

## PEACE RIVER REGIONAL DISTRICT

### Bylaw No. 2460, 2021

A bylaw to adopt an Official Community Plan for the North Peace Fringe Area to help guide future development

WHEREAS Section 472 of the *Local Government Act* authorizes a local government to adopt an Official Community Plan to guide decisions of the Peace River Regional District on planning and land use management issues;

AND WHEREAS the Regional Board has provided one or more opportunities for consultation with persons, organizations and authorities it considers affected in the development of the Official Community Plan in accordance with Section 475 of the *Local Government Act*;

AND WHEREAS the goals reflect the resident visions relating to their community, economy and environment;

AND WHEREAS the Regional Board in accordance with Section 477 of the *Local Government Act*, has considered the Plan in conjunction with its capital expenditure program, solid waste management plan and has referred the Plan to the Provincial Agricultural Land Commission;

NOW THEREFORE the Regional Board of the Peace River Regional District in open meeting assembled enacts as follows:

1. This bylaw shall be cited for all purposes as the “North Peace Fringe Area Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 2460, 2021.”
2. The following schedules and maps are attached to and form part of this bylaw:
  - a) Schedule 'A' Official Community Plan Text;
  - b) Schedule 'B' Index and North Peace Fringe Area maps (1 to 6);
  - c) Schedule 'C' Agriculture Land Reserve;
  - d) Schedule 'D' Parks, Protected Area and Watersheds;
  - e) Schedule 'E' Preservation Area and South Taylor Management Area;
  - f) Schedule 'F' Public Facilities;
  - g) Schedule 'G' Development Permit Areas;
  - h) Schedule 'H' Conceptual Public Transit Network; and
  - i) Schedule 'I' Road Classifications and Conceptual Road Network.
3. “North Peace Fringe Area Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 1870, 2009” and all amendments thereto are hereby repealed.

4. If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrases or map of this bylaw is for any reason declared invalid by a Court of competent jurisdiction, the decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this bylaw.
5. This bylaw shall take effect upon its adoption by the Regional Board.

READ A FIRST TIME THIS	<u>7<sup>th</sup></u>	day of	<u>October</u>	, 2021.
READ A SECOND TIME THIS	<u>31<sup>st</sup></u>	day of	<u>March</u>	, 2022.
Second Reading rescinded on the	<u>11<sup>th</sup></u>	day of	<u>August</u>	, 2022.
READ A SECOND TIME AS AMENDED this	<u>11<sup>th</sup></u>	day of	<u>August</u>	, 2022.
Public Notification published on the	<u>8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup></u>	day of	<u>September</u>	, 2022.
Public Hearing held on the	<u>20<sup>th</sup></u>	day of	<u>September</u>	, 2022.
READ A THIRD TIME THIS	<u>13<sup>th</sup></u>	day of	<u>October</u>	, 2022.
ADOPTED THIS	<u>13<sup>th</sup></u>	day of	<u>October</u>	, 2022.

*Original signed by*

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Brad Sperling, Chair

(Corporate Seal has been affixed to the original bylaw)

*Original signed by*

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Tyra Henderson, Corporate Officer

I hereby certify this to be a true and correct copy of "North Peace Fringe Area Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 2460, 2021", as adopted by the Peace River Regional District Board on October 13, 2022.

*Original signed by*

Tyra Henderson, Corporate Officer





PEACE RIVER REGIONAL DISTRICT

# North Peace Fringe Area

Official Community Plan

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**Part 1 | Setting the Stage**



# 1 About the Official Community Plan

## 1.1 What is an Official Community Plan?



An Official Community Plan is a statement of goals, objectives, and policies used to guide decisions on planning, land use management, and community development within a designated area.



The **North Peace Fringe Area Official Community Plan** (the **Official Community Plan**) provides the Peace River Regional District with a framework to guide decision-making related to land use, **development**, local government service provision, and the future economic, social, and environmental well-being of the **North Peace Fringe Area**. The **Official Community Plan** is a policy framework that is also a guide for residents, businesses, investors, and other levels of government that may be considering potential land use changes, new **developments**, or subdivisions.

The **Official Community Plan** is a bylaw of the Peace River Regional District. In British Columbia, the **Local Government Act** describes an **official community plan** as a comprehensive guiding policy document and requires the following content:

- Approximate location, amount, type and density of residential **development** required to meet anticipated housing needed for at least five years;
- Approximate location, amount, and type of present and proposed commercial, industrial, agricultural, recreational and public utility land uses;
- Approximate location and area of sand and gravel deposits that are suitable for future sand and gravel extraction;
- Restrictions on the use of land that is subject to hazardous conditions or that is environmentally sensitive to **development**;
- Approximate location and phasing of any major road, sewer and water systems;
- Approximate location and type of present and proposed public facilities, including schools, parks and waste treatment and disposal sites;
- Other matters that may, in respect of any plan, be required or authorized by the minister;
- Policies respecting affordable, rental and special needs housing; and
- Targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the area covered by the **Official Community Plan**, and policies and actions of the local government proposed with respect to achieving those targets.

An **Official Community Plan** can also include policies that influence the overall quality of life. These optional policies may include social and environmental strategies, as well as Development Permit Area designations and associated guidelines. **Official Community Plans** are typically developed with a 15 to 25 year time frame, and best practices suggest reviewing **Official Community Plans** approximately every five years, or if there have been changes that may impact the overall direction of the document.

Where authority is outside of the jurisdiction of the Peace River Regional District, the **Official Community Plan** may only state broad objectives related to the topic. These topics typically fall under provincial, federal, or other local government jurisdictions, and may also include areas regulated by agencies such as the **Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure**, the **Agricultural Land Commission**, or Northern Health.

After the adoption of an **Official Community Plan**, all bylaws enacted and works undertaken by the Peace River Regional District that fall within the **North Peace Fringe Area** must be consistent with this **Official Community Plan**.

The **North Peace Fringe Area** is not static, and changes are always occurring. With this in mind, an **Official Community Plan** should be a living document that is amended from time to time. This is because many of the goals and policies contained within the **Official Community Plan** have broad implications and it is important to ensure that they remain relevant and current throughout the life of the **Official Community Plan**. Any proposed changes or amendments to the **Official Community Plan** in the future will be subjected to a public review process including any proposed amendments by private landowners.

## **1.2 Why do we need an Official Community Plan?**

This **North Peace Fringe Area Official Community Plan** is an overarching visionary document. It is intended to facilitate discussions, inform decision-making, and guide the use and **development** of land in the **North Peace Fringe Area**. The intent of the **Official Community Plan** is to:

- Ensure positive changes will occur that will benefit all in the **North Peace Fringe Area**;
- Ensure future **development** is consistent with the goals and policies set out in the **North Peace Fringe Area Official Community Plan**; and
- Guide decisions of private landowners, developers and other authorities.

This **North Peace Fringe Area Official Community Plan** applies to all land and water surfaces as shown on Schedule B.

### 1.3 What has Changed Since our Last Official Community Plan?

This **Official Community Plan** replaces the **North Peace Fringe Area Official Community Plan** that was adopted in 2010. Since 2010, there have been many changes in both the region and the **North Peace Fringe Area** that should be reflected in the **Official Community Plan**. The Peace River Regional District has worked to improve the rural quality of life by undertaking key initiatives such as:

- Charlie Lake Sewage Facility capital upgrades
- Establishment of a Truck Sewage Waste Receiving Facility
- Establishment of a Solid Waste Management Plan
- Adoption of the 2019-2022 Strategic Plan
- Establishment of a Regional Parks and Trails Master Plan
- Completion of the Montney Centennial Regional Park Design Study
- Renewal of the Peace River Agreement (formally known as the Fair Share Agreement)
- Creation and launch of an on-line public engagement page on the Peace River Regional District website
- Completion of the North Peace Recreation Inventory and Assessment
- Completion of the North Peace Regional Landfill Gas Collection System
- Completion of the Peace River Regional District's Housing Needs Assessments

In addition to the above initiatives, the boundaries of the City of Fort St. John were expanded in 2014 and 2016, and there have been significant changes to key provincial legislation such as the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and Regulations and the **Local Government Act**.

Since 2009, the population and economic picture of the Peace River Region, and in turn, the **North Peace Fringe Area** experienced a number of changes. Overall, the area's population has increased. Our economy is tied to the cyclical nature of the resource industry. Today, the resource industry continues to be influenced by market conditions and other external factors.

These changes provide an opportunity for the public to review and confirm the direction, goals, and policies set out in this **Official Community Plan**.

This **North Peace Fringe Area Official Community Plan** builds upon the previous **Official Community Plan** and as a result, many elements of the previous document have been retained and expanded. Where appropriate, new sections have been added.

## 1.4 Where does the Official Community Plan Apply?

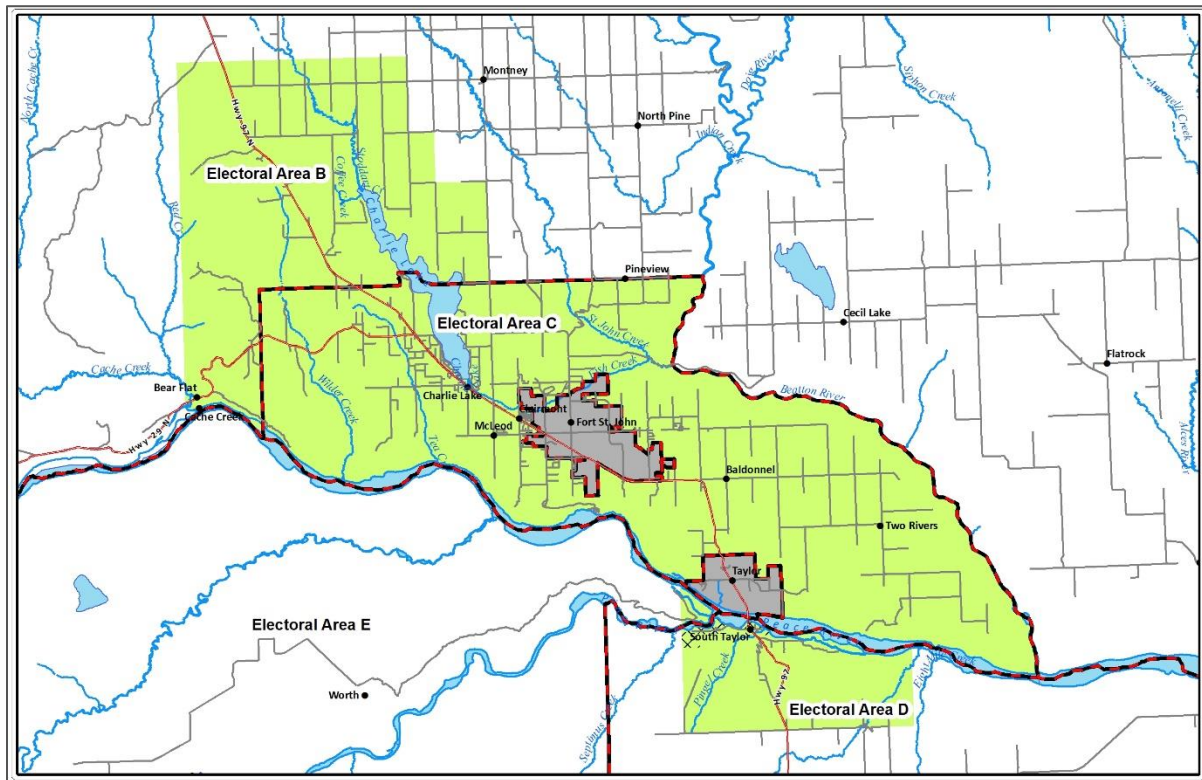


Figure 1: North Peace Fringe Area Official Community Plan Area

The **North Peace Fringe Area Official Community Plan** applies to the area as shown in Figure 1 (the **North Peace Fringe Area**), which covers approximately 96,500 ha within Treaty 8 First Nations territory, including all of Peace River Regional District Electoral Area C, and small portions of Electoral Areas B, D, and E, as shown in green above. The **North Peace Fringe Area** is bisected by Highway No. 97N and Highway No. 29N (herein referred to as Highway No. 29).

The **North Peace Fringe Area** encompasses the communities of Baldonnel and Charlie Lake. The **Official Community Plan** area surrounds the District of Taylor and the City of Fort St. John. The **North Peace Fringe Area** – the most densely populated and developed rural area within the Peace River Regional District with a population density of approximately 12 people/km<sup>2</sup> – has a wide variety of land uses. These land uses include agricultural operations, rural residential, commercial businesses, industrial enterprises, institutional uses, natural resource uses, recreational uses, and natural areas.

## 1.5 How to use this Document

The **Official Community Plan** serves as a roadmap for the Peace River Regional District. The **Official Community Plan** is used to shape the growth, **development**, and services of the **North Peace Fringe Area**.

Many of the sections contain a number of goals and policies. The **Official Community Plan** does not commit a local government to proceed with any project specified in the **Official Community Plan**. However it does require the Peace River Regional District to ensure that all bylaws enacted or works undertaken by the Regional District after the adoption of the plan are consistent with it. The **Official Community Plan** is organized into four parts, as follows:

### Part 1 | Setting the Stage

Sections 1 to 3: These are new sections in the **Official Community Plan** that describe the context of an **Official Community Plan**, why is it needed, where it applies, and how to use it; as well as a brief history of the **North Peace Fringe Area**; and a bit of background on the community consultation process undertaken to prepare this **Official Community Plan**.

### Part 2 | Regional Considerations

This new section addresses land demands and growth management along with the **Agricultural Land Reserve**, subdivision of land and Indigenous relations and collaborative planning.

### Part 3 | Land Use

Sections 5 – 11: These sections address the land use goals and policies specific to various types of land uses found within this **Official Community Plan**. Land uses addressed include:

- *Agricultural*
- *Industrial*
- *Residential*
- *Community Amenity*
- *Settlement Centre*
- *Study Area Lands*
- *Commercial*

Sections 12 – 14: These sections focus on how to approach **development** in the **North Peace Fringe Area**. **Development** Permits, Temporary Use Permits, preservation areas, environmental hazards, and other **development** considerations are discussed.

### Part 4 | Community Development

Sections 15 – 22: These sections describe aspects of community development such as affordable housing, the environment, parks and trails, transportation, services and utilities, social well-being, economic development and natural resources.

### Part 5 | Implementing Our Plan

Section 23: This section of the document provides direction on how the **Official Community Plan** will be implemented.

## 1.6 Definitions

In this bylaw, words and phrases (except headings) which are bolded are defined terms as detailed below.

**Accessory** means a use, building or structure which is incidental and subordinate to, and located on the same parcel as, a principal use, building, or structure.

**Agricultural Land Commission** is an independent administrative tribunal comprised of appointed commissioners that are responsible for administering the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and overseeing the **Agricultural Land Reserve**.

**Agricultural Land Reserve** means a collection of land in British Columbia in which agriculture is recognized as the priority use, and non-agricultural uses are controlled or restricted. The Agricultural Land Reserve protects approximately 4.6 million ha of agriculturally capable public and private land across British Columbia. The Agricultural Land Reserve is administered by the Agricultural Land Commission.

**Approving Officer** means a person appointed by the Province of British Columbia to approve applications to subdivided land.

**Buffer** means a feature or area that is designed and maintained to separate adjoining land uses or parcels and may include a combination of setback distances, treed, grass or shrub areas, earth berms, fences or natural vegetated areas.

**Community Sewer System** means a common sanitary sewer or a system of sewerage or sewage disposal, which serves two (2) or more parcels and is owned, operated and maintained by the Regional District.

**Community Water System** means a system of waterworks which serves two (2) or more parcels and which is owned, operated and maintained by an Improvement District as defined in the *Water Sustainability Act* or the **Local Government Act**, or the Regional District, or which is regulated under the *Water Utility Act*.

**Development** means the subdivision or alteration of land, and construction of, or addition to, buildings and structures.

**Environmentally Sensitive Area** means an area requiring special management attention in order to protect fish and wildlife resources in natural systems.

**Hard Services** means water and sewer facilities and services that may be provided by the PRRD.

**Home-Based Businesses** means a business operated by an occupant of a dwelling, which is subordinate to the residential use of the premises (property and buildings).

**Local Government Act** is provincial legislation that provides a framework and foundation for the establishment and continuation of local governments to represent the interests and respond to the needs of their community. The *Local Government Act* provides all local governments with duties, powers, and functions to fulfill their purpose, and to provide flexibility to respond to different needs and changes of their communities.

**Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure** is the provincial government ministry responsible for transportation infrastructure and associated policy in British Columbia.

**North Peace Fringe Area** is the area (shown in Figure 1) within the Peace River Regional District outside of Fort St. John and Taylor.

**Official Community Plan** means a bylaw adopted by a local government that represents a community's vision for the future and provides a framework to guide growth and decisions about the use and management of land resources in the region.

**Qualified Professional** means an individual who is registered with or accredited by the Province, Canada, or an entity created by the Province of British Columbia to register or give accreditation to an individual who carries on a profession that is regulated by that entity.

**Soft Services** means services that may be provided by the Peace River Regional District, such as social programming, parks, recreation, and library services.

## 2 About the North Peace Fringe Area

### 2.1 History of the North Peace Fringe Area

The Peace River area has a rich history of perseverance, community, agriculture, and industry, as well as being home to Indigenous people for over 10,000 years.

