



FORT ST. JOHN
The Energetic City

Swanson Lumber Road Area Plan

May 2024

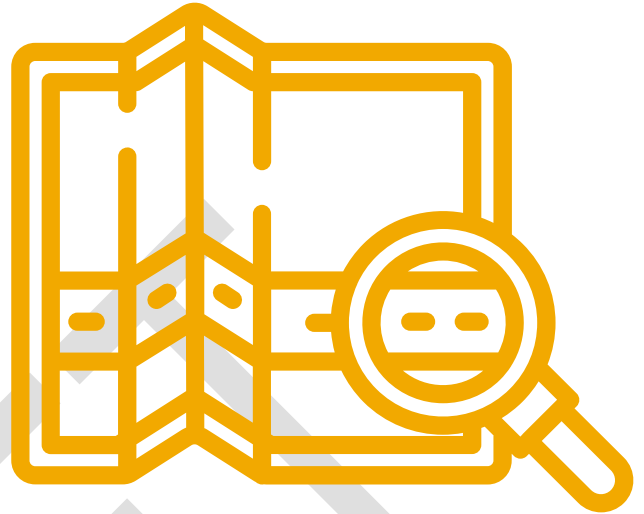
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What is an Area Plan?

Area Plans are designed to be community building blocks that inform future land use and development for a specific area. They provide guidance and direction on a variety of matters such as land use, transportation, servicing and urban design and development. An Official Community Plan is a community's vision for future growth and includes aspects such as long-term planning for land use, quality of life, development, community health and housing. In the British Columbia context, an Area Plan is a legal land use plan that can be either incorporated into the Official Community Plan through an amendment or endorsed as a strategic document.

This Area Plan will be incorporated into the City of Fort St. John's Official Community Plan through an amendment and become a statutory plan that will inform long term planning for future zoning and subdivision applications within the context area.



The Planning Process

The Swanson Lumber Road Area Plan ('Area Plan') draws on key policy documents such as bylaws, long term plans, strategies and reports to create relevant policies. The process is informed by policy review; economic analyses; and engagement with area landowners, provincial and utility agencies and City departments. A review of key policy documents establishes themes used for discussion with City departments and Council to create guiding principles that highlight key matters in creating this Area Plan. These guiding principles inform the Area Plan policies and infrastructure concepts specific to how the lands will develop over time.

For the Swanson Lumber Road lands, the Official Community Plan requires an Area Plan supporting a planned and principled approach, directing how and where development proceeds over time. To implement the Area Plan, additional steps are required before development can begin including Agricultural Land Reserve exclusion, rezoning of land, subdivision and servicing and building permits.

The strategic policy documents supporting this Area Plan are:

- 2018-2023 Strategic Plan, 2021
- Official Community Plan (OCP), 2017
- Industrial Lands Strategy (ILS), 2020
- Transportation Master Plan, 2015

Introduction and Context

The City's Official Community Plan requires that an Area Plan be created for a variety of lands within the City to guide their future planning and development. These lands are called "Urban Development Areas." Urban Development Area 8 will be referred to as "Swanson Lumber Road Area Plan". This Area Plan provides the City with a policy direction to meet the industrial land demand for economic development in our community over the next 20 years.

The Industrial Lands Strategy identifies the need for heavy industrial-designated large parcels. The shortage of large parcels for heavy industrial uses has limited the City's industrial economic growth. The Area Plan will address this by supplying land for heavy industrial purposes for years to come.

This Area Plan provides policy direction on the following aspects unique to the Swanson Lumber Road area:

- Locations for and supporting user industrial uses;
- Accounting for growth of new industrial uses and mitigation of incompatible uses over time;
- Identifying suitable land uses compatible with industrial uses and surrounding major services like the airport;
- New road connections within the existing transportation network; and
- High-level concepts on major infrastructure for water, drainage and sanitary sewer systems to inform early development decisions.

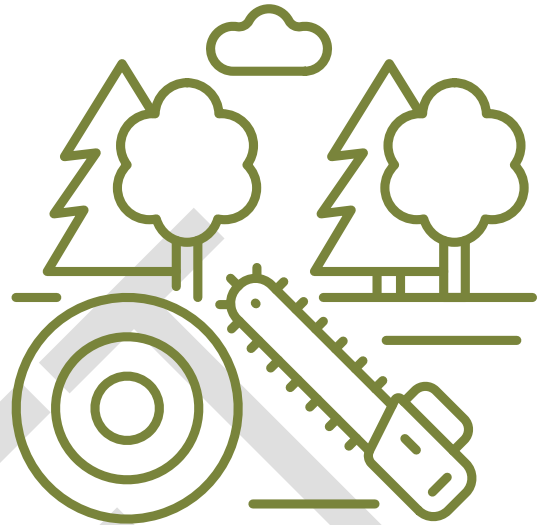
Swanson Lumber Road Area Plan Existing Conditions

Physical and Historical Context

The Area Plan includes approximately 205 hectares (507 acres) of land spread across 23 privately-owned parcels. The land is defined to the north by existing heavy industrial lands including the Louisiana-Pacific 'Peace Valley' OSB lumber mill, Highway 97 (Alaska Highway) to the south, the City boundary to the east and Northern Lights Drive to the west. The Swanson Lumber Road is an existing collector road that runs north to south through the Area Plan with several large residential parcels located on the west side of this road (see Map 1 for existing site conditions).

The geography of this area slopes gently downward from north to south. The elevation in areas north of Stampede Avenue is 40 metres higher in some parts than the lands further south towards Highway 97 (Alaska Highway). The prevailing winds in Fort St. John are from the southwest.

From a historical context, archaeological reviews by the City and Doig River First Nation do not reveal significant cultural or biological archaeological resources to retain within this Plan area. No additional comments were received from other First Nation communities and organizations about the knowledge of archaeological elements.



Existing Land Uses and Servicing

The Plan area includes a range of existing land uses for industrial, commercial, residential and agricultural purposes. Approximately 69% of the land area is comprised of three large parcels that are used for agricultural purposes. There are 20 privately-owned parcels used for residences, most of which are large parcels (approximately 5 acres) and several that include farms or businesses. There are also several parcels used for light industrial purposes such as the storage of goods.

The surrounding land uses of the Plan area include the North Peace Light Horse Association, home to a race track and horse boarding stables, and a lumber mill located to the north. To the northeast, the land is agricultural, with the North Peace Regional Airport located 700 metres away. To the south and east, are lands within the Peace River Regional District (PRRD) which are primarily agricultural except for a small rural residential community to the east that includes the Forest Lawn manufactured (mobile) home park community. To the west, is a mixture of residential and commercial uses which are located within city limits.

The existing water and sanitary services have limited capacity to service the context area. Small water mains are located along Northern Lights Drive and south of Stampede Avenue. The water main along Highway 97 (Alaska Highway) is for raw water and is unavailable as a source for drinking water. A small sanitary force main is located along Northern Lights Drive.

Informing the Plan – Suitability and Justification for the Area Plan Uses

The Official Community Plan identifies this Plan area as the most suitable land for a mix of parcel sizes that will encourage cluster-style industrial development to complement heavy industrial developments both within the Swanson Lumber Road area, and nearby. Limited light industrial and commercial uses may be contemplated in this Plan area under certain circumstances, including development that directly supports heavy industrial in the area and cannot be located in other areas of the city, or a commercial hub clustered around the Swanson Lumber Road and Highway 97 (Alaska Highway) intersection that is specifically targeting heavy truck traffic. Informed by census data, strategic documents, and market analysis, this Area Plan provides an adequate supply of industrial land to support economic development and growth over the next 20 years and is anticipated to further support the industrial employment sector within the City.

