

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Subject: Former Mill Properties Conceptual Land Use Plan - Resolution of Support

Date: September 12, 2022

To: Mayor & Council

From: Cody Vangel, Chief Building Official / Municipal Planner



ISSUE:

Consideration of passing a resolution of general support for the Conceptual Land Use Plan for the Former Mill Properties to assist the property owners when seeking funding opportunities related to redevelopment.

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council of the Town of Fort Frances approve Report # AR -22-0030 and supports, in general, the Conceptual Land Use Plan for the Former Mill Properties as prepared by Scatliff + Miller + Murray May 2022.

STRATEGIC IMPACT:

1. Attracting new industry and attracting investment for local business development.
2. Promotion of Tourism / Destination Tourism
17. Improve Transportation Linkages

OPTIONS & ALTERNATIVES:

1. Pass a resolution of support; or
2. Disregard resolution of support.

HISTORY:

Council will recall the creation of the Fort Frances/Aazhogan Renewal Planning Committee which set out to work collaboratively with 2670568 Ontario Ltd., Rainy River First Nations and Rainy River Future Developments Corporation. The goal of the planning committee was to engage a consultant to craft location specific land use planning policies, identify economic development opportunities and to provide recommendations that would be used to amend the Town of Fort Frances Official Plan and Zoning By-Law to assist in the redevelopment of the subject lands. The outcome of these amendments would intend to assist to mitigate delays and reduce turnaround times on planning applications associated with the subject lands and to promote redevelopment of the lands for a wide range of uses.

ANALYSIS:

The Fort Frances/Aazhogan Renewal Planning Committee engaged Scatliff + Miller + Murray to develop a conceptual land use plan for the former Fort Frances Mill properties. The final report resulting from the planning study has been attached with this report and was subsequently presented to Council via deputation on June 27, 2022. Through further conversation amongst the members of the Fort Frances/Aazhogan Renewal Planning Committee, it was requested to bring forward a report to Mayor and Council seeking a resolution of general support. The intent of receiving a resolution of general support would be to assist the property owners in hopefully obtaining various forms of funding that would be utilized towards promoting redevelopment activities.

CONSULTATION:

Rainy River Future Development Corp.
Ziibi Anishinaabe Investments Inc.
BMI Restorative (2670568 Ontario Ltd.)

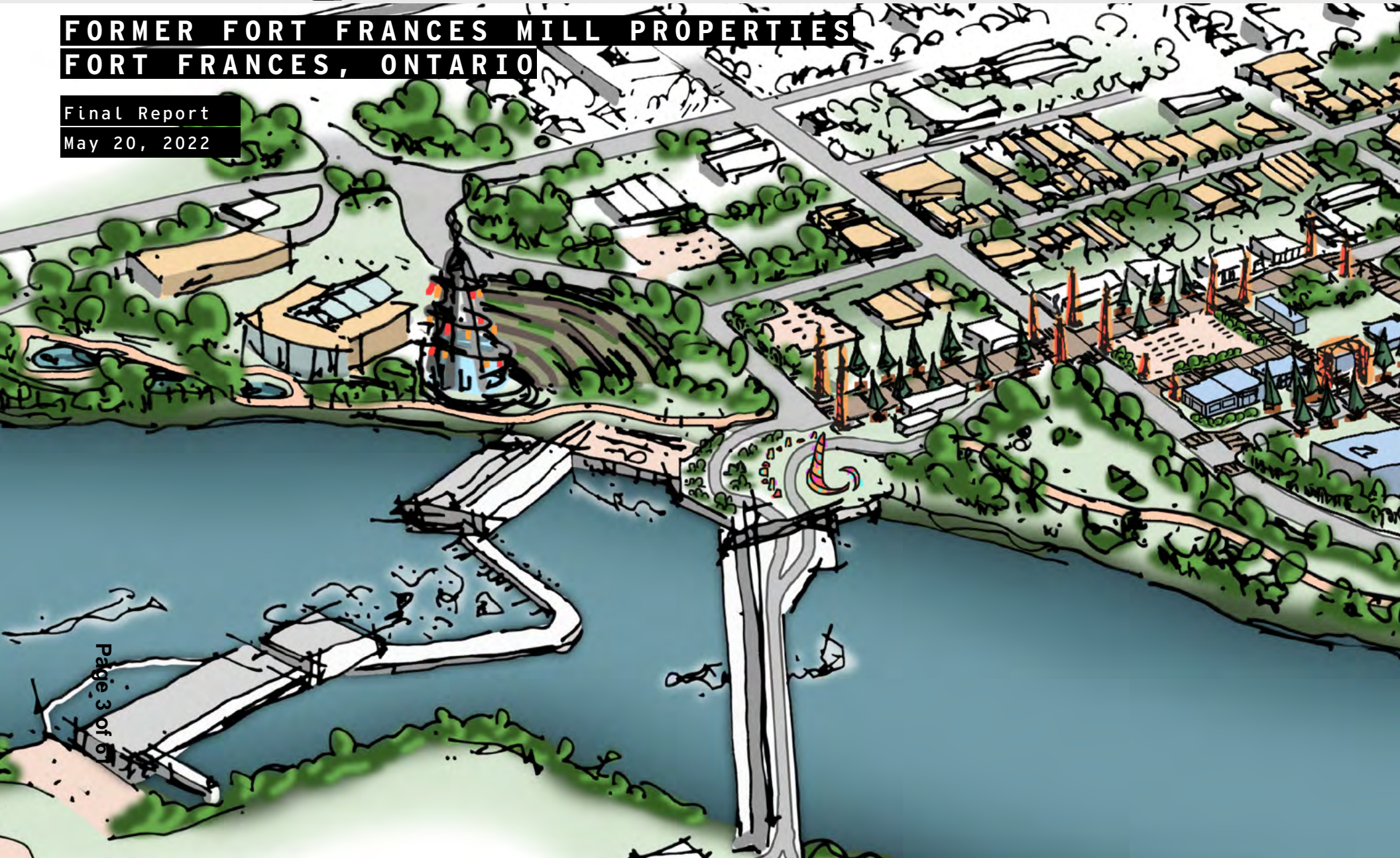
SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

[FFMR_FinalReport_May2022](#)

Conceptual Land Use Plan

**FORMER FORT FRANCES MILL PROPERTIES
FORT FRANCES, ONTARIO**

Final Report
May 20, 2022



Acknowledgments

2670568 Ontario Ltd., more commonly referred to as BMI Group, acquired the subject lands with the intent to engage in a redevelopment strategy in joint venture with Rainy River First Nations (RRFN). This joint venture operates as Aazhogan Renewal. Ziibi Anishinaabe Investments Inc. (Ziibi Investments) is the operating entity assigned by RRFN to act on its behalf for this project.

The Town of Fort Frances and Aazhogan Renewal have agreed to work together with the project team through an Advisory Committee to undertake the strategic planning for this project. This Committee is comprised of:

- Stacey Jack, Project Advisor, BMI Group
- Tim Friesen, Interim CEO, Ziibi Investments
- Cody Vangel, Chief Building Official & Municipal Planner, Town of Fort Frances
- Geoff Gillon, Executive Director, Rainy River Future Development Corporation
- Tannis Drysdale, Economic Development Consultant, Town of Fort Frances

This report and redevelopment concept were created on behalf of the Advisory Committee by the project team:

— Scatliff + Miller + Murray:

- Tom Janzen
- Wes Paetkau
- Michael Blatz
- Mike Scatliff
- Cheryl Oakden
- Matthew Peters

— KGS Group:

- Burton Mikolayenko
- Alison Barrett

— Compass:

- Ian McCormack

— Indigenous Design and Public Art Advisor:

- Cassandra Cochrane

Cassandra Cochrane also provided the otter tail and floral motifs used throughout this report.

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Introduction

The former Resolute Pulp and Paper Mill in Fort Frances was intrinsic to Fort Frances' identity and economy for generations. Not only dominating the Town's skyline, the Mill was the Town's main employer, and was a feature in the daily lives of most if not all of its residents. Straddling the entry point into Canada, it also provided an impressive and industrious gateway into Fort Frances, Treaty 3 Territory, and Northern Ontario.

The official closing of the Mill in 2014 continues to be felt deeply by Fort Frances and the surrounding region. Not surprisingly, there is intense community interest in the future plans for the Mill site and what those plans will mean for the future of Fort Frances. Just like the development of the Mill did in the early 1900s, the redevelopment of the subject lands represents an extraordinary opportunity to redefine and reaffirm the Town's identity and set the stage for sustainable investment and community building for generations to come.

PURPOSE

This plan represents a conceptual blueprint for the redevelopment of the former Mill site and its reintegration into the Town's urban fabric. Recognizing the magnitude of the project and its significance to Fort Frances, the intent is to define an overall vision for the redevelopment of the former Mill site that reflects community values, promotes renewal, guides future planning, and generates positive momentum in Fort Frances. It also provides sufficient flexibility to allow for creative interpretation and innovative solutions to meet the long-term development objectives for the former Mill site and Town.

PROCESS

This plan reflects the principles that conceptual planning should be inclusive, visionary, ambitious, and achievable. Its preparation evolved on the basis of the following inputs and processes:

1. A review of pertinent background reports, community profile, real estate and tourism market data, infrastructure servicing information as well as policies and regulations supporting the Town's land use and development planning framework.
2. A visit by project team members to the community and RRFN in early October 2021 to become more familiar with the conditions, issues and opportunities affecting the former Mill site and its context within the Town and surrounding region.
3. Collaborating in an iterative manner with Aazhogan Renewal representatives, the Advisory Committee, Town staff and Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) staff to further assess and/or refine land use planning and redevelopment issues and opportunities, and to vet proposed ideas, strategies and recommendations for the former Mill site.

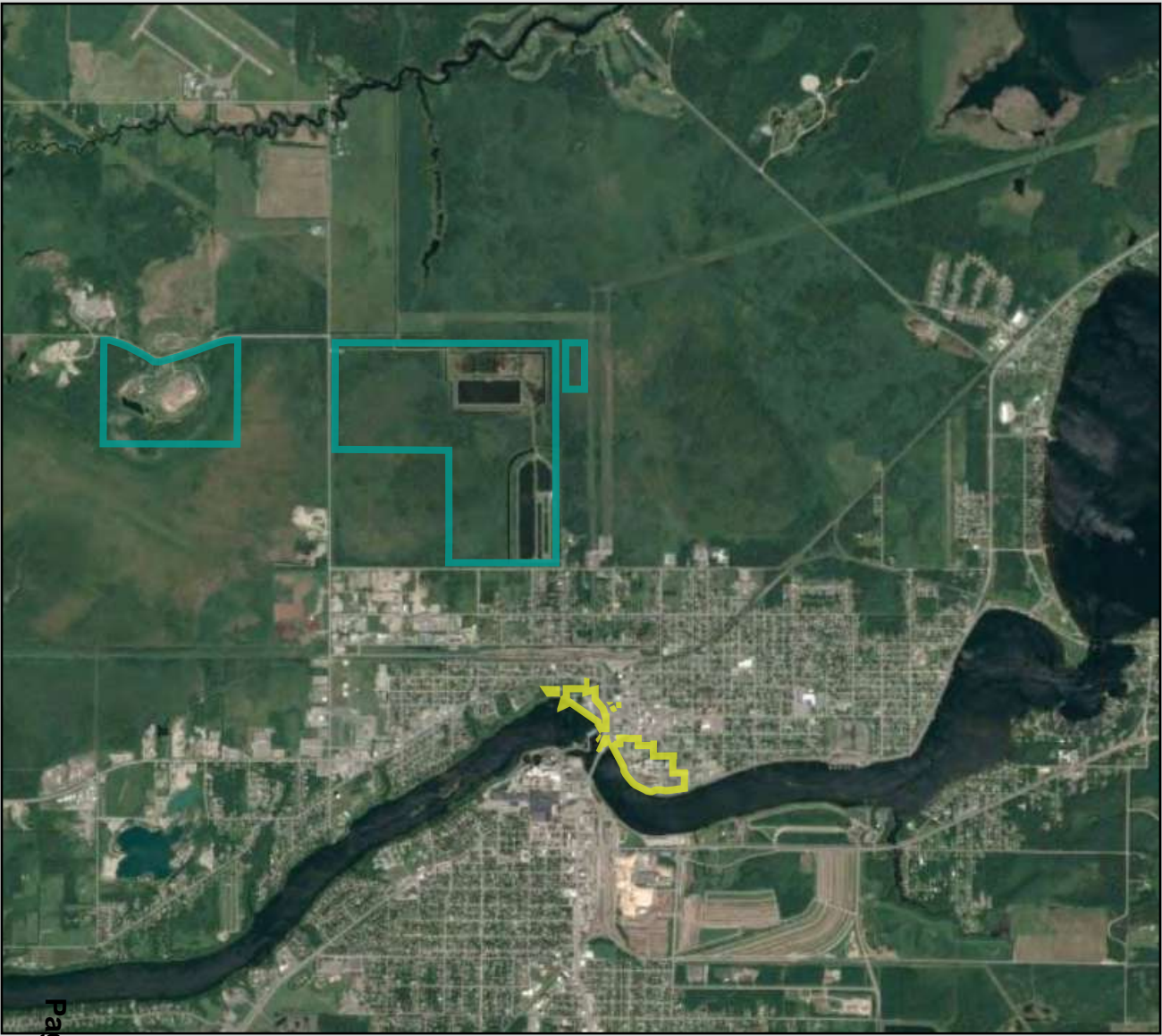
STUDY AREA

The subject lands, as shown on Figure 1 and Figure 2, comprise several properties totaling 294 hectares (725 acres), which are located in two areas within the Town. Area No. 1 is in the heart of Fort Frances, just west of downtown along the northern shore of Rainy River. This area comprises 25 hectares (61 acres) and was the focal point of the Mill operations, before it officially closed in 2014. The TransCanada Highway extends along its northerly extent, with additional access points provided by the downtown street network.

The Canada-United States (US) border runs within the river basin. The CBSA station is located adjacent to the International Bridge crossing, also within Area No. 1, just south of Church Street between Central and Mowat Avenues. Land uses adjacent to Area No. 1 include pockets of commercial, industrial and residential uses, as well as La Verendrye Hospital at the intersection of Front Street and Victoria Avenue.

Area No. 2 is in the northwest portion of the Town. This area provided private utility services in support of the former Mill operation, namely, a 203 hectare (501 acre) sewage lagoon and a 66 hectare (163 acre) landfill site.

Pursuant to acquiring the subject lands, BMI Group has engaged the demolition of most of the former Mill buildings and structures. The buildings and structures that are to remain and form part of the overall vision for the redevelopment of the former Mill site are shown on Figure 2.



Legend

Subject Lands

-  Area No. 1 (Shorelands): Site of Former Pulp and Paper Mill
-  Area No. 2: Site of Former Mill's Landfill and Lagoon

FIGURE 1: MAP OF SUBJECT LANDS IN FORT FRANCES



Legend

- Subject Lands
- Existing Buildings to Remain
- ① Former Stores Warehouse No. 2
- ② Historic Mill Building
- ③ Historic Mill Building
- ④ CBSA Station
- ⑤ Former Bio-Mass Building
- ⑥ Former Paint & Mason Shop
- ⑦ Former International Bridge & Terminal Building
- ⑧ Portage Warehouse

FIGURE 2: DETAIL MAP OF AREA NO. 1 (SHORELAND PROPERTIES)

CONTEXT

Abridged History

The area's long history begins with the Saulteaux peoples who lived on the local lands and waters since time immemorial. The area offered bountiful fishing and hunting, as well as trade via the Rainy River, enabling the Saulteaux to flourish. Change came with the influx of European settlers in the 1700s and 1800s, at first enabling more trading opportunities, including a Hudson's Bay Company trading post called Fort Frances, but eventually leading to the creation of new borders, countries, and reserves.

