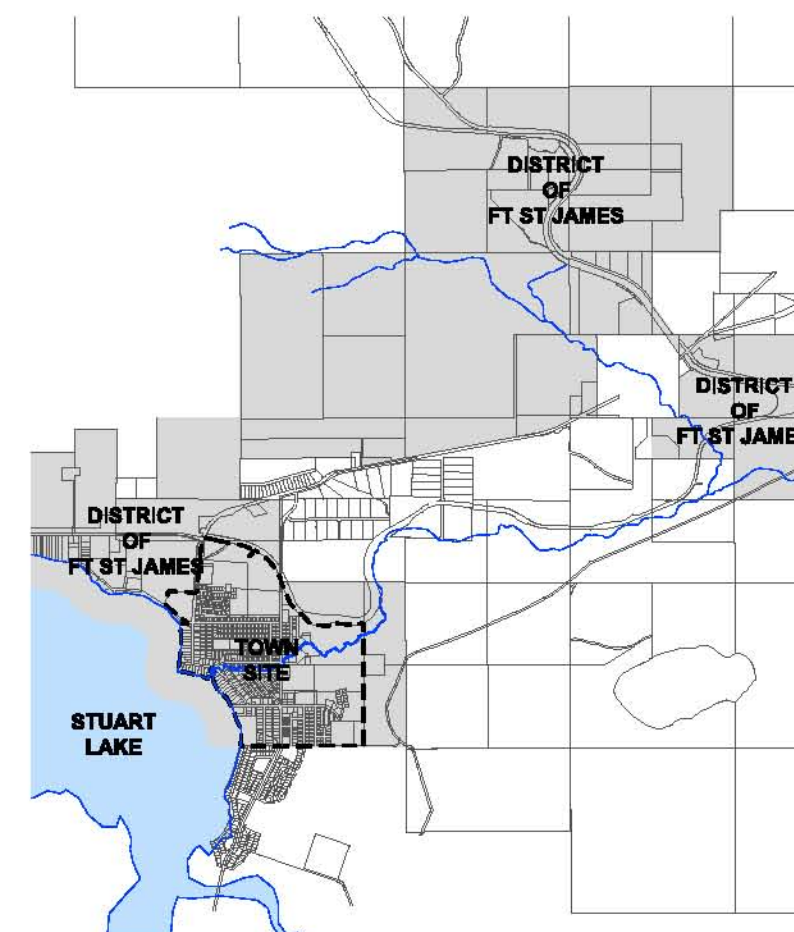
 DISTRICT OF FORT ST JAMES
BOUNDARY



THE DISTRICT OF
FORT ST. JAMES
OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN
MAP 2
AERIAL PHOTO



0 50 100 250 500
SCALE 1: 10,000 meters



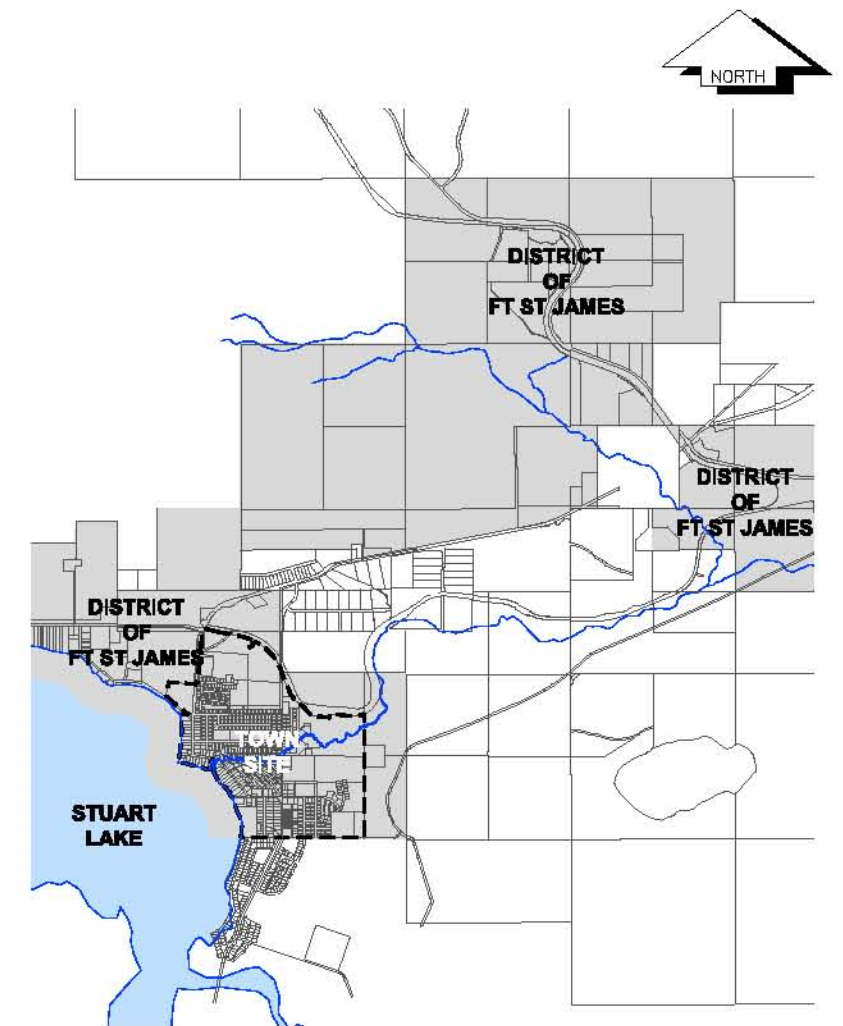
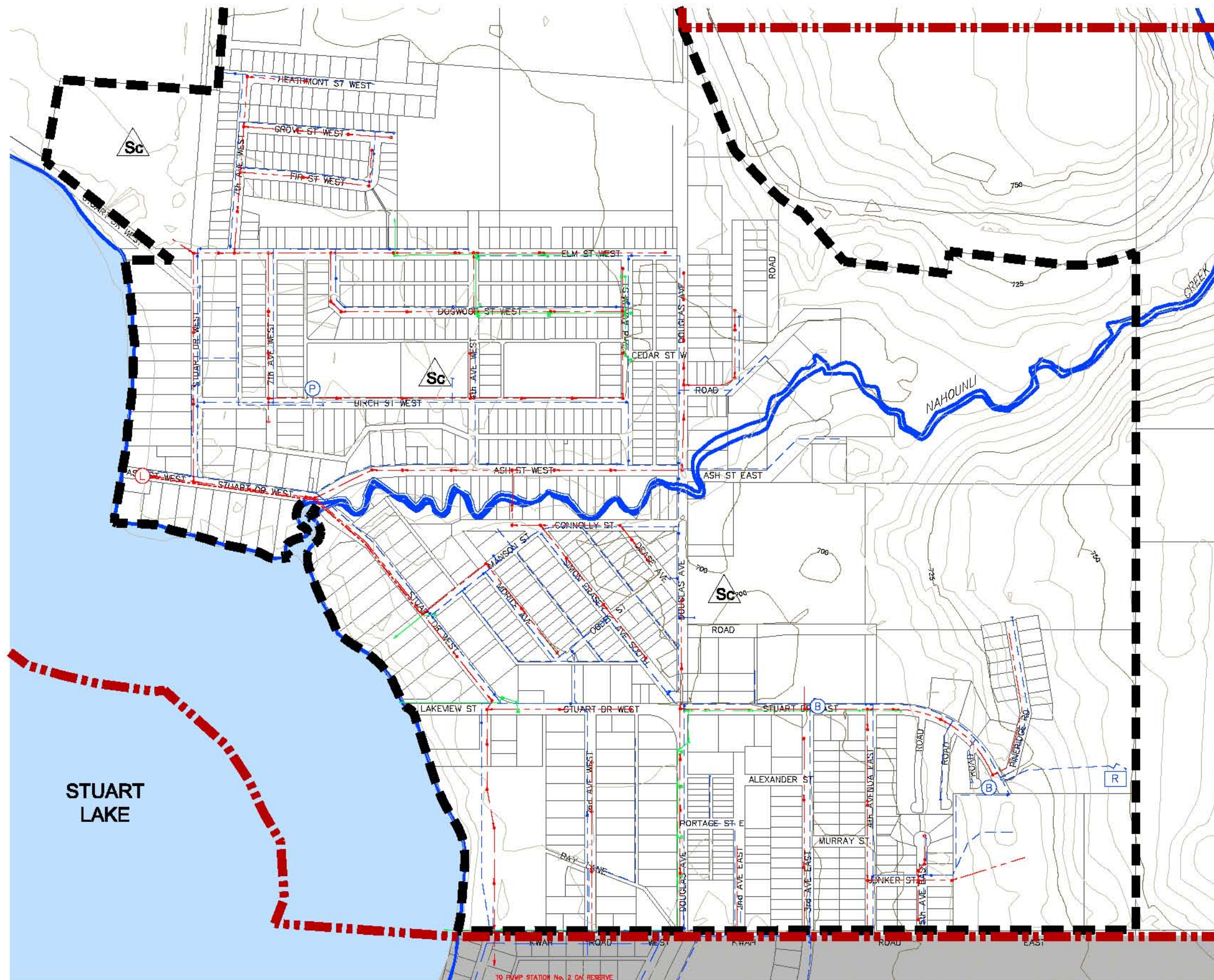
CONTEXT PLAN
NTS

LEGEND

- - - DISTRICT OF FORT ST JAMES BOUNDARY
- - - URBAN CONTAINMENT BOUNDARY



THE DISTRICT OF
FORT ST. JAMES
OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN
MAP 3
AERIAL PHOTO - TOWN SITE



CONTEXT PLAN
NTS

LINETYPE LEGEND			
	DISTRICT OF FORT ST JAMES BOUNDARY		EXISTING WATER MAIN
	URBAN CONTAINMENT BOUNDARY		EXISTING SANITARY MAIN
	EXISTING LEGAL LINES		EXISTING SANITARY FORCEMAIN
	RESERVE LAND		EXISTING STORM MAIN
	SCHOOL		LIFT STATION
			BOOSTER STATION
			PUMP STATION
			RESERVOIR



THE DISTRICT OF
FORT ST. JAMES
OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN
MAP 4
EXISTING SERVICES & TOPOGRAPHY