The location of this Area Plan offers a combination of large and flat sites with nearby rail and highway access and is near other existing heavy industrial uses. The land is located just southwest of the

Industrial Lands Strategy – Land Needs vs Supply (excerpt)

We know, however, that the vacant industrial land base (zone and designated) is constrained in a number of ways, and is therefore insufficient to accommodate long-term need for all industry segments:

- The average parcel sizes are relatively small (0.8 hectares)
- There are only 3 parcels of greater than 12 hectares, and only one of them is well located vis-à-vis other heavy industry
- The location of much of the vacant supply is not conducive to the emergence of a significant cluster of heavy industrial users, most of whom will require large (at least 8 hectare) lots, and in some cases much larger lots (20-30 hectares)

North Peace Regional Airport and 200 metres south of the CN Rail main line. Both of these factors are crucial when selecting suitable locations for industrial development. In addition to these features, the grouping of industrial uses in an industrial park setting supports economic development for the City's underserved industrial sector allowing similar and complementary uses to emerge. The creation of industrial lands to meet the City's projected need also creates the opportunity for further growth in the industrial sector for the City.

The industrial uses designated in this Area Plan are supported by guidance in the Official Community Plan and the Industrial Lands Strategy. The Industrial Lands Strategy highlights a shortage of large parcels for industrial use which has limited the economic growth in the industrial sector in Fort St. John. Most heavy industrial users require larger parcels (i.e. at least eight hectares in size) but 97% of available industrial parcels within the City are smaller than four hectares. A major challenge to providing large industrial parcels for development is assembling small parcels together that often have fragmented property ownership. The Area Plan will also consider some commercial development around the intersection of the Swanson Lumber Road and Highway 97 (Alaska Highway).

The Area Plan provides the opportunity to generate tax revenue for the City which can be used for public services and amenities that benefit residents, businesses and the community. The industrial land designated through this Area Plan and through rezoning in the next stages of development contribute substantially to the City's economy and tax base.

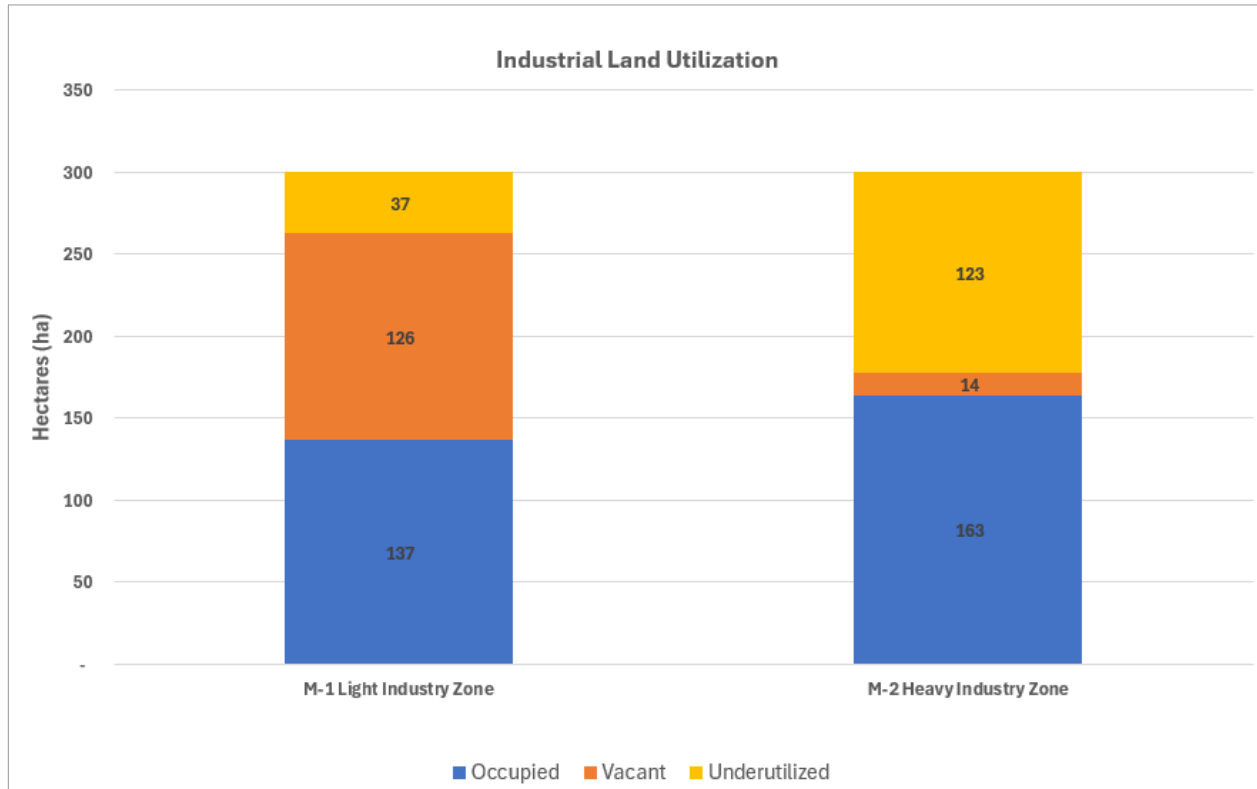
The employment opportunities tied to future industrial development supported through this Area Plan are also beneficial for the community. In 2021, Fort St. John had 2,930 people employed in the oil and gas and construction sectors. This is higher than the provincial average,¹ and businesses operating on industrial lands accounted for an estimated 2,800 jobs and \$236 million in income in 2016.²

According to the Industrial Lands Strategy, much of the City's existing industrial land is occupied in some capacity. The City currently has approximately 600 hectares of zoned industrial land (M-1 Light Industry and M-2 Heavy Industry). Of the City's approximately 300 hectares of Heavy Industrial lands (zoned M-2), 163 hectares are occupied, another 123 hectares are underutilized, and 14 hectares are vacant. 137 hectares of the City's Light Industrial (M-1) lands are occupied, 37 hectares are underutilized, and 126 hectares are vacant. The graphic below shows occupancy for heavy and light industrial zoned parcels with heavy industrial having a high occupancy rate.

Underutilized means vacant lands used for storage or unknown occupancy

¹ Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census of Population; Accessed December 5, 2022.

² City of Fort St. John Industrial Lands Strategy, 2020.



From extensive analyses in the Industrial Lands Strategy, it was determined that the City will need an estimated 28-74 hectares of serviced industrial land by 2033, and 58-154 hectares by 2043. While the City has more than this land already, much of the existing industrial land in the city is occupied as noted above, or otherwise unsuitable due to its size or location, thereby reinforcing the need for the lands in this area to be made fully available for future industrial uses.

Stakeholder and Public Engagement

The Swanson Lumber Road Area Plan provides the City with a policy direction to meet the industrial land demand for economic development in our community over the next 20 years. Therefore, its development requires extensive stakeholder and public engagement to ensure that this Plan aligns with the needs of Area Plan property owners, the City, and external stakeholders with an interest in this land, such as the Agricultural Land Commission.