On October 3, 1873, the Anishinaabe and the British agreed to share the 55,000 square miles of territory covering present-day northwest Ontario and southeast Manitoba under Treaty No. 3. Treaty No. 3 was planned to be the first post-Confederation treaty, but the Anishinaabe held firm that they would not cede lands, nor allow farming or settlement, in their territory. Despite this, the area was ultimately settled, and the trading post of Fort Frances grew into the Town of Fort Frances.

The story of the industrial heart of Fort Frances began in part with the construction of the Minnesota and Ontario Company pulp and paper mill in 1912, as well as the original private international road and rail bridge between the community and International Falls, Minnesota. The Town and the Mill continued to grow in the 20th century, with the Mill eventually employing 700 people; however, very few of them were members of the local Treaty 3 Nations. The mill changed owners several times over its history before permanently closing in 2014. The loss of a major employer deeply affected the Town, whose population had been on the decline for at least 20 years prior. Still, the area is widely known as a fishing and hunting destination, bolstered by the international border crossing and tourists from the US. An extended community profile can be found in Appendix A.

Planning Policy

Redevelopment of the former Mill site will be informed by the Town of Fort Frances' policy documents. A summary of relevant policies is included below, and more detail can be found in Appendix B.

The Town of Fort Frances Official Plan was adopted in 2011, while the Mill was still operational, and designates the majority of the former Mill site (Area Nos. 1 and 2) as 'Employment Area'. A portion of land along the southerly extent of the Cornwall Avenue right-of-way is designated as 'Living Area,' and three parcels on the north side of the Central Avenue / Scott Street right-of-way are designated 'Downtown Business Area'. Additionally, portions of the former Mill site are subject to special policy regarding potential flooding, environmental occurrences, and the international gateway. Finally, the Official Plan includes a 'Gateway Economic Overlay'. Its focus is on specialized transportation and logistics uses, developed with high quality urban design.

The Town of Fort Frances Zoning By-law zones the majority of the shoreland portion of the former Mill site (Area No. 1) as 'M1 – Light Industrial', however three parcels on the north side of the Central Avenue / Scott Street right-of-way are zoned 'C2 – General Commercial'. Area No. 2 in the northwest portion of Town is zoned 'M2 – Heavy Industrial' and 'M3 – Waste Disposal Industrial'.

In addition, a portion of land at the foot of the International Bridge, including the CBSA station, is a "sterile zone" in which vehicle and pedestrian traffic is restricted to vehicles and individuals intending to cross the Canada-US border.

Lastly, the Shevlin Wood Yard and Gateway to Fort Frances Study identifies the importance of the Canada-US border crossing and the former Shevlin Wood Yard (re-branded as Shevlin Green) as key development opportunities for the Town. As shown on Figure 3, both have an intrinsic relationship with the downtown, and their proximity to the former Mill site represents an important consideration in the planning process.

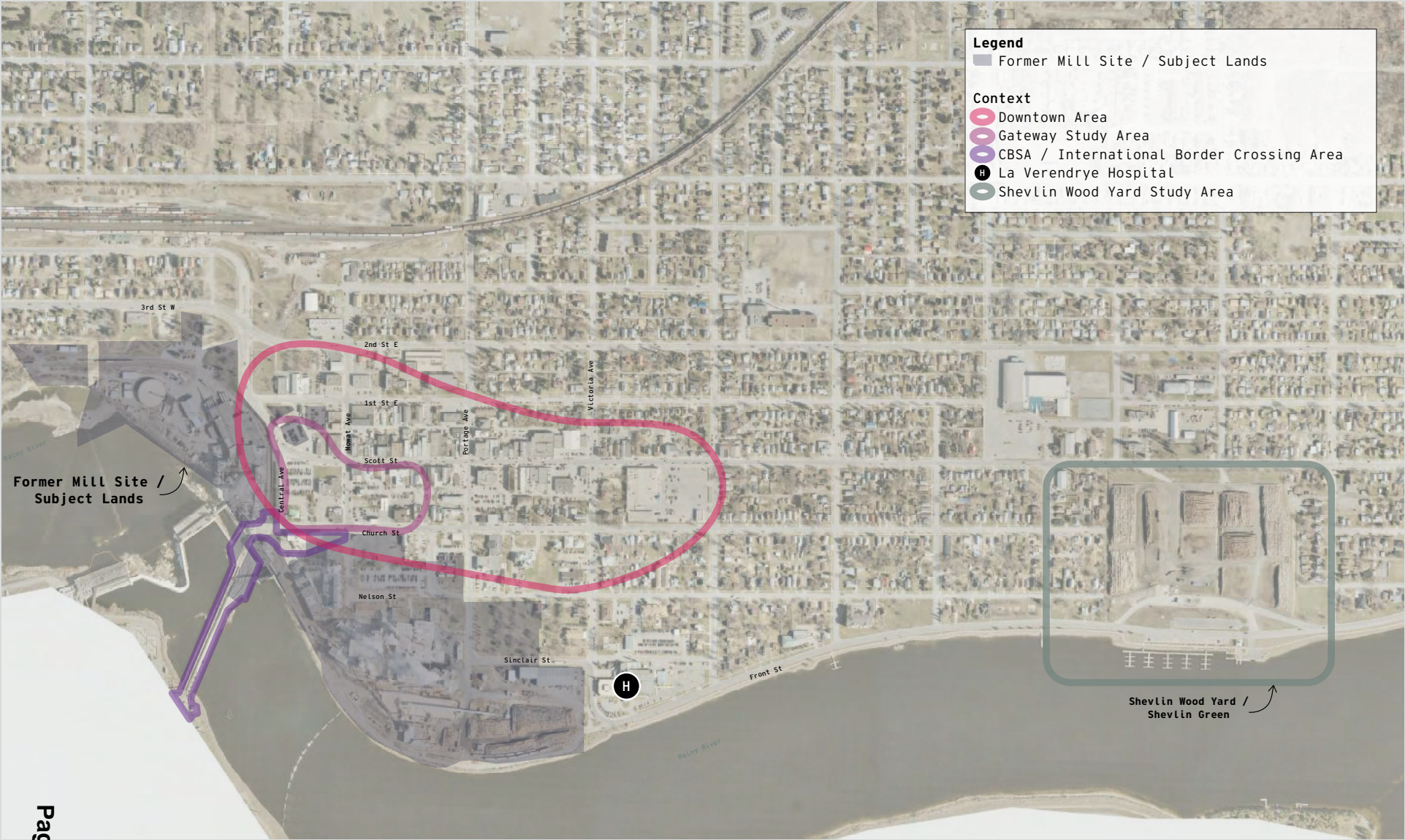


FIGURE 3: SHORELAND CONTEXT MAP

Vision

The redevelopment of the former Mill site is a monumental project for Aazhogan Renewal, Fort Frances and the surrounding district. Ushering in a new, sustainable future for the region, the redevelopment should be a model for economic regeneration, urban revitalization, and inclusive community building that transforms the former Mill site and reopens the waterfront in particular. It should be a home for innovation, bold ideas, and experimentation in design and land use.

ASPIRATIONS

The redevelopment vision is supported by the following aspirations:

Revitalization

Propel the complete transformation of the waterfront portion of the former Mill site into a thriving urban district, that showcases innovative community building, promotes design excellence, and supports the Fort Frances image as a regional centre.

Reception

Recognize and elevate the importance of the waterfront portion of the former Mill site as a gateway to Fort Frances, Canada, and Treaty 3 traditional territory.

Reconnection

Integrate the waterfront portion of the former Mill site back into the Town's structure, create links with Anishinaabe culture, and explore the possibilities for business and economic synergies.

Reconciliation

Build strong relations, embed Indigenous perspectives, and embrace reconciliation with Indigenous communities as a fundamental principle of the design and development of the former Mill site.

Resurgence

Stimulate sustainable economic development, promote innovation, and attract investment – both public and private – given the opportunities for the waterfront portion of the former Mill site to evolve as a thriving urban district and the northwest portion of the former Mill site to continue to support utility services, but on a broader community-wide basis.

Redevelopment Concept

The redevelopment framework is organized around six interconnected precincts, each intended to have distinct functional, land use, and design characteristics. Figures 4 and 5 depict the redevelopment concept in situ in Fort Frances. The concept is rooted in the vision and aspirations, as well as the pragmatic considerations outlined earlier in this report in order to support the Town as a destination / gateway and the Town's post-COVID recovery efforts.



Legend - Conceptual Land Uses & Features

Market Precinct

- 01 Retail Mixed-Use
- 02 Hospitality
- 03 Market
- 04 Cultural Arbour
- 05 Parking

Gateway Precinct

- 06 Parks
- 07 CBSA Station
- 08 Parking / Landing Pad
- 09 Retail

Waterfront Precinct

- 10 Paths / Trails
- 11 Public Pier / Docks

Enterprise Precinct

- 12 Light Industry

Wellness Precinct

- 13 Seniors Housing
- 14 Potential Health Care Expansion
- 15 Wellness Facilities

FIGURE 4: REDEVELOPMENT CONCEPT PLAN



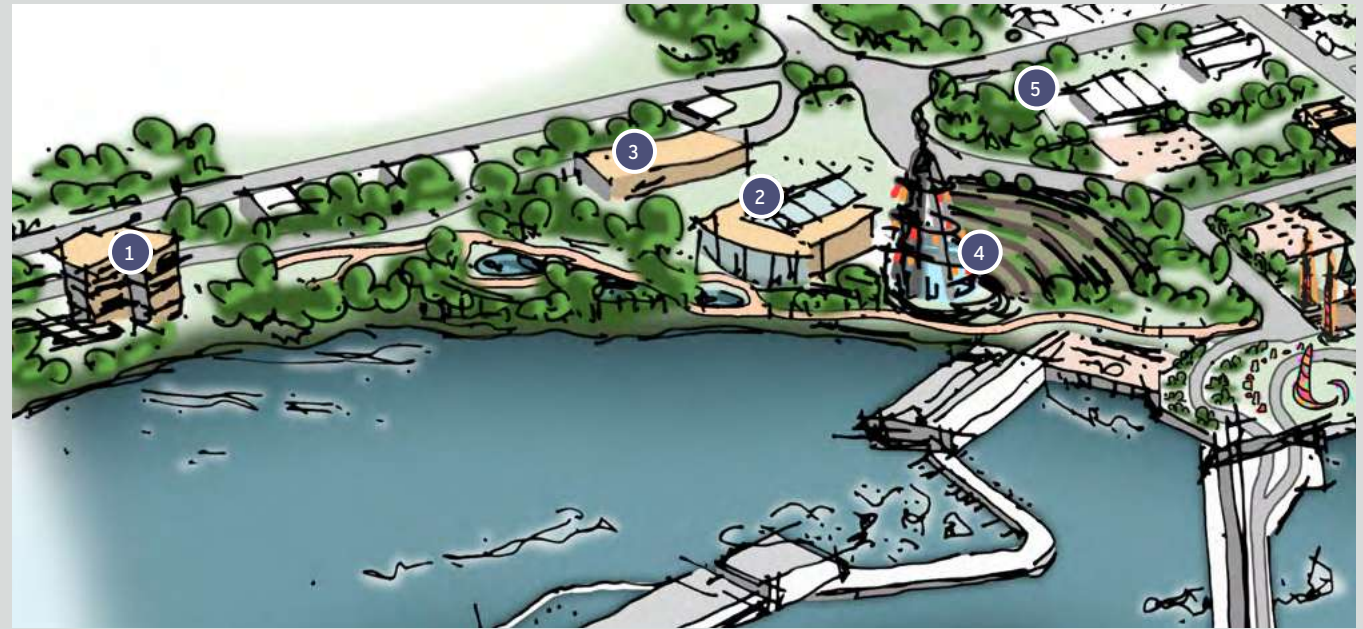
FIGURE 5: 3D RENDERING OF REDEVELOPMENT CONCEPT PLAN (LOOKING NORTHEAST)

MARKET PRECINCT

With a focus on cultural, leisure, and hospitality-related uses, the Market Precinct will function as an extension of Fort Frances' downtown. The vision for the Market Precinct centers around the rehabilitation and repurposing of a core set of historic Mill buildings into an animated market and cultural hub, drawing in both residents and visitors. As the gateway to Treaty 3, there is a significant opportunity to embed Indigenous design, art, and cultural uses to reinforce the connection to RRFN and their traditional territory. The redevelopment concept includes a large cultural arbour at the southernmost end of the Precinct that could serve as both an iconic architectural beacon and as a place for continental Indigenous gatherings.

Conceptual Land Uses & Features

- 1 Retail Mixed-Use
- 2 Market
- 3 Hospitality
- 4 Cultural Arbour
- 5 Parking



GATEWAY PRECINCT

The Gateway Precinct is envisioned as the grand entryway into Fort Frances and Treaty 3 Territory. In an ode to Northern Ontario's wilderness that draws so many visitors to the region, the Gateway Parks offer a snippet of greenery at the foot of the International Bridge. These parks, combined with Indigenous Public Art and the Cultural Arbour in the Market Precinct, provide a striking vista rooted in local culture.

The concept includes a reimagining of Church Street – with enhanced lighting and streetscaping – that welcomes returning residents and visitors to Fort Frances. The parking lot at the southeast corner of Church Street and Mowat Avenue, which has become an informal rendezvous point for inbound travelers, is proposed as a more purposeful area for visitors to rest, park, and connect. Linked via a plaza to new adjacent retail uses, this area is viewed as a 'landing pad' that provides easy access to downtown shops and the waterfront park; enticing visitors to stay and explore the Town.



Conceptual Land Uses & Features

- 1 Retail
- 2 Parking / Landing Pad
- 3 CBSA Station
- 4 Parks
- 5 Public Art



2



5



4



5



5

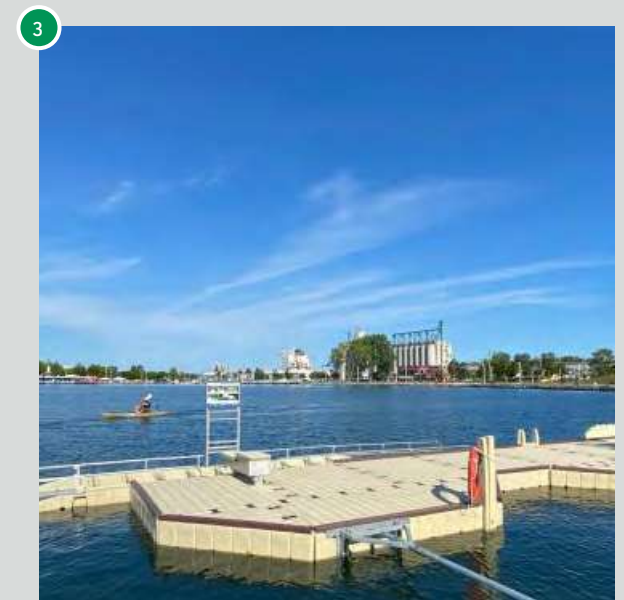


WATERFRONT PRECINCT

The focus of the Waterfront Precinct is to reconnect the Town to its riverfront through the development of a new parkway, parks and new public docking. The new parkway will establish a green link between all of the emerging Precincts within the former Mill site and extend Fort Frances' Waterfront Walk through the site, creating a continuous pedestrian and cycling connection to the International Bridge. Through public art, signage, and other interpretive elements, the Waterfront Precinct can tell the story of Fort Frances, RRFN, and Treaty 3, Rainy River and its ecology, as well as the history of the former Mill.