The Charlie Lake Caves, known as Tse'Kw'a, are one of the oldest archeological sites in North America. The Dane-zaa, often referred to as the Beaver People, lived in small groups along the Peace River from Alberta into the eastern base of the Rocky Mountains. They were joined by Cree people migrating westward



*Figure 2: Peace River*

during the 1700s due to European settlement pressures in Eastern Canada. During the 17th and 18th centuries, the Iroquois and Sauteau people also migrated and settled in the Peace River region, with the Sauteau people ultimately settling in the Moberly Lake area. In 1899, Treaty 8 was signed between the local Beaver and Cree groups, prairie Chipewyan groups, and the Government of Canada. In 1910, both the Fort Nelson and Prophet River groups also signed Treaty 8, which ultimately spans lands in northeastern British Columbia, northern Alberta, northwestern Saskatchewan, and the Northwest Territories south of Hay River and Great Slave Lake. Under this Treaty, signatories were promised access to maintain traditional activities, such as hunting, fishing and trapping, in their traditional territory.

The first direct contact between the Beaver and European settlers was commemorated by Alexander Mackenzie in 1793. Travelling by canoe up the Peace River, when he reached the Peace River region, Mackenzie determined that it would be an ideal location for a fur trading post due to its proximity to five rivers that flow into the Peace River within a 40 km radius. The following year, a trading post was established in the region by the North West Company.

In the early 1900s, settlement in the region occurred primarily in the Halfway River Valley and Hudson's Hope. These areas were situated outside of the Peace River Block, an area of land that was held by the Canadian government on behalf of the Canadian National Railway as compensation for undevelopable railway right-of-way in the south. In 1912, Canada released quarter sections of land in the Peace River Block to settlers if they cleared 12 ha (29 ac) of land and paid \$10 after the first year. After the end of World War I, veterans were provided a quarter section 64 ha (160 ac) of land if they cleared 12 ha (29 ac).

The Peace River region saw slow but steady growth, as a westward expansion of agricultural settlements to the foothills of the Rocky Mountains occurred. In the 1930s, the Peace River region saw a large influx of people as a result of the area being opened for home steading, and remaining



untitled lands were handed over to the Province of British Columbia. Farming replaced trapping as the main industry at the time and many farming families came to the region from the Prairies to seek out new opportunities. In the 1940s, the construction of the Alaska Highway brought along another influx of people to the area, and in the 1950s the first oil well was drilled near the rail bridge west of Taylor. All of these people and events helped write the history of this area and create what is here today.

## 2.2 Context within the Peace River Region

The **North Peace Fringe Area** is located within the Peace River Regional District (see Figure 3), which is situated in northeastern British Columbia and encompasses approximately 120,000 km<sup>2</sup>, of which the **North Peace Fringe Area** encompasses 965 km<sup>2</sup>. The Peace River Regional District is comprised of seven municipalities and four electoral areas. The modern boundaries of the Peace River Regional District were established in 1987.

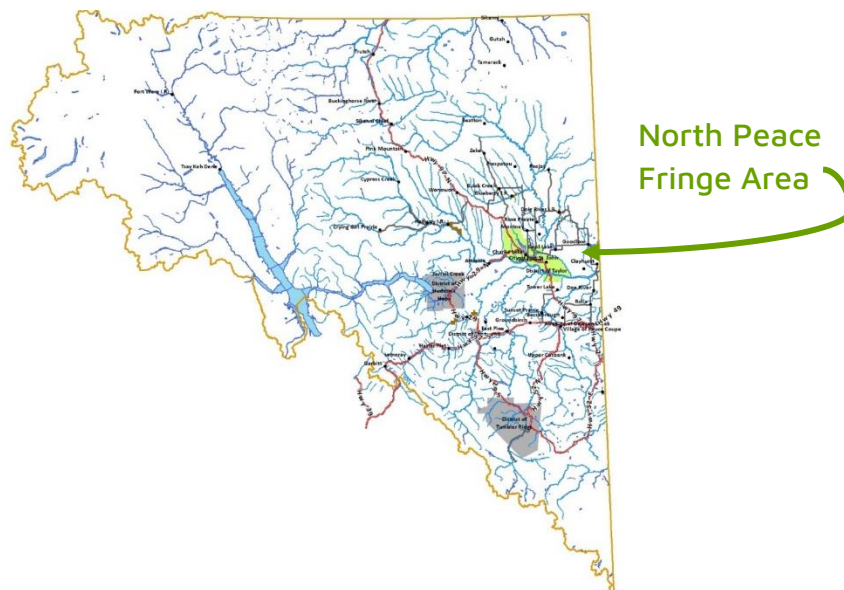


Figure 3: North Peace Fringe Area within the Peace River Regional District

## 2.3 Demographics of the North Peace Fringe Area

### Historical Population Trends

Census of Canada counts since 2001 show that the Peace River Regional District as a whole and the **North Peace Fringe Area** have both seen increases in population. The **North Peace Fringe Area**, which primarily encompasses Electoral Area C, saw a population increase of approximately 12% in the 20-year period between 2001 and 2021, averaging approximately 0.6% per year. Even with the economic slowdowns in the region after 2009 and again after 2015, population counts are still trending upward. In addition to this, the average age of residents in the **North Peace Fringe Area**, as per the 2016 Census, is 37.5, while the average age of residents in the Peace River Regional District is 35. Table 1 summarizes area population counts between 2001 and 2021.

Table 1: Area Population Counts, 2001-2021

Year	2001	2006	2011	2016	2021	% Change (2001-2021)	% Change Per Annum
<b>Electoral Area C</b>	5,813	6,350	6,398	6,772	5,947	2.3%	0.1%
<b>North Peace Fringe Area</b>	7,034	N/A	7,743	8,187	7,854*	11.7%	0.6%
<b>Peace River Regional District</b>	55,080	58,264	60,082	62,942	61,532	11.7%	0.6%
<b>Fort St. John</b>	16,051	17,402	18,609	20,155	21,465	33.7%	1.7%
<b>Taylor</b>	1,143	1,384	1,373	1,469	1,317	15.2%	0.8%

\* Population estimate based on residential unit counts and persons per household

### Growth Projections

Population projections used for the **Official Community Plan** area are based on BC Stats Sub-provincial Population Projections - P.E.O.P.L.E. 2020 (July 2020) and also rely upon the recently completed Housing Needs Assessments. The BC Stats projections use 2016 as the base year, which was the last year of a full population count with data available through the Census of Canada at the time the projections were run in July 2020. The PEOPLE 2020 projects an average annual growth rate of 0.9 percent for the Northeast Development Region between 2020 and 2041. Using the updated Census and the 0.9% annual growth rate, the total permanent population in the **North Peace Fringe Area** is projected to increase from the 2021 population of 7,854 to 9,395 by 2041.

Table 2: North Peace Fringe Area Population

	2021	2031	2041
<b>Population Projection (2021-2041)</b>	7,854	8,590	9,395

Source: Derived from Statistics Canada Census Program, and BC Stats Sub-Provincial Population Projections (2020)

This does not account for the shadow population that is expected to also increase as a result of renewed activity in the oil and gas industry, some of which may be found within the **North Peace Fringe Area** over this same period of time. Due to large industrial and resource sectors in the region, there exists a shadow population that fluctuates depending on the amount of work in these sectors. This shadow population can number in the thousands. There are challenges gauging the worker camp populations, which use the amenities provided by the Regional District and municipalities within the **North Peace Fringe Area**.

The mobile work force contributes to the wear and tear on infrastructure, such as water, sewer, roads, airport and landfills. There are also impacts to the community, such as affordable housing and access to services for permanent residents of the region.

The majority of the population increase is expected to be driven by growth in the age categories of 35 to 44 years and 65 to 74 years of age. The increasing senior population will have an impact on the household sizes and the types of dwelling units desired.

### 2.4 Economy of the North Peace Fringe Area

The economy and labour force of the region is predominantly driven by oil, gas, forestry, mining, and agriculture. The region has also seen a significant rise in a mobile work force, which was in response to the increase of resource exploration and extraction.

According to the 2016 Census (the 2021 Census information on the economic data has not been released at the time this **Official Community Plan** was prepared), the **North Peace Fringe Area** has a working population of 3,780 people who work in the following sectors:

- 16% (620 jobs) are in the oil, gas and mining industry
- 14% (550 jobs) are in construction
- 9.5% (360 jobs) are in transportation and warehousing
- 18 % (708 jobs) are in the retail, manufacturing, scientific and technical services
- 4% (175 jobs) are in the agricultural sector
- 38.5% (1,367 jobs) are in other sectors such as accommodation and food, administration and educational services

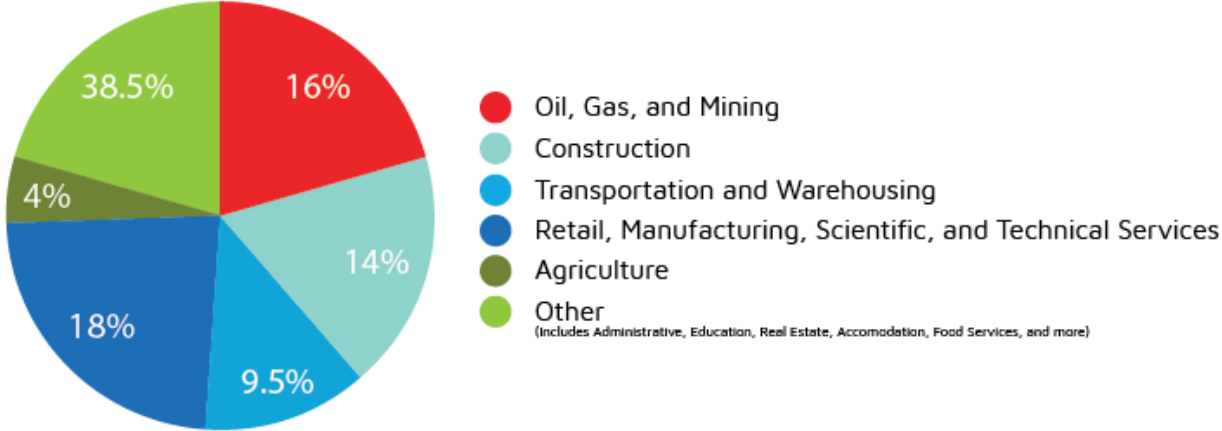


Figure 4: Employment Sectors in the North Peace Fringe Area

## 3 About the Planning Process

### 3.1 Community Consultation

Community consultation is an important component of updating any long-range land use planning document. Throughout the process of updating the **North Peace Fringe Area Official Community Plan**, the project team met with and gained feedback from the Steering Committee, the Community Advisory Committee and the Technical Advisory Committee as well as through hosting several public engagement sessions. In 2017 the three committees were combined into one Steering Committee with membership including elected officials, technical agency representatives and community representatives. This involvement ensured that the **Official Community Plan** reflects the community's values and objectives, while protecting the area's natural and agricultural resources and the rural lifestyle. Consultation with and inviting feedback on the draft was also done with external agencies, organizations and the First Nations communities of Treaty 8.

### 3.2 Our Community Vision, Values & Goals

From the extensive public engagement input and guidance of all involved, the following vision, values and goals were identified to guide the **North Peace Fringe Area Official Community Plan**.

#### Our Vision



#### The year is 2041...

The North Peace Fringe Area is a remarkable place with incredible natural beauty, a thriving economy, a rich history, and a distinct rural character. Residents enjoy a high quality of life, with access to stunning open spaces, a variety of housing choices, employment options, and ample recreational opportunities. We continue to grow thoughtfully and responsibly by valuing our agricultural and natural landscapes and by balancing our need to grow with the well-being of our current and future generations.



## Our Values

The public engagement during the planning process identified nine values of great importance to **North Peace Fringe Area** residents.

We value:

1. Our residents' wants, needs, and input.
2. Our rural character and lifestyle.
3. Our sensitive environmental features and ecological systems.
4. Our health, well-being, and safety.
5. Our productive agricultural lands and resources.
6. Our regional parks and trails.
7. Our opportunities to engage in public consultation.
8. Our communities' accessible, energy efficient, and comfortable buildings to live and work.
9. Our efficient and healthy transportation choices to live, work and play in our community.

## Our Goals

The public engagement during the planning process identified nine collectively shared goals. These goals are to:

1. Retain the rural character and lifestyle of the **North Peace Fringe Area**.
2. Consider the impacts of growth and **development** between different land uses on the health, social needs, social well-being, and safety of communities.
3. Ensure a sustainable economy comprised of a variety of sectors, such as resource **development**, agriculture, and industry.
4. Preserve sensitive environmental features such as steep slopes and ecological systems, protect and preserve water and air quality, and encourage environmental stewardship.
5. Preserve productive agricultural lands to ensure the viability of the agricultural industry and contribute to future food security.
6. Ensure the transportation network accommodates roads, transit, rail, air travel, trails, and parks.
7. Continue to secure a system of regional parks, and support a network of recreation opportunities, such as parks and trails, in the **North Peace Fringe Area**.
8. Provide housing and lot size options to meet a variety of needs of rural residents.
9. Work collaboratively with member municipalities and First Nations in the region to build more engaged and open relationships.

### 3.3 Communications

As the Peace River Regional District fulfills our responsibilities as a regional government, we strive to communicate and engage with residents to understand their interests as well as foster a better understanding of our roles and services. We collaborate and cooperate with our partners to enhance our effectiveness. We strive to make consistent decisions and policy.

Throughout the process of creating this Plan, we used a variety of tools to communicate with and engage residents in the **North Peace Fringe Area**. We will continue to use a variety of tools to communicate with residents after the planning process is finished – as we implement this Plan, process **development** applications, and respond to public inquiries including the following:

1. **The PRRD Website:** ([prrd.bc.ca](http://prrd.bc.ca)) hosts a wealth of publicly accessible information including our latest news, events, bylaws, meeting agendas, meeting minutes, meeting videos, application forms, and contact information.
2. **Have Your Say!:** The Peace River Regional District’s “Have Your Say!” page ([haveyoursay.prrd.bc.ca/](http://haveyoursay.prrd.bc.ca/)) was created as an interactive information hub for the PRRD’s public engagement initiatives.
3. **Social Media:** Peace River Regional District staff regularly post educational content, links to meeting agendas, and reminders about upcoming public hearings to our Facebook and LinkedIn pages.
4. **PRRD Board Meetings:** The Peace River Regional District Board usually meets twice per month to make decisions on planning, financial, and servicing matters. Meetings are open to the public and residents have the opportunity to address the Board about items on that agenda.
5. **Public Hearings:** The PRRD holds public hearings in accordance with the *Local Government Act* for certain types of **development** applications to gather residents’ views about the proposal.
6. **Special Events:** The Peace River Regional District hosts special events to gather input from and share information with residents on major projects and initiatives. Several open houses and workshops were included as part of our community engagement process when creating this Plan.
7. **Development Services Staff:** The Development Services team are available via phone, email, and in person to answer questions about planning, building, and **development**.
8. **North East BC Emergency & Public Alerts:** In partnership with our municipalities, the Peace River Regional District established this system to quickly notify residents about emergencies, important community news, severe weather, unexpected road closures, and evacuations.

# Part 2 | Regional Considerations

## 4 Regional Considerations

The **North Peace Fringe Area** plays an important role within the region, as it has the largest concentration of residents and economic activity within the Peace River Regional District. Many of the opportunities and challenges faced by the **North Peace Fringe Area** with respect to land use, growth and **development** exist across the region and transcend any jurisdictional boundaries. In order to capture opportunities and tackle challenges that impact the region, it is important that all local governments within the region recognize the role they have to play – both individually and as a collective. Keeping in mind regional considerations will ensure orderly growth and the management of **development** across the region.

This section strives to identify overarching goals and policies as they relate to the region as a whole. These regional considerations should be contemplated throughout this **Official Community Plan** as they guide the growth and **development** of people and the economy and compatibility and efficient use of land and resources.

### 4.1 Land Demands in the North Peace Fringe Area

#### Residential Land Demand and Housing Projections

Residential land demand is influenced by population growth and housing needs. Housing needs are estimated based on population growth projections and average household size, which is the number of persons per dwelling unit. Within Electoral Area C, which comprises the majority of the **North Peace Fringe Area**, the average household size from the 2021 Census is 2.447 people.

The total number of housing units in the **North Peace Fringe Area** as of 2021 was approximately 3,150. Based on the population projection shown earlier in Table 2, it is estimated that the **North Peace Fringe Area** will need to accommodate an additional 632 dwelling units between 2021 and 2041. Nearly all of these residential units are expected to remain as single-detached homes or other ground-oriented housing.

The minimum lot size required to accommodate on-site sewage treatment, based on Northern Health guidelines is 1.6 ha (4 ac). Public feedback obtained during the **Official Community Plan** update process indicated that there continues to be strong demand for residential lots in the range of 1.6 – 4 ha (4 – 10 ac). Therefore, based on the housing projections, it is anticipated that the **North Peace Fringe Area** will require between approximately 1,011 ha to 2,528 ha of residential land to accommodate the projected population growth. Based on BC Assessment, there is over 9,800 ha of vacant residential land consisting of parcels greater than 0.8 ha in size so there would appear to be no need to further designate residential lands to absorb the projected population growth.



## Non-Residential Land Demand

Based on Statistics Canada information, Labour Force Participation rates in Northeastern BC went from 76.9% in 2016 down to 73.5% in 2020. With an expected rebound in the overall economy beyond 2021, the number of new jobs associated with the population growth could likely be about 1,500 by 2041 (not including the shadow population and related jobs). According to BC Assessment, the combined total of industrial and commercial vacant land is about 200 ha within the **North Peace Fringe Area**, not including the City of Fort St. John and District of Taylor. Additional analysis of the land needs to absorb the employment growth is contemplated in the policies described below in the Growth Management section.