Summary of Stakeholders Involved

The following summarizes the stakeholders that have been engaged with prior to the development of this Swanson Lumber Road Area Plan:

INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

(CITY STAFF AND ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES)

- Planning and Engineering
- Public Safety
- Community Services
- Parks
- Finance
- Corporate Services
- Public Works
- City Council
- Urban Systems (Planning and Engineering consultant)

EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

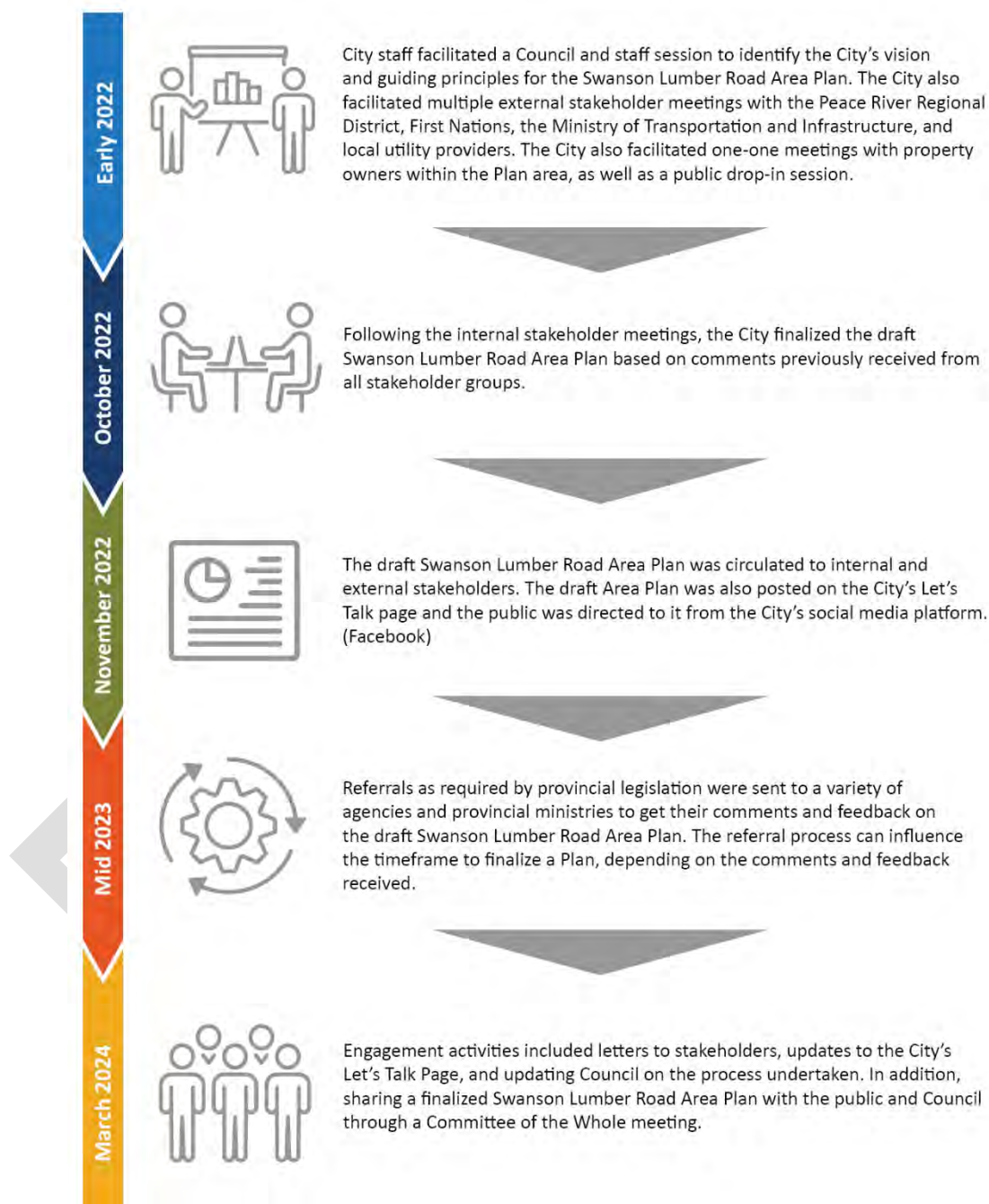
- Peace River Regional District
- First Nations
 - Blueberry River First Nation
 - Doig River First Nation
 - Prophet River First Nation
 - Treaty 8 Tribal Association
- Transportation
 - North Peace Regional Airport
 - Canadian National Railway
- Utilities
 - BC Hydro
 - Shaw
 - Telus
 - Pacific Natural Gas
 - Enbridge
- Province of BC Ministries and Agencies
 - Agricultural Land Commission
 - Northern Health
 - Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
 - Ministry of Forests (Archaeology Branch)
 - Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy
- Government of Canada Agencies
 - Canada Post
 - Royal Canadian Mounted Police

PUBLIC STAKEHOLDERS

- Swanson Lumber Road Area Plan property owners
 - Associated Engineering (representing a large landowner)
 - Individual property owners
- Members of the public

Engagement Events Summary

The following summarizes the engagement activities that were undertaken to guide and inform the development of this Area Plan:



What We Heard

From the engagement undertaken, themes began to emerge that were noted as important to consider in the development of the area plan for the Swanson Lumber Road. The first part of this section is divided into three groups: internal engagements with City staff, external engagements with stakeholders, and public engagement with property owners, and identifies what was heard from each group prior to the development of the Swanson Lumber Road Area Plan.

Internal Engagements

Internal engagement included meetings with Council, and other City departments.

From this engagement, the 4 themes identified for the Area Plan were:



External engagement

City staff met with various utility and transportation agencies, as well as First Nations, and the Peace River Regional District.

From that engagement, the following key findings arose:



Existing BC Hydro transmission lines cannot be buried underground.



The North Peace Regional Airport requires height limits for buildings and structures in this Area Plan to protect flight paths.



Storm water retention ponds should be placed as far away from the airport as possible because birds can interfere with air traffic.



Existing roads and intersections with the Alaska Highway may be upgraded, however, no new intersections with the Alaska Highway are proposed or desired in the Swanson Lumber Road area.



Archaeological and culturally significant sites were not identified by First Nations in the Swanson Lumber Road area.

Public engagement

City staff held six (6) one-on-one meetings with landowners from the Area Plan, as well as a public open house for landowners.

Key findings that arose from the public engagement included:



Landowners in the Swanson Lumber Road area were divided in their support, for the industrial uses that were proposed.



Landowners opposed to industrial land uses owned homes on large plots of land along the Swanson Lumber Road. They were supportive of substantial buffering and mitigation of industrial nuisances to protect the liveability of their properties.



One landowner favoured a strip of commercial uses along the Alaska Highway. The need for buffering and attractive landscaping was highlighted by landowners.

Once the draft Area Plan was completed, reviews and engagement on the draft Area Plan occurred in late 2022. This section summarizes what was heard from those engagements.

Public, Internal, and External engagement of draft Area Plan:

The draft Area Plan was widely circulated to the public and all internal and external stakeholders through a variety of means (emails, letters, engagement platform, social media)

From the circulation of the draft Area Plan, the following key findings were noted:

- City staff and external agencies were universally supportive of the industrial vision in the Area Plan.
- One landowner desired a strip of commercial uses along Highway 97 (Alaska Highway) and more light industrial land uses throughout the Area Plan
- Residential landowners favoured buffering and landscaping to protect the quality of life of their residential properties
- Most agencies were in support of the draft Area Plan

Agricultural Land Commission Engagement

Since the initial circulation of the draft Area Plan, the City and the Agricultural Land Commission continue to work collaboratively together to arrive at an Area Plan that meets the future needs of the City while also reflecting the direction of the Agricultural Land Commission. At this stage in the process, the City is seeking Agricultural Land Commission support for the general concept contained within this Area Plan for the Swanson Lumber Road lands. Support from the Agricultural Land Commission will enable the City and future developers to further refine development plans for this site. Furthermore, should development be desired on those lands within the Agricultural Land Reserve in the Area Plan, an application for exclusion of lands from the Agricultural Land Reserve will be required prior to any development occurring on those lands.

Summary of Engagement Themes

The key themes that emerged during engagement with City Council and staff were prioritized and used along with themes from external stakeholders to help inform the direction of the area plan.

The following are the identified themes that will guide the Guiding Principles and Policy Statements for this Area Plan; economic growth and service sectors, infrastructure and servicing, financial sustainability, relationships and neighbouring jurisdictions, land use, and lastly form and character. The last theme, natural spaces and trails, will be integrated throughout the other sections including land use, form and character, and related maps.