Conceptual Land Uses & Features

- 1 Waterfront Walk Extension
- 2 Public Parks & Green Space
- 3 Public Docking & Fishing Stations

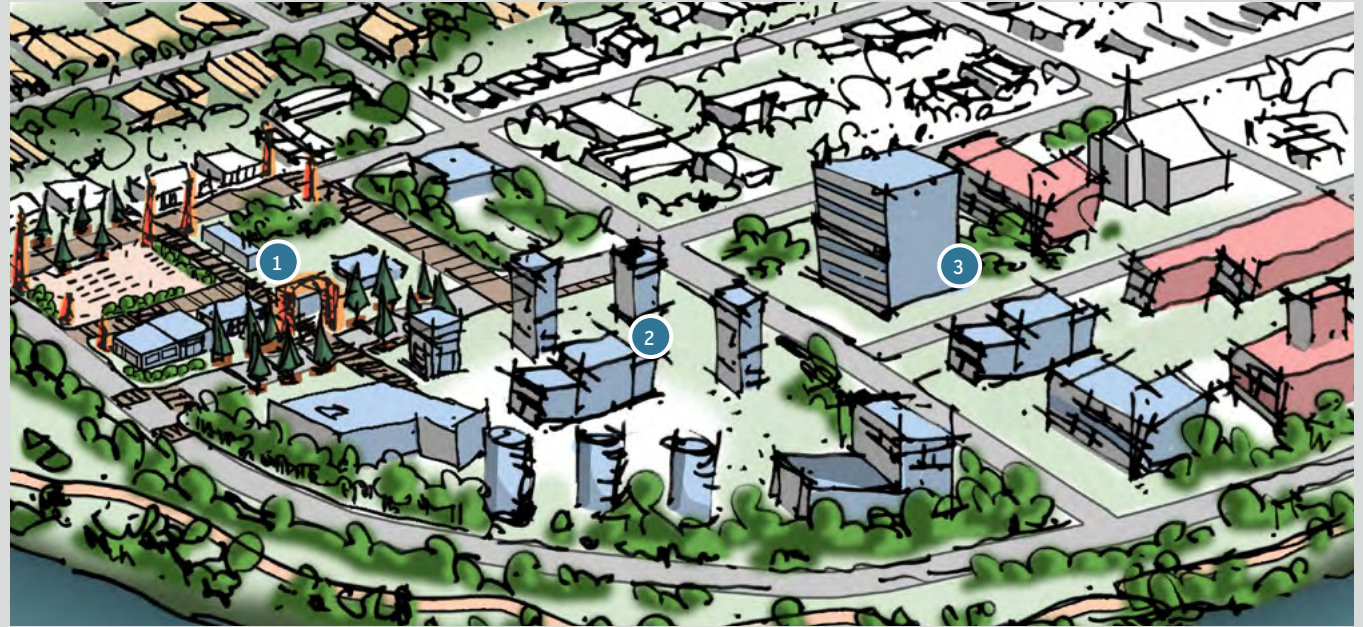


ENTERPRISE PRECINCT

The Enterprise Precinct is intended to support new industries and re-introduce production and employment-related uses to the former Mill site. With a predominant focus on green technology, the Enterprise Precinct will be an economic generator and a potential demonstration for leading-edge industrial development and transformation.

Conceptual Land Uses & Features

- 1 Ancillary Retail & Service Commercial
- 2 Employment Lands [+/- 4 hectares (10 acres)]
- 3 Green Industry

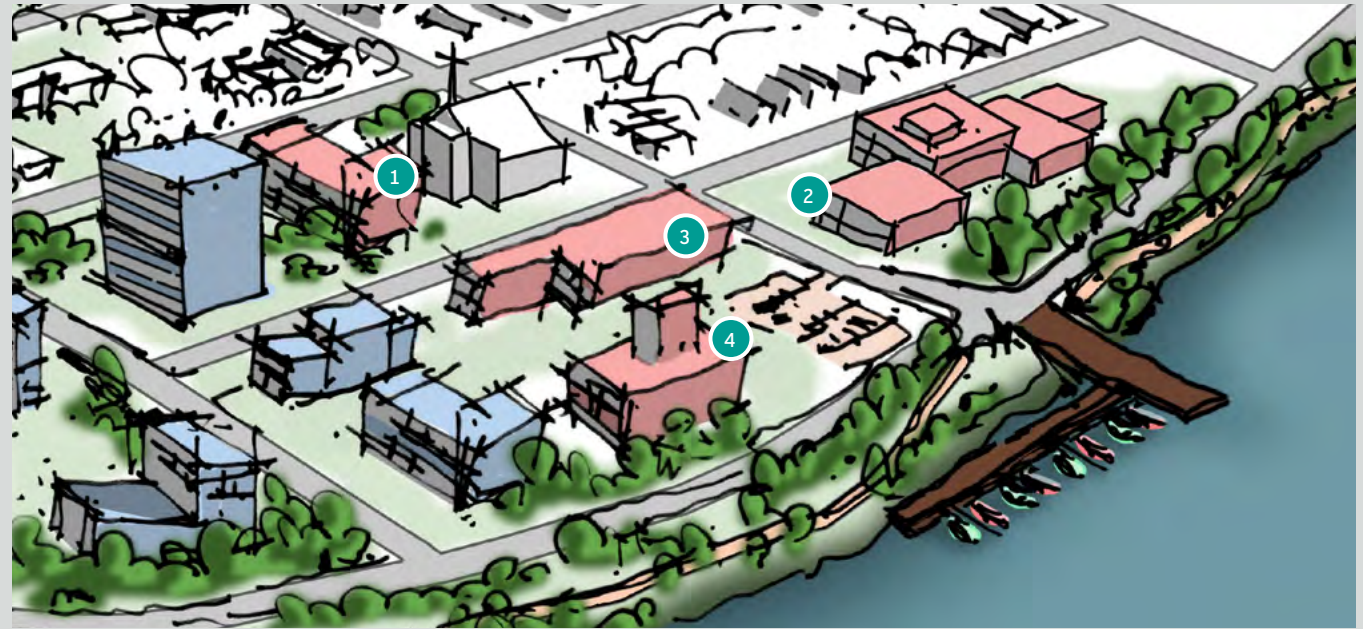


WELLNESS PRECINCT

The Wellness Precinct builds on the adjacency of the La Verendrye Hospital and the potential for its future expansion and development into an integrated health campus. Beyond the expansion of the hospital, the Wellness Precinct envisages new seniors housing and regional-serving facilities that provide a continuum of care in a setting that is connected to the waterfront and downtown.

Conceptual Land Uses & Features

- 1 Specialized multi-unit residential (e.g., seniors housing, extended stay housing, medical staff residences, etc.)
- 2 Potential Health Care Expansion
- 3 Medical/Health/Wellness Service & Supplies
- 4 Fitness & Rehabilitation Facilities



UTILITY PRECINCT

The Utility Precinct encompasses the former Mill's landfill and lagoon sites north of the Town, identified as "Area No. 2" on Figure 1. These sites have significant potential for future green energy generation and employment-related uses, connected with and supporting the new industrial uses envisioned in the Enterprise Precinct. In addition, these lands may also support future enhancement and expansion of municipal waste management facilities.

Conceptual Land Uses & Features

- 1 Public / Private Utilities
- 2 Green Energy Generation
- 3 Employment



PLACEMAKING & DESIGN

The design should welcome international travelers with a memorable and sought after experience while instilling pride for local residents who will live, work, and play on the lands. The design should strive for authenticity by drawing on local histories, vegetation, materials, traditions, cultures, art, and architecture.

Anishinaabe Culture

Embedding Anishinaabe culture in the design will be key to creating an authentic experience. This can be done by:

1. Seeking input from Knowledge Keepers regarding all open space designs, including the Cultural Arbour.
2. Incorporating plant life from Kay-Nah-Chi-Wah-Nung, as well as interpretive elements to explain their meanings.
3. Naming streets and places using Ojibwe words and phrases, potentially mirroring those used in Manitou, in a process guided by Knowledge Keepers.
4. Hiring Indigenous artists, architects, engineers, and planners to design elements including the Cultural Arbour, public art, building wraps, open spaces, and signage.

Mill History

The design should also draw on the historical industrial architecture of the former Mill buildings, and retrofit them for new uses. The unique style of these buildings has the potential to create a lasting image in visitors' minds. Additional elements could include reuse of masonry from demolished buildings as hardscape or metal work as public art.

LINKAGES & CIRCULATION

As shown on Figure 6, the former Mill site, Downtown Fort Frances, and Shevlin Green will primarily be linked by Scott Street. The westerly extension of Front Street to Mowat Avenue will provide another important link. Additionally, the redevelopment concept aims to connect and revitalize several key linkages:

1. **Downtown Fort Frances and Rainy River:** A proposed pier on the shore of the Rainy River at the end of either Portage Avenue or Victoria Avenue will enable river travelers to dock and walk downtown. Likewise, patrons of the downtown will be able to walk to the pier for recreation. Further, Scott Street's western terminus will overlook the proposed Cultural Arbour, Market Precinct, and Rainy River. While no river access is planned within the Market Precinct due to water conditions, the view of Rainy River will reinforce Fort Frances' identity as a waterfront community. Finally, the proposed western extension of Front Street would curve north to connect with Mowat Avenue, offering another connection between downtown and the waterfront. These linkages should be reinforced with wayfinding signage.
2. **Former Mill Site and Downtown Fort Frances:** The redeveloped former Mill site will connect to and extend the area's existing grid road network. These linkages will reintegrate the former Mill site into the adjacent urban fabric, including downtown, as well as break the large site into smaller, human-scaled blocks. The proposed land uses will complement the surrounding area. Both the Gateway and Market Precincts are intended to include limited small-scale retail similar to what is found downtown, but with a cultural or tourism focus. Likewise, the Wellness Precinct is intended to include medical/health/wellness services which will complement the nearby existing pharmacy, clinics, and similar services along Victoria Avenue.

3. **International Border Crossing:** The former Mill site straddles the international border crossing area and is the de facto welcome to Canada and Treaty 3 territory. Building on the Shevlin Wood Yard & Gateway to Fort Frances Study, the demolition of former Mill structures at the foot of the International Bridge would offer additional opportunities to improve cross-border traffic flow. As such, the redevelopment concept shows a softer corner for Canada-bound traffic between the foot of the International Bridge and the CBSA building. This is possible due to the planned demolition of several structures and could enable Canada-bound traffic to split into multiple queuing lanes earlier, which could help ease congestion. This potential change should be studied further, possibly as an update to the Shevlin Wood Yard & Gateway to Fort Frances Study.

The proposed Gateway Precinct also offers opportunity to capitalize on the '30 Minute Stop-Shop-and-Go-Market' by encouraging parking, including truck/trailer/boat parking, in the parking lot immediately east of the CBSA building, and activating the area with amenities such as food trucks, retail shops, a café or restaurant, and public washrooms. These amenities, in addition to the other redevelopment precincts within the former Mill site, along with the downtown and the Shevlin Green redevelopment, could encourage travelers to spend more time in Town.

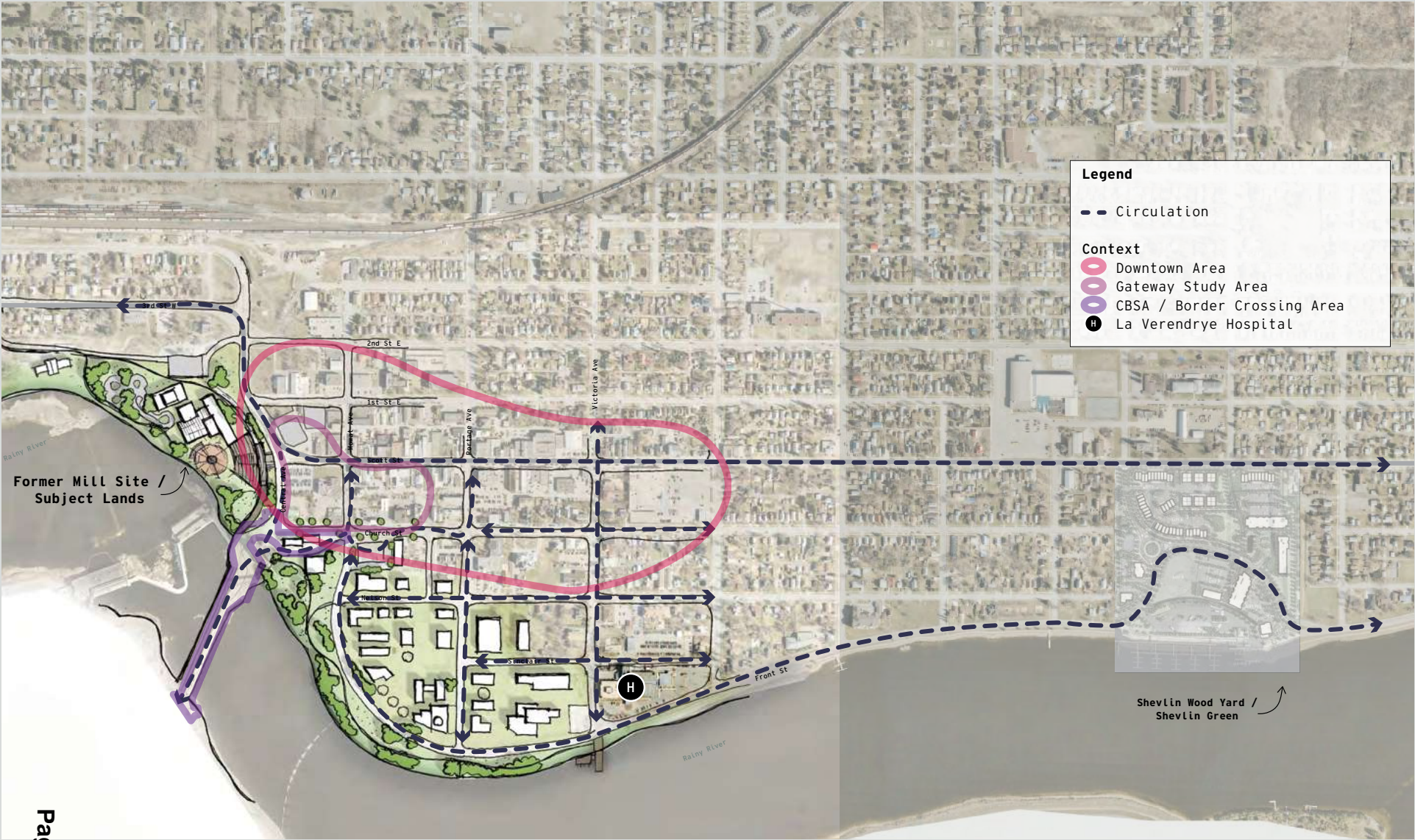


FIGURE 6: FORMER MILL SITE, DOWNTOWN & SHEVLIN GREEN CIRCULATION MAP

Finally, and as shown on Figure 7, the redevelopment concept shows a land use mix intended to complement and strengthen downtown Fort Frances. As such, any retail or commercial uses within the redeveloped Mill site should be located along Church Street or in the Market Precinct, adjacent to the downtown area.