Agricultural employment will remain spread across rural farming areas and there is some potential for additional food-related processing and other activities that are consistent with **Agricultural Land Reserve** policies and regulations.

## 4.2 Growth Management

Growth management is a fundamental component of good planning as it enables a community or region to direct growth in a manner that: protects the quality of life for residents, protects the natural environment, and provides economic opportunities and utilizes infrastructure in an efficient manner.

The Peace River Regional District and the City of Fort St. John completed a Comprehensive Development Plan in 2005. The 2009 **Official Community Plan** identified land supply and future land requirements for **development** around Fort St. John for a period of ten years. That time frame has elapsed and much has changed in the area since that **Official Community Plan** was completed. An updated Comprehensive Development Plan could identify topic areas and lands where joint planning between the City of Fort St. John, the District of Taylor, and the Regional District could occur.

### Growth Management Goals

1. Identify lands to accommodate future growth and **development** for a variety of land uses, including residential, commercial, and industrial.
2. To effectively manage the use of land within the region and reduce sprawl, future growth and **development** should be directed to locate within already developed areas, or those areas that are anticipated to receive **hard services** in the future.
3. Investigate, where appropriate, the feasibility of increasing or expanding the level of **hard services** within the **North Peace Fringe Area**.
4. Submit a block exclusion application to the **Agricultural Land Commission** that enables the **development** of lands already identified for non-agricultural uses to protect agricultural lands from the pressures of non-agricultural **development**.
5. Recognize the importance of the agricultural and natural resource industries within the region and how they influence land use, growth, and **development**.

6. Protect the natural environment by focusing and supporting growth to already developed areas within the City of Fort St. John, District of Taylor, and Charlie Lake.
7. Educate property owners on ways to reduce their risk from wildfires.

### **Growth Management Policies**

1. The Peace River Regional District will encourage **development** in accordance with land use designations as shown in Schedule B to match land demand before considering proposed amendments for re-designating land to other uses. In evaluating proposals the Regional Board will:
  - Protect productive agricultural land;
  - Encourage the efficient use of land, infrastructure, and resources and avoid scattered **development**;
  - Enable financial sustainability of public infrastructure including services, utilities, and transit; and
  - Lessen interference of non-agricultural uses with agricultural operations.
2. In planning for **development**, this **Official Community Plan** recognizes the lands that interface with the City of Fort St. John and District of Taylor as areas for possible future urban expansion. As such, inter-governmental collaboration on matters such as planning for urban expansion and the potential expansion of **hard services** and **soft services** will be carefully considered.
3. The Peace River Regional District will continue to work collaboratively with the City of Fort St. John and the District of Taylor regarding non-residential land demands as broader economic development initiatives and servicing demands need to be considered.
4. The Peace River Regional District will work collaboratively with the City of Fort St. John and the District of Taylor to minimize and prevent land use conflicts along shared boundaries.
5. The Peace River Regional District will work collaboratively with the City of Fort St. John and the District of Taylor to review the boundary of the **North Peace Fringe Area Official Community Plan** to improve alignment with the Zoning Bylaw.
6. In partnership with the City of Fort St. John and the District of Taylor, the Peace River Regional District will work towards establishing a Terms of Reference to determine applicable area(s) and topic(s) of an updated Comprehensive Development Plan.
7. In partnership with the City of Fort St. John and the District of Taylor, the Peace River Regional District will work towards creating an industrial land strategy to evaluate existing supply and to forecast the need for additional industrial land in the **North Peace Fringe Area**, taking into consideration any relevant strategies that have been created by these partner municipalities.
8. Direct **development** that requires connecting to community water and/or sewer services to locate within the City of Fort St. John, District of Taylor, and/or Charlie Lake.

9. Provide information for prospective new property owners to enable them to understand the different levels of services that exist within the Peace River Regional District including those that are provided by the Regional District and those provided by municipalities.
10. Manage the impacts of the shadow population on the residential, commercial and community amenity needs within the **North Peace Fringe Area** and the wider Peace River Regional District.
11. Encourage industrial **development** to locate in areas already designated by this Plan for industrial **development** wherever possible.
12. Where applicable, apply the Peace River Regional District's Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw that establishes servicing and **development** standards for rural subdivisions and new **development**.

### 4.3 Agricultural Land Reserve

Notwithstanding the provisions of this **Official Community Plan**, lands within the **Agricultural Land Reserve** remain subject to the provisions of the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and its associated regulations.

Proposals for a non-farm use or subdivision within the **Agricultural Land Reserve** that are not permitted by the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* will require an application to the Commission. Before the **Agricultural Land Commission** will review an application, it must be supported by the Regional District by way of Regional Board resolution.

Furthermore, as of September 30, 2020 private landowners are no longer permitted to apply to the **Agricultural Land Commission** to exclude their lands from the **Agricultural Land Reserve**. If a private landowner wishes to pursue an exclusion, it must first be supported by the Peace River Regional District and the Peace River Regional District then makes the application to the **Agricultural Land Commission**. This change to the regulation is meant to ensure that exclusions are carefully considered and guided by the community planning process and local government bylaws.

#### Agricultural Land Reserve Policies

1. The Peace River Regional District will support the general objective of the **Agricultural Land Commission** to preserve agriculture land through the policies of this Plan.
2. The Peace River Regional District may pursue a block exclusion from the **Agricultural Land Reserve** for lands within the Charlie Lake Sewer Area.
3. Additional block exclusions may be considered for Agricultural Land Reserve lands designated for non-agricultural uses within the **Official Community Plan** area.
4. Private property owners are not permitted to make applications for Exclusion from the **Agricultural Land Reserve**. Their request must be submitted to the Peace River Regional District for consideration and assessment against land use planning criteria and conformity with this Plan. Should the Regional Board agree to support the request, the Peace River Regional District will make application to the **Agricultural Land Commission**.

5. All non-farm land use and subdivision applications within the **Agricultural Land Reserve** shall be considered by the Regional Board in accordance with the provisions of this Plan, the *Agricultural Land Commission Act*, regulations and Orders of the **Agricultural Land Commission** and consideration of the potential impact on the agricultural viability of the subject property and surrounding area.

#### 4.4 Subdivision of Land

**Approving Officer** means a person appointed by the Province of British Columbia to approve applications to subdivide land. Currently the **Approving Officer** appointed by the Province for all subdivisions within the Regional District is within the **Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure** office.

When reviewing a subdivision application referred by the **Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure**, the Regional District will consider whether the subdivision complies with applicable Regional District bylaws, including the Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw and the applicable zoning bylaw. The Regional District may also consider other factors that it believes may be relevant to the assessment of whether the **Approving Officer** should consider the subdivision to be in the public interest, including but not limited to the following:

##### Subdivision Policies

1. The extent of the **development** and its potential effect on the subject property and neighboring properties including agricultural uses.
2. The agricultural capability and Canada Land Inventory soil classification of the area proposed for subdivision.
3. Whether the proposal includes mechanisms to minimize conflicts along the agricultural/non-agricultural land use designation boundaries by means of a continuous landscaped **buffer** that is developed with guidance from the **Agricultural Land Commission's Landscape Buffer Specifications** and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries' *Guide to Edge Planning*.
4. The ability of the parcel to be an integral part of an existing farm operation, if applicable.
5. Whether the proposal demonstrates orderly and compact **development** as a priority, to avoid sprawl and create an efficient **development** pattern.
6. Ensuring that the proposal does not create land-locked parcels without access to a developed right-of-way, while avoiding the creation of panhandle parcels.
7. Whether the proposal fills in missing linkages in the transportation network.
8. The severity of topographic features (slope) of the proposed parcel and whether it is suitable for subdivision or, if applicable, more difficult to farm.
9. Whether the **development** can accommodate an on-site sewage disposal system or be connected to a community sewage system as authorized by Northern Health or the Peace River Regional District in accordance with the Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw.

10. The availability of existing services to the site, including but not limited to, fire protection, roads, electricity, telephone, natural gas, or the ability to provide the services to the site.
11. The potential effect of the proposed subdivision on the transportation network.
12. Environmental effect and potential for hazardous conditions.
13. If the proposal corrects, or improves an existing property circumstance including, but not limited to encroachment, split designation, separation by a road etc., an OCP amendment would not be required.
14. Any other issues that may be relevant to a specific proposal.

## **4.5 Indigenous Inclusion & Collaborative Planning**

The planning area for this **Official Community Plan** is within the territory of Treaty 8 First Nations. The planning area also surrounds the City of Fort St. John and nearly surrounds the District of Taylor. As all of these jurisdictions grow and change, it is important to collaborate to ensure orderly and mutually beneficial **development** in the Peace River region for the present and for the future.

### **Collaborative Planning Policies**

1. The Peace River Regional District will work towards reconciliation with First Nation, Metis, and Indigenous communities, as laid out in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Principles of Truth and Reconciliation and Calls to Action.
2. The Peace River Regional District will work collaboratively in partnership with First Nation, Metis, and Indigenous communities and organizations to build thriving relationships.
3. The Peace River Regional District acknowledges Treaty Land Entitlement negotiations and relevant agreements that may initiate opportunity for enhanced relations between the Peace River Regional District and First Nations.
4. The Peace River Regional District will engage with First Nation, Metis and Indigenous communities as appropriate and coordinate on significant land use planning matters.
5. The Peace River Regional District will work towards holding regular government-to-government meetings with First Nation, Metis, and Indigenous communities to discuss shared interests.
6. The Peace River Regional District will work collaboratively with First Nation, Metis, and Indigenous communities to minimize and prevent land use conflicts along shared boundaries.

## Part 3 | Land Use

## Land Use Designations

The Land Use Designations, which are a fundamental aspect of the **Official Community Plan**, are shown on Schedule B and further described in this Part of the **Official Community Plan**. The purpose of a land use designation is to ‘match’ the use of the land within the **Official Community Plan** area to the goals, vision and intentions set out in Part 1 of this Plan. There are ten land use designations including one designation “Study Area Lands” which identifies lands where additional analysis by the PRRD is necessary before assigning land use designations.



## 5 Agricultural Land Use

Agricultural areas generate employment and are central to the history, culture, and sense of place of the **North Peace Fringe Area** for its residents. These lands also serve as attractive visual breaks from more intensive uses and contribute to the aesthetics of the **North Peace Fringe Area**.

The rolling landscape consists of fertile soils that support an active agricultural industry. Considered to be a prairie region and the most northerly agricultural area in Canada, the Peace River Regional District produces almost 90% of the province's grain. The region is a major food source to the province, and agriculture is a valuable component of the local and provincial economy.

This Plan recognizes agriculture as an integral part of the rural landscape and a major contributor to the local area economy and critical to food security. This Plan aims to protect agricultural land from land use conflicts and encroachment by non-agricultural uses. Most lands in the Agriculture designation are within the **Agricultural Land Reserve** and are subject to the *Agricultural Land Commission Act*, its associated regulations, and the *Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act*. This **Official Community Plan** aims to ensure agricultural lands are used for food production and other agricultural uses, for the long term. Buffering in accordance with the **Agricultural Land Commission's Landscape Buffer Specifications** and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries' *Guide to Edge Planning* is recommended to help protect agriculture when these lands are adjacent to non-agricultural uses.

Some of the highest quality agricultural lands in the region have already experienced urban **development** of some type, particularly in and around the City of Fort St. John and the District of Taylor. Soils around Fort St. John are primarily Class 2, which are some of the most fertile soils available. This class of soils extends to the south end of Charlie Lake, where Class 3, 4, and 5 soils are also found. Southeast of Fort St. John, there are Class 3 (moderate-severe limitations) and Class 7 (not arable) lands associated with the natural features, topography, and erodible soils of the Peace River.

Protection of agricultural lands is a key priority for the Peace River Regional District, communities of the North Peace, and the Government of British Columbia. Careful management and protection of productive agricultural lands must be prioritized to enhance the agricultural sector of the economy and rural lifestyle enjoyed by the **North Peace Fringe Area** residents.

### Agriculture Goals

1. To support agriculture as a primary industry within the Fringe Area and recognize its value to the area's rural character and residents.
2. To direct subdivisions and uses that are not complementary to agriculture away from agricultural areas.
3. Support the Province's initiatives such as the Environmental Farm Plan Program and ensure local producers are aware of Provincial grant programs and opportunities.



## 5.1 Agriculture (AG)

### Intent

The purpose of the Agriculture designation is to retain land for agricultural use and to support and encourage agriculture. Lands in the **Agricultural Land Reserve** are subject to the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and associated regulations.

### Agriculture Land Use Designation Policies

1. Within the Agriculture designation, the principal uses of land will generally be limited to agriculture, and uses which are compatible or complementary to agriculture.
2. **Home-based businesses** are permitted in lands designated for agriculture, subject to zoning regulations and the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and associated regulations.
3. The Peace River Regional District will support the general objectives of the **Agricultural Land Commission** in preserving the agricultural land base for future food production and food security through the Agriculture land use designation.
4. The Peace River Regional District will work with the **Agricultural Land Commission** to identify land in the **Agricultural Land Reserve** that has limited agricultural capability and may be suitable for exclusion from the **Agricultural Land Reserve** for non-agricultural **development**, based on existing non-agricultural designations previously endorsed by the ALC, and can contribute to community **development** and economic sustainability.
5. In reviewing **development** applications, the Peace River Regional District will ensure that decisions and amending bylaws are consistent with the purposes of the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* so that land can be used for agricultural and complementary uses as permitted by the legislation.
6. It is recognized that not all land designated as Agriculture is contained within the **Agriculture Land Reserve**. The review of **development** applications on such lands will be based on the broader agriculture goals listed above and the principle of protecting agricultural land for agricultural purposes.
7. The Peace River Regional District will support the longevity of the agricultural industry by supporting the family and corporate farms and encouraging farm diversification initiatives.
8. Initiatives to increase awareness of the importance of the agricultural sector to the local economy should be explored and supported. These may include initiatives such as local farmers' markets, agri-tourism, and education programs.
9. The Regional District encourages farming operators and other land uses to share the responsibility for minimizing potential land use conflicts. This can be done through collaboratively using minimum distance setbacks for intensive agricultural operations, as well as fencing and landscape **buffers** as per the Ministry of Agriculture's Guide to Edge Planning and in compliance with the *Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act*.

10. All agricultural operations will be encouraged to comply with the environmental and waste control regulations and guidelines as administered by the Province.
11. Local food production, processing, distribution, and sale of locally grown products will be encouraged in order to diversify the agricultural industry.
12. The Regional District supports strengthening partnerships with local food producers to help increase local food accessibility in the region.
13. The Peace River Regional District will encourage water management strategies that increase the availability of water to the agricultural sector, while striving to ensure management operations are consistent with provincial and federal objectives for protecting water quality and supply.
14. The Peace River Regional District will limit the encroachment of **development** on agricultural lands by directing future growth and **development** to locate within already developed areas, or those areas that are anticipated to receive **hard services** in the future.
15. Non-Farm Uses which have been authorized by the **Agricultural Land Commission** shall be considered a permitted use within the Agriculture designation for the duration of the Non-Farm Use approval, subject to the terms and conditions set out in the approval, and shall not require an amendment to the Official Community Plan.

## 6 Residential Land Use

Existing residential land use patterns in the **North Peace Fringe Area** reflect the rural nature of the area and the need to accommodate sewer services on the property. Given that large lot subdivision is not sustainable from an environmental or land supply perspective, this Plan focuses residential growth to existing residentially designated areas by this Plan, with higher densities in areas that can be serviced with community sewer. Complementary measures in other land use designations and other parts of this Plan establish parameters related to the conservation and preservation of agriculture, natural areas, and open space.

### Residential Goals

1. To appropriately accommodate projected housing demand to meet the diverse needs of current and future residents through a mix of housing options by type, density, and tenures.
2. To encourage cost-effective and compact **development** by directing future growth and **development** to locate within already developed areas, or those areas that are anticipated to receive **hard services** in the future.
3. To prevent further encroachment into productive agricultural lands, hazardous lands, and **environmentally sensitive areas**.

### General Residential Policies

1. The Peace River Regional District will direct residential **development** to areas already designated in this **Official Community Plan** for residential use and generally not support any new land for residential uses through re-designations.
2. Residential **development** will be encouraged to be directed to areas where established residential neighbourhoods exist or in areas where servicing is available.
3. The Peace River Regional District will make reasonable efforts to ensure that new residential **development** is not approved adjacent to industrial land uses or lands designated for future industrial use wherever possible.
4. Residential **development** will not be permitted in areas with known risks of natural hazards.
5. New residential **developments** and subdivisions will be designed in a manner which respects the rural character of the **North Peace Fringe Area**, preserves open space and is achieved through innovative site planning.
6. **Home-based businesses** are permitted in residential land uses, subject to zoning regulations and the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and regulations.
7. Secondary suites and additional dwellings are permitted throughout in residential land uses, subject to zoning regulations and the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and associated regulations.

8. To minimize conflicts along the agricultural/non-agricultural land use designation boundaries, a continuous landscaped **buffer** should be developed with guidance from the **Agricultural Land Commission's Landscape Buffer Specifications** and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries' *Guide to Edge Planning*.

## 6.1 Rural Residential (RR)

### Intent

Lands designated as Rural Residential are intended to provide large lot residential housing options while preserving the rural character of the **North Peace Fringe Area**.