Economic Growth
and Service
Sectors



Infrastructure
and Servicing



Form and
Character



Financial
Sustainability



Land Use



Relationships
and Neighbouring
Jurisdictions



Natural Spaces
and Trails

1 Guiding Principles and Policy Statements

This section presents the guiding principles and policy statements that inform the Swanson Lumber Road Area Plan. These guiding principles and policy statements are based on the key themes that arose from the comprehensive engagement undertaken. The Guiding Principles are intended to support the vision of this Area Plan to create a prosperous economy in a fiscally responsible manner, and the Guiding Principles align with the direction from the City's Official Community Plan and Council's Strategic Priorities. The policy sections below proceed from a broader community context to more specifically guiding development in the Area Plan

1.1 Relationships and Neighbouring Jurisdictions

Building and maintaining good relationships with the City's neighbouring local governments, agencies and other non-government partners is important. Long-term planning discussions foster proactive planning considerations, mutually beneficial economic growth and lasting partnerships. All of these support innovation that benefits communities and industry sectors. In the context of this Area Plan, the City shares a boundary with the Peace River Regional District (PRRD). The City also has relationships with First Nations, industry sectors (PNG, AltaGas, Northriver Midstream, CN Rail) and provincial and federal agencies (North Peace Airport Society, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, Agriculture Land Commission, Ministry of Agriculture, BC Energy Regulator and BC Hydro).

1.1.1 Guiding Principle:

1. Adopt the Area Plan through a public and transparent process that involves input from key government agencies such as the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, Agricultural Land Commission, PRRD and neighbouring First Nation communities.

1.1.2 Policy Statements:

1. Explore opportunities to support industrial development and strategic partnerships with the provincial government, regional governments, First Nation communities and industry in order to develop creative solutions to challenges in the region.
2. Support building, fostering and maintaining positive relationships with nearby local governments including the PRRD and First Nations.

1.2 Land Uses

The long-term vision of this Area Plan is that the majority of lands will transition over time to heavy industrial uses as shown on Map 2. Existing large residential parcels with residences will be able to continue as they are. Should there be a desire for a different land uses, the vision for this area is that it changes to industrial uses over time. As industrial development occurs around existing residential parcels, landscaped buffers will be put in place by industrial development to mitigate nuisances such as noise, smell and dust. Light industrial uses will be retained and expanded along Northern Lights Drive in keeping with the existing road's character.

Policies in this section also support the creation of a commercial node at the intersection of Swanson Lumber Road and Highway 97 (Alaska Highway), see Figure 1, and complementary commercial uses that support the industrial land within this Area Plan.

The industrial nature of the Area Plan does not support the introduction of new parks or natural spaces but instead supports cash-in-lieu payments for parkland to be built in other priority areas of Fort St. John. The opportunity for a multi-use trail along Highway 97 (Alaska Highway) is supported as a recreational and transportation pathway and will be located within the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure right-of-way.

Parcels within the Agricultural Land Reserve are regulated by the provincial agency, the Agricultural Land Commission. The 2018 Official Community Plan contains policies and strategies recognizing that large agricultural uses will be primarily located outside of the City boundaries, with Agricultural Land Commission support for approximately 144 hectares of agricultural reserve land for future urban development. This also includes the lands within this Plan area. This Area Plan suggests future development steps for these lands and reiterates the City's understanding to remove relevant lands from the Agricultural Land Reserve in a planned, principled, responsible and staged manner.



Figure 1: Commercial Node on Swanson Lumber Road Intersection

1.2.1 Guiding Principles:

1. Encourage a range of industrial uses to support economic development and emerging industrial sectors.
2. Encourage primarily industrial development in this area. Other complimentary land uses may be considered.
3. Support a maximum of ten hectares of lands designated as commercial fronting Highway 97 (Alaska Highway). The intent of these commercial lands is to directly support the heavy industrial uses located in the Area Plan (see Figure 1).

1.2.2 Policy Statements:

1. The location and form of development within the Plan area shall be generally consistent with the Conceptual Future Land Use Map (see Map 2).
2. The lands shall be primarily for industrial uses and offer a range in parcel sizes. Priority will be given to larger parcel that meet the intent of the Industrial Lands Strategy and are generally over eight hectares in size.
3. Support the transition of land from rural residential use to industrial use over time.
4. Existing residential development within the Plan area shall be permitted to continue within the Swanson Lumber Road area. Should residential developments wish to transition to other land uses through subdivision or rezoning, then transitions should be consistent with the direction provided in this plan. The Agricultural Land Commission and/or the City may limit improvements to existing residential parcels to support the planned land use transition.
5. Consideration through an Official Community Plan amendment may be given for light industrial uses within the heavy industrial area on Map 2, and shall address the following factors:
 - a. That the proposed use cannot be accommodated elsewhere in the City or within light industrial-designated lands;
 - b. Subdivision that creates parcels smaller than the intent of the Industrial Lands Strategy may be considered on a case-by-case basis; and
 - c. Land is unavailable elsewhere in the City for the proposed size.
6. The City will consider an Official Community Plan amendment for the Commercial nodes as shown on Map 2, in the following circumstances:
 - a. Commercial uses are service-oriented in nature and oriented to the travelling public and/or support nearby industrial uses;
 - b. Commercial uses do not detract from identified commercial areas within the City or the downtown;
 - c. Incorporate high-quality landscaping designs along any public road or publicly visible areas;
 - d. It is clearly demonstrated why the commercial use is desired in the Swanson Lumber Road area as opposed to being located in other already designated commercial areas in the City;
 - e. Land is unavailable elsewhere within the City for the proposed use; and
 - f. Commercial uses in the Swanson Lumber Road area will be considered on a case by case basis.

This will be further implemented through the development of a new zone with limited commercial uses in the Swanson Lumber Road area.

7. The City will regularly assess the current inventory and rate of development within other commercial areas when considering any potential commercial subdivision or rezoning within the Plan area.
8. Specific site development standards for commercial development within the Swanson Lumber Road area shall be applied through the Zoning Bylaw and the development of a zone for limited commercial uses.
9. A 5% parkland cash-in-lieu payment will be applied to all subdivisions within the Plan area in alignment with the Official Community Plan.
10. Where a commercial, comprehensive development or industrial site shares a common boundary with a residential site, the non-residential development shall be required to incorporate buffering, screening, or other acceptable mitigating measures acceptable to the City (see Figure 2).
11. Promote high-quality, visually appealing development for lands abutting the Highway 97 (Alaska Highway) corridor (see Figure 3).
12. Plan for development that can be efficiently serviced.
13. The City will consider an Official Community Plan amendment for the Comprehensive Development areas (see Map 2) within the Swanson Lumber Road area for uses that are compatible to support industrial development. Supportive Comprehensive Development uses may include such uses as:
 - Bulk Fuel Sales;
 - Cartage, Delivery, Express Terminal Storage;
 - Gas Station;
 - Heavy Equipment Sales and Servicing;
 - Light Passenger Vehicle Wash;
 - Oilfield Sales and Services;
 - Restaurant;
 - Retail Store;
 - Service Station; and
 - Vehicle Sales and Servicing.

This will be further implemented through the development of a Comprehensive Development Zone in the Swanson Lumber Road area.

14. An Agricultural Land Reserve exclusion application process is required to remove lands from the Agricultural Land Reserve prior to development for industrial, comprehensive development and commercial uses.
15. Prior to the City applying for a future exclusion for lands that are currently within the Agricultural Land Reserve in this Area Plan, the City will require the preparation of future development plans by the developer(s). These plans shall meet the general intent of this Area Plan.
16. An Agricultural Land Reserve exclusion application will only be considered when it can be clearly demonstrated that there are no other appropriate lands available within the City for development.