Overall, the predominant land uses within the redeveloped Mill site will be employment, institutional, and cultural. The intent of this land use mix is to complement, rather than compete with, the existing commercial core and the proposed uses within the Shevlin Green redevelopment.

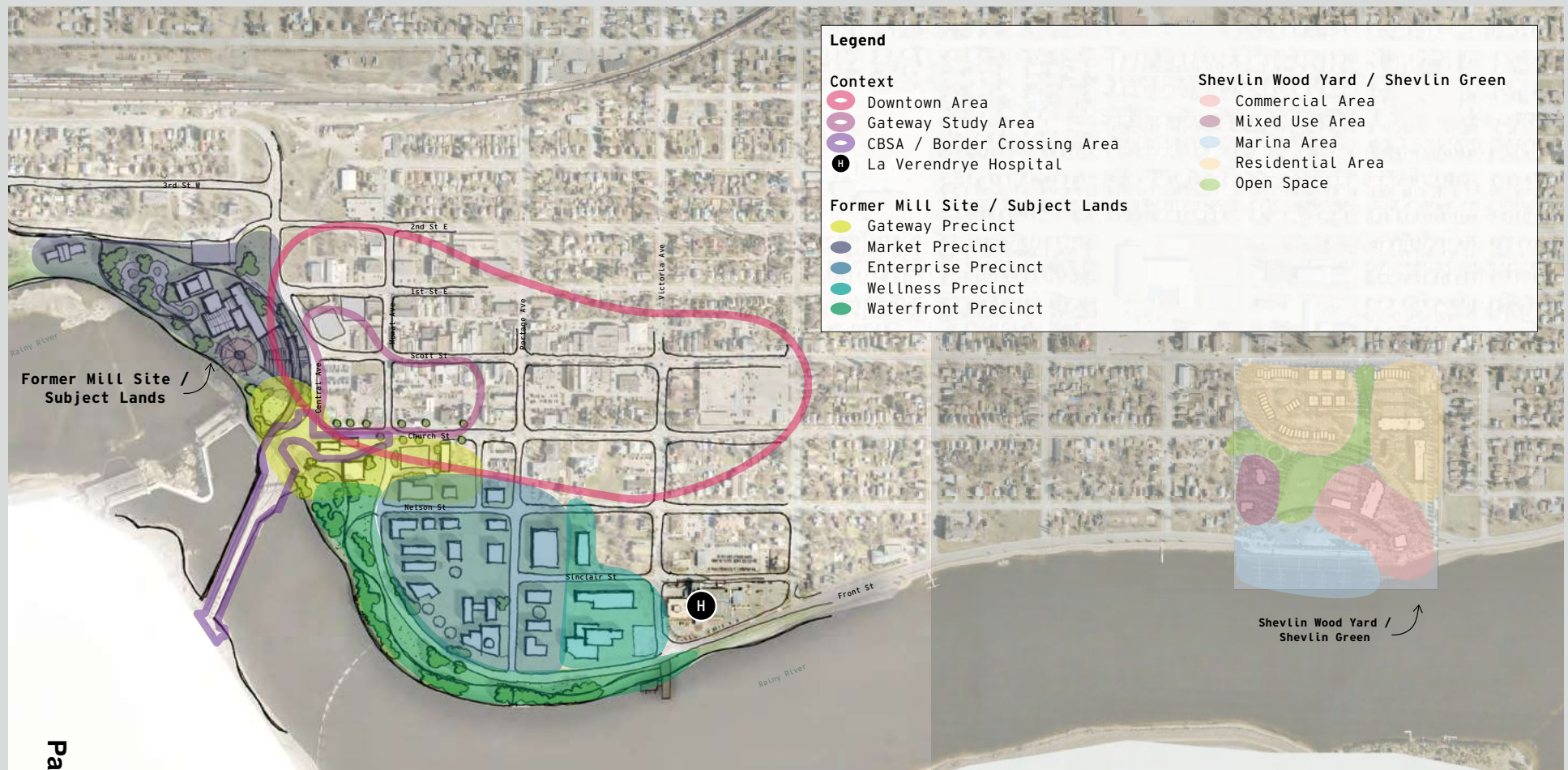


FIGURE 7: FORMER MILL SITE, DOWNTOWN & SHEVLIN GREEN LAND USE MAP

Implementation

While this plan articulates a vision for the redevelopment of the former Mill, it represents an early step in the overall planning and development process. The realization of this vision and the site's full redevelopment will require a sustained collective effort between Aazhogan Renewal, the Rainy River Future Development Corporation, and the Town of Fort Frances.

Given the sheer scale, complexity, and ambitious vision for the project, the transformation of the former Mill will take time. As such, concepts for the site will inevitably evolve over the course of successive planning, design, and development initiatives.

Fundamentally, this plan is about identifying the possibilities for the site, sparking interest in the redevelopment opportunity, and maintaining momentum in pursuit of the shared vision. With that, the following provides an overview of a core set of initial actions to advance the project and create the necessary conditions for its success.

PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

Aazhogan Renewal welcomes the opportunity to engage with interested parties to advance the revitalization concepts outlined in this plan and to identify potential new business opportunities.

CULTIVATE DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIPS

As evidenced by the outcome of this plan, a strong sense of partnership and collaboration has already been well established between Aazhogan Renewal, the Rainy River Future Development Corporation, and the Town of Fort Frances.

This collaborative approach – between public, private, institutional and community interests – will be foundational to the successful transformation of the former Mill. While this early concept is premised on creating a fertile ground for cultivating and strengthening partnerships, future planning initiatives and policies should explicitly promote partnerships to support the redevelopment of these lands. This includes continuing to advance collaborative efforts with Riverside Health Care in support of the potential future expansion of the La Verendrye Hospital, and the realization of the broader vision for the Wellness Precinct component of the project.



INTERIM ACTIVATION

While the ongoing demolition and remedial site works provide tangible evidence of progress, creative opportunities to activate the site on an interim or temporary basis should be pursued. In support of the broader community engagement efforts, activating the site through tactical projects would help build awareness around the development and also begin the process of re-acquainting the community with both the site and the waterfront. Some of the early ideas for interim activation projects are shown on Figure 8 and could include:

1. Pop-up park / plaza space at the foot of Victoria Avenue – this could be developed as part of an initial extension of the Waterfront Walk and future waterfront park.
2. Site enhancements to the parking lot at the southeast corner of Church Street and Mowat Avenue – this could include signage and lighting, stall demarcation (i.e., to create pull-through parking stalls for boat trailers and campers), and dedicated space for food trucks.
3. Public art – this could focus on lighting, murals, video projections, artist-designed construction hoarding, and/or other temporary installations that add interest to the site.



FIGURE 8: INTERIM ACTIVATION LOCATION MAP

INITIAL TECHNICAL STUDIES

The redevelopment of the former Mill is a complex undertaking. As the planning and design process moves forward, it may need to be supported by a variety of technical and engineering studies to ensure feasibility and identify integrated design solutions to support development objectives. Key studies may include, but are not limited to:

1. Municipal Servicing Studies – Water, Waste Water, and Stormwater.
2. Geotechnical and Hydrogeological Studies.
3. Environmental Site Assessment(s).
4. Transportation Impact Study.
5. Cultural Heritage Assessment.
6. Natural Heritage Assessment.
7. Utility Servicing – energy and telecommunications.
8. Environmental Assessments – including associated approvals – for planned decommissioned infrastructure works as well as any in-water and/or shoreland works.

A preliminary Municipal Servicing assessment, undertaken by KGS Group as part of this conceptual planning exercise, is included in Appendix C.

REVIEW BORDER CROSSING AREA CIRCULATION

The border crossing area and surrounding traffic circulation is a critical consideration in the redevelopment of the former Mill. In addition to Canada-US border security and operational considerations which are of paramount importance, any planned reconfiguration of the border crossing area must be mindful of the area's significance as a major gateway, as well as potential implications on the integration and connectivity of the future precincts to one another, the downtown and the broader Town.

While outside the scope of this plan, the Town and Aazhogan Renewal, in collaboration with CBSA, should review transportation circulation plans for the border crossing area – specifically the merits of converting two-way streets to one-way streets, as outlined in the Shevlin Wood Yard and Gateway to Fort Frances Study – in the context of CBSA operational needs, this concept plan and the emerging vision for the former Mill and its inter-relationships with the downtown.

This review may be done as part of a comprehensive Secondary Planning process for the former Mill site.

PLANNING APPROVALS

Given the importance of the redevelopment, the former Mill properties require specific recognition in the Town's Official Plan. At minimum, the former Mill properties should be identified as a Special Study Area, recognizing the site's significance and need for a comprehensive planning framework that builds on the conceptual work in this plan. While the current Official Plan identifies a number of Special Study Areas, it does not provide specific direction regarding the pathway for future planning of these areas.

As part of the Town's forthcoming Official Plan and Zoning By-law review process, in addition to adding the former Mill site to the roster of Special Study Areas, it should also provide clear guidance in terms of planning requirements. Likely the best vehicle to articulate and implement the vision for the former Mill properties, as well as the Shevlin Wood Yard, is by way of a Secondary Plan.

This conceptual plan should form the basis of an area-specific Secondary Plan that both enshrines the vision and establishes focused development policy directives into the Town's planning framework. A Secondary Plan that has received statutory approval creates a significant degree of development certainty that can contribute to market confidence and also streamline future planning approvals.

Following approval of the Secondary Plan, the Town, in collaboration with Aazhogan Renewal, should consider pre-zoning the former Mill site for its anticipated evolution in conformity with the Secondary Plan. The provision of pre-zoning is a major benefit in achieving the principles of development certainty and efficiency.

LEVERAGING FINANCIAL TOOLS

As part of the public-private collaborative effort, the overall redevelopment strategy should identify any and all opportunities to leverage available financial tools and potential public investment programs. As shown across Canada and North America, public sector investment signals a tangible commitment and in turn, creates market confidence that can stimulate significant private investment.

The Town of Fort Frances, through its existing Community Improvement Plan, has already established a suite of financial tools applicable to the Downtown Core and Waterfront Community Improvement Project Areas that can potentially be used to support the redevelopment of the former Mill. Beyond the Town's existing toolbox, the development partners should actively explore other funding opportunities, including but not limited to:

1. Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario (FedNor), Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC), and Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) – various programs and initiatives are available to support economic development and job growth.
2. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) – funding and financing programs are available to support brownfield redevelopment and the development of green infrastructure.
3. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation – financing is available for multi-family and affordable housing projects.
4. Canada Council for the Arts – grants are available for artists, groups, and organizations to support public art projects.
5. Other Federal and Provincial funding sources aimed at supporting economic development, green infrastructure, and other development innovations.

Given the regional and national significance of the project and the prospective economic opportunities for the Town, RRFN, and wider region, the potential for Federal and Provincial level investment, outside of prescribed programs, should be pursued.

Appendix A: Community Profile

LOCAL AND REGIONAL HISTORY

The Rainy River long served as a major transportation route for Indigenous Nations of the Saulteaux peoples, as it linked the Great Lakes with Lake of the Woods. As such, the Indigenous Nations flourished in the pre-contact era through fishing, hunting, and trade. Post-contact, European settlers recognized the river's importance and established various trading posts in the area, including the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) trading post in 'Fort Frances', named after the HBC Governor's wife, Frances Ramsay Simpson.

European influence increased in the area and North America as a whole, eventually leading to the Treaty of Paris in 1783 which delineated the borders of two new countries – the US and what would eventually become Canada. As this new border ran along the basin of the Rainy River, it effectively split up the existing Indigenous Nations. On the Canadian side, Indigenous Nations negotiated and signed Treaty No. 3, which covers present-day northwest Ontario (ON) and southeast Manitoba (MB). The territory was important for regional trade, as it linked Fort Garry and Fort William (present-day Winnipeg, MB and Thunder Bay, ON respectively). Treaty No. 3 was planned to be the first post-Confederation treaty, but the Anishinaabe held firm that they would not cede lands, nor allow farming or settlement, in their territory. On October 3, 1873, the Anishinaabe and the British government agreed to share the 55,000 square miles of Anishinaabe territory.

In 1914, the Government of Canada amalgamated seven Rainy River Saulteaux Nations – Hungry Hall 1 Band of Rainy River Saulteaux, Hungry Hall 2 Band of Rainy River Saulteaux, Little Forks Band of Rainy River Saulteaux, Long Sault 1 Band of Rainy River Saulteaux, Long Sault 2 Band of Rainy River Saulteaux, Manitou Rapids 1 Band of Rainy River Saulteaux, and Manitou Rapids 2 Band of Rainy River Saulteaux – into what is now known as Rainy River First Nations. RRF currently has two reserves along the Rainy River, 40 kilometres (25 miles) west of Fort Frances.



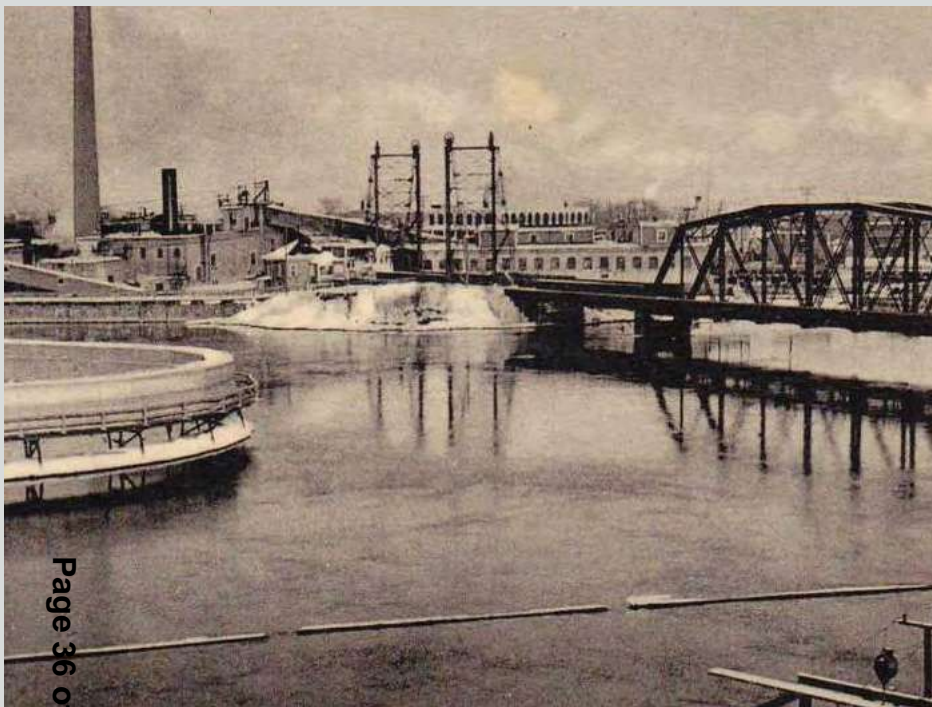


Kay-Nah-Chi-Wah-Nung, or Place of the Long Rapids, is a sacred place within RRFN, as the area was recurrently used and/or inhabited for more than 8,000 years. The site was home to the Ojibway people, including the Long Sault Reserve leading up to the time of the signing of Treaty No. 3 until 1914. Encompassing close to 4 kilometres (2.5 miles) of Rainy River shoreline, Kay-Nah-Chi-Wah-Nung contains the largest group of burial mounds and associated village sites in Canada. The first mound builders inhabited this region up to 2,000 years ago. Kay-Nah-Chi-Wah-Nung was declared a National Historic Site in 1970. The on-site visitors centre focuses on Ojibwe history, culture and traditions.