### Rural Residential Land Use Designation Policies

1. The principal use of land within the Rural Residential designation will be residential, subject to zoning regulations.
2. Agricultural uses are permitted subject to the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and associated regulations, and Zoning Bylaw regulations.
3. Water and sewer services on rural residential parcels are the responsibility of the property owner and subject to Northern Health regulations.

## 6.2 Community Residential (CR)

### Intent

The Community Residential designation is intended to provide smaller serviced residential parcels while preserving the rural character of the Fringe Area.

### Community Residential Land Use Designation Policies

1. The principal use of land within the Community Residential designation will be residential.
2. Community Residential uses will be directed to those areas with community sewer services to maximize existing sewer capacity, or those areas planned to receive sewer service, encouraging future compact **development**.
3. Community Residential land uses will be required to connect to community sewer services, where they exist, in accordance with the provisions of the Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw.
4. The minimum parcel size will be determined based on the servicing capacity of the area designated for Community Residential and zoning regulations.
5. New infill community residential **development** that connects neighbourhoods and amenities should be directed to locate within already developed areas, or those areas that are anticipated to receive **hard services** in the future.
6. A variety of housing types including manufactured home parks and other ground-oriented multi-unit dwellings are permitted, subject to zoning regulations.

7. Liquid waste should be disposed of through a **community sewer system**, pursuant to the Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw.

## 7 Settlement Centres

The **North Peace Fringe Area** has two established Settlement Centres. The Charlie Lake Settlement Centre is located at the south end of Charlie Lake and is the Peace River Regional District's largest unincorporated community. The Baldonnel Settlement Centre is situated east of the City of Fort St. John.

### 7.1 Settlement Centre (SC)

#### Intent

Lands designated as Settlement Centre are intended to recognize and promote the growth of an established community centre to provide local residents with a range of services such as schools, community gathering areas, recreation, residential and commercial uses.

#### Settlement Centre Land Use Designation Policies

1. The Peace River Regional District will collaborate with area residents and stakeholders, including the **Agricultural Land Commission** to initiate a Conceptual Design Plan for the Charlie Lake Settlement Centre that will reflect current and future community needs.
2. Only lands adjacent to existing Settlement Centre lands should be considered for expansion of the Settlement Centre designation, ideally as part of a broader community planning process that involves general areas rather than individual parcels or sites ad hoc or patchwork re-designation is discouraged.
3. Within the Settlement Centre the following land uses are permitted :
  - a) Community Residential (CR)
  - b) General Commercial (GC)
  - c) Civic, Assembly, and Institutional (CIVIC)
  - d) Parks, Open Space, and Natural Environment (OS)

Agriculture land use is permitted within the Settlement Centres until such time as the parcel is re-designated to any of the land uses listed above.

4. Noxious uses or uses that may have a negative impact on the rural community, its residents and the environment are not permitted in the Settlement Centre designation.
5. Through the **development** process, the Peace River Regional District will encourage the **development** of pedestrian and cycling pathways, including highway crossings that facilitate the safe movement of the public.
6. Commercial **development** on lands designated as Settlement Centre will be subject to the relevant guidelines as described within Commercial **Development** Permit Area.
7. Within the Settlement Centre designation, commercial **development** shall be located on highways and/or major roads.

8. Proposals for new **development** within the Settlement Centre designation will be required to provide planning justification for the location and land use designation in accordance with the intent of the Settlement Centre and the proposed land use designation.
9. To minimize conflicts along the agricultural/non-agricultural land use designation boundaries, a continuous landscaped **buffer** should be developed with guidance from the **Agricultural Land Commission's *Landscape Buffer Specifications*** and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries' *Guide to Edge Planning*.

## 8 Commercial Land Use



*Figure 5: Strip Mall in Charlie Lake*

Most region-serving office and retail activity will be based in the City of Fort St. John. This Plan recognizes that there is potential for a limited amount of smaller-scale retail and service employment at a neighbourhood level in the rural areas, particularly in Settlement Centres like Charlie Lake and Baldonnel. Commercial uses that serve the travelling public and require **hard services** should be located in serviced areas along the highways.

### Commercial Goals

1. To support a range of commercial uses that help build a strong economy and serve the needs of the rural community, tourists, and the traveling public.
2. Direct **development** that requires community water and/or sewer services, to locate within the Charlie Lake Settlement Centre, or within the municipal boundary of the City of Fort St. John or the District of Taylor.

### 8.1 General Commercial (GC)

#### Intent

Lands designated as General Commercial are intended to provide goods and services to both local residents and the traveling public.

#### General Commercial Land Use Designation Policies

1. Commercial uses that cater to local area residents' goods and services needs are encouraged to locate in Settlement Centres.
2. Commercial uses that cater to residents, tourists, and the traveling public may be located at highway junctions or along controlled access highways with approval from the **Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure**.



3. The General Commercial designation is intended for small-scale and retail businesses that supply neighbourhood level services in the rural areas.
4. Lands designated as General Commercial will be subject to the relevant guidelines as described within the Commercial **Development** Permit Area.
5. Subdivision or land use proposals will be examined and considered if commercial use is compatible with surrounding land uses, subject to the factors as set out in Section 4.4 Subdivision of Land.
6. The Peace River Regional District will promote an orderly sequence of commercial **development** that is compatible with neighbouring land uses and agricultural areas.
7. The Peace River Regional District will collaborate with the **Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure** to ensure that access and egress from commercial **developments** are designed to the highest standards of safety and satisfy any Ministry requirements.
8. To avoid conflicts with any adjacent residential uses, where new commercial **development** is proposed, a continuous landscaped **buffer** shall be provided between the uses, on the commercial side of parcel lines.
9. To minimize conflicts along the agricultural/non-agricultural land use designation boundaries, a continuous landscaped **buffer** should be developed with guidance from the **Agricultural Land Commission's Landscape Buffer Specifications** and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries' *Guide to Edge Planning*.

## 9 Industrial Land Use



*Figure 6: Industrial Business along Highway 97*

### Intent

Lands designated as Industrial are intended to support the natural resource sector regionally, as well as service nearby residents and businesses. The industrial sector in the **North Peace Fringe Area** is primarily located near the City of Fort St. John.

### Industrial Goals

1. To support a range of industrial uses that help build a strong local economy.
2. To minimize the impact of industrial uses on agricultural, residential and commercial uses.

### Industrial Policies

1. Industrial uses that require connecting to community water and/or sewer services should be located within serviced communities such as the City of Fort St. John or the District of Taylor, or in those areas that are anticipated to receive **hard services** in the future.
2. Infill of existing vacant industrial parcels will be prioritized before creating new industrial parcels.
3. The Peace River Regional District will work collaboratively with the City of Fort St. John and District of Taylor to develop a new Comprehensive **Development** Plan and create an industrial land strategy to determine future industrial land use needs.
4. Further designation and **development** of Light Service Industrial lands will be discouraged until the Comprehensive **Development** Plan is complete.
5. Initiatives should be undertaken by industrial land users to avoid or minimize conflicts with surrounding land uses such as residential and agricultural, as well as protecting the natural environment.

6. The Peace River Regional District will collaborate with the **Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure** to ensure that access and egress from industrial **developments** are designed to the highest standards of safety and satisfy any Ministry requirements.
7. This **Official Community Plan** recognizes that resource processing industries are often best located in areas close to the resource.
8. To minimize conflicts along the agricultural/non-agricultural land use designation boundaries, a continuous landscaped **buffer** should be developed with guidance from the **Agricultural Land Commission's Landscape Buffer Specifications** and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries' *Guide to Edge Planning*.

## 9.1 Light Service Industrial (LSI)

### Intent

The Light Service Industrial designation, will generally be used for industrial uses that service the natural resource sector and nearby residents and businesses.

### Light Service Industrial Land Use Designation Policies

1. Proposals for new industrial **development** outside designated areas are discouraged.
2. Light Service Industrial lands should be developed in a sequential manner that minimizes gaps of undeveloped land between **developments**.
3. New Light Service Industrial **development** will be designed in order to avoid or mitigate potential noise, traffic, visual or emission conflicts between residential or agricultural and the industrial uses.
4. All Light Service Industrial designated lands are subject to the Industrial **Development** Permit Area guidelines.

## 9.2 Heavy Industrial (HI)

### Intent

Within the Heavy Industrial designation, the principal use of the land will generally be industrial uses of a particularly noxious nature.

### Heavy Industrial Land Use Designation Policies

1. The Peace River Regional District will direct Heavy Industrial **development** away from watercourses and any **environmentally sensitive areas**.
2. All Heavy Industrial designated lands are subject to the Industrial **Development** Permit Area guidelines.

## 10 Community Amenity Land Uses



*Figure 7: Beatton Park*

The **North Peace Fringe Area** has a strong sense of community, supported by community amenities. These places offer locations for residents to gather, learn, worship, and play.

### **Community Amenity Goals**

1. To support and provide for a wide range of public, government and not-for-profit community related uses, facilities and services that are non-commercial in nature and that provide for and contribute to enhanced lifestyle opportunities within the **North Peace Fringe Area**.
2. To support and work collaboratively with all levels of government, First Nations, community organizations, public interest groups, and all members of the community to provide a diverse range of recreational opportunities that may be enjoyed by residents and visitors of the area, while protecting the natural environment which all area residents enjoy.
3. To support the availability of public access to lakes and watercourses within the **North Peace Fringe Area** for all residents to enjoy.

## General Community Amenity Policies

1. The Peace River Regional District will participate, as appropriate, in the processes to determine the feasibility of upgrading or building new facilities that support community growth, including but not limited to such uses as schools, health care facilities, community halls or recreational facilities.
2. New Civic, Assembly, and Institutional **developments** shall be made universally accessible and include public safety measures such as lighting, signage, open spaces and seating.
3. The Peace River Regional District will work collaboratively to recognize heritage, cultural and historical sites in cooperation with the appropriate committees, societies, organizations, First Nations and provincial agencies.
4. The Peace River Regional District will foster an awareness of the need for environmental protection and the importance of preserving wildlife and habitat connectivity in this Plan area, by directing **development** away from such areas.
5. The Peace River Regional District will collaborate with the provincial government in water protection measures and discourage **development** that would adversely affect the quality of surface and groundwater sources for present and future users.
6. Consider climate change adaptation measures, such as air filtration and cooling, shade and green space design, when upgrading or developing new community amenities.
7. To minimize conflicts along the agricultural/non-agricultural land use designation boundaries, a continuous landscaped **buffer** should be developed with guidance from the **Agricultural Land Commission's Landscape Buffer Specifications** and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries' *Guide to Edge Planning*

## 10.1 Civic, Assembly and Institutional (CIVIC)

### Intent

Within the Civic, Assembly and Institutional designation, the principal uses of land and/or buildings will generally be for public and institutional uses.

### Civic, Assembly and Institutional Land Use Designation Policies

1. The Peace River Regional District will work collaboratively with the community, and appropriate agencies to determine appropriate locations for new institutional uses such as schools, community halls, or care facilities as the needs of the community evolve.
2. The Peace River Regional District will work with the school district, industry, and the provincial government to address concerns of health and safety with regards to industrial activities and infrastructure being located in close proximity to schools.

## 10.2 Parks, Open Space and Natural Environment (OS)

### Intent

Within the Parks, Open Space and Natural Environment designation, the principal use of land and buildings will generally be for parks, recreation and preservation of the natural environment.

### Parks, Open Space and Natural Environment Land Use Designation Policies

1. The Peace River Regional District will support the **development** of public parks, ecological reserves, fish and wildlife habitat areas within the **Agricultural Land Reserve** subject to the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and associated regulations.
2. The Peace River Regional District will work with the general public, committees, societies, organizations, First Nations and provincial agencies in identifying and protecting features and sites of scenic, heritage, cultural, historical, paleontological, or archaeological significance within the **Official Community Plan** area.
3. As areas become known or verified as **environmentally sensitive areas**, the necessity to protect such areas may be considered, due to their biological diversity and key importance as habitat and wildlife connectivity, and alternative sites for future land use **development** should be a priority.
4. The Peace River Regional District will rely upon its *Regional Parks and Trails Master Plan* or subsequent and related parks strategies to plan for the long-term needs of the residents in the **North Peace Fringe Area**.

## 11 Study Area Lands

The Regional District has not yet determined the most suitable land uses for the lands designated in the Plan as being within a Study Area Lands designation. There are two sub-areas within this designation as follows: Industrial Study Area (ISA) and Geotechnical Hazard Study Area (GHSA). The Regional District intends to conduct further analysis and rely upon work being conducted by other agencies such as the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, in the months following adoption of this Plan to assist it in making the determination about future land uses in these areas and then follow the legislated process to amend the Plan once that further analysis is completed to provide one or more specified land use designations for each parcel in a Study Area Lands designation.

Any lands within the Study Area Land designation which are within the Agriculture Land Reserve remain subject to the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and will require the Agricultural Land Commission approval before the Regional Board will make any further determination on a new designation following the further analysis.

The Regional District anticipates that such an amendment(s) will be made within 18 to 24 months of the adoption of this Plan bylaw. In the meantime, lands that are found within the Agricultural Land Reserve will allow agriculture as their primary use, and so long as any parcel continues to be designated in the Plan as part of a Study Area Lands designation, no zoning amendment bylaw should be adopted to change the permitted use of the parcel.

## 12 Development Permit Areas

### Development Permit Area Intent

In addition to the goals and policies of this Plan, pursuant to Section 488 of the *Local Government Act*, certain lands are designated as **Development** Permit Areas. These areas have been identified to regulate specific aspects of **development** for the following reasons:

- Protection of the natural environment, its ecosystems and biological diversity;
- Protection of **development** from hazardous conditions;
- Protection of farming;
- Establishment of objectives for the form and character of intensive residential **development**;
- Establishment of objectives for the form and character of commercial, industrial or multiple dwelling housing **development**;
- Establishment of objectives to promote energy conservation; and
- Establishment of objectives to promote water conservation.

The specific purposes, conditions, guidelines, and exemptions for each **Development** Permit Area are described in this subsection of the **Official Community Plan** and shown on Schedule G.

Within the **North Peace Fringe Area Official Community Plan**, the following **Development** Permit Areas apply:

- Commercial **Development** Permit Area
- Industrial **Development** Permit Area
- Charlie Lake **Development** Permit Area
- Old Fort **Development** Permit Area

### 12.1 Interpretation

Particular attention should be given to the wording of policies contained in plan:

- a) “shall/must/will” means compliance with the goal, policy or guideline is mandatory; and
- b) “should/may” means that the goal, policy or guideline is the preferred course of action, however other options could be considered.



## 12.2 General Development Permit Area Policies

1. Where the land is included within one or more **Development** Permit Areas, one **Development** Permit is required; however, the application will be subject to meeting the guidelines of all applicable **Development** Permit Areas, as they pertain to the **development**.
2. Once a **Development** Permit is issued, the **development** must be in accordance with the terms of the permit and notice of the **Development** Permit will be registered on the title of the land.
3. The Peace River Regional District may require the posting of a letter of credit in order to ensure compliance with the conditions of the **Development** Permit.
4. The applicant shall address the guidelines stated in the applicable **Development** Permit Area guidelines.
5. The Peace River Regional District encourages applicants to seek the guidance of the necessary **qualified professionals** who are capable of addressing these guidelines.
6. **Development** Permit applications for proposed industrial or commercial **development** within 800 m from a “controlled” intersection shall be circulated to the **Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure** prior to approval, in accordance with the *Local Government Act*.
7. For **development** where both are required, **Development** Permits must be issued prior to Building Permits.
8. If the **development** proposed in the **Development** Permit application will likely cause soil disturbance, the applicant is required to submit the Peace River Regional District Contaminated Site Declaration form.
9. For the purposes of these **Development** Permit Areas, a landscape **buffer**:
  - a) Is a 3 m wide landscaped area adjacent to the parcel line on private property;
  - b) Includes trees at a ratio of 3:1 coniferous to deciduous, at least 6 cm in diameter at breast height at time of planting and spaced at maximum 10 m intervals;
  - c) Includes ground cover consisting of a combination of grass, rocks, mulch, and/or shrubs; and
  - d) May include fencing subject to the guidelines herein.

## Exemptions to Development Permits

1. **Development** permits are not required for the following:
  - a) Construction involving building floor area of less than 11 m<sup>2</sup>, or a garden shed or greenhouse having a floor area of less than 20 m<sup>2</sup>;Interior renovations or alterations;
  - b) Maintenance or repair of existing buildings or structures, as long as the works do not change the exterior appearance or design;
  - c) Addition, replacement, or alteration of doors, windows, heating systems, ventilation systems, air conditioning systems, or plumbing;
  - d) Alterations to plantings, as long as there is no loss of landscaped area or removal of required landscaping as set out in the landscaping section below;
  - e) Renovations or alterations to improve a building or structure's accessibility or universal design features;
  - f) Minor exterior addition or alterations with an estimated construction value not exceeding \$20,000; and
  - g) Emergency actions to prevent, control, or minimize immediate threats to life or property as determined by a professional engineer or building inspector or other **qualified professional** based on the situation.

## 12.3 Commercial Development Permit Area

### Justification

Pursuant to the *Local Government Act*, the purpose of this **Development** Permit Area is to establish objectives for the following:

- Protection of the natural environment, its ecosystem, and biological diversity;
- Protection of farming;
- Revitalization of an area in which a commercial use is permitted; and
- Form and character of commercial **development**.

### Area

The Commercial **Development** Permit Area applies to all lands designated Settlement Centre and General Commercial on Schedule G of this Plan.

