

Date: December 9, 2025
Report to: Mayor and Council
From: Alexander Bihori, Corporate Officer
Subject: **Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaws**

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THAT Council gives first reading of “Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 1100, 2025”.
2. THAT Council considers “Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 1100, 2025”, in conjunction with the current Financial Plan and confirms there are no issues.
3. THAT Council considers “Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 1100, 2025”, in conjunction with the current Regional District Solid Waste Management Plan and confirms there are no issues.
4. THAT Council considers “Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 1100, 2025”, in conjunction with the Fort St. James Corporate Energy and Emissions Plan and confirms there are no issues.
5. THAT, in accordance with section 475 of the Local Government Act, Council has considered whether consultation is required for the proposed Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 1100, 2025, and determines that the following should be consulted:
 - Nak’azdli Whut’en
 - School District No. 91
 - Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako
 - Ministry of Transportation and Transit
 - Agricultural Land Commission
 - [Any other organizations or agencies Council determines];

AND THAT Council directs staff to carry out the consultation with the prescribed agencies prior to a Public Hearing.

6. THAT Council gives first reading of “Zoning Bylaw No. 1101, 2025”.

ALTERNATE RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council directs staff to amend [OCP/Zoning Bylaw] prior to second reading as follows:

- [Council directed amendment].

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the proposed Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 1100, 2025, and Zoning Bylaw No. 1101, 2025. The Official Community Plan (OCP) is the principle land use planning document of the District, and one of the key tools used by Council to achieve the community's desired future. The Zoning bylaw is utilized to regulate properties and developments, and should remain aligned with the OCP to ensure the vision of the OCP is being implemented.

The existing OCP was adopted by Council March 24, 2010, and the existing Zoning Bylaw was adopted October 10, 2001.

BACKGROUND

The District retained the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako (RDBN) to engage with the residents of Fort St. James in conjunction with their consultation efforts for the Area C OCP. The RDBN, completed their works and provided the District with a draft OCP. At this time the District was made aware of the upcoming legislative changes and the current OCP draft did not have these changes built in. This caused District staff to re-evaluate the draft, and instead recommend a different plan which included making amendments to the draft and further consultation with the community, Council, and Nak'azdli Whut'en.

Highlights of the process, and can be found on the District's website:
<https://www.fortstjames.ca/2025-OCP-ZBL>

In January 2022, Nak'azdli Whut'en and District staff met briefly to introduces the OCP review process.

In March 2022, the Advisory Planning Commission Met.

In April 2022, a mail-out was sent to all municipal and rural mailboxes inviting to public open houses and showcasing the project's website and survey. Approximately 35 people attended in person and 6 virtually to the open house, and additionally, the Regional District and Municipal Staff presented to Nak'azdli Whut'en Chief and Council at their Council meeting.

June & July 2022, a booth was at the Farmer's Market.

November 2023, a draft OCP was provided to District Staff for review.

January 2024, third party-consultant review of the drafted OCP highlighted new upcoming legislative changes which would need to be reflected within the OCP.

June-August 2024, District solicited quotes for further baseline review and Council workshop, retained Stantec Consulting.

November 2024, Council workshop held

January 2025, Stantec OCP Baseline Review complete

February 2025, District retained Stantec for Updates to Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw

June 2025, Open house, pop-ups, Council and Nak'azdli Whut'en meetings

October 2025, open house, Council and Nak'azdli Whut'en meetings.