FORT FRANCES PROFILE

“We are a border town: we are the beginning of everything. We have always been the industrial capital of Northwest Ontario, and we will strengthen that role. We always were more than a mill town and we will be so much more than a mining town – aided by the lowest cost power and the most affordable industrial land in Ontario. We are the diversified industrial heartbeat of forestry, mining, agriculture, and tourism”.

Fort Frances, 2021



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Despite the Mill's closure in 2014, the Town continues to serve as a regional centre in the Fort Frances Rainy River District (District) for healthcare, education, community services and businesses providing a range of professional, retail, and administrative services. Fort Frances enjoys strong connectivity with the rest of the region and Canada and the US through its airport (a Nav Canada point of entry from the US), rail service via Canadian National Railway (CNR), the provincial highway system, and the land border crossing into the US. The crossing supports tourism, a key economic sector in the region, with approximately 500,000 people crossing into Canada from the US each year. The crossing also provides access to markets in the US Midwest and beyond, with Minnesota having a population of 5.7 million alone. The industrial sector also remains strong, with the development of the New Gold mining and other milling operations in the region which continue to operate. The hydroelectric power generation site, proximate to the international crossing, provides the community and region with low cost, environmentally friendly power.



But despite these positive attributes, Fort Frances' population and economic growth trajectory faces some significant challenges:

1. **Population decline:** As shown on Figure 9, the population of Fort Frances has been declining over the last two decades; its population was 7,739 in 2016. This trend is not dissimilar to other communities in the District as well as in the cities of Kenora and Dryden.

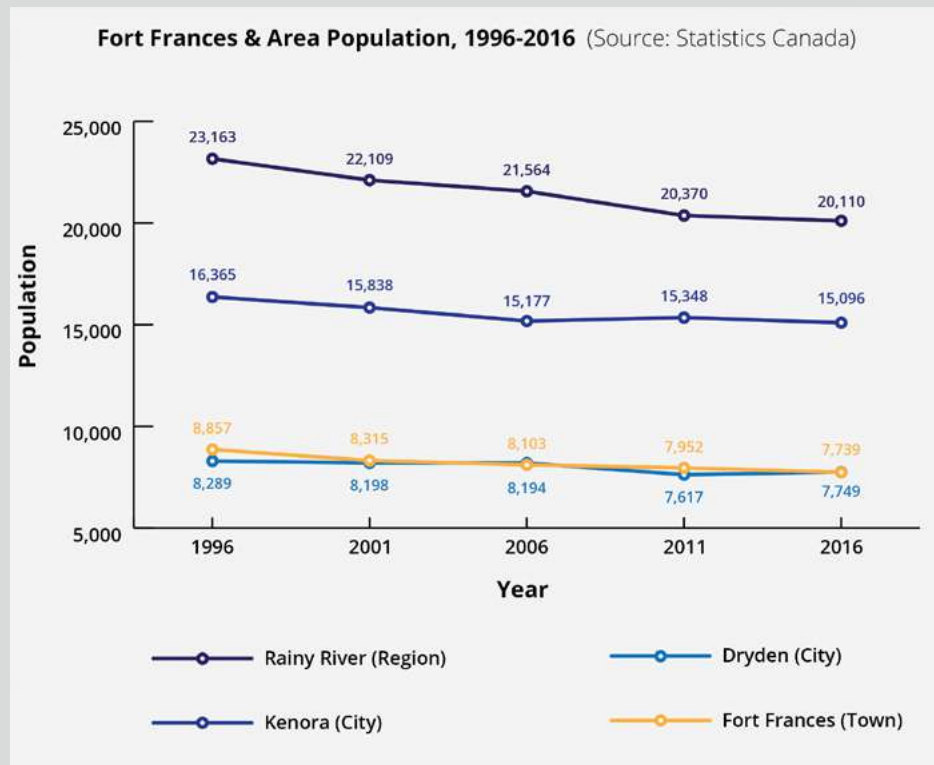


FIGURE 9: POPULATION GRAPH

This regional population decline is expected to continue. As shown on Figure 10, projections show approximately 40-45 fewer people per year in Fort Frances, resulting in a projected population of 6,649 in 2041. Conversely, the Northern Policy Institute projects that the Indigenous population in the region will grow by about 18% over the next ten years.

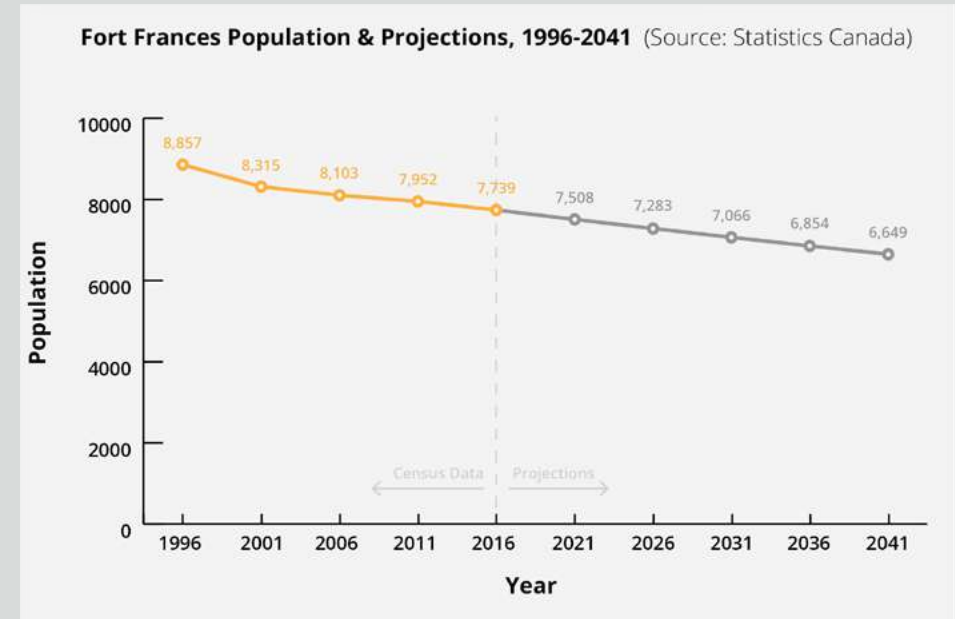
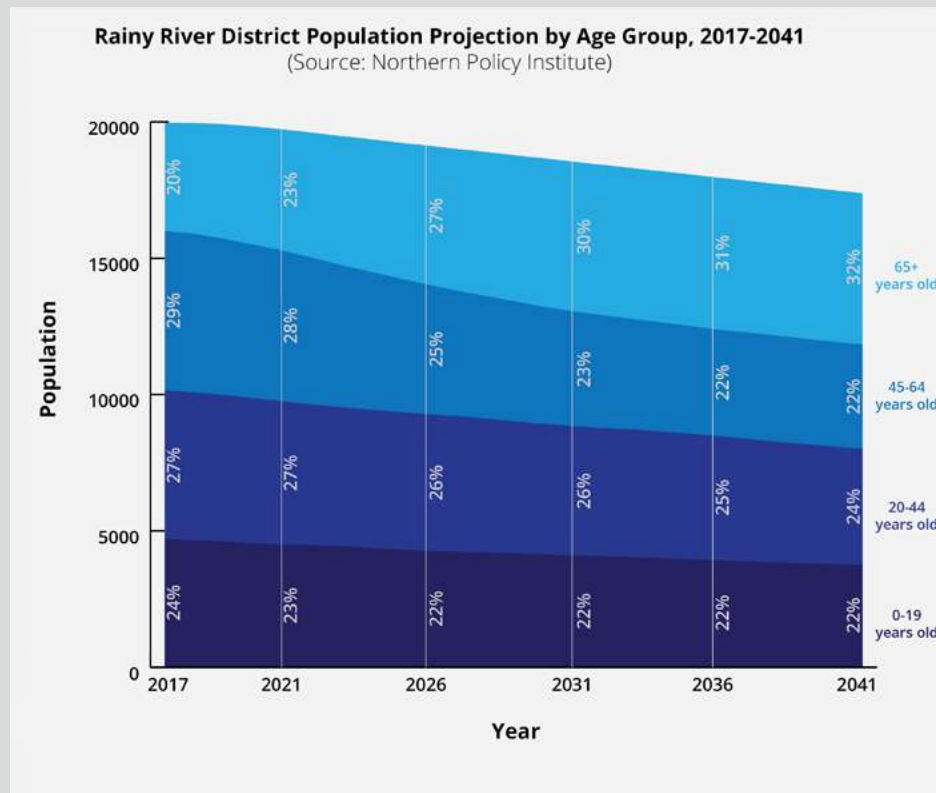


FIGURE 10: POPULATION PROJECTION GRAPH

- 2. Aging population:** The Town's population is aging. According to the Northern Policy Institute and as shown on Figure 11, younger age cohorts will shrink and make up smaller proportions of the total population, while the 65+ age cohort will grow. An aging population often contributes to a trend of smaller household sizes, which in turn could increase the demand for dwelling units required to house the population, even if the population is declining.



- 3. Static residential market and hospitality sectors:** The number of dwelling units in the Town has remained relatively static, increasing marginally from 2,875 units in 2013 to 2,900 in 2020. The residential real estate market has also remained slow over the past ten years: real estate listings have remained low (10-15 units), due in part, to a lack of alternative housing and supports for the Town's aging population. The increase in average assessed value of dwelling units has similarly been gradual, from \$396,000,000 in 2013 to \$464,000,000 in 2020, representing a 17% increase over the period (or 2.5% per year). As shown in Table 1, housing is older than that of the province, with 80% of the Town's housing constructed before 1980 compared to 53% in Ontario.

TABLE 1: AGE OF HOUSING STOCK

Period of Construction	Town of Fort Frances		Province of Ontario	
	Number of Dwellings	% of Total Dwellings	Number of Dwellings	% of Total Dwellings
1960 or before	1,645	48%	1,293,135	25%
1961 to 1980	1,120	32%	1,449,585	28%
1981 to 1990	320	9%	709,135	14%
1991 to 2000	230	7%	622,565	12%
2001 to 2005	60	2%	396,130	8%
2006 to 2010	25	1%	368,235	7%
2011 to 2016	40	1%	330,390	6%
Total	3,450	100%	5,169,175	100%

FIGURE 11: POPULATION PROJECTION BY AGE GROUP GRAPH

In addition, there has been little development in the hotel sector in the past ten years. There are seven hotels in Fort Frances, with approximately 300 to 350 beds combined. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, occupancy levels were averaging 65%. Most hotels/motels in the Town, due to their age and location, would be considered 'Highway Hotels', as they are geared to the traveling traffic passing through and not staying for an extended period. Two of the seven larger facilities have full-service accommodations, with meeting and food services. One of the seven properties would be considered a resort, but the suites do not lend themselves for extended stays. Other than the Super 8 Hotel which opened in 2019, the hotels do not appear to be on a routine re-modernization program as is typical with the chain facilities.

4. Effects of COVID-19 on the tourism sector: Fort Frances' tourism vision is threefold:

- a. A greater presence of a primary NW Ontario product – angling – with better leverage of Rainy Lake.
- b. A learn-to-fish/hunt/forage/track/cook market targeted at millennials and younger explorers.
- c. A simple low-on-the-ladder objective to help capture more tourism dollars, focusing on the '30 Minute Stop-Shop-and-Go-Market' and the '30-Hour-3-Day-Stay-and-Play-Market'.

From a functional perspective, the Town's tourism vision recognizes that enhancing the hospitality sector and engaging in placemaking strategies (via the 'Beautiful Fort Frances' initiative) could nurture brief and longer stays by elevating the quality and variety of the tourism experience. This is aligned well with tourism trends being seen and forecast across the region as families and small groups look for vacations that include more than one multi-experience, multi-night but shorter stays during their vacations that are generally connected to the land, outdoor recreation, and local culinary and cultural experiences. Unfortunately however, COVID-19 negatively impacted the tourism industry first, and is forecast to be the last to recover.

Appendix B: Policy Context

2020 PROVINCIAL POLICY STATEMENT

The 2020 Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), which is issued under the Planning Act, provides general policy guidance on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. All municipal decision-making must be consistent with the 2020 PPS.

Noteworthy summations of the 2020 PPS regarding the subject lands are as follows:

1. Healthy, livable and safe communities are sustained by promoting cost-effective development patterns through such means as redevelopment and intensification.
2. Planning authorities shall engage with Indigenous communities and coordinate on land use planning matters.
3. Land uses shall be planned and developed to mitigate potential risks to public health and safety, support energy conservation and other sustainable design practices, and ensure the long-term viability of development.
4. Planning authorities may permit conversion of lands within identified employment areas to non-employment uses, where it has been demonstrated that the land is not identified as provincially / regionally significant; it is not required for employment purposes over the long term; and there is a need for the conversion.

GROWTH PLAN FOR NORTHERN ONTARIO

The Growth Plan for Northern Ontario (Growth Plan) is a provincial plan issued under the Places to Grow Act. Released in 2011, the Growth Plan is to be read in conjunction with the 2020 PPS. The Growth Plan states that the Province will focus economic development in a variety of sectors, such as forestry, manufacturing, arts and culture, renewable energy, and tourism. Some of the resulting economic development strategies are as follows:

1. Grow and retain existing competitive businesses and diversification into value-added business opportunities.
2. Attract investment by partnering with Indigenous communities as well as businesses, industry, education and research sectors, economic development organizations and northern communities.
3. Demonstrate leadership in sustainable growth and environmental management.
4. Respond to labour market needs and opportunities through training, education, and entrepreneurship.

TOWN STRATEGIC PLAN

The overall purpose of Strategic Plans is to provide a road map for proactive municipal decision-making and direct capacity building to identified priority areas within a community. The Town's own 2020-2022 Strategic Plan establishes its vision and mission statement as nurturing a safe, inclusive, sustainable and attractive community that enhances quality of life and promotes growth and prosperity with boundless opportunities.

The Strategic Plan sets out the following community development objectives to achieve this vision:

1. Attract a new primary industry to support job creation, and attract additional investment to develop, expand and retain businesses in other sectors.
2. Consider tourism potential when developing new projects in the community or investing in economic development initiatives.
3. Develop a plan for the former Shevlin Wood Yard, of which accommodating various housing forms and types shall be an important component.
4. Establish partnerships with nearby Indigenous communities as a means to promote reconciliation and community-region building.
5. Improve relationships with US border communities to take further advantage of mutually beneficial economic development opportunities, including those associated with the International Bridge crossing.
6. Work with local health system service providers to address health care facility needs and ensure that appropriate levels of service can be provided to vulnerable populations (both local and non-local).
7. Continue to advocate for increased post-secondary learning opportunities in the region.
8. Ensure the potential risks of climate change are considered and mitigated when undertaking new developments in the community.
9. Continue to advocate for improved transportation linkages between communities in Northwestern Ontario and to nearby markets to further support community-region building.
10. Position the Town as an attractive community for new immigrants, both international and from within Canada.