### Objectives

The objectives of the Commercial **Development** Permit Area are to:

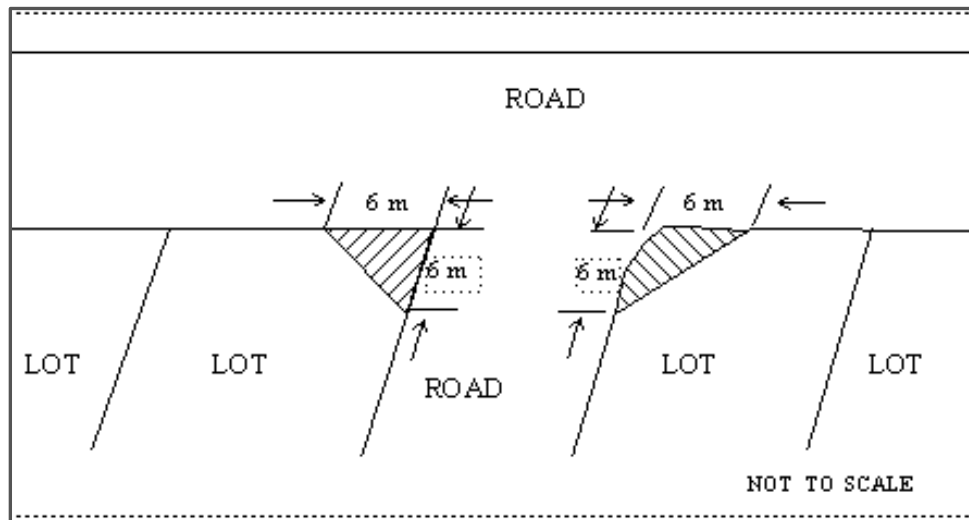
1. Protect agricultural land by establishing land use **buffers** and other land management techniques to ensure improved compatibility between agricultural and other land uses.
2. Ensure that any commercial **development** has a visual quality that enhances the area's general appearance, including appropriate screening and landscaping to minimize the effects on adjacent parcels.
3. Ensure that the **development** offers safe and efficient access to all users.
4. Protect the natural environment by establishing land use **buffers** and other land management techniques between commercial **developments** and natural areas.
5. Reduce risk of injury to property, **development** and the environment.

### Commercial Development Permit Area Guidelines

Within the Commercial **Development** Permit Area, no person shall subdivide land or construct a building or structure prior to the landowner applying for and receiving a **Development** Permit from the Regional District, which shall sufficiently address the following guidelines:

## Building Siting and Design

1. Buildings shall be located towards the front parcel line, with parking and loading areas located to the side or rear of the parcel.
2. Building entrances shall be oriented towards the front parcel line and be clearly identifiable. Architectural features such as canopies, lighting and building articulation which highlight entrances are encouraged.
3. **Accessory** buildings and uses including storage, repair, and maintenance areas shall be located at the rear or side of the parcel, away from the highway and road right-of-way, in order to enhance the appearance of the **development** along any such highway or road right-of-way.
4. Buildings and parking areas shall incorporate universal design principles.
5. Buildings, accesses and parking areas should be designed in a manner that is easy to understand and navigate while ensuring pedestrian safety.
6. No buildings or structures shall be located within the sight triangle, as shown in *Figure 8 Sight Triangle*.



*Figure 8 Sight Triangle*

7. The use of an overall aesthetic colour scheme is encouraged to promote a cohesive and appealing design.

### Winter Design Considerations

8. Buildings should be designed to maximize sunlight exposure to absorb and retain heat during winter months while providing shade from the summer sun.
9. Building roofs and eaves should be designed to prevent snow from accumulating and sliding onto the ground below.
10. Snow storage areas should be situated in areas that receive long periods of sunlight to quickly melt and drain the snow and generally be out of site from highway and road right-of-ways.
11. Snow storage areas should be located and designed to minimize runoff from snow melt entering naturalized areas or adjacent agricultural lands.

### Materials

12. Exterior building materials shall be durable and of high quality.
13. Building façades are encouraged to include a mixture of exterior building cladding materials, such as brick, stone, wood or other durable and aesthetically pleasing material.

### Parking, Loading and Circulation

14. Parking area access should be well-identified from the highway and major roads.
15. An identifiable and well-lit pathway should be provided to the front entrance of every building from all on-site parking areas and any adjoining public sidewalks.

### Landscaping

16. All work, including landscaping planning, design, installation and maintenance shall be executed to the Canadian Landscape Standards or other applicable trade associations.
17. Parcels abutting lands zoned Agriculture shall provide buffering as per the Ministry of Agriculture's Guide to Edge Planning.
18. Landscaping should be used to protect the building from direct sunlight during afternoon hours during the summer and permit sunlight penetration in the winter.
19. Landscaping should be designed to shield buildings from the strong winds and to not block solar access for south facing walls and windows. Consider planting deciduous trees on the south and east sides of buildings and coniferous trees on the north and west sides of buildings.
20. Landscaping designs should maximize the retention of existing vegetation or the use of new plantings such as native vegetation, rough grasses and hardy and drought-tolerant plant species.

21. Parking areas shall be screened from adjacent highway or road rights-of-way by placing on private property trees at a ratio of 3:1 coniferous to deciduous, at least 6 cm in diameter at breast height at time of planting and spaced at maximum 10 m intervals.
22. Landscaping shall be designed so that no plantings occur within the required sight triangle, as shown in Figure 8 Sight Triangle.

#### Screening and Buffering

23. Off-street parking, loading, and storage areas shall be separated from adjacent residential or agricultural designated parcels, by a landscape **buffer**.
24. Parcels abutting natural areas or lands designated as park, open space, natural environment, shall provide a landscape **buffer**.
25. Wherever possible, retain existing vegetation to serve as a landscape **buffer** between adjacent properties. In situations where this is not possible, existing vegetation may be removed and a new landscape screen may be planted in accordance with General **Development** Permit Area Policy 9.
26. Building and structures fronting Highway No. 97 and Highway No. 29 shall be separated from the highway by a landscape **buffer**. Such areas may be broken only for driveways.
27. Commercial uses abutting residential or agricultural uses shall provide opaque fencing, such as wood fencing, at the property line with a minimum height of 1.8 m.
28. Commercial uses abutting other commercial uses or industrial uses may utilize chain link fencing to a minimum height of 1.8 m.

#### Lighting

29. Light pollution and over-spill illumination into adjacent properties shall be avoided. Where lighting occurs in parking areas, it shall be designed without glare to the adjoining land parcels or public rights-of-way.
30. All parking lots, loading bays and other semi-private spaces should be well light during the nighttime and winter months.

## Environmental Protection

31. In assessing a **Development** Permit application, if the Peace River Regional District determines that the proposed **development** or works may potentially affect natural features, slopes, water, or riparian areas, or **environmentally sensitive areas** such as fish and wildlife resources, the applicant may be required to submit, at the applicant's expense, further documentation, technical studies, plans and recommendations with respect to the effects of the proposed **development** or works including any of the following:
- a) An environmental assessment report prepared by a registered professional biologist
  - b) An erosion and sediment control plan
  - c) A vegetation management plan
32. Vegetative **buffer** separation is encouraged between **development** and natural, undeveloped areas.
33. Wherever possible, natural vegetation, natural flora and fauna habitat, including nesting, denning and breeding sites shall be protected.
34. **Development** should be sited in order to protect natural watercourses, riparian corridors and floodplains from erosion, channel migration and flooding.

## 12.4 Industrial Development Permit Area

### Justification

Pursuant to the *Local Government Act*, the purpose of this **Development** Permit Area is to establish objectives for the following:

- Protection of the natural environment, its ecosystem, and biological diversity.
- Protection of farming.
- Form and character of industrial **development**.

### Area

The Industrial **Development** Permit Area applies to land shaded on Schedule G of this **Official Community Plan** that are designated for industrial use (LSI or HI) and generally described below:

1. Land in proximity to Highway No. 97 and Highway No. 29.
2. Land in proximity to residential or agricultural designated areas generally located on lands surrounding the City of Fort St. John.

Highway No. 97 is the main transportation artery traversing through this **Official Community Plan** area with Highway No. 29 branching off of this corridor to connect the North Peace with the West Peace. Parcels in proximity to these highways are highly visible to many local area residents and the traveling public, from which first impressions of the community are often made as people travel through the area. The importance of industrial **development** to the community and its economy is recognized by this Plan.

### Objectives

The objectives of the Industrial **Development** Permit Area are to ensure that:

1. All **development** has a visual quality that enhances the area's general appearance, including appropriate screening and landscaping to minimize the effects on adjoining parcels.
2. Protect agricultural land by establishing land use **buffers** and other land management techniques to ensure improved compatibility between agricultural and other land uses.
3. Protect the natural environment by establishing land use **buffers** and other land management techniques between industrial **developments** and natural areas.
4. The industrial **development** offers safe and efficient access to all users.



## Industrial Development Permit Area Exemptions

1. A **Development** Permit is not required for the construction, addition or alterations of a single detached dwelling and **accessory** residential uses where those are a permitted use according to the zoning bylaw.

## Industrial Development Permit Area Guidelines

Within the Industrial **Development** Permit Area, no person shall subdivide land or construct a building or structure prior to the landowner applying for and receiving a **Development** Permit from the Regional District, which shall sufficiently address the following guidelines:

### Building Siting and Design

1. Where industrial buildings or structures are sited on parcels adjacent to controlled access highways they shall be located towards the front parcel line, with parking and loading areas located to the side or rear of the parcel.
2. **Accessory** buildings and uses including storage, repair, and maintenance areas shall be located at the rear or side of the parcel, away from the highway and road right-of-way, in order to enhance the appearance of the **development** along any such highway or road right-of-way.
3. Building entrances shall be oriented towards the front parcel line and be clearly identifiable. Architectural features such as canopies, lighting and building articulation which highlight entrances are encouraged.
4. Buildings and parking areas shall incorporate universal design principles.
5. Buildings, accesses and parking areas should be designed in a manner that is easy to understand and navigate while ensuring pedestrian safety.
6. No buildings or structures shall be located within the sight triangle, as shown in Figure 8 Sight Triangle.

### Winter Design Considerations

7. Buildings should be designed to maximize sunlight exposure to absorb and retain heat during winter months while providing shade from the summer sun.
8. Building roofs and eaves should be designed to prevent snow from accumulating and sliding onto the ground below.
9. Snow storage areas should be situated in areas that receive long periods of sunlight to quickly melt and drain the snow and generally be out of site from highway and road right-of-ways.

10. Snow storage areas should be located and designed to minimize runoff from snow melt entering naturalized areas or adjacent agricultural lands.

#### Materials

11. Exterior building materials shall be durable and of high quality.
12. Buildings adjacent to controlled access highways are encouraged to include a mixture of exterior building cladding materials, such as brick, stone, wood or other durable and aesthetically pleasing material.

#### Parking, Loading and Circulation

13. Parking areas should be well-identified from the highway and from major roads.

#### Landscaping

14. All work, including landscaping planning, design, installation and maintenance shall be executed to the Canadian Landscape Standards or other applicable trade associations.
15. Parcels abutting lands zoned Agriculture shall provide a **buffer** as per the Ministry of Agriculture's Guide to Edge Planning.
16. Landscaping should be used to protect the building from direct sunlight during afternoon hours during the summer and permit sunlight penetration in the winter.
17. Landscaping should be designed to shield buildings from the strong winds and to not block solar access for south facing walls and windows. Consider planting deciduous trees on the south and east sides of buildings and coniferous trees on the north and west sides of buildings.
18. Landscaping designs should maximize the retention of existing vegetation or the use of new plantings such as native vegetation, rough grasses and hardy and drought-tolerant plant species.
19. Parking areas shall be screened from adjacent highway or road rights-of-way by placing on private property trees at a ratio of 3:1 coniferous to deciduous, at least 6 cm in diameter at breast height at time of planting and spaced at maximum 10 m intervals.
20. Landscaping shall be designed so that no plantings occur within the required sight triangle, as shown in Figure 8 Sight Triangle.

### Screening and Buffering

21. Off-street parking, loading, and storage areas shall be separated from adjacent residential or agricultural designated parcels, by a landscape **buffer** at least 6 m in width.
22. Parcels abutting natural areas or lands designated as residential or park, open space, natural environment, shall provide a landscape **buffer**.
23. Wherever possible, retain existing vegetation to serve as a landscape **buffer** between adjacent properties. In situations where this is not possible, existing vegetation may be removed and a new landscape screen may be planted in accordance with General **Development** Permit Area Policy 9 and other policies of this section.
24. Building and structures fronting Highway No. 97 and Highway No. 29 shall be separated from the highway by a landscape **buffer**. Such areas may be broken only for driveways.
25. Industrial uses abutting residential or agricultural uses should provide opaque fencing, such as wood fencing, at the property line with a minimum height of 1.8 m.
26. Industrial uses abutting other industrial uses or commercial uses may utilize chain link fencing with a minimum height of 1.8 m.
27. Alternative **buffers** may be considered, including earth berms that block the line of sight between industrial and residential, agricultural or natural areas, consisting of soil, seeded to grass in the same year the berm is built, with optional vegetative growth such as shrubs planted along the top of berm. Such berms should be a height of approximately 3 m above adjacent grades and have a base of approximately 9 m.

### Lighting

28. Light pollution and over-spill illumination into adjacent properties should be minimized. Where lighting occurs in parking areas, it should be designed without glare to the adjoining land parcels or public rights-of-way.
29. All parking lots, loading bays and other semi-private spaces should be well lit during the nighttime and winter months.

## Environmental Protection

30. If proposed **development** or works may potentially affect natural features, slopes, water, or riparian areas, or **environmentally sensitive areas** such as fish habitat or wildlife habitat, the applicant may be required to submit, at the applicant's expense, further documentation, technical studies, plans and recommendations with respect to the effects of the proposed **development** or works including any of the following:
  - a) An environmental assessment report prepared by a registered professional biologist
  - b) An erosion and sediment control plan
  - c) A vegetation management plan
31. A vegetative **buffer** separation is encouraged between **development** and natural, undeveloped areas.
32. Wherever possible, natural vegetation should be maintained.
33. **Development** should be sited in order to protect natural watercourses, riparian corridors and floodplains from erosion, channel migration and flooding.
34. Protect natural flora and fauna habitat, including nesting, denning and breeding sites.

## 12.5 Charlie Lake Development Permit Area

### Justification

Pursuant to the *Local Government Act*, the purpose of this **Development** Permit Area is to provide objectives for the following:

- Protection of the natural environment, its ecosystem, and biological diversity
- Establishment of objectives for the form and character of intensive residential **development**

### Area

The Charlie Lake **Development** Permit Area applies to lands shaded on parcels bordering Charlie Lake on Schedule G of this **Official Community Plan**.

In 2000, Charlie Lake was classified as a “Special Case Lake” within the Peace River Regional District Lakeshore Development Guidelines, July 2000, which recommends that no more than 50% of the lake perimeter should be developed. As of 2020, 42.26% of the lake perimeter has been developed, comprised of a range of land use activities, including, residential, recreational, ecological, and agricultural **development**. Cumulative effects of increased **development** can have detrimental effects on the overall health of the lake.

The Regional District has received public concerns regarding the effects of residential **development** on the lake that can result in pollutants from a wide range of uses such as inadequate placement and maintenance of sewage systems, fertilizer use, driveway runoff, and lawn or garden pesticide use.

Community groups and individuals have an interest in protecting the lake’s natural environment areas, which is essential for providing and maintaining wildlife habitat, water quality, and recreation opportunities.

Charlie Lake is a backup water supply for the City of Fort St. John and rural area residents and therefore protection of the lake’s water quality is a priority.

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change holds Watershed Reserve No. 0288651, Document No. 73265, for the purpose of watershed management, affecting lands referenced on Schedule D. Part of this reserve affects some lands outside this Plan area.

If any **development** is proposed on lands identified as part of the Charlie Lake Watershed Reserve No. 0288651, the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change should be contacted directly for further information.

## Objectives

The objectives of the Charlie Lake **Development** Permit Area are to:

1. Ensure that the water quality of Charlie Lake is improved and preserved.
2. Ensure that a balance be found between the preservation of ecological resources and the desire to develop lakeshore lots around Charlie Lake.
3. Ensure that, as a public resource, Charlie Lake is accessible to all who use and enjoy it.
4. Ensure that all residential **development** around the Charlie Lake is designed to minimize impacts to the lake and achieve a high quality form and character.

## Charlie Lake Development Permit Area Guidelines

Within the Charlie Lake **Development** Permit Area, no person shall subdivide land, alter land, including the removal of trees or vegetation and removal or deposit of soil, or construct a building or structure prior to the landowner applying for and receiving a **Development** Permit from the Regional District, which shall sufficiently address, the following:

### General Requirements

1. In addition to the requirements herein, all **development** within the Charlie Lake **Development** Permit Area must meet the guidelines set out in Peace River Regional District Lakeshore **Development** Guidelines.

### Building Siting and Design

2. **Accessory** buildings and uses including storage, repair, and maintenance areas shall be located at the rear or side of the parcel, away from the highway and road right-of-way, in order to enhance the appearance of the **development** along any such highway or road right-of-way.
3. No buildings or structures shall be located within the sight triangle, as shown in Figure 8 Sight Triangle.
4. Any new **development** proposal within Charlie Lake **Development** Permit Area will provide a Site **Development** Plan that must meet the criteria outlined in Section 8, 'General **Development** and Subdivision Guidelines' within Subsections 8.1 through to 8.3 of the Lakeshore **Development** Guidelines, July 2000, (page no.'s 13 to 18) to address such issues as single lot **development** and construction, soil erosion control, building setbacks or site layout and clearing.