LEGAL/STATUTORY PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS

Consultation during development of official community plan

475. (1) During the development of an official community plan, or the repeal or amendment of an official community plan, the proposing local government must provide one or more opportunities it considers appropriate for consultation with persons, organizations and authorities it considers will be affected.
- (2) For the purposes of subsection (1), the local government must
- (a) consider whether the opportunities for consultation with one or more of the persons, organizations and authorities should be early and ongoing, and
 - (b) specifically consider whether consultation is required with the following:
 - (i) the board of the regional district in which the area covered by the plan is located, in the case of a municipal official community plan;
 - (ii) the board of any regional district that is adjacent to the area covered by the plan;
 - (iii) the council of any municipality that is adjacent to the area covered by the plan;
 - (iv) first nations;
 - (v) boards of education, greater boards and improvement district boards;
 - (vi) the Provincial and federal governments and their agencies.
- (3) Consultation under this section is in addition to the public hearing required under section 477 (3) (c).
- (4) If the development of an official community plan, or the repeal or amendment of an official community plan, might affect agricultural land, the proposing local government must consult with the Agricultural Land Commission.

Adoption procedures for official community plan

Section 477 of the Local Government Act identifies the adoption procedures for the development, repeal or amendment to the Official Community Plan bylaw.

1. After an OCP has been given first reading the following must occur:
 - a. Consideration of the OCP in conjunction with the current [Financial Plan](#);
 - b. Consideration of the OCP in conjunction with the current [Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako Solid Waste Management Plan](#);
 - c. Consideration of any other plan and policies that the local government considers relevant (i.e. [Fort St. James Corporate Energy and Emissions Plan](#))
2. Referral to the Agricultural Land Commission for comment

3. Second reading
4. Hold a public hearing
5. Complete third reading
6. Adopt the Official Community Plan (Council may adopt an Official Community Plan or Zoning Bylaw at the same meeting at which the plan passed third reading).

ATTACHMENTS

Stantec Memo
Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 1100, 2025
Zoning Bylaw No. 1101, 2025

SIGN OFF

Submitted by:	Alexander Bihori, Corporate Officer
Internal Review by:	Darlene Wiebe, Temporary Legislative Assistant

Reference: OCP & Zoning Bylaw Update

council adoption. The second round included a public open house, a council workshop, and a meeting with Nak'azdli Whut'en.

Updates to the OCP

Working closely with District staff, the OCP underwent a significant update to reflect evolving community priorities and vision, with the intention creating a more accessible and future-focused strategy document. The goal was to enable a stronger connection to the OCP and to streamline the document to make it easier for Council, staff, residents, and businesses to understand and use. Through engagement with the community and working with District staff, the OCP updates were focused on:

- **Improved structure and readability:** consolidating land use designations in the OCP, increasing alignment between the OCP and the Zoning Bylaw, and creating a clear relationship between the vision and land use policies in the OCP.
- **Enhancing and maintaining community character:** protecting the surrounding natural environment and Stuart Lake, encouraging more diverse housing options, and improving parks and recreation amenities.
- **Community well-being:** Integration of First Nations culture and focus on reconciliation and policies addressing climate change.
- **Attracting residents and businesses:** focus on attracting visitors, encouraging economic diversity, and attracting families and residents of all ages.
- **Downtown and Waterfront Vibrancy:** policies focussed on develop downtown into a mixed use and cultural hub, and policies to improve the visual identity of downtown and the waterfront for visitor and economic activities.
- **Compact land use:** remove urban containment boundary, growth directed to priority growth areas to optimize infrastructure investment, and improving multi-modal transportation connection throughout the District.

Updates to Zoning Bylaw

Working with District staff, the project team identified targeted updates to the Zoning Bylaw, which included:

- **General updates:** modernizing and improving readability, defining every use class, incorporating recently approved bylaws, and removing redundant regulations.
- **Residential zones:** consolidated R1 (single-family residential) with R2 (duplex) into new R1 – Residential Urban zone to allow duplexes throughout the District and removed R5 (Residential Mobile Home Park), as it is currently not being used.
- **Commercial zones:** consolidated C4 (commercial rural) in with C2 (commercial highway).
- **Industrial zones:** simplifying use classes and redistricting one industrial lot.
- **Parks and Institutional zones:** consolidated P3 (greenbelt) with P1 (parks and greenbelt), schools removed from P1 (parks and greenbelt) to P2 (institutional).