TOWN OFFICIAL PLAN

The Planning Act requires municipalities to prepare and adopt Official Plans that are consistent with the 2020 PPS as well as Provincial Growth Plans (if one is in effect). Official Plans provide a guide for future development in a community. Adopted by Town Council in 2011 and approved by the Province in 2012, the Town's Official Plan includes guiding principles, planning objectives, land use policies and special study areas to manage the Town's growth and development to the year 2031.

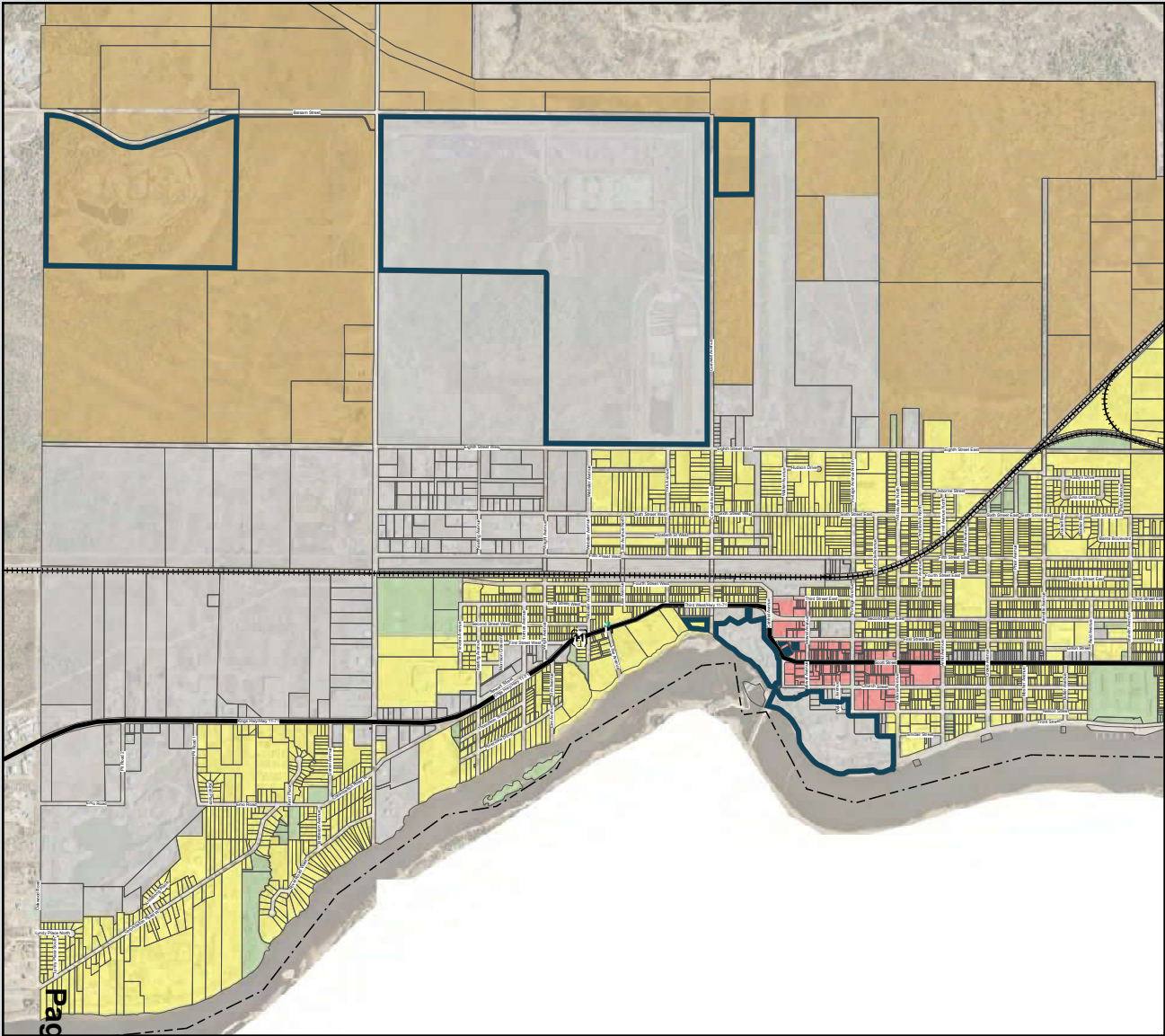
The guiding principles in Section 2 of the Official Plan focus on supporting initiatives that enable the Town to meet all peoples' needs as a safe, accessible and complete community; and promote the four pillars of sustainability – economic, social, cultural and environmental – as the over-arching framework to community building. These principles inform the general land use policies in Section 3 of the Official Plan and the land use designations in Section 4.

Pertinent highlights are as follows:

1. As per the Official Plan Schedules, which are consolidated on Figure 12 and Figure 13:
 - a. The Official Plan considers all lands abutting watercourses below corresponding high water marks to be subject to flooding. As such, there is a portion of the subject lands along the shoreline that is designated as 'Hazard Areas'. Unless proposed developments can demonstrate that the effects and risk to public safety are minor and can be mitigated, permitted uses in 'Hazard Areas' are generally limited to outdoor recreation, conservation, parks, docks, picnic pavilions, boat ramps, parking, water management, and erosion protection.

- b. There are three areas proximate to the subject lands shown as 'Environmental Occurrences'. These areas identify the presence of significant flora, fauna and/or wildlife habitat (i.e., the Tufted White Prairie Aster and Inland Bluegrass in this context). No development or site alteration shall occur within – or within a 1-kilometre radius – these areas unless an Environmental Impact Study determines there will be no negative impacts to identified natural features.
- c. As the pulp and paper mill was still operational pursuant to the effective date of the Official Plan, the majority of the subject lands is designated 'Employment Areas'. The objectives of 'Employment Areas' are:
 - i. to support the development of a diverse range of employment opportunities;
 - ii. to ensure there are sufficient lands to support future employment opportunities;
 - iii. to accommodate sufficient flexibility so 'Employment Areas' can adapt to changing conditions;
 - iv. to increase the attractiveness of 'Employment Areas' through high quality urban design guidelines; and
 - v. to ensure employment uses are compatible with adjacent uses.

Industrial, commercial, and business uses are permitted in 'Employment Areas'. However, future heavy industry is encouraged to locate in the northwest portion of the community. Further, the Town will require justification for any proposed conversion of existing 'Employment Areas' to non-employment uses.



Legend

Administrative

Subject Lands

Town Boundary

Parcel Line

Transportation

Highway

Railway

Official Plan

Downtown Business Area

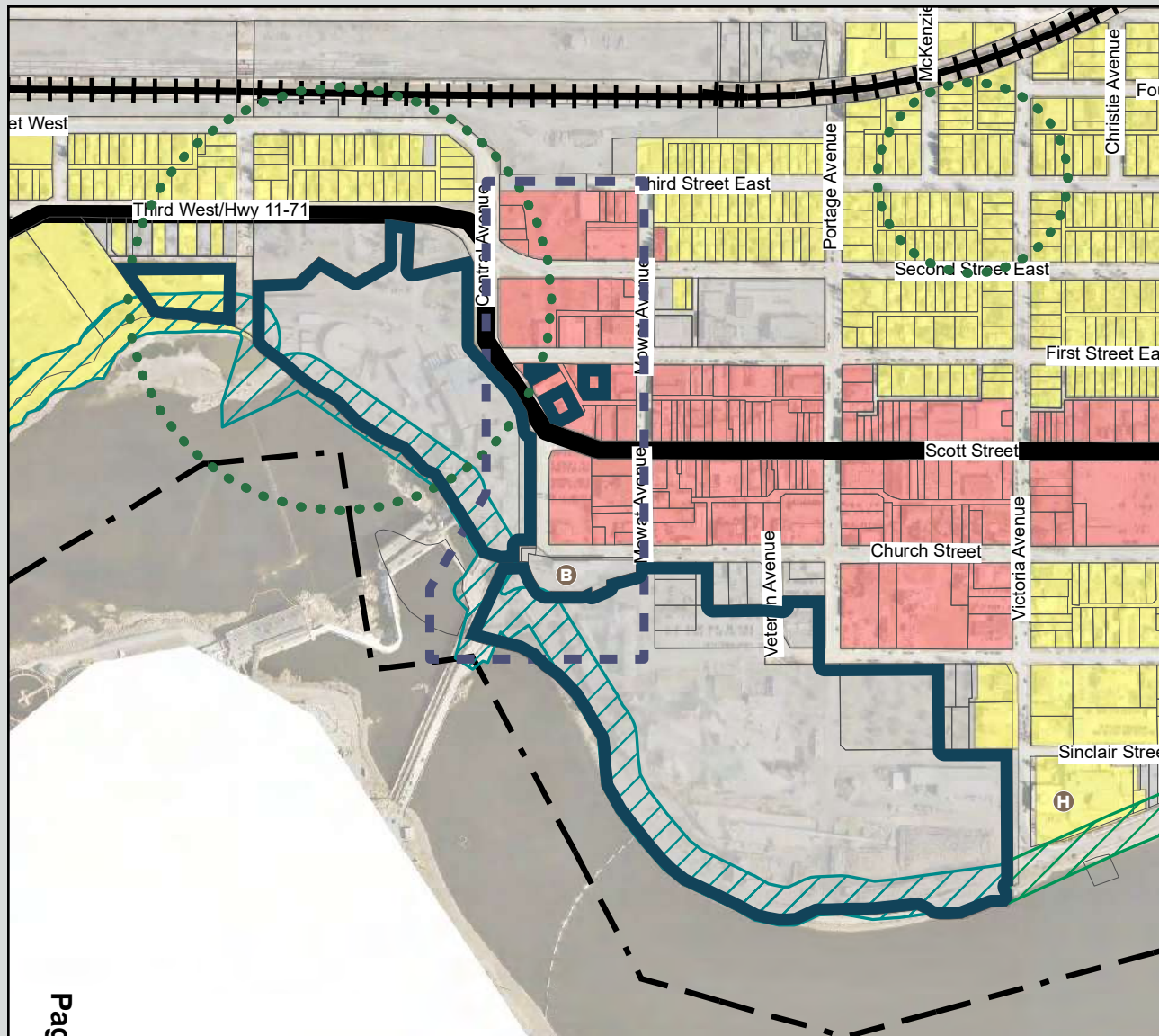
Employment Area

Living Area

Recreation Area

Resource Development Area

FIGURE 12: OFFICIAL PLAN MAP (TOWN OVERVIEW)



Legend

Administrative

- Subject Lands
- Town Boundary
- Parcel Line

Transportation

- Highway
- Railway

Official Plan

- Downtown Business Area
- Employment Area
- Living Area
- Recreation Area
- Resource Development Area
- Environmental Protection Area
- Hazard Area
- Environmental Occurrence
- Gateway Economic Overlay

FIGURE 13: CONSOLIDATED OFFICIAL PLAN MAP (SHORELANDS)

- d. A portion of the subject lands along the southerly extent of the Cornwall Avenue right-of-way is designated as 'Living Area.' Its intent is to provide for residential uses and supporting local commercial, institutional and recreational uses. New housing should reflect a range of housing types to accommodate various market needs, including infill and intensification opportunities, generally at 12-16 units / net hectare (low density); 17-39 units / net hectare (medium density); and 40-plus units / net hectare (high density).
 - e. Three distinct parcels of the subject lands on the north side of the Central Avenue / Scott Street right-of-way are designated 'Downtown Business Area'. Its intent is to accommodate the broadest range of commercial uses (at the street line on ground level) and residential uses (located on the upper floors above the commercial uses).
 - f. The Official Plan includes a 'Gateway Economic Overlay' at the three main entrances into Town. The southern Gateway Economic Overlay includes portions of the subject lands along Central Avenue and Church Street via the International Bridge. Its focus is on specialized transportation and logistics uses, developed with high quality urban design.
2. Additional land use and development policies affecting the subject lands are as follows:
- a. Land use and development decisions by the Town shall be based on an ecosystems approach that considers the inter-relationships among air, land, water, plant life, wildlife and human activities.
 - b. Shoreline areas shall be kept in their natural state as much as possible.
 - c. The Town shall support the use and application of energy conservation, district heating, combined heat and power, and alternative and renewable energy sources in new development and redevelopment projects, in accordance with applicable regulations and provided potential negative impacts to adjacent lands are mitigated.
 - d. All new development shall have regard for the Town's cultural heritage resources (i.e., lands, archaeological sites, important views and vistas, and buildings of historic, cultural and architectural value) and shall, wherever possible, incorporate these resources into new development and redevelopment projects.
 - e. The Town supports the role of public art to enhance the public realm, enrich the visual experience of residents and visitors, and promote the Town's culture.
 - f. The Town recognizes the role of active transportation (e.g., cycling, walking, jogging, inline skating, skateboarding, etc.) in contributing to a healthy community as well as a safe, accessible and diverse local transportation system.
 - g. All new development that has access to municipal sewer and water and other public utilities shall be connected to these services.
 - h. The Town may undertake a planning study and/or implement a Secondary Plan to guide the development or redevelopment of a specific area of the community.
 - i. The Town is designated as a Site Plan Control Area. As such, all development and redevelopment shall be subject to Site Plan Control provisions, except for licensed pits and quarries, single-unit, semi-detached or two-unit dwellings, and any associated additions or renovations.

TOWN ZONING BY-LAW

The Town Zoning By-Law No. 3/14 (Zoning By-Law) must conform to the Official Plan. As per the Zoning By-Law Schedules, which are consolidated on Figure 14 and Figure 15:

1. The portion of the subject lands along the shoreline is zoned 'M1 – Light Industrial' (M1 Zone), recognizing that the pulp and paper mill was still operational pursuant to the effective date of the Zoning By-Law. Similarly, the portion of the subject lands in the northwestern portion of the Town is zoned 'M2 – Heavy Industrial' (M2 Zone) and 'M3 – Waste Disposal Industrial' (M3 Zone), recognizing their former use in supporting mill operations i.e. the waste disposal grounds (zoned M2 Zone), and the sewage lagoon (zoned M3 Zone).
2. The three distinct parcels of the subject lands on the north side of the Central Avenue / Scott Street right-of-way are zoned 'C2 – General Commercial' (C2 Zone), recognizing their location in the Town's downtown area.

Table 2 provides additional highlights of the zones affecting the subject lands and surrounding area.