## Landscaping

5. Parcels abutting lands zoned Agriculture shall provide a **buffer** as per the Ministry of Agriculture's Guide to Edge Planning.
6. Landscaping designs should maximize the retention of existing vegetation or the use of new plantings such as native vegetation, rough grasses and hardy and drought-tolerant plant species.
7. Landscaping shall be designed so that no plantings occur within the required sight triangle, as shown in Figure 8 Sight Triangle.

## Environmental Protection

8. Vegetative **buffer** separation is encouraged between **development** and natural, undeveloped areas.
9. Wherever possible, natural vegetation, natural flora and fauna habitat, including nesting, denning and breeding sites should be protected.
10. **Development** should be sited in order to protect natural watercourses, riparian corridors and floodplains from erosion, channel migration and flooding.
11. If proposed **development** or works may potentially affect the natural features of the lake or effect fish and wildlife habitat or riparian areas, the applicant may be required to submit, at the applicant's expense, further documentation, technical studies, plans and recommendations with respect to the effects of the proposed **development** or works including any of the following:
  - a) An environmental assessment report prepared by a registered professional biologist.
  - b) An erosion and sediment control plan.
  - c) A vegetation management plan.

## 12.6 Old Fort Development Permit Area

### Justification

Pursuant to the *Local Government Act*, the purpose of this **Development** Permit Area is to establish objectives for the following:

- Protection of the natural environment, its ecosystems, and biological diversity.
- Protection of **development** from hazardous conditions.

### Area

The Old Fort **Development** Permit Area applies to all lands shaded as “Old Fort **Development** Permit Area” on Schedule G.

This area encompasses steep slopes that may be vulnerable to slope instability, erosion, landslides or flooding.

Properties may be subject to storm water drainage or lagoon wall failure or other hazards. There has been a demonstrated need to ensure that all hazards to persons and property are reduced through the control of the location and nature of the **development**.

### Old Fort Development Permit Area Objectives

The objectives of this designation are to:

1. Determine the conditions or requirements that need to be met to safeguard life and property.
2. Facilitate safe **development** in these areas, only as supported by geotechnical assessment.
3. Preserve significant natural features and landscapes.

### Development Permit Area Guidelines

Within the Old Fort **Development** Permit Area, no person shall subdivide land, alter land, including the removal of trees or vegetation and removal or deposit of soil, or construct a building or structure prior to the landowner applying for and receiving a **Development** Permit from the Regional District, which will sufficiently address the following:

#### General Requirements

1. All **development** applications in the Old Fort **Development** Permit Area must be accompanied by a slope stability assessment and a geotechnical report prepared by a **qualified professional** which considers the Tetra Tech Report dated June 24, 2021.



2. The geotechnical report must be prepared by a professional geotechnical engineer who is qualified to practice in the field of geotechnical engineering. This report will assist the Regional District in determining the level of **development** that may safely be constructed and what conditions or requirements it will impose on the applicant. The geotechnical report shall:
  - a) Define the extent and character of all surface geological materials and the groundwater regime in the area proposed for **development**;
  - b) Define the type and extent of hazard zones within the area, including:
    - i. The potential for slope failure above, below, or within the **development** (based on expert judgement, which may use extrapolation of past performance on site and in the vicinity, modelling of various factors including current and future conditions on site, and/or other means deemed appropriate by the geotechnical engineer); and
    - ii. The location and characteristics of present and potential future soil collapse (e.g., collapse in the form of piping, caving, or sinkholes);
  - c) Indicate how storm water runoff and leakage from pipes related to the **development** will be controlled to avoid concentration of runoff or groundwater seepage and reduce potential for erosion, piping, and sinkhole activities;
  - d) Discuss the stability of soils and geology on which the proposed **development** will be sited and, if applicable, indicate any special measures needed to facilitate safe construction;
  - e) Provide a plan for the safe disposal of any unstable soils to ensure they are reconditioned such that they are no longer collapsible or are excavated such that they are not used in construction on or off site.
3. Where a site-specific geotechnical report has been provided by a **qualified professional** indicating conditions under which the property can be safely developed, the report shall be registered in a Section 219 covenant on title to ensure safe use for all subsequent owners.
4. Where a professional geotechnical engineer's report indicates that the land may be used safely subject to the conditions as set out in the report, the Regional District may consider and impose any of the engineer's conditions that are within the scope of the **Local Government Act**. Upon completion of the building or structure, the owner shall provide the Regional District with a statement certified by the professional engineer that the construction was carried out in compliance with the conditions specified in the **Development Permit**.

### Location of Structures

5. Whenever possible, place buildings and structures in areas with less than 15% slope.
6. In order to protect against the loss of life and to minimize property damage associated with ground instability and/or slope failure, **development** in steep slope areas is discouraged.
7. No excavation or filling shall be undertaken, nor any building or permanent structure erected, constructed or placed in areas subject to hazardous conditions. Further, buildings and structures shall be sited in accordance with the permit.
8. **Development** should be sited in order to protect natural watercourses, riparian corridors and floodplains from erosion, channel migration and flooding.
9. **Development** opportunities, constraints and conditions of design will be identified on the basis of a topographic and feature survey showing natural slope contours, spot elevations, swales, slope transitions, seasonal and permanent watercourses, drainage routes, vegetation, top of bank, and break lines.
10. The underside of any floor system or the top of any pad supporting any space or room, including a manufactured home, that is used for dwelling purposes, business or the storage of goods that are susceptible to damage by flood water will be located above the flood levels as designated by the provincial government.

### Environmental Protection

11. Existing vegetation shall be maintained to control erosion and protect slopes.
12. Vegetative **buffer** separation is encouraged between **development** and natural, undeveloped areas.
13. The pattern of **development** should be responsive to the varied topography and natural landscape. Changes to existing terrain should be kept to a minimum.
14. Human-made storm drainage and retention ponds should have a natural appearance and be restored to the condition of natural environment. Drainage should be designed as natural environmental corridors wherever possible.
15. Drainage flow rates offsite should be retained as close as possible to pre-**development** conditions and drainage retention and detention is encouraged.
16. The protection of water quality should be ensured.
17. Protect natural flora and fauna habitat, including nesting, denning and breeding sites.

18. If proposed **development** or works may potentially affect the natural features of the area or effect fish and wildlife habitat or riparian areas, the applicant may be required to submit, at the applicant's expense, further documentation, technical studies, plans and recommendations with respect to the effects of the proposed **development** or works including any of the following:
- a) An environmental assessment report prepared by a registered professional biologist.
  - b) An erosion and sediment control plan.
  - c) A vegetation management plan.

## 13 Temporary Use Permits

Economic opportunities sometimes arise that are temporary in nature for which permanent **development** is not desirable. Also at times, it is beneficial to test the potential of a use at one particular location before committing to permanent **development**. In these circumstances Temporary Use Permits may be considered. In addition to public notification requirements, a public hearing may be held at the discretion of the Regional Board concerning an application for a Temporary Use Permit.

### Temporary Use Permit Policies

1. Pursuant to the **Local Government Act** the entire **North Peace Fringe Area** is designated as an area where Temporary Use Permits may be considered.
2. Temporary Use Permits will be evaluated on a case by case basis and context.
3. A Temporary Use Permit for a proposed use located adjacent to a Controlled Access Highway or other major roads may not be approved by the Regional Board where the **Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure** indicates that it has an objection to the proposed use.
4. An approved temporary use may continue in accordance with the provisions specified in the permit until the date the permit expires, or three years after the date the permit was issued, whichever occurs first.
5. Temporary Use Permits may be renewed only once and should be discouraged from re-application in favour of being considered through a rezoning process if the use is likely to need to continue for longer than three years.
6. Temporary uses should be oriented so as to minimize or eliminate conflicts with agriculture, sensitive land uses or neighbourhoods.
7. Where a temporary use is proposed within the **Agricultural Land Reserve**, issuance of a Temporary Use Permit is subject to approval of a Non-Farm Use by the **Agricultural Land Commission**.
8. Once a Temporary Use Permit expires, the land shall be reclaimed to pre-permit conditions or to a standard agreeable to the landowner and compliant with Peace River Regional District bylaws.
9. Temporary Use Permits considered for the operation of a temporary work camp must comply with Section 15.2 of this Plan.
10. Applications for Temporary Use Permits will be evaluated against the policies of this Plan and relevant zoning bylaw provisions and may require conditions attached to the permit to ensure that land use compatibility and efforts to minimize any off-site impacts are addressed.

# 14 Development Considerations

## 14.1 General Land Use

### Goals

1. Within the **North Peace Fringe Area**, the Regional Board will consider and implement principles that foster and sustain the rural lifestyle of the region. These principles include such elements as:
  - a) Conserving and protecting unique or sensitive environments, including wildlife habitat
  - b) Using existing infrastructure wherever possible
  - c) Promoting infill or **redevelopment** in areas where municipal services and amenities are available before developing new areas in order to preserve agricultural lands
  - d) Encouraging compact **development** to minimize sprawl and leapfrog **development**
  - e) Supporting residential **development** that preserves scenic views
  - f) Preserving access to outdoor recreation opportunities

## 14.2 Northern Health

The enforcement of the *Public Health Act* provisions for on-site sewage disposal, by Northern Health, is important for the maintenance of public health in the rural area. The management of sewage system location away from watercourses and ground water is a priority for the maintenance of healthy environmental conditions of the region's water resource.

To reduce sprawl and facilitate efficient compact communities in the rural area, the Regional District will collaborate with Northern Health to:

1. Identify opportunities and barriers for compact **development**, related to rural sewage disposal challenges in the Peace Region.
2. Research alternative on-site sewage treatment/disposal options for rural lot **development** on lots less than 1.6 ha (4 ac) in the Peace Region.

### 14.3 South Taylor Management Area

The lands in the South Taylor Management Area, as shown in Schedule E of this Plan, contain some of the highest quality agricultural lands, including lands in the Peace River Valley. The Regional District supports agricultural, recreational, and limited commercial activities in this area.

#### South Taylor Management Area Policies

1. In the South Taylor Management Area, lands located within the **Agricultural Land Reserve** should be used primarily for agriculture.
2. Lands outside the **Agricultural Land Reserve** will generally be used for parks, open space, outdoor recreational uses, limited commercial and residential uses, campgrounds, boat launches, and agriculture.
3. No new permanent dwelling units are to be located on those land parcels identified by BC Hydro and leased by the District of Taylor, which are generally located below the 410 m elevation.
4. Best management practices will be required for lands located within South Taylor Management Area where lands may be subject to occasional flooding of the Peace River, associated with BC Hydro power projects, and other potential hazardous conditions, including unstable soils.
5. When any **development** is on lands located adjacent to a watercourse, public access to the water must be maintained or provided.

### 14.4 Preservation Area and Environmental Hazards

Areas identified as Preservation Area in Schedule E may be subject to natural hazards. The boundaries of the Preservation Areas are approximate and may need to be confirmed at the time of **development** proposal.

#### Objectives

1. Continue to work with appropriate Provincial Ministries to identify areas that are subject to natural hazards including flooding, landslides, and wildfires.
2. Continue to work with the Province to reduce the risk of wildfire hazards, including efforts to develop physical fireguards to protect populated areas from wildfire.
3. Discourage **development** and resource extraction that would adversely affect the quality of surface and groundwater sources for present and future users.
4. Discourage the clearing of steep slopes or riverbanks because of the detrimental effect related to soil erosion and the siltation of watercourses.

## Preservation Area Policies

5. All **development** will be encouraged to use wildfire prevention measures such as “Fire Smart” principles.
6. **Development** and resource activities will be directed away from areas that are subject to hazardous conditions.
7. **Development** on lands with a slope of 15% or greater, or on slopes that are subject to slippage or mass movement shall be prohibited.
8. When considering **development** proposals within flood-prone areas, the Regional District will encourage these areas to be kept in their natural state, and may approve **development** as long as mitigation measures identified by the province and in any supplementary engineering studies are adhered to. **Development** within flood plains shall be strongly discouraged.
9. The Regional District will discourage **development** that might result in groundwater contamination in areas where soils have fast percolation rates and areas where the groundwater is close to the surface.
10. The Regional District will discourage **development** in areas characterized by wetlands, swamps, saturated soils, valleys, ravines and seasonal draws.
11. Applications for subdivision or **development** within or in close proximity to the Preservation Areas identified on Schedule E may be required to provide a report prepared by a **qualified professional** that confirms the existence of developable areas on the site and delineates the areas which are at a higher risk of natural hazards.
12. Lands identified as having a hazard or identified as a ‘Preservation Area’ may, where possible, be used for park, trails, open space, outdoor recreation, or agricultural purposes.

## 14.5 Surface, Ground & Storm Water

There is no storm water management system in the **North Peace Fringe Area**; however, as more **development** takes place, there may be a need to develop an Integrated Storm Water Management Plan in areas experiencing more urban style **development**, in order to more effectively address and manage storm water.

### Surface, Ground & Storm Water Policies

1. **Development** and resource extraction that would adversely affect the quality and quantity of surface and groundwater sources for present and future users will be strongly discouraged. **Development** may be approved provided it is able to demonstrate that it will meet any mitigation measures recommended by a **qualified professional** through their impact assessment studies.
2. The clearing of steep slopes or riverbanks will be strongly discouraged because of the potential detrimental effects related to soil erosion and the siltation of watercourses.
3. The requirements of the Peace River Regional District Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw will apply to all new **development** where applicable.



**Part 4 | Community Development**

## 15 Our Housing

The Peace River Regional District completed its Housing Needs Assessments in response to the Government of British Columbia's requirement that every local government must complete a Housing Needs Report by 2021. These must be updated every 5 years thereafter in order to better understand the current and future housing needs of its residents.

For the areas covered by this Plan, affordability and housing for seniors and options for aging in place were the top housing challenges identified by stakeholders involved in the Housing Needs Assessments. There is also a lot of land surrounding neighbouring municipalities that is both designated as Agricultural and within the **Agricultural Land Reserve**. As such, limitations on **development** exist. These limitations impact housing type options and the ability for seniors who may be retiring from farming to downsize and continue to live in the rural areas while being closer to services, supports and amenities provided within municipalities.

Estimated projections indicate a need for approximately 632 new housing units in the **North Peace Fringe Area** between 2021 and 2041. This Plan designates areas for residential **development**, and directs more intensive types of housing to areas such as the Charlie Lake, Fort St. John, and Baldonnel. Based on the recent completion of the Housing Needs Assessments, it is recognized that special types of housing are also needed, as discussed below.

### 15.1 Affordable, Rental and Special Needs Housing

The City of Fort St. John functions as a service hub for a sub-regional area. Within the city there is access to transit, community amenities, and health and social services, and it is recognized that the city is the major location for affordable, rental and special needs housing in the North Peace.

#### Housing Policies

1. Residential neighbourhoods should be designed to allow freedom of public access with a connected street network. Disconnected street networks and the **development** of gated residential communities intended to restrict public access and circulation through neighbourhoods by means of security gates, walls and similar barriers will be discouraged.
2. The Peace River Regional District will encourage assisted living housing and services to be developed within neighbouring municipalities in order to ensure access to the services, supports and amenities needed by the intended residents of those units.
3. The Peace River Regional District will collaborate with the City of Fort St. John and District of Taylor to identify opportunities to support housing projects through service agreements and other partnerships.
4. Residential **development** within settlement centres or in close proximity to municipalities will be encouraged in order to provide a variety of housing options including small acreages that allow seniors to age in place in rural areas while being close to services and supports needed.

5. The Peace River Regional District will advocate for and explore partnership opportunities for additional housing resources and supports in settlement centres.
6. The Peace River Regional District will work with non-profit housing agencies to support their efforts in seeking grant funding for affordable housing projects.
7. The Peace River Regional District will assess the feasibility of implementing a region-wide housing function to support the **development** of affordable housing within the region which could involve applying incentives and entering into agreements to secure affordable rental housing units for a specified length of time.
8. The Peace River Regional District will collaborate with neighbouring jurisdictions, community-based agencies and partner agencies to address homelessness and related issues facing vulnerable populations, including potential migrant workers experiencing homelessness.
9. The Peace River Regional District will encourage the **development** of accessible and adaptable housing options to meet the needs of seniors, persons with mobility issues, and persons with disabilities.
10. Multi-unit residential **development** proposals will be encouraged to use sustainable and green building practices and materials, such as Passive House design for long-term maintenance and operating cost efficiencies.

## 15.2 Work Camps

Work camps fulfill a need for temporary housing for workers, often for those people employed in natural resource activities in remote areas. Depending on the size and scope of the project, these camps can include residential, recreational, and commercial uses.

### Work Camp Policies

1. The Peace River Regional District will pursue the creation of an inter-governmental working group of all authorities involved in the approval of temporary work camps in order to respond to applications in a coordinated, effective manner.
2. The Peace River Regional District will work with other jurisdictions and the natural resource sector to seek a full understanding of the cumulative effects of work camps in the region, identify opportunities to minimize negative impacts on housing availability and affordability, and to ensure that a list of all work camps is developed for emergency purposes.
3. The Regional District will require a plan for reclamation to pre-permit state be filed and secured for as part of a Temporary Use Permit approval.
4. When considering an application for a work camp, the Regional District requires information beyond a typical application for **development**, as found on the “Work Camp – Background Information” sheet available on the Peace River Regional District website.
5. The Peace River Regional District will consider the development of a zone in relevant zoning bylaw(s) to specifically accommodate permanent or long-term work camps.