Figure 2: Example Stampede Avenue Buffering

1.3 Economic Growth and Service Sectors

The policies in this section support the City's commitment to economic investment and future development benefits for the community and the region. Strategically bounded by Highway 97 (Alaska Highway) and located near the North Peace Regional Airport and a railway main line, the Area Plan is envisioned as a key industrial hub.

The Area Plan aligns with the Official Community Plan's policies for growth management and new development supporting a planned and principled approach, while balancing the flexibility of property owners deciding if, where and when to develop.

The City understands that market conditions inform the timing of industrial development and complimentary commercial development, and supports flexible timing to accommodate such growth. The Area Plan encourages industrial development while clarifying supported commercial uses. In addition, it directs developers to strategic land earmarked for industrial development and supports emerging industrial sectors such as technologies for industry, energy, agriculture and transportation to ensure they are accommodated for economic growth and are appropriately located.

1.3.1 Guiding Principles:

1. Support innovative and diverse employment sectors such as oil and gas, green energy, technology, agriculture, forestry, manufacturing, education and training, food security and others to develop within the Plan area.
2. Promote the subdivision of large parcels to be specifically designated for industrial uses and support high-growth employment sector industries.
3. Promote a phased approach to development to align with the logical extension of municipal services and is flexible in responding to market needs over time.

1.3.2 Policy Statements:

1. The City shall support the expansion of highway, rail and air transportation infrastructure needed to support development as envisioned by this Plan and to reinforce the importance of Fort St. John as a service centre and transportation hub.
2. The City will monitor existing industrial land inventory and the rate of development to ensure that there is a minimum 10-year supply of serviced, larger industrial parcels available to meet market demands.

3. The City will also assess and monitor the current inventory and rate of development of existing light industrial and commercial land inventory and the market demand within the City, in determining if there is a need to consider the exclusion of lands within the Agricultural Land Reserve in the Plan area to accommodate future development needs and the timing of such development.
4. The City will prioritize industrial development within the Plan area which is geared towards high-growth and emerging industrial sectors including oil and gas, green energy, forestry, manufacturing, agri-tech and food processing.
5. Green energy and agriculturally related development shall be encouraged to locate on vacant and underutilized lands.
6. For commercial-designated areas, consider limiting the size to a maximum of 10 hectares based on current market analysis.
7. Support heavy industrial uses in areas identified in Map 2, such as manufacturing, processing, fabricating facilities serving oil and gas, renewable and biomass energy technology, information technology systems, agricultural technology, and construction and trades education. Support opportunities for energy producers to coordinate on waste-to-energy innovations, energy conservation, and other energy output systems for industrial users.

“Looking at the combined sectors, ... we see that demand over 20 years in the ‘medium development density’ scenarios range from 108 to 188 acres (43 to 76 hectares). Without new, large parcels, most of this demand will end up being accommodated outside of the City.”

- Industrial Lands Strategy, 2020



Figure 3: High Quality Visual Development Along Highway 97 (Alaska Highway)

1.4 Transportation

Transportation planning within the Plan area is informed by the direction provided by the Official Community Plan and Transportation Master Plan. These plans form the policy basis for creating an efficient transportation network effectively serving both active and vehicular modes of transportation. The principal means of supporting active transportation within the Plan area is through the construction of a linear parkway with an integrated trail system extending along Highway 97 (Alaska Highway) right-of-way and the consistent application of City standards for the internal road network within the Plan area.

Northern Lights Drive and Swanson Lumber Road are both two-lane collector roads prominently situated and serving existing development within the Plan area. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the potential construction of an additional minor collector road as an extension of Stampede Avenue linking Northern Lights Drive and Swanson Lumber Road as illustrated on Map 2. The need for this new minor collector will be dictated by the form, density, and intensity of development within the Plan area and confirmed at the time of subdivision. The City may consider proposed layouts and parcel size to warrant if a collector road is necessary.

At the time of subdivision of the lands east of Swanson Lumber Road, consideration should be made to design and construct a service road that will connect to the existing Forest Lawn Frontage Road within the Peace River Regional District.

To support a principled and planned approach to development and fostering of good relationships, the City supports discussions between the developer(s), Peace River Regional District, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure and the City regarding opportunities for future road connections as part of this Area Plan.

1.4.1 Guiding Principle:

1. Development shall connect to the existing transportation network and be consistent with City bylaws and standards with respect to road designs.

1.4.2 Policy Statements:

1. Traffic impact studies shall be prepared by a proponent to support a subdivision or development application to verify the function of major intersections and to evaluate the impact of major development on the safe and efficient movement of vehicles and pedestrians.
2. The transportation network shall be developed with local roads to ensure efficient and safe vehicular traffic through the area. Local road alignments shall be established through the subdivision process to support flexibility in subdivision layout.
3. Local roadways shall align with City bylaws and standards.
4. A frontage road along Highway 97 (Alaska Highway) shall not be permitted in this development.
5. For parcels created adjacent to Highway 97 (Alaska Highway), access shall be from an interior road on the north side of the parcels, and not a future frontage road.
6. No new permanent access points to Highway 97 (Alaska Highway) will be supported.

7. Existing private accesses to Highway 97 (Alaska Highway) will be closed and incorporated into the future road network as this Area is developed.
8. The City shall engage with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to explore the opportunity for developing a linear park corridor and a multi-use trail network within the Highway 97 (Alaska Highway) right-of-way, subject to City priority, budget and funding opportunities (see Figure 4).
9. Support opportunities to connect to Forest Lawn Frontage Road at time of subdivision.



Figure 4: Northern Lights Drive

1.5 Infrastructure and Servicing

The Official Community Plan identifies the importance of providing public utilities in a suitable and efficient manner for long-term fiscal and environmental sustainability. The Area Plan provides high-level servicing plans in support of this Official Community Plan direction.

Municipal servicing to the land within this Area Plan is presently very limited. The servicing information provided in the context of this Area Plan is at a conceptual high-level to determine the feasibility of servicing this area and to outline parameters for detailed design during the subdivision process.

1.5.1 Guiding Principles:

1. Support the implementation of the City's long-term infrastructure master plans in a manner that is high quality, financially sustainable, and efficiently delivers services.
2. The Area Plan will address high-level infrastructure servicing design for water, sanitary and drainage to support development of serviced parcels.

1.5.2 Drainage System

The land generally slopes from north to south with the low points being near Highway 97 (Alaska Highway). Swanson Lumber Road provides a natural divide creating west and east catchment areas. The existing natural drainage course in the east catchment area shall be protected through subdivision. Consideration should be taken to enhance this natural drainage area for storm water management planning.

The proposed stormwater management system for the area is shown on Map 3. This plan includes the use of two large storm water facilities. This is preferred over creating multiple smaller municipal and private storm water management facilities to reduce future maintenance costs. Contributing areas must be considered and accommodated through the design of the site for both the minor and major systems.

The receiving channels downstream of this area that lead to the Peace River are vulnerable to erosion and landslides due to soil conditions. Therefore, this area needs to have a storm water system that combines both peak flow attenuation and low impact development practices, where feasible, to limit runoff volume. Water quality will also need to be addressed through best practices of storm water management design.

It has been determined that this entire area is in the Primary Hazard zone of the airport according to the Safety Above All report³. Therefore, wet ponds may not be the best option, especially in the flight path (on the west side) of the airport. Detailed design of storm water management facilities will need to be coordinated with a qualified professional at the time of subdivision to mitigate the impacts of storm water management facilities near the airport.

The storm water will be directed to the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure Right-of-Way. Approval from the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure will be required regarding the preferred outlet location and drainage design.

