

Date: February 10, 2026
Report to: Mayor and Council
From: Alexander Bihori, Corporate Officer
Subject: **Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw Second Reading**

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THAT, in accordance with section 475 of the *Local Government Act*, sufficient consultation has occurred for Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 1100, 2025.
2. THAT Council gives second reading to “Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 1100, 2025”, as circulated.
3. THAT Council gives second reading to “Zoning Bylaw No. 1101, 2025”, as circulated.
4. THAT Council refers “Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 1100, 2025” and “Zoning Bylaw No. 1101, 2025” to Public Hearing.

ALTERNATE RECOMMENDATIONS

THAT Council directs staff to [amend, bring a report, etc] on Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 1100, 2025, prior to [second reading or public hearing].

THAT Council directs staff to [amend, bring a report, etc] on Zoning Bylaw No. 1101, 2025, prior to [second reading or public hearing].

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to return to Council for second reading of Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 1100, 2025 and Zoning Bylaw No. 1101, 2025 following the completion of S. 475 referral period.

BACKGROUND

At Regular Council Meeting No. 2025-22, held December 9, 2025, Council completed first reading of both Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 1100, 2025 and Zoning Bylaw No. 1101, 2025 and provided staff with the parties who should be consulted on to meet the obligations of S. 475 of the *Local Government Act*.

Based on this consultation, only two parties provided responses, Ministry of Transportation and Transit (MOTT) and the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC).

Changes that occurred after first reading to the Official Community Plan:

- S. 5.2 Land Use Designate Table “Agricultural Designation” updated to include A1 as the compatible zone.
- S. 12, introduction sentence has been adjusted as requested by MOTT.
- S. 12.1.3, full Ministry of Transportation & Transit name inserted.
- S. 12.1.4 full Ministry of Transportation & Transit name inserted.

Changes that occurred after first reading to the Zoning Bylaw:

- S. 2.4 Agritourism definition inserted.
- S. 2.48 Ecological reserve inserted.
- S. 1.137 Wildlife Management Area inserted.
- S. 4.6.2 inserted subsection b) secondary suite as a permitted use to bring this into compliance with SSMUH requirements.
- Division 8 Agriculture and subsequent sections inserted as informally requested by the ALC, and all further sections re-numbered.
- S. 9.3.5 (iii) full Ministry of Transportation & Transit name inserted.
- Schedule A-1 (Zoning Map) amended to zone the Agricultural land as A1.
- Schedule A-2 (Summary of Zoning Requirements) to include A1.

District owned lots with zoning changes:

- Spirit Square, District owned lots changing to P2 except for the lot with the building, which remains C1.
- Lot adjacent to the old Legion (285 4th Ave E), changing from R1 to P2.

The above noted changes were present within the first reading copies of the bylaws, however, were not directly pointed out within the report accompanying the bylaws.

Background reports and information on these bylaws are available on the District’s website at <https://www.fortstjames.ca/2025-OCP-ZBL>.

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 (**at this stage**)
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).

EXTERNAL AGENCY/PUBLIC COMMENTS

On December 18 & 19, 2026 the District sent a letter inviting the following agencies to provide comments on the OCP and Zoning Bylaw:

- School District 91
- Ministry of Transportation & Transit
- Agricultural Land Commission
- Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako

There has been early ongoing consultation with Nak'azdli Whut'en throughout the drafting of the bylaws, prior to Council's direction on the S. 475 consultation.

Based on the referral response received from the ALC, the bylaws were reviewed and edits made, the District, will provide the ALC with the updated copies of the bylaws should second reading be completed.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Agricultural Land Commission Referral Response

Attachment 2: Ministry of Transportation & Transit Referral Response

Attachment 3: *Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 1100, 2025*

Attachment 4: *Zoning Bylaw No. 1101, 2025*

SIGN OFF

Submitted by:	Alexander Bihori, Corporate Officer
---------------	-------------------------------------

November 3, 2025

Re: Local Government OCP/Zoning Bylaw Referral

The Agricultural Land Commission (the “ALC”) has received a copy of your Official Community Plan and/or zoning bylaw referral. Due to the ALC's current workload, ALC staff are not able to provide a response. This letter provides general guidance.

A reminder that local governments are required under [s.46 of the Agricultural Land Commission Act](#) (“ALCA”) to ensure their bylaws are consistent with ALCA, Agricultural Land Reserve (“ALR”) regulations, and any orders of the Commission. Inconsistent bylaws include those which allow a use which is not permitted in the ALR or contemplate a use of land that would impair or impede the intent of the ALCA, such as prohibiting agriculture.

As outlined in the [ALC Bylaw Review Guide](#), it is recommended, among other things, that local governments designate and zone ALR land with one “Agricultural” designation/zone, permit agriculture and uses identified in Parts 2 and 3 of the [ALR Use Regulation](#) that may not be prohibited by a local government, and set a minimum lot size large enough to discourage subdivision of ALR land.

ALR land should not be designated for future development or for non-farm uses unless the use has been approved by a resolution of the Commission or meets criteria set out in [section 23 of the ALCA](#) for an exception.

For specific guidance related to housing, it is recommended that local governments refer to [Housing Legislation in the ALR Factsheet](#) that outlines the number and types of housing permitted in the ALR.

Additionally, it is recommended that local governments establish buffering and setbacks between agricultural and urban zones, as set out in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food’s [Guide to Edge Planning](#) and [Subdivision Near Agriculture Guide for Planners and Approving Officers](#), and consider exceptions for farm buildings and farm uses within DPAs.

We look forward to working with you on your next referral. If you have any specific questions in the meantime, please let me know (ALC.Referrals@gov.bc.ca).

Yours truly,



Liz Sarioglu, Director of Policy and Planning



Ministry of
Transportation
and Transit

Our File: 2026-00009

Date: January 21, 2026

Response To: District of Fort St. James
Item Referred: Draft OCP and Zoning Bylaw
Reviewed By: Leah Labarrere, Senior Development Officer

RESPONSE SUMMARY

The Ministry of Transportation & Transit (MoTT) has received the above noted referral from the District of Fort St. James regarding the proposed new Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw. The application has been reviewed and our comments are as follows:

- The Ministry should be referred to as the Ministry of Transportation and Transit (MoTT) instead of MoTH.
- Please revise the opening statement of S.12 which currently implies that the Ministry builds and maintains community/municipal roads. The creation and maintenance of municipal roads lies with the District, however the statement could be revised to speak to consultation with the Ministry regarding proposed changes.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact myself at (250) 649-7726, or by email at leah.labarrere@gov.bc.ca.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Leah Labarrere".

Leah Labarrere
Senior Development Officer
Fort George District

**Ministry of Transportation &
Transit**

Fort George District

Mailing Address:
360-1011 Fourth Avenue
Prince George, BC V2L 3H9

Telephone: (250) 565-4410
Facsimile: (250) 565-6065

Site Address:
360-1011 Fourth Avenue
Prince George, BC V2L 3H9

Web Address:
www.gov.bc.ca/tran