## 16 Our Environment & Climate Change



*Figure 8: Algae in Charlie Lake*

The **North Peace Fringe Area** is home to a number of species of flora and fauna, as well as geological features, natural landscapes, and water bodies. These natural features hold intrinsic value, sustain life and ecosystems, and have defined the area for hundreds of years. The natural environment characterizes a ‘way of life’ that is valued and cherished by the residents of the **North Peace Fringe Area**. The rolling valleys, the flowing rivers, and the night sky are among the natural attributes that make the **North Peace Fringe Area** special for its residents. While seeking to develop sustainably, the **North Peace Fringe Area Official Community Plan** places emphasis on preservation and stewardship.

## Environment & Climate Change Goals

1. To support and work collaboratively with all levels of government, First Nations, community organizations, public interest groups, and all members of the community to protect the natural environment and its ecosystems for future generations.
2. To work toward meeting 'Carbon Neutral' targets and actions for reducing Green House Gas Emissions.

## Environment & Climate Change Policies

1. Ensure future **development** is managed with consideration for minimizing effects on the natural environment.
2. Foster an awareness of the need for environmental protection and the importance of preserving wildlife and habitat connectivity in this Plan area by directing **development** away from such areas.
3. Promote the protection of the **North Peace Fringe Area** ecosystems and biodiversity, while supporting the rehabilitation of damaged areas that are threatened by invasive plants.
4. Support and encourage community involvement in environmental stewardship and environmental education.

## 16.1 Energy Reduction

As a signatory to the *Climate Action Charter*, the Regional District will:

1. Continue to take action to reduce the Peace River Regional District's energy consumption and Green House Gas emissions and encourage residents and local businesses to do likewise in pursuit of 'carbon neutrality'.
2. Continue working toward reducing the amount of Green House Gases by 15% by 2030 (from 2007 levels) and, to the extent possible, implement the strategies and actions of the Regional District's Community Energy Plan and Corporate Energy Plan (2010).
3. Broadly support the development and use of alternative energy sources, including wind, solar and geothermal, subject to regulations of the applicable zoning bylaw.
4. Encourage building improvements that are resource-efficient, including retrofits to older structures and green building designs in new structures.
5. Continue investigating the use of regulatory tools to promote or require efficiency and alternate energy use in new **developments**.
6. Encourage and support environmental stewardship partnerships focused around achieving the 5 R's – Rethink, Refuse, Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.

## 16.2 Water Stewardship

### Water Stewardship Policies

1. The Peace River Regional District recognizes the value of the provincial government's Northeast Water Strategy (2015) and will work in collaboration with other governments, First Nations, community groups and industry to achieve the Strategy's goals of unified water stewardship, healthy aquatic ecosystems, clean water, and sustainable use of water by:
  - a. Promoting the preservation and protection of the quality and quantity of water and underground aquifers;
  - b. Encouraging best practices in preserving, restoring, and protecting natural waterways, including Charlie Lake, Peace River, Beatton River, and those smaller tributaries within these watersheds; and
  - c. Recognizing that the Peace River is one of 20 rivers in BC proclaimed as a 'BC Heritage River' in order to provide greater emphasis on river-related values during land use planning processes, raise awareness of the importance of a healthy river system, help protect the special values of the river, and build a stronger public support for and involvement in stewardship of the river<sup>1</sup>.

## 16.3 Air Quality

### Air Quality Policies

1. The Peace River Regional District recognizes the importance of protecting air quality throughout the **Official Community Plan** area, and will work with industrial, commercial, and community interests to maintain and improve air quality through the use of best management practices.
2. The Peace River Regional District will work with member municipalities and provincial agencies in identifying issues of air quality and work collaboratively towards managing **development** in such a manner to minimize effects, specifically within sensitive air sheds such as those located within valley bottoms.

## 16.4 Lighting

### Lighting Policies

1. Lighting should be designed to support a safe and secure environment, while minimizing effects on adjacent properties, **environmentally sensitive areas**, and the night sky.

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Environment (BC Parks), British Columbia Heritage Rivers Program.  
[www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/heritage\\_rivers\\_program/bc\\_rivers.html](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/heritage_rivers_program/bc_rivers.html)

2. The Peace River Regional District will encourage the use of energy efficient lighting and appropriate lighting scaled to the land use proposal in order to provide for the level of safety needed while protecting the night sky.

## **16.5 Invasive Plants**

Invasive plants bring harm to our environment by altering habitats and disrupting essential ecosystem functions. Once established, invasive plants can be costly to manage, if not impossible to eradicate – prevention is key. Once established, invasive plants can:

- Endanger public health and safety by increasing hay fever allergies and by having toxic properties harming humans, pets, livestock, and wildlife
- Out-compete native vegetation and destroy natural habitats
- Reduce agriculture forage yields and hay quality
- Increase wildfire hazards and interfere with regeneration of forests
- Decrease land values and effect recreation areas
- Negatively effect water quality by causing soil erosion and stream sedimentation

### **Invasive Plant Policies**

1. In recognition of these dangers, the Regional District will be a leader in the prevention and management of terrestrial invasive plant infestation<sup>2</sup> by:
  - a) Establishing measures to control invasive plants on Regional District property;
  - b) Developing strategic alliances with other land occupiers to minimize the spread of invasive plants to Peace River Regional District lands; and
  - c) Implementing public outreach and education initiatives focused on achieving prevention through increased awareness.

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<sup>2</sup> Peace River Regional District. Strategic Plan and Profile of Invasive Plants and Noxious Weeds.

## 17 Our Recreation, Parks & Trails



*Figure 9: Trails in Beaton Park*

The **North Peace Fringe Area** is home to the Montney Centennial Regional Park, Rotary RV Park, Peace Island Park, Charlie Lake Provincial Park, Beaton Provincial Park and Taylor Landing Provincial Park. There are also informal trails that are used and maintained by various groups and individuals. In 2014, the Regional Board adopted the *Regional Parks and Trails Master Plan*. Its objectives are to:

1. Develop regional parks that are enjoyable, exciting, and accessible places.
2. Maintain and encourage quality outdoor recreational opportunities for residents and visitors to the Peace River Regional District.
3. Provide guidelines to encourage a mix of regional parks that are representative of the varied geographic locations and environments found throughout the Peace River Regional District.
4. Provide broad recommendations for the improvement, maintenance, and priorities of the existing regional parks.



5. Support user groups and organizations in the **development** and management of recreational trails.

### **Recreation, Parks & Trails Goals**

1. To recognize the importance of regional parks and recreational trails for residents in terms of enhanced quality of life, health and well-being benefits, economic benefits, protection and conservation of the environment, and preservation of local history and culture.
2. Ensure communal parks and green spaces are designed for the needs of all ages, physical abilities, and groups. Parks can incorporate adaptive playground equipment, wheelchair accessible paths, and places for individuals or groups to gather comfortably.
3. To manage existing regional parks through the Regional Parks and Trails Master Plan to ensure that they are safe, secure, and inviting for residents and visitors.
4. Examine feasibility of multi-use recreational facilities.
5. Seek out partnerships with other groups on recreational projects.
6. Examine the potential for creation of a parkland dedication policy for new subdivisions.

### **17.1 Regional Parks**

During the consultation process associated with the *Regional Parks and Trails Master Plan*, it was determined that park users would like to see more regional parks as well as upgrades and improvements to existing regional parks.

#### **Regional Park Policies**

1. Update and develop policies, procedures, and bylaws to support Montney Centennial Regional Park.
2. Develop guidelines to explore new Regional Park acquisition opportunities.
3. Apply the provisions of the Peace River Regional District Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw, where applicable, to acquire parkland dedication or cash-in-lieu of parkland for the purpose of establishing regional or community parks.

### **17.2 Regional Trails**

A trail for recreational use may either be a stand-alone outdoor recreation feature or be located within a parkland area. Within the *Regional Parks and Trails Master Plan*, a “recreational trail” means a path or route solely or partly used for one or more recreation functions and that is regionally significant within the Peace River Regional District but not necessarily owned, managed, maintained, or developed by the Regional District.

## Regional Trails Policies

1. The Peace River Regional District will consider establishing minimum trail standards and procedures as a condition of successful funding, such as regional connectivity and connectivity to municipal trail systems.
2. The Peace River Regional District will support the creation of a regional map showing the location of all registered trails and trailheads and their intended recreational use, and identifying roadways with existing pathways.
3. Explore the creation of a communications plan that would provide opportunities for all recreational trail user groups to collaborate on ways to accommodate a wide variety of users by sharing information and having open discussions.
4. Recognize the importance of the existing recreational amenities and ensure that areas are identified to meet the future needs of the **North Peace Fringe Area** in co-ordination with provincial agencies.
5. Support and encourage the **development** of a multi-use pathway from Charlie Lake to Peace Island Park through Fort St. John and Taylor, thereby enhancing active transportation and contributing to Green House Gas reductions.
6. Explore the **development** of a multi-use pathway extending along Fish Creek to the Beatton River.
7. Support and encourage the **development** of a multi-use trail south from Fort St. John towards the Peace River.
8. Trails along major roads should include separation between the roadway and a roadside pathway. Trails should be built to the **Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure's** Active Transportation Design Guide.
9. Pursue partnership opportunities with the **Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure**, Canadian National Railway, and BC Rail as a way to secure future trail routes.

## 18 Our Transportation Network

The **Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure** has jurisdiction over most transportation-related decisions in the **North Peace Fringe Area**, while taking into account local aspirations and circumstances. All road rights-of-way in the **North Peace Fringe Area** are owned by the Province of British Columbia.

The transportation system includes road, rail, and air traffic. The system also encompasses active transportation – walking, cycling, and riding. Active modes offer flexible travel most suitable for short and medium length trips that benefit individuals and the broader community by facilitating healthy lifestyles, increased recreation/tourism, and reduced environmental effects. Rural areas are challenged by longer trip distances and broader areas with increased costs to provide appropriate infrastructure.

### Transportation Goals

1. To provide a safe and effective transportation network system that respects the natural landscape, ensures continuing safety for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers, and increases the opportunities for efficient active transportation.
2. To collaborate with the **Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure** to improve, upgrade, and maintain highways and local roads.
3. To explore the merits of reactivating the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC).
4. To consider creating an Active Transportation Plan to identify potential routes, trails, and paths, building upon the **Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure's** Active Transportation Design Guide.

### 18.1 Road Network

The *Fringe Area Transportation Network Plan*, prepared in 2015, was used as a basis of the goals and policies of this section. This plan presents the long-term multi-modal transportation network for the **North Peace Fringe Area**, providing a long-term vision for roads, active transportation facilities, and public transit. The elements of the *Fringe Area Transportation Network Plan* are considered along with the long-term **development** pattern envisioned for the **North Peace Fringe Area**, and integrated with existing and future multi-modal networks in the City of Fort St. John and District of Taylor to provide for coordinated regional travel.

## Road Network Policies

1. Adopt the following road classifications, as shown in Schedule I:
  - a) Highway (Arterial): Highways accommodate long distance trips within the region and to destinations outside the region. The primary role of highways is to move traffic with minimal interruption and with limitation on property access.
  - b) Major Road (Collector): Major Roads connect Minor Roads to the Highway system or to major municipal roads. They may accommodate both short or long distance trips and balance demand for both vehicular mobility and property access.
  - c) Minor Road (Local): Minor Roads provide access to adjacent properties and connect local vehicle traffic to the Major Road and Highway network. Minor Roads are not intended for through or long distance trips.
2. Collaborate with the **Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure** to improve, upgrade, and maintain the local area transportation network, which should address regional priorities such as alternate community routes for potential emergency evacuations, dangerous goods routes, seasonal weight restrictions, and transit systems that connect the rural area with the City of Fort St. John and the District of Taylor.
3. Encourage the consideration for future bus stops in the rural areas close to the municipalities to promote alternative methods of transportation.
4. Support the implementation of the **Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure's** Alaska Highway 97 Corridor Study (2015), which recommends opportunities to improve the quality of service and safety along the Alaska Highway.
5. Encourage future connected road networks that minimize travel distances, provide a choice of route options, maximize access to facilities and services, help distribute traffic congestion, and aid motorist orientation. The Peace River Regional District will promote the following guidelines for the future transportation network:
  - a) Roads should respond to existing natural features such as steep topography, wetlands, and forested areas.
  - b) The transportation network should encourage active transportation by promoting walkways, trails, and cycling routes along with road standards that safely accommodate pedestrians and cyclists.
  - c) The transportation network should include future inter-community public transit service within the **Official Community Plan** area.
  - d) Within settlement centres, consideration should be given to adopting road standards that include higher-order pedestrian facilities consistent with the "village" experience envisioned.
  - e) Roads and the transportation network should be designed to discourage heavy industrial traffic in residential areas.

6. Review and update the 2015 *Fringe Area Transportation Network Plan* as needed to address ongoing upgrades and priority areas.
7. Consult and pursue approvals from **Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure** for alternative road design standards, including such items as roadside trails, wider shoulders, and potential bus stops.
8. Support the transportation of dangerous goods on routes that would have least effect on existing and future residential areas.
9. Work with the District of Taylor, City of Fort St. John, and **Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure** to identify alternate emergency routes of access/egress through or around communities.

## 18.2 Public Transit

BC Transit provides planning and information for public transit in the Fort St. John area. Service is almost entirely contained within the City of Fort St. John boundaries. Accessible transit service is provided to Taylor and Charlie Lake and available to all residents. System funding is cost shared between BC Transit and the City.

The *Fringe Area Transportation Network Plan*, prepared in 2015, identified two conceptual transit route options to extend fixed-route conventional style public transit into the **North Peace Fringe Area**, as shown on Schedule H. One route would extend northwest to Charlie Lake, the other southeast connecting to the Airport, Baldonnel and Taylor. Either route could be implemented independent of one another. It should be noted that the rural transit service options are conceptual only and that more planning and funding consideration is required before a feasible and supported service concept is confirmed.

## 18.3 Rail and Air Transportation

In addition to roads and trails, the BCR / CN Rail line runs north-south in the **North Peace Fringe Area** passing through Fort St. John and crossing the Peace River immediately west of Taylor. Small spur lines have been developed in Fort St. John and Taylor to connect to adjacent industrial areas.

The North Peace Regional Airport, located between Taylor and Fort St. John is a regional hub, providing services to northern Peace River region residents, businesses, and resource industries. Served by three airlines, there are daily services to Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver, and Prince George. In 2019, the North Peace Regional Airport served more than 278,000 passengers travelling on commercial and charter flights for leisure and business.

## Rail and Air Transportation Policies

1. All **development**, if applicable, will be required to adhere to the guidelines<sup>3</sup> prepared by the Railway Association of Canada and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities pertaining to building setbacks, noise and vibration mitigation, safety barriers, security fencing, storm water management, and drainage.
2. In collaboration with the Provincial government, the Peace River Regional District will investigate opportunities for improvements to air and rail service to alleviate pressure on the highway system.
3. Recognizing that Federal aviation regulations pertaining to **development** near airports supersede regulations of the Peace River Regional District, work collaboratively with the North Peace Regional Airport Society, Transport Canada, and NAV Canada to ensure that Federal aviation regulations are adhered to, in order to limit the potential for aviation hazards on adjacent lands.

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<sup>3</sup> Railway Association of Canada and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. Guidelines for New Development in Proximity to Railway Operations. 2013

# 19 Our Services and Utilities

## Existing Conditions

In 2015, a baseline Infrastructure Assessment for the **North Peace Fringe Area** was undertaken by WATT Consulting Group as background to the **Official Community Plan Update**.

## Services and Utilities Goals

1. To ensure that infrastructure, services, and utilities meet the present and future needs of **North Peace Fringe Area** residents and businesses.

## Services and Utilities Policies

1. The Peace River Regional District will work collaboratively with member municipalities to identify the potential benefits and opportunities that may be shared and expanded upon in areas such as economic development, tourism, fire protection, recreation services, emergency services, solid waste, water, and sewer.
2. **Development** proposals will apply the provisions of the Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw where applicable to provide services and reduce gaps between urban and rural levels of servicing.

## 19.1 Fire Protection, Emergency Call Answer, and Fire Dispatch Services



*Figure 10: Charlie Lake Fire Hall*

The Charlie Lake Fire Department, operated by the Peace River Regional District, provides protection over the Charlie Lake Fire Protection Area. The City of Fort St. John and the District of Taylor also provide fire protection in the Fort St. John Rural Fire Protection Area and the Taylor Rural Fire Protection Area.

### Fire Protection, Emergency Call Answer and Fire Dispatch Services Policies

1. Continue to maintain and enhance fire protection throughout the **Official Community Plan** area.
2. Provide and expand cost effective access to fire protection and 911 call services.

## 19.2 Emergency Services

### Emergency Services Policies

1. Continue to collaborate with provincial agencies, member municipalities, First Nations, and volunteer organizations to provide emergency management and preparedness for the region.



2. Collaborate with provincial agencies, the District of Taylor, and City of Fort St. John in providing emergency preparedness for the region and its residents through the Regional Emergency Management Planning Program.

### 19.3 Water Services

There is currently no community potable water distribution system in the **North Peace Fringe Area**. Water supply is provided through private wells or from private water haulers. The exceptions are the North Peace Regional Airport and the Charlie Lake bulk water station, both of which are supplied by the City of Fort St. John. At one point, a water intake structure was operating at Charlie Lake as a drinking water source for Fort St. John. While it is no longer the City's primary water source, the pumping infrastructure at Charlie Lake remains in place. Further study is required to determine the density threshold where it becomes feasible to provide communal public water supply in Charlie Lake.