1.5.2.1 Policy Statements:

1. Natural drainage areas shall be protected by a Right-of-Way. The size and details shall be established during the subdivision process detailed design.
2. Large storm water facilities that encompass a majority of the plan area shall be used instead of multiple small storm water facilities.
3. The storm water management system for this area shall combine peak flow attenuation and low impact development practices to limit runoff volume and improve water quality.
4. Coordination between developers, the airport and the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure shall occur for detailed design of stormwater management facilities.

³ Safety Above All: A Coordinated approach to airport-vicinity wildlife management. Transport Canada Aerodromes and Air Navigation Branch Wildlife Division. 2007.

1.5.3 Water Supply and Distribution

The proposed water distribution system for the Area Plan is shown on Map 4. Main line connections are required for adequate water circulation throughout the area. The network is to be designed according to the requirements set out in City bylaws and include a:

1. 300mm diameter watermain extending north on the Swanson Lumber Road to connect into the existing 400mm diameter watermain north of the Area Plan adjacent to the CN rail crossing.
2. 300mm diameter connection to the watermain at Northern Lights Drive near Stampede Avenue.
3. 300mm diameter extension of the existing watermain on Equestrian Avenue between 68 Street and Northern Lights Drive.
4. 300mm diameter connection to the existing 150mm diameter watermain that dead ends at the south end of Northern Lights Drive.
5. Minimum of one 300mm east-west connection between Northern Lights Drive and Swanson Lumber Road. The exact alignment may be dependent on future internal road alignments.

The maximum static pressure in the lowest points of this area is estimated to be more than the recommended pressure. The City does not wish to create another pressure zone in the water system with a main line pressure reducing valve. Therefore, service connections that are in areas above the recommended shall be individually protected by a pressure reducing valve located inside the building. This will help prevent circulation and maintenance challenges that can be caused by an additional pressure system.

1.5.3.1 Policy Statements:

1. The water distribution system for the Area Plan shall be as shown on Map 4.
2. The internal water system shall be comprised of looped mains meeting the minimum diameter requirements in the Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw through detailed design during the subdivision process.
3. Water main dead ends to service individual parcels shall not be permitted.
4. Each building with a main floor elevation below 660.0 metres shall be required to have an individual pressure reducing valve.

1.5.4 Sanitary Sewer System

The proposed Sanitary Servicing Concept for this Area Plan is shown on Map 5. The area is to be serviced by gravity mains that lead to one centrally located lift station. The flat terrain and the requirement to avoid excess lift stations will have considerable influence on the depth and size of the main required leading to the central lift station. This must be accommodated and planned for in subdivision layouts. The lift station will pump the sewer through a force main to the existing sanitary manhole at 90 Street, north of Highway 97 (Alaska Highway). This location is subject to development design flows determined during the subdivision process detailed design. An extension may be required across Highway 97 (Alaska Highway) to the City's main lift station.

The existing trunk main in Alaska Road North that terminates near 7508 Alaska Road North was analyzed as an option for a connection. This trunk main is a part of the Southeast Sewer Local Area Service Establishment Bylaw. The Swanson Lumber Area is not a contributing area to that local service area. In addition, there are anticipated capacity issues to connect into this trunk main; and this is not a feasible option for a connection.

Additional detailed design during the subdivision process shall demonstrate the capacity of the proposed lift station and force main and the scalability of the design to accommodate contributing areas to the north that are outside of this Area Plan, as shown on Map 5. Due to the topography of the lands, the sanitary sewer system network shall be planned with these areas in mind so that key gravity mains have capacity.

1.5.4.1 Policy Statements:

1. The Plan area shall have one lift station that is centrally located.
2. The lift station shall be designed to be scalable to accommodate contributing areas, directly to the north, outside of this Area Plan.
3. Detailed design calculations shall be required to demonstrate the capacity of the sanitary sewer system through the subdivision process.
4. The sanitary sewer collection system for the Plan area shall be designed according to the requirements set forth in the City bylaws.

1.5.5 Electrical, Telecommunication and Gas Distribution

Electricity, telecommunication and natural gas systems will be provided by utility company service providers.

There is a BC Hydro transmission line that runs north from Highway 97 (Alaska Highway) towards the OSB plant that will need to be accommodated during detailed design.

1.5.5.1 Policy Statement:

1. Detailed design of electrical, telecommunication and natural gas systems is to be coordinated with respective utility companies through the subdivision process.
2. Developers are encouraged to engage utility providers early in the development process to ensure adequate infrastructure is available to support the development envisioned by this plan.

1.6 Financial Sustainability

The City strives to be a sustainable community, and a key factor is economic sustainability. This includes approaches that support costs for new development that pays for itself and does not pass on costs to the City or taxpayers. Full recovery for infrastructure costs is required from developers in this Area Plan for infrastructure such as roads, water pipes, sanitary sewer and drainage facilities.

1.6.1 Guiding Principles:

1. Future reviews of municipal development processes should consider cost-effective municipal operations and maintenance.
2. The cost of constructing new infrastructure for new development within the Plan area should not burden City or taxpayers, but rather be funded proportionately by the people benefiting from the new services at such time that they are connected.

1.6.2 Policy Statement:

1. Developers shall be required to pay the portion of infrastructure costs directly related to servicing new development, as well as any off-site costs that may be required. The City may utilize a variety of development financing tools to achieve this.

1.7 Site Design & Form and Character

Development within this Area Plan along Highway 97 (the Alaska Highway) will form the first impression for people driving into Fort St. John. Emphasis will be placed on development along Highway 97 (Alaska Highway) to be visually attractive through siting of buildings and thoughtfully-placed landscaping and implemented through Development Permit Area requirements (see Figure 5). In addition, the transition of the area from rural residential uses with existing residences to new industrial development will be mindfully balanced through landscaping, screening and spacing buffers to help reduce nuisances over time. Residential landowners indicated that applying building setbacks, buffers using trees and vegetation, trails and parks, windscreens, berms and situating lower intensity land uses such as light industrial or commercial uses adjacent to the rural residential area would be considered suitable forms of mitigation.

The Area Plan lies in the flight path of the nearby North Peace Regional Airport. Height limit restrictions are on property title for all properties in the Area Plan, changing between approximately 17 to 50 metres. Development that exceeds height restrictions can result in the Federal Minister ordering the removal of structures at a landowner's expense. Height limitations protect aircraft from buildings and from wildlife that have been known to strike and damage engines.

The use of regulatory tools such as Zoning Bylaw siting regulations and Development Permit Area (DPA) guidelines will help balance and maintain the visually attractive form and character along Highway 97 (Alaska Highway) and reduce nuisances between rural residences during the transition of these lands to industrial and commercial development over time.



Figure 5: Gateway to Fort St. John

1.7.1 Guiding Principles:

1. Use Development Permit Area guidelines to maintain and enhance the visual attractiveness of development for the travelling public along Highway 97 (Alaska Highway), considering siting of buildings and landscaping fronting Highway 97 (Alaska Highway).
2. Use Zoning Bylaw regulations to create landscaped screens, and setback and buffer options between industrial development and existing residences to reduce nuisances such as dust, wind and smell.

1.7.2 Policy Statements:

1. The commercial areas located along Highway 97 (Alaska Highway) are intended to be designated in the Gateway Development Permit Area to create a visually attractive and welcoming entrance into the community.
2. Commercial and industrial lands sharing a common boundary with an occupied residential site shall be required to incorporate buffering, screening, or other acceptable mitigating measures acceptable to the City including a minimum of 15-metre separation between structures and residential property lines.
3. New development shall incorporate high-quality landscape design including street trees, boulevard landscaping, and the integration of natural vegetation where appropriate.
4. Industrial-designated land uses along Highway 97 (Alaska Highway) and Northern Lights Drive are intended to be designated in a development permit area to address the following:
 - a. Providing visually appealing development, attractive visual corridors and viewsapes along Highway 97 (Alaska Highway).
 - b. Regulating the appearance of developments within public view and along major highway corridors which provides a consistently high quality of exterior building design.