TABLE 2: ZONING BY-LAW HIGHLIGHTS

	Zone	Description / Main Intent	Minimum Area
R1	Residential Type One	Single detached dwellings	460 m ²
R2	Residential Type Two	Apartments	240 m ² / unit
R3	Residential Mobile Home	Mobile home dwellings	14,000 m ²
SR	Seasonal Residential	Single detached dwellings	10,000 m ²
C1	Local Commercial	Bank, personal services, limited retail, offices	550 m ²
C2	General Commercial	Personal services, retail, offices, restaurant	230 m ²
E	Enterprise	Large format commercial / retail	4,000 m ²
TC	Tourist Commercial	Campground, hotel, marina, restaurant	4,000 m ²
M1	Light Industrial	Equipment sales, manufacturing, storage	2,050 m ²
M2	Heavy Industrial	Equipment sales, storage, resource extraction	20,000 m ²
M3	Waste Disposal Industrial	Recycling, solid waste, sewage lagoon	10,000 m ²
I	Institutional	Arena, community centre, school, hospital	550 m ²
RD	Resource Development	Agriculture, greenhouse, quarry	10,000 m ²
OS	Open Space	Parks, gardens, recreation, conservation	4,000 m ²



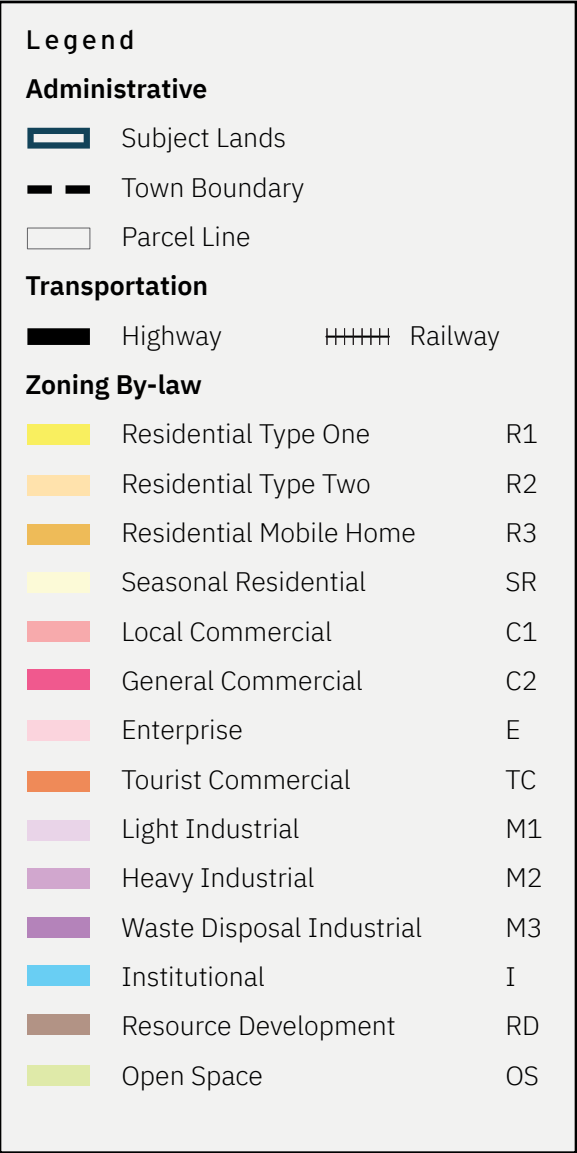
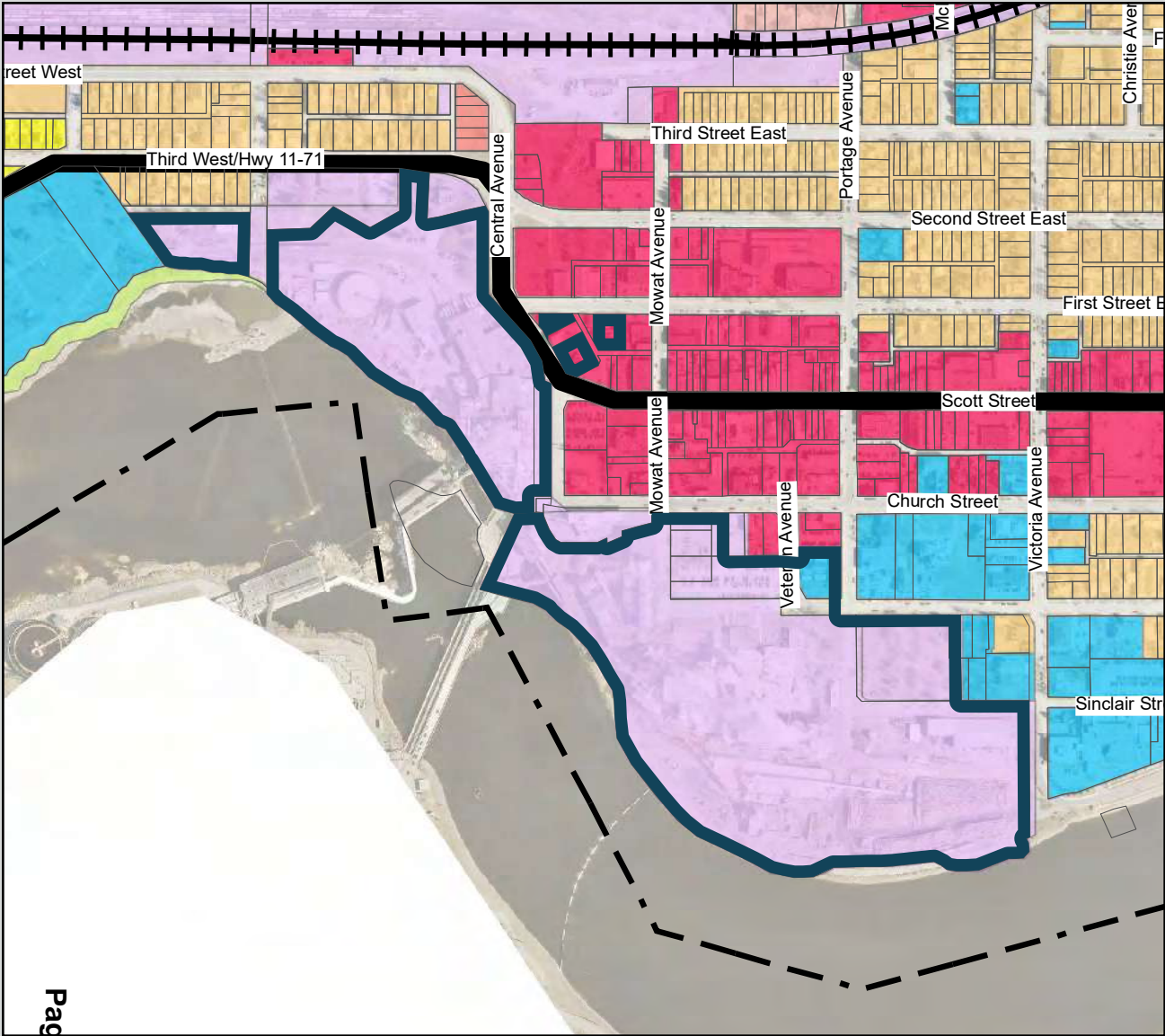


FIGURE 15: ZONING BY-LAW MAP (SHORELANDS)

COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Planning Act allows municipalities to identify Community Improvement Project Areas, prepare Community Improvement Plans (CIP), and provide incentive programs which stimulate redevelopment of lands as a means to maintain the vitality of the municipality.

The Town's CIP was initially adopted – and subsequently modified – by Town Council prior to the mill closure. As such, the CIP does not discuss specific improvements envisioned for the subject lands. Still, there are incentives to both stimulate and support future redevelopment initiatives within the CIP's three project areas, as shown on Figure 16 and highlighted below regarding the subject lands:

1. The portion of the subject lands along the shoreline is within the 'Downtown Core & Waterfront Project Area'. There are a range of programs and projects indicated, focusing on:
 - a. Façade and property restoration and improvement incentives.
 - b. Planning fee(s) and Development Charge and waivers / exemptions.
 - c. Residential conversion and intensification incentives.
 - d. Parking reduction / relief incentives.
 - e. Waterfront redevelopment projects, including recreational paths and trails, shoreline rehabilitation, tree planting, and lighting.

2. The northwestern portion of the subject lands is within the 'Resource Development Area' of the CIP. The main focus here is to promote the remediation, rehabilitation, adaptive re-use, redevelopment and overall improvement of brownfield sites through such means as property tax assistance (e.g., incentives, relief).

It is important to note that the programs and projects cited above shall be consistent with the intent of the Official Plan and are subject to funding being available through Town Council.

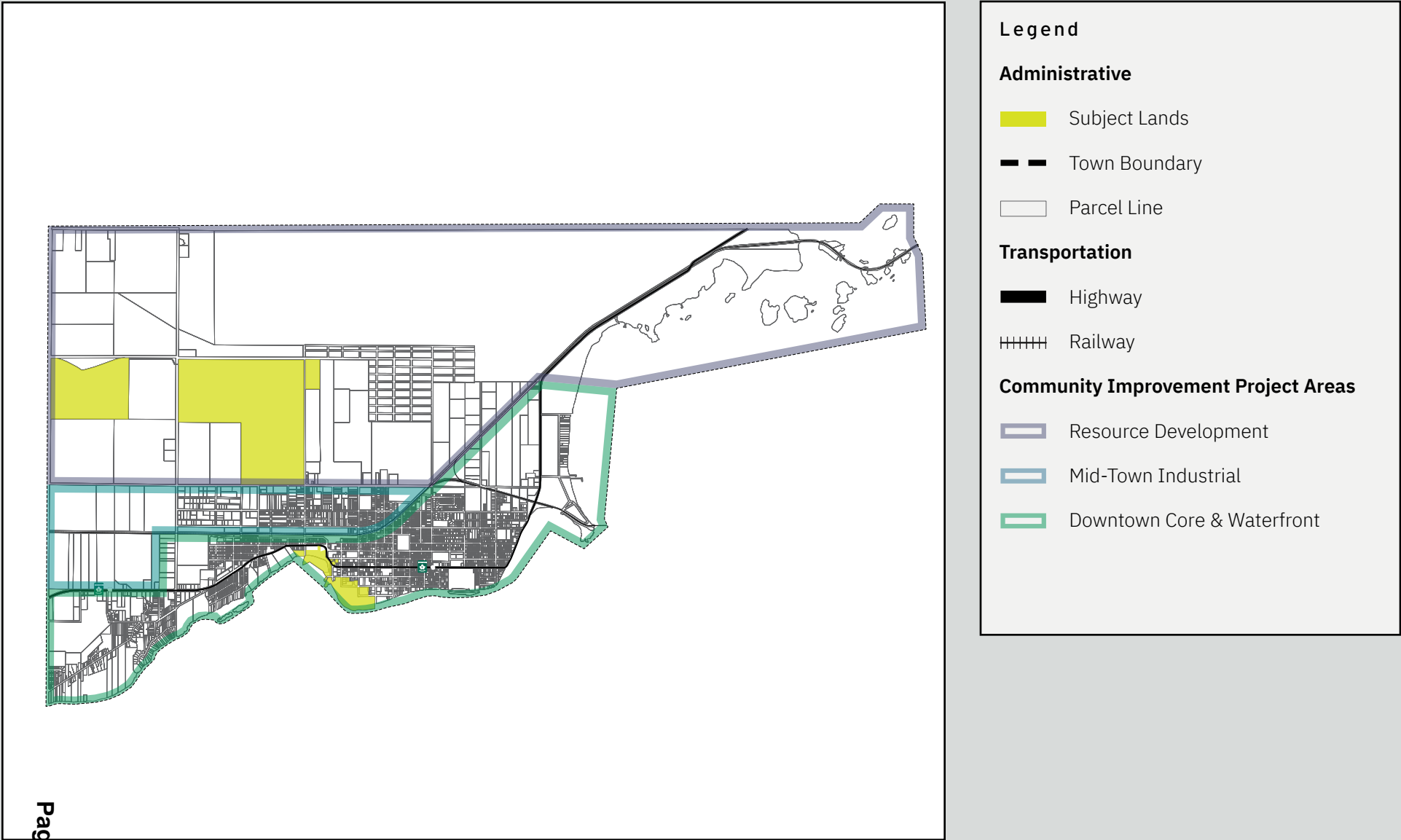


FIGURE 16: COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN MAP

SHEVLIN WOOD YARD & GATEWAY TO FORT FRANCES STUDY

Borne out from the Town's Strategic Plan, the Shevlin Wood Yard and Gateway to Fort Frances Study was completed in 2021. It developed two plans: a land use plan for the redevelopment of the former Shevlin Wood Yard site, comprising roughly 7.3 ha. (18 acres) east of the subject lands; and a conceptual design for a new transportation corridor at the Canada border entry point via the International Bridge crossing:

1. As shown on Figure 17, the gateway concept included recommendations for:
 - a. Reconfiguring Mowat Avenue to include on-street parking bays on the east side serving standard cars and cars pulling trailers, as well as streetscaping, wayfinding and buffers around the Enbridge Gas facility. Mowat would remain two-way to ensure existing and future commercial properties remain easy to access.
 - b. Revising Central Avenue to one-way southbound, staging US bound traffic with one through lane and two queuing lanes. People could book a time for departure, allowing them to leave their vehicles while they wait.
 - c. Additional landscaping and streetscaping on Central Avenue, Scott Street and Mowat Avenue.
 - d. Bulb outs and other intersection improvements for safety and pedestrian comfort.
 - e. Additional parking behind Scott Street businesses.
 - f. Public parking areas along Central and Church Street that includes pull through trailer stalls to serve entering and exiting travelers.
 - g. Better wayfinding and information throughout.
 - h. A new pedestrian promenade linking to Rainy Lake Square from the new public parking area on Church Street (this space would be home to tourist information kiosks, wayfinding information, public art, interpretive signs and seasonal food trucks).
 - i. Relocating the tourist information and public washroom functions to the Fort Frances Museum.
 - j. A three-phased build-out of the improvements cited above, which would be driven by the Town.

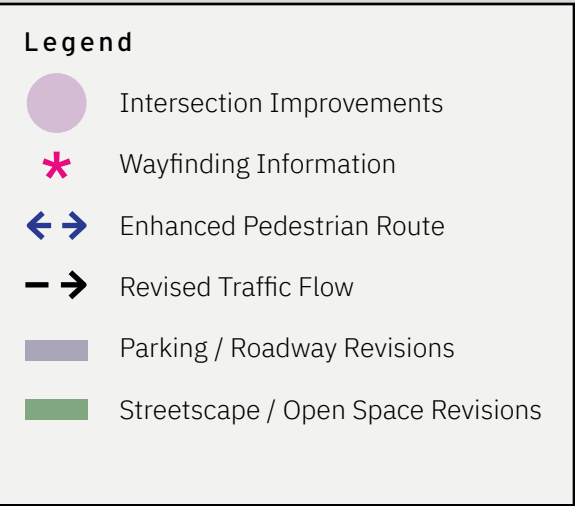
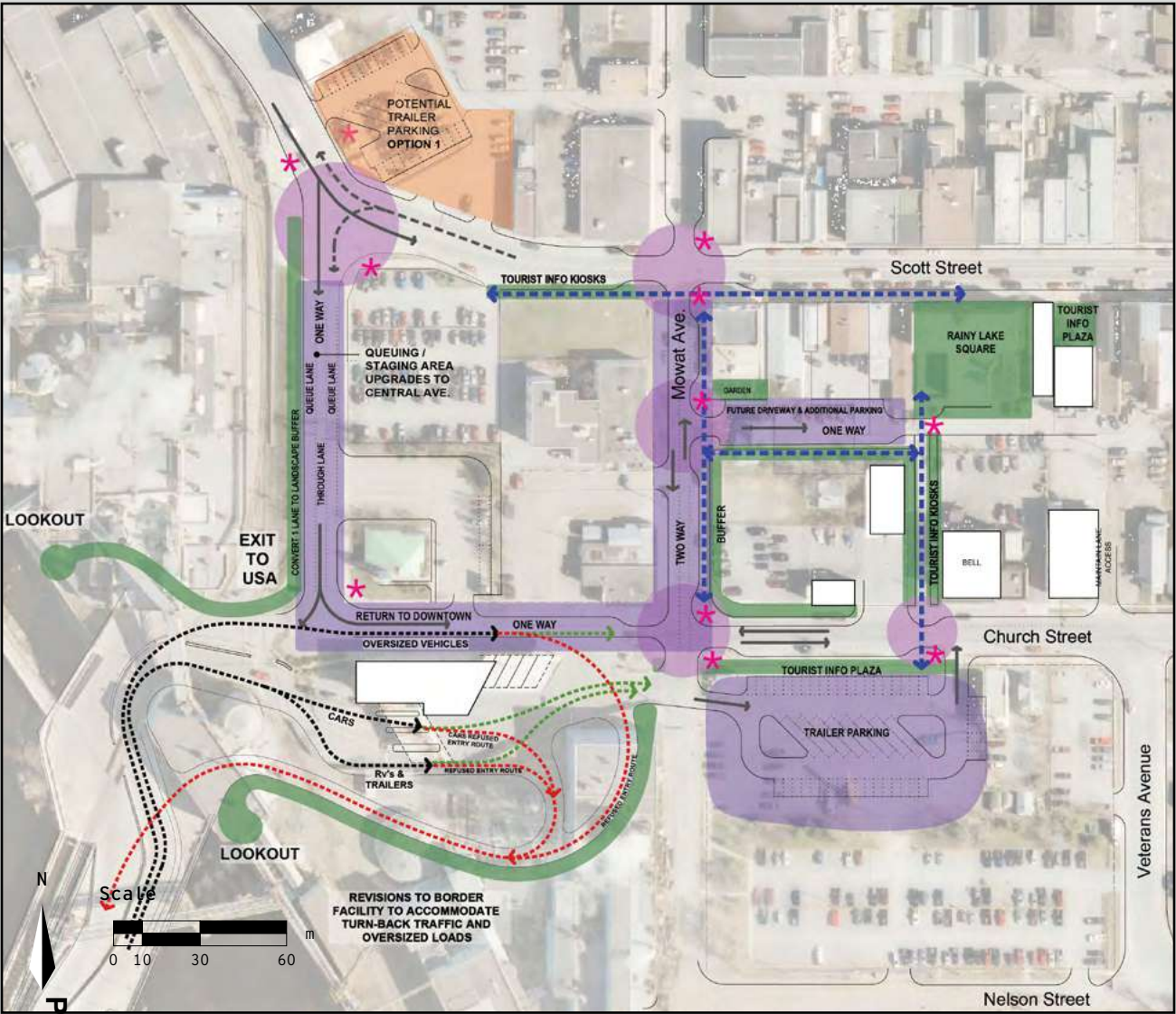