#### Water Services Policies

1. Continue working toward a supply of clean, safe drinking water available for human consumption.
2. Review and update all sub-regional rural water agreements. Assess current status of all sub-regional rural water agreements and identify measures to address outstanding issues.
3. Facilitate the establishment of community water service systems within already developed areas, or those areas that are anticipated to receive **hard services** in the future in order to prevent sprawl and encourage compact, efficient **development**.
4. Complete a water service study for the Charlie Lake area, to determine population thresholds for establishing a community water service or density thresholds for requiring connection to water services.
5. Work cooperatively with adjoining municipalities and rural area residents to consider the feasibility of new or extensions to existing water system services.

### 19.4 Liquid Waste Services

The most common method of sewage disposal in the **North Peace Fringe Area** is individual septic and field systems. The Regional Airport is tied into Fort St. John's system for treatment. There is a collective **community sewer system** operating in Charlie Lake located around the south end of the lake. Completed in the early 1990s, it was designed to handle domestic sewage, as well as commercial and light industrial uses. Effluent is collected at a lift station and is pumped out to a sewage lagoon. Updated in 2017, approximately 410 homes are currently connected to the system. Available capacity for an additional 80% of the current households is available along select branches.

## Liquid Waste Services Policies

1. Facilitate the establishment of new **community sewer systems**, and consider expanding existing services on a local service area basis, in order to prevent sprawl and encourage compact, efficient **development**.
2. Work cooperatively with adjoining municipalities and rural area residents to consider the feasibility of new or extensions to existing sewer system services.
3. Investigate priority areas on an annual basis for either new or expanded sewer services funded on a local servicing area basis, in response to area residents' requests.

## 19.5 Solid Waste Services

Solid waste will continue to be a major issue in the Peace River Region due to the current and anticipated residential and industrial growth. The Regional District supports Zero Waste as a long-term, overarching vision.

### Solid Waste Services Policies

1. Continue to use and update the *Regional Solid Waste Management Plan* to divert waste from landfills with the intent of reducing the solid waste stream to the greatest extent possible. Timely reviews and evaluations of this plan will be carried out to enhance services to all residents and businesses.
2. Encourage residents and businesses to rethink, refuse, reduce, re-use and recycle, in order to limit the volume of solid waste within the **Official Community Plan** area.

## 19.6 Utilities

Shallow utilities refer to natural gas and hydro lines. Natural gas supply in the study area is provided by Pacific Northern Gas.

### Utilities Policies

1. Assist rural residents in determining the feasibility of obtaining, extending, and maintaining local area infrastructure, inclusive of a range of services and utilities needed to manage growth as outlined in Section 12.2.
2. Services and utilities are permitted throughout the **Official Community Plan** area, in any designation. There will be no minimum parcel size requirements for a use in the Services and Utilities designation, other than an office building or works yard, which is subject to the applicable zoning bylaw.
3. The Peace River Regional District will work with major utility providers to provide continuous improvement to **North Peace Fringe Area** customers such as, but not limited to: electricity; radio and television receiving or broadcasting; telephone exchange; high-speed internet capacity; and natural gas utility distribution services.
4. Encourage the cooperation and coordination of utility companies in using existing utility corridors for multiple utilities.

5. The Peace River Regional District will advocate to senior levels of government for enhanced high speed Broadband Internet across the region to provide residents, businesses, and organizations with performance levels that meet all of their needs for health, education, and economic development.
6. Utility and communication uses proposed in the **Agricultural Land Reserve** are subject to the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and associated regulations.

## **19.7 Energy Services**

### **Energy Services Policies**

1. Consider the feasibility of alternative energy approaches, such as a District Energy System for the Charlie Lake Settlement Centre, to assist in achieving climate action and sustainability goals.

## 20 Our Social Well-Being

While the Regional District does not directly provide any health and social services within the **North Peace Fringe Area**, it supports a wide range of public and not-for-profit uses, facilities, and services that enhance the lifestyle opportunities for residents and visitors.

### Social Well-Being Goals

1. To support the efforts of community groups and public organizations in providing community facilities and services.

### Social Well-Being Policies

1. As the needs of the community change, the Peace River Regional District will work collaboratively with the community, and appropriate agencies supporting the location of institutional uses such as schools, community halls, or care facilities in the **North Peace Fringe Area**.
2. The Peace River Regional District will work collaboratively with the School District 60 in relation to the planning for and monitoring of residential **development** activity and proposals that could impact the need for educational services and schools including the acquisition of school sites, as provided for in provincial legislation.
3. The Peace River Regional District will work with School District 60, industry, and the provincial government to address concerns of health and safety with regards to industrial activities and infrastructure being located in proximity to rural area schools.
4. Work with local organizations to help articulate local needs and desires. The groups and facilities help forge a community identity and foster co-operation and volunteerism.
5. Encourage the design of residential neighbourhoods to allow freedom of public access with a connected street network and discourage unconnected street networks.
6. Publicly-accessed facilities should include universal-design features so that they are age-friendly and accessible to everyone.
7. Advocate to senior government for greater funding to support aging in place through programs such as Better at Home, Meals on Wheels, and other similar initiatives.
8. Advocate to the federal government for increased funding for the Home Adaptation Supports Initiative for Peace River Seniors.
9. Work with all Peace River Regional District jurisdictions to advocate for affordable housing investments in the region.
10. Advocate for additional resources to support future implementation efforts of the Housing Needs Reports.

## 20.1 Healthcare

The recruitment and retention of health professionals in all disciplines is an ongoing challenge that has a direct effect on the quality of life for residents in the Regional District. Although the following policies and initiatives apply to the whole of the Peace River region, they merit referencing in the **North Peace Fringe Area Official Community Plan**.

### Healthcare Policies

1. Support the creation of a plan to address health care needs in the region.
2. Explore developing a strategic alliance with Northern Lights College to establish a professional development program for nurses as part of the suite of educational opportunities offered through the College.
3. Collaborate with BC Emergency Health Services and Northern Health to explore the establishment of a training center for Primary Care Paramedics.
4. Work with provincial ministries and agencies to:
  - a. Ensure adequate access to mental health and substance use counseling
  - b. Ensure there are quality senior's care facilities in Fort St. John
  - c. Develop a health professional recruitment strategy

## 20.2 Culture and Heritage

### Culture and Heritage Policies

1. Identify and protect features and sites of scenic, cultural, historical, paleontological, and archaeological significance within the **Official Community Plan** area, with the assistance of residents, societies, First Nations, member municipalities, provincial ministries and other organizations.
2. Recognize structures and sites of heritage, historical, and archaeological significance through inclusion on the Regional District's Heritage Register and ensure they are appropriately designated.
3. Recognize the archaeological significance of the Tse'Kwa (Charlie Lake Cave), which contains evidence of a series of temporary occupations, spanning the last 11,000 years.
4. Recognize the heritage significance of the Old Fort Cemetery by maintaining it on the Heritage Register.

## 21 Our Economic Development

This section of the **Official Community Plan** provides objectives and policies aimed at ensuring a strong and resilient local economy in which residents can enjoy a high quality of life. A healthy economy is a cornerstone of a community – where people can prosper and invest, diversifying the local economy while balancing the capacity of the natural environment. A healthy community ensures that enough lands are designated for agricultural, industrial, and commercial uses, so that a wide range of employment opportunities are available, and that residents and visitors are able to obtain the goods and services they need within the community.

The Peace River region’s most enduring resources are its working landscapes. Natural resource lands and agricultural lands generate significant employment and add stability to the regional economy. In order to protect and enhance the rural lifestyle of the **North Peace Fringe Area**, Goals and Policies were developed to encourage a diverse range of industries, agricultural operations, and commercial enterprises that contribute to the regional economy.

### Economic Development Goals

1. To promote an economic climate that supports local businesses and attracts new investments while providing employment opportunities for residents of the region.
2. To recognize that educational facilities, recreation centres, resource lands, culture, tourism, community services, **home-based businesses**, as well as commercial and industrial businesses are all essential components of a diverse and strong economy.

### Economic Development Policies

1. Forestry, mining, and oil and gas resources are recognized as important economic drivers for the region and this Plan encourages wise stewardship and an approach to resource extraction activities that balances economic opportunities with environmental and social impacts.
2. Agriculture is recognized as a key sector of the economy and this Plan prioritizes the protection of agricultural lands for the long-term use for agriculture and encourages the maximization of agricultural opportunities.
3. A range of industrial uses will be permitted within the **Official Community Plan** area to provide the community with employment opportunities through these industrial businesses and services.
4. The Peace River Regional District encourages the **development** of businesses that provide services and support to seniors, regardless of where they reside.
5. Opportunities for local commercial, and **home-based business** uses will be encouraged in locations where the population can support them.

## 22 Our Natural Resources

The **North Peace Fringe Area** economy has historically been supported by agriculture and in recent decades, forestry, mining, and oil and gas industries have become important economic drivers. In order to benefit the region's economy, these resources must be protected and extracted efficiently, but not at the risk of irreparably damaging the working or cultural landscapes of the **North Peace Fringe Area**. Therefore, it is the intent of this Plan to encourage the utilization of extractive resources in areas of least detrimental effect and to reclaim the land for other productive uses.

### Natural Resource Goals

1. To work collaboratively with all levels of government, the public, and industry to reduce conflicts caused by resource extraction activities and to lessen the cumulative effects on the land base.

### Natural Resource Policies

2. Acknowledge that federal and provincial governments regulate resource extraction activities and ensure that local municipal regulations do not conflict with federal and provincial legislation and regulation.
3. Encourage a balanced approach to resource extraction activities that recognizes the importance of industry to the local and regional economy but does not compromise the health and safety of residents and reduces conflict with adjacent land uses.
4. Support all levels of government in recognized resource management, conservation, impact mitigation, site rehabilitation, and reclamation techniques to facilitate the future use of lands after resource extraction has been complete.
5. Request that the provincial government give due consideration to the effect of resource extraction activities on surrounding land uses and to direct such uses away from residential, commercial, settlement centres, civic and public, and institutional land use designations, and protected areas.
6. Encourage the provincial government to seek community input and support prior to resource **development** on Crown Land by notifying adjacent landowners and by holding public meetings when extraction activities are located in close proximity to residential uses.
7. Support efforts which aim to sustain and enhance the land base in the rural area through sound management practices, erosion control, identification and protection of **environmentally sensitive areas**, and through the timely reclamation of lands used for resource extraction.
8. Encourage water use that does not ultimately diminish the quality and quantity of water.
9. Recognize and continue to support Environmental Assessment Reviews for proposed resource **development** projects.

10. Support extraction, processing, and transportation of primary resources to meet provincial and federal standards applicable to environmental protection.
11. Recognize that resource extraction in the **Agricultural Land Reserve** is subject to the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and associated regulations.
12. Ensure that the Regional District is recognized by the provincial government as a key stakeholder in relation to resource **development**, including but not limited to mining, sand and gravel extraction, oil and gas production wells, logging operations, transportation, and the **development** of BC Hydro's Site C dam.

## 22.1 Forestry

### Forestry Policies

1. Support timber production harvesting, silviculture, and agro-forestry production within the **Official Community Plan** area.
2. Recognize that forestry is permitted within the **Agricultural Land Reserve** and is subject to the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and associated regulations; however, some ancillary uses related to this resource activity may be subject to provincial legislation and applicable zoning bylaw.

## 22.2 Mining

### Mining Policies

1. Work with all levels of government to identify future sand and gravel sources suitable for extraction and identify locations of sand and gravel deposits suitable for gravel extraction on Schedule B.
2. Extraction shall be undertaken in a manner that minimizes social, economic and environmental impacts.
3. Recognize that mining is subject to the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and associated regulations; however, some ancillary uses related to this resource activity may be subject to provincial legislation and applicable zoning bylaw.

## 22.3 Oil & Gas

### Oil & Gas Policies

1. Advocate for more proactive management strategies by working with other authorities to address public concern regarding petroleum activities and facilities that affect the environment, agriculture, and residents within this Plan area.
2. Work with the provincial government and the Oil and Gas Commission to ensure that the best industrial practises are followed protecting the environment, and protecting the public health.



3. Recognize that oil and gas may be permitted within the **Agricultural Land Reserve** and is subject to the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and associated regulations; however, some ancillary uses related to this resource activity may be subject to provincial legislation and applicable zoning bylaw.
4. Recognize the importance of industry and government commitments to community-based initiatives and continue to encourage these programs.
5. Recognize that major pipeline rights-of-way traverse the **Official Community Plan** area that may affect adjacent land use and may alter **development** plans subject to provincial or federal regulations.
6. Encourage the Ministry of Energy, Mines, and Low Carbon Innovation to not provide new tenures or renew existing tenures for oil and gas exploration without consulting with the Regional District.
7. Investigate the use of **Development** Permits, pursuant to the *Local Government Act*, to address the effects associated with resource processing and related facilities to the environment, land, and the community.
8. The Peace River Regional District will support the Oil and Gas Commission's policies and requirements for permit holders that address such factors as environmental stewardship, noise management, public engagement, and road maintenance.

**Part 5 | Implementing Our Plan**

## 23 Implementing Our Plan

The Regional District is the primary authority to implement the goals and policies of the **North Peace Fringe Area Official Community Plan**; however, many of the policies of the **Official Community Plan** will be carried out in collaboration with the City of Fort St. John, the District of Taylor, provincial ministries and agencies, as well as community-based organizations. The following are the primary means of carrying out the **Official Community Plan**.

### 23.1 Bylaw Consistency

#### Official Community Plan Consistency

All land use applications and changes to regional services will be evaluated by the Regional District for consistency to this **Official Community Plan**, including its maps and schedules. While every effort has been made in preparing this Plan to anticipate future **development** and associated requirements, occasional amendments may occur in response to new circumstances and situations. Where a project or proposal necessitates an amendment to this **Official Community Plan**, a public hearing will be held in accordance with the provisions of the **Local Government Act**.

An **Official Community Plan** is intended to be reviewed and updated every five to ten years in response to changing circumstances and conditions in the area covered by this **Official Community Plan**.

#### Zoning Bylaw Consistency

Any amendments to the Regional District's zoning bylaws shall be consistent with this Plan. The zoning bylaws regulate the use of the land with specific regulations that control the size, uses, siting and other details of **development** on a parcel of land.

A rezoning application submitted to the Regional District by the applicant may be required to consider factors including, but not limited to the following:

1. The physical characteristics of the subject property, including topography and vegetation.
2. The agricultural capability of the land, including the Canada Land Inventory soil rating and history of production.
3. The subject property's access to infrastructure and utilities.
4. The projected effects on the transportation network.
5. The effects of the **development** on neighbouring properties, which may include direct and indirect effects.
6. The extent to which the proposal would create or contribute to encroaching land uses that may interfere with agriculture and/or other nearby established land uses.
7. Public opinion received through any applicable public consultation process.
8. Other issues that may be relevant to the subject property or specific proposal.

## Other Regional District Bylaws

Other bylaws may influence the shape and **development** of the rural area, such as the *Building Bylaw* or the *Manufactured Home Parks Bylaw*. These bylaws provide detailed specifications that apply to the use and **development** of lands consistent with this Plan and are important methods used for implementation of the **Official Community Plan**. All lands within this Plan area are subject to the BC Building Code as well as the Regional District's Building Bylaw which includes a mandatory and voluntary building permit area.

### Bylaw Enforcement

The Regional District will work towards resolving any violations of Peace River Regional District bylaws in accordance with the established Peace River Regional District Bylaw Enforcement Policy.

## 23.2 Development Approval Information

The **Official Community Plan** area is a **development** approval information area per the *Local Government Act*, and the Regional District may require **development** approval information for a zoning bylaw amendment application, **Development** Permit application, and Temporary Use Permit application. The objective in designating the **Official Community Plan** area as a **development** approval information area is for the Regional District to obtain information from an applicant in order to gain a sound understanding of the anticipated effects of the proposed activity or **development** on the community and to make an informed decision regarding such applications.

Where deemed relevant, an applicant may be required to provide information regarding:

1. The effects of the proposed **development** on surrounding land uses.
2. How the proposed **development buffers** adjoining farming and rural areas in order to mitigate potential negative effects caused by the **development** proposal.
3. The effect of the proposed **development** on groundwater quantity and quality, surface water generated by the proposed **development**, and the options for collection, storage, and dispersal of such drainage.
4. The effect of the proposed **development** on the natural environment, such as adjacent aquatic areas, vegetation, soils, topographical features, ecosystems and biological diversity, fish and wildlife habitats, environmentally sensitive features, and rare or endangered plant or animal species.
5. The ability of the proposed **development** to provide on-site water and septic disposal or to connect to community services, if available.
6. The effect of the proposed **development** on public infrastructure, such as roads, water supply, sewage disposal, fire protection systems, and recycling, as well as community services such as schools and regional parks.
7. The aesthetic values of the proposed **development**, such as visual character, integration with the natural environment, lighting, noise, and odour.

8. The archaeological effect of a proposed **development** in areas identified to have high archaeological potential.
9. Proposals for new **development** may be considered in the context of a review based on the following:
  - a. Potential effect of the proposed **development** on natural drainage systems
  - b. Potential effect of the proposed **development** on adjacent wildlife areas
  - c. Potential instability of soils subject to subsidence
  - d. Steep topography, with implications for access and on-site sewage disposal
  - e. Susceptibility of the site to periodic or permanent flooding
  - f. Potential effect of the **development** on agricultural activities on the subject property and nearby properties
  - g. Susceptibility of the site to potentially hazardous industrial operations