- c. Softening the view of development along Highway 97 (Alaska Highway) using land use, building orientation, landscaping or green buffers.
 - d. Focused landscaping at key visual locations along Highway 97 (Alaska Highway); and
 - e. Preservation of open spaces and natural areas where possible.
5. Industrial development shall be required to create and maintain buffers to provide separation between industrial land uses and adjacent residential and agricultural land uses located outside of the Area Plan (see Figure 6).
 6. Encourage industrial land uses along collector and local roads to include landscaping fronting these roads to visually buffer industrial activities from vehicular traffic.
 7. Incorporate winter city elements for industrial and commercial developments through development processes such as road design and subdivision design, to account for employees and users in those spaces.



Figure 6: Industrial & Residential Buffering

2 Implementation - How to Use This Area Plan For Development

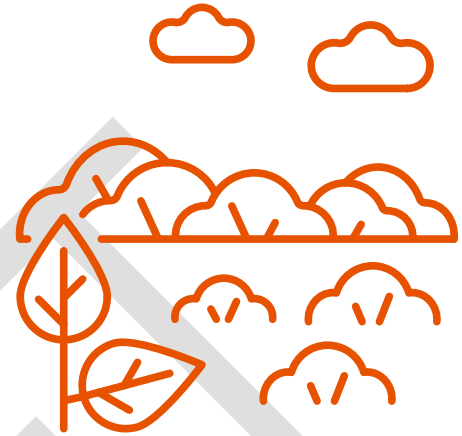
This Area Plan will be implemented using the direction from the policy statements and recommended actions within this section. Using appropriate regulatory land use tools, future development will follow the policy statements and maps contained within this Area Plan. The Area Plan is also used to inform key infrastructure improvements as development occurs over time through various local government development processes.

In addition, this Area Plan is a strategic document and is consistent with the Official Community Plan, giving direction for the orderly transition of lands from agriculture to urban development, and to justify future Agricultural Land Reserve land exclusion within this area that is already supported by the Agricultural Land Commission. An Agricultural Land Reserve exclusion application to remove lands from the Agricultural Land Reserve to other productive uses, including industrial and commercial uses, is required for this Area Plan. The Agricultural Land Reserve exclusion process is the next step to preparing this area for the City's growth of industrial lands and will be based on clear justification and market needs.

Following a successful application to remove lands within the Agricultural Land Reserve, development processes are required such as rezoning and subdivision to support industrial and commercial development. Development Area Permits and Building Permits are part of the final development steps.

2.1 Recommendations:

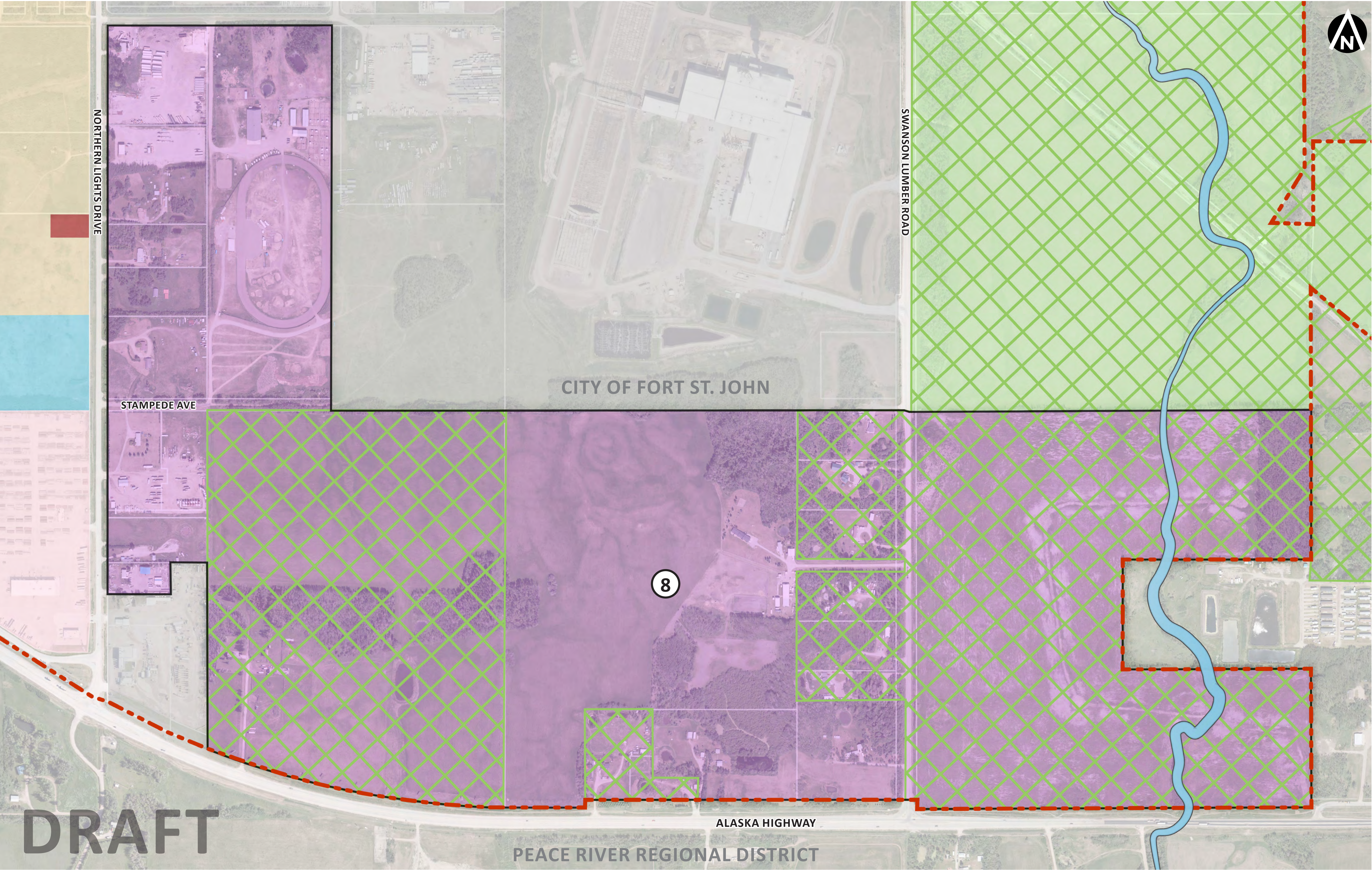
1. Review and update relevant Official Community Plan Bylaw map schedules to reflect the concepts for Development Permit Areas, Transportation Networks and Infrastructure, refined through this Area Plan.
2. To facilitate industrial development in the Area Plan, the City will work with the Agricultural Land Commission to support the Agricultural Land Reserve exclusion applications so that development occurs in a staged and responsible manner.
3. Support the exclusion of lands within the Agricultural Land Reserve to ensure that land for industrial needs are ready for development.
4. Continue to communicate with landowners on the implementation of measures to reduce nuisances related to transition and development.