FIGURE 17: GATEWAY STUDY AREA MAP

2. As shown on Figure 18, the Shevlin Wood Yard site concept included recommendations for:
 - a. Commercial uses near Front Street i.e. brew pub / riverside patio, three-storey hotel, and pavilion / conference space.
 - b. Multi-unit residential uses in the northern portion of the site i.e. three-to-four storey apartments (complete with underground parking accessed off Scott Street); one-to-two storey townhomes; garden apartments.
 - c. Mixed use buildings in the northeastern portion of the site, ranging from two-to-three storeys, with commercial on the main floor and apartments above.
 - d. Open space improvements i.e. park spaces, paths and trails, tourism attraction (focusing on key outdoor activities of the Rainy River region), playground, and an upgraded marina promenade that links the commercial spaces.
 - e. Realigning Front Street northward to Scott Street through a roundabout with the east leg of Front Street connecting back to the existing alignment near the Lookout Tower and providing access to the marina parking lot.

Implementation of the development concept would be led by the Town, focusing on supporting Official Plan Amendments, Zoning By-Law Amendments, a topographic survey, an environmental assessment, urban design guidelines and an infrastructure implementation strategy.



FIGURE 18: SHEVLIN GREEN MAP

Appendix C: Municipal Servicing

SHORELAND SITE (AREA NO. 1)

Existing Town of Fort Frances sanitary sewer, water mains and land drainage sewers are located on the adjacent streets including Central Avenue, Church Street, Nelson Street, Sinclair Street, and Portage Avenue, as shown on Figure 19. Some are also understood to pass through portions of the former mill site through the west portions of the former Town right-of-way that had been taken over by the mill as it expanded during its lifespan, including:

1. Sinclair Street west of Victoria Avenue to the south projection of Mowat Avenue.
2. Nelson Street west of Portage Avenue to south projection of Mowat Avenue.
3. Portage Avenue from Nelson Street to Sinclair Street.
4. Mowat Avenue from Sinclair to Church Street.

The above areas are all south of the Canada Customs border crossing site. Future planning for redevelopment of the mill properties in this area will need to take into consideration the presence of these existing Town mains and will need to review any existing easements and agreements regarding operation and maintenance of these mains. There could be potential need for replacement of some of them depending upon their condition and/or limitations in their capacity. While the Town of Fort Frances did not express any immediate concerns regarding capacity limits on the sewers and water mains near the former mill sites, investigation is required for each future development phase to confirm servicing requirements and any associated potential servicing capacity implications.

Watermain Servicing Considerations

New development of the former Mill site will likely need connections to the Town's municipal water system to provide potable and fire protection water service. Servicing for these properties will need to consider the following:

1. Capacity of existing water main to support additional flow demands from the new development.
2. Condition and suitability of existing water main located within the project site.

Future planning for the development for water servicing needs will need to include review of watermain capacity, through Town watermain system modeling and analysis to determine the existing available flows in the Town's water system and limits on the additional capacity in the system to support the planned development for potable and fire-protection needs.

Sanitary Sewer Servicing Considerations

Wastewater effluent from former mill process and production activities was connected to the mill's effluent treatment lagoon north of 8th Street W via a private dedicated effluent line which runs underneath Central Avenue north to the lagoon.

Wastewater from the planned redevelopment will need to connect to the Town's sanitary sewer system. The redevelopment will require a sanitary sewer study to confirm the capacity limits of the existing downstream system and identify whether the proposed redevelopment plans will require upgrades to the Town's downstream sanitary sewer or lagoon system to manage the additional flows.

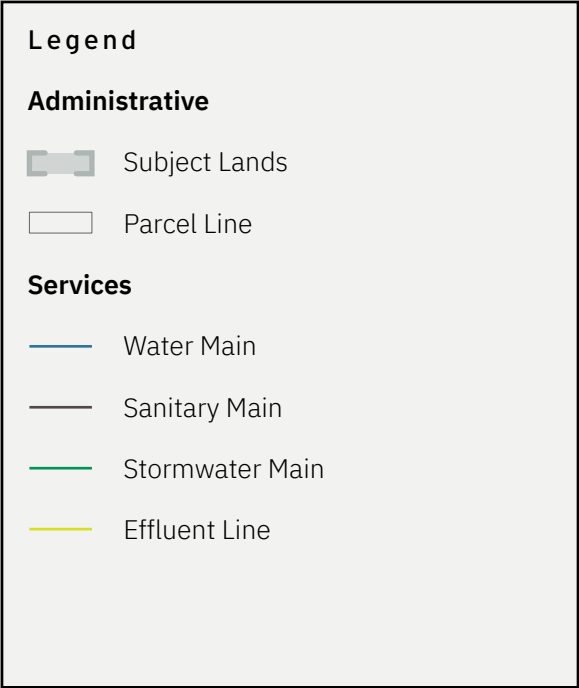
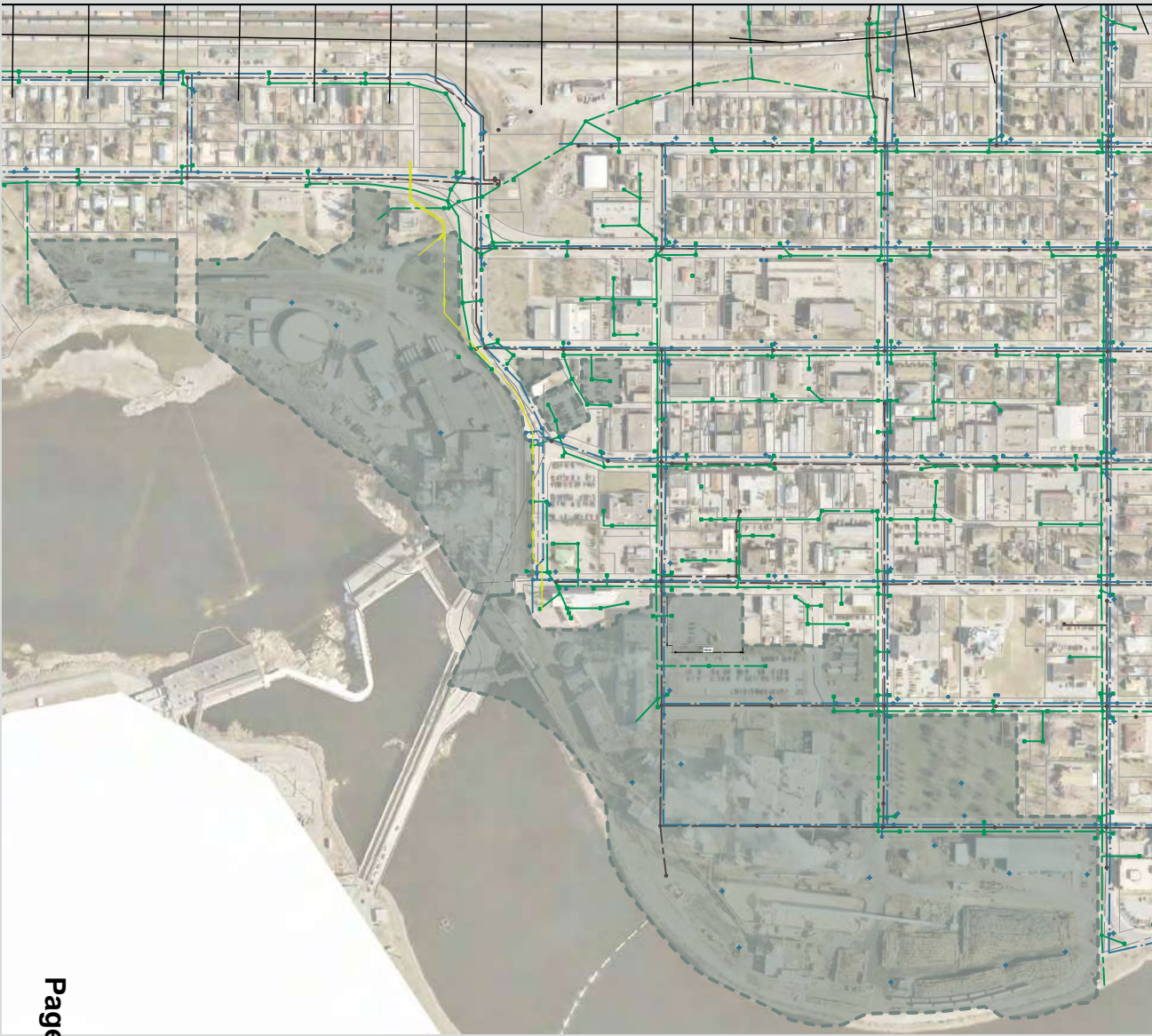


FIGURE 19: EXISTING MUNICIPAL SERVICING MAP

Land Drainage Servicing Considerations

The Town supplied GIS information identifies that some parts of the former Mill site may have existing land drainage catch basins which direct stormwater runoff into the Town's land drainage sewer system. In particular, the two existing parking lots east of Central Avenue between 1st Street and Scott Street have their own internal land drainage systems. It is possible there are additional catchbasin connections to the Town's land drainage sewer system on other parts of the property.

Two unconfirmed land drainage outfalls which might pass through the former Mill site and discharge to the Rainy River include:

1. Outfall west of the intersection of Central Avenue and 1st Street, having passed underneath a former mill building.
2. Outfall near the southeast corner of former intersection of Nelson Street and Mowat Avenue.

Any existing outfalls confirmed passing through the former Mill site should be assessed for their condition and reviewed for their capacity to determine if replacement and/or upgrade as a part of replacement is necessary.

Future planning for these areas will also need to take any existing outfalls into account in terms of planning such that sufficient space for access to them for repair and maintenance work is provided. Ideally, there should be existing easements to allow the Town to access these pieces of infrastructure as they pass through the former Mill site. The widths of these easements should be reviewed with the Town of Fort Frances to verify that they are sufficient for future maintenance work and does not adversely affect the new developments. If there are no existing easement agreements, some will need to be established to minimize conflicts in the future.

Because the subject properties border the Rainy River, consideration should be made for potential development of new outfalls from the properties directly to the Rainy River where feasible, to minimize impact on the Town's existing land drainage infrastructure. A land drainage study will be necessary to identify the potential magnitude of land drainage flows from the site and the potential impact on the Town's existing land drainage sewer infrastructure.

Future design for land drainage should investigate the feasibility of connecting to any existing outfalls. A land drainage sewer impact study would help identify the feasibility and impact of such considerations.

LANDFILL AND LAGOON SITES (AREA NO. 2)

The north landfill site is not serviced by Town of Fort Frances watermain, sanitary sewer or land drainage sewer. All land drainage in and around the landfill site is understood to be via overland drainage.

The mill effluent lagoon site was supplied by a dedicated effluent line from the former pulp and paper mill. From GIS data provided by the Town, the mill effluent lagoon site does not appear to be serviced by any of the Town's municipal sewer and water main infrastructure. However, the southeast corner of the lagoon site abuts two streets that have some existing Town watermain and sanitary sewer mains.

The former Mill operated a private buried effluent line for conveying untreated process wastewater south of Church Street to the Mill effluent lagoon site northwest of Cornwall Avenue N and 8th Street W. The former Mill also operated a treated effluent line from its lagoon to discharge into the Rainy River west of Central Avenue. The untreated effluent line is understood to be a 750mm diameter pipe, and the treated effluent line a 900mm diameter pipe, both of unknown material and condition.

The untreated line runs from Church Street north along the west side of Central Avenue and continues north through a hydro line easement to 8th Street West, and then bears west along the 8th Street right-of-way to the former lagoon site. The return line of treated effluent is understood to run parallel to the discharge line from the former lagoon site heading south, where the treated effluent line is understood to diverge from the untreated line southeast of the Fort Frances Transformer Station. Both lines cross under the CN Rail lines between 4th Street West and 5th Street West.

Use of the effluent line was discontinued after closure of the mill. The Town of Fort Frances has expressed concerns about the effluent line and potential impact on nearby municipal infrastructure in the event of collapse from no longer being in-use and actively maintained. The Town has also identified concerns with potential conflicts with other buried infrastructure, particularly if emergency work is required. This concern is significant due in part to the large diameter of the lines and being of unknown age and condition.

Planning for redevelopment of the former mill properties will need to include provision for fully investigating the effluent lines to determine the best option for decommissioning them, whether full removal, abandonment, or potential re-use. The assessment and selection of a preferred option should be undertaken in collaboration with the Town and all governing authorities having jurisdiction.

Ministry of Environment Approvals

Any alterations, additions, or replacements to existing Town of Fort Frances watermain, sanitary sewer or land drainage sewers, will require an Environmental Compliance Approval (ECA) certificate obtained from the Ontario Ministry of Environment (MOE). Identification of what parts of any existing or proposed infrastructure will need an ECA from the MOE will need to be determined.

Decommissioning of the former mill effluent line will also likely require environmental assessment and approvals from the MOE.

Other Utility Considerations

Other utilities, such as gas, communications, and hydro, will need to be reviewed and coordinated with the appropriate utility companies. Coordination with these other utilities is typically done by the project electrical and mechanical engineers.



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