5. Implement applicable regulations in the Zoning Bylaw for buffers, landscaping, permitted uses and Development Permit Area guidelines, to maintain and enhance the visual corridor along Highway 97 (Alaska Highway) and address nuisances such as dust, wind and smell for existing residential-designated lands. Tools such as the Ministry of Agriculture's Guide to Edge Planning regarding setbacks and buffer treatments should be utilized.⁴
6. Review the Zoning Bylaw for light and heavy industrial uses to ensure that heavy industrial lands are utilized for uses appropriate for heavy industry sectors.
7. Monitor the vacancy and parcel size inventory for all land uses, with a particular focus on heavy industrial lands, to ensure land need is met over the next 5, 10 and 15 years, responding to market conditions.
8. Research appropriate and applicable tools to support responsible and efficient industrial development, such as development processes, financial mechanisms and servicing innovations.
9. Create and communicate information materials on next steps in the development process that may be required prior to development occurring in this Plan area. Other applications, permits and/or processes that may be required include Agriculture Land Reserve exclusion applications, Development Permit Area applications, Official Community Plan and/or Zoning amendments, etc. These additional requirements will further inform and guide developers and ensure that requirements for development are clearly outlined for developers and administration staff.
10. Review the Zoning Bylaw to consider new commercial zones and related regulations appropriate for commercial development in this Area Plan, such as maximum floor areas for Commercial uses.
11. Support for commercial-designated land will be located generally within the commercial nodes identified in Map 2. Commercial uses within this area are intended to be those that are generally supportive to industrial uses in the area. The following commercial uses may be limited by maximum floor area:
 - Restaurants;
 - Retail Stores;
 - Personal Services Establishment; and
 - Vehicles Sales and Servicing.

⁴ Guide to Edge Planning, Ministry of Agriculture, 2015, pages 15, 22-27.

MAP 1: EXISTING CONDITIONS



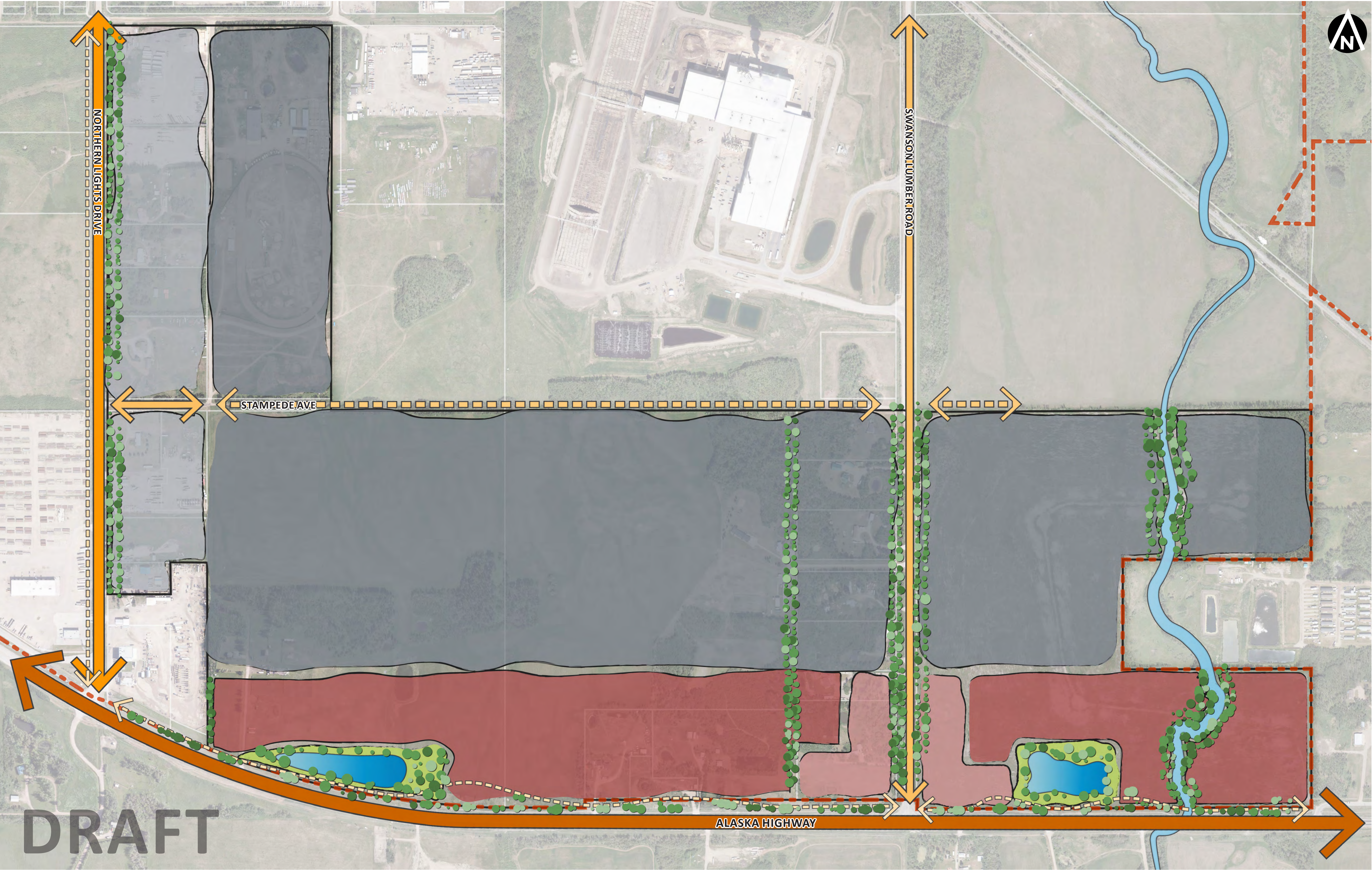
LEGEND

BOUNDARIES
- - - CITY BOUNDARY
— URBAN DEVELOPMENT AREA 8

EXISTING OCP LAND USE
LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
NEIGHBOURHOOD COMMERCIAL
HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL
PUBLIC UTILITY
INDUSTRIAL
AGRICULTURAL
URBAN DEVELOPMENT AREA

DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS
EXISTING DRAINAGE COURSE
AGRICULTURAL LAND RESERVE

MAP 2: CONCEPTUAL FUTURE LAND USE PLAN



LEGEND

BOUNDARIES

- CITY BOUNDARY
- URBAN DEVELOPMENT AREA 8

FUTURE LAND USE

- COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT
- COMMERCIAL
- LIGHT INDUSTRIAL
- HEAVY INDUSTRIAL

CIRCULATION

- ALASKA HIGHWAY
- ARTERIAL ROAD
- MINOR COLLECTOR ROAD
- FUTURE MINOR COLLECTOR ROAD
- FUTURE MULTI-USE TRAIL

DRAINAGE AND STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

- EXISTING DRAINAGE COURSE
- STORMWATER MANAGEMENT AREA

LANDSCAPE

- TREE PLANTING/LANDSCAPE BUFFER
- OPEN SPACE

MAP 3: CONCEPTUAL DRAINAGE PLAN



LEGEND

BOUNDARIES

- CITY BOUNDARY
- URBAN DEVELOPMENT AREA 8

DRAINAGE AND STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

- EXISTING DRAINAGE COURSE
- LOCATION OF STORMWATER MANAGEMENT FACILITY (SIZE TBD)
- OFF-SITE CONTRIBUTING AREA

LANDSCAPE

- TREE PLANTING/LANDSCAPE BUFFER
- OPEN SPACE

MAP 4: CONCEPTUAL WATER SERVICING PLAN



LEGEND

BOUNDARIES

- CITY BOUNDARY
- URBAN DEVELOPMENT AREA 8

WATER SERVICING

- ← EXISTING WATER MAIN
- - - FUTURE WATER MAIN

DRAINAGE AND STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

- EXISTING DRAINAGE COURSE
- OFF-SITE CONTRIBUTING AREA

DRAFT

MAP 5: CONCEPTUAL SANITARY SERVICING PLAN



LEGEND

BOUNDARIES

CITY BOUNDARY

URBAN DEVELOPMENT AREA 8

SANITARY SERVICING

EXISTING SANITARY FORCE MAIN

EXISTING SANITARY MAIN (GRAVITY)

DRAINAGE AND STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

EXISTING DRAINAGE COURSE