

YELLOWKNIFE
SMART GROWTH REDEVELOPMENT
PLAN

TERMS OF REFERENCE



PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

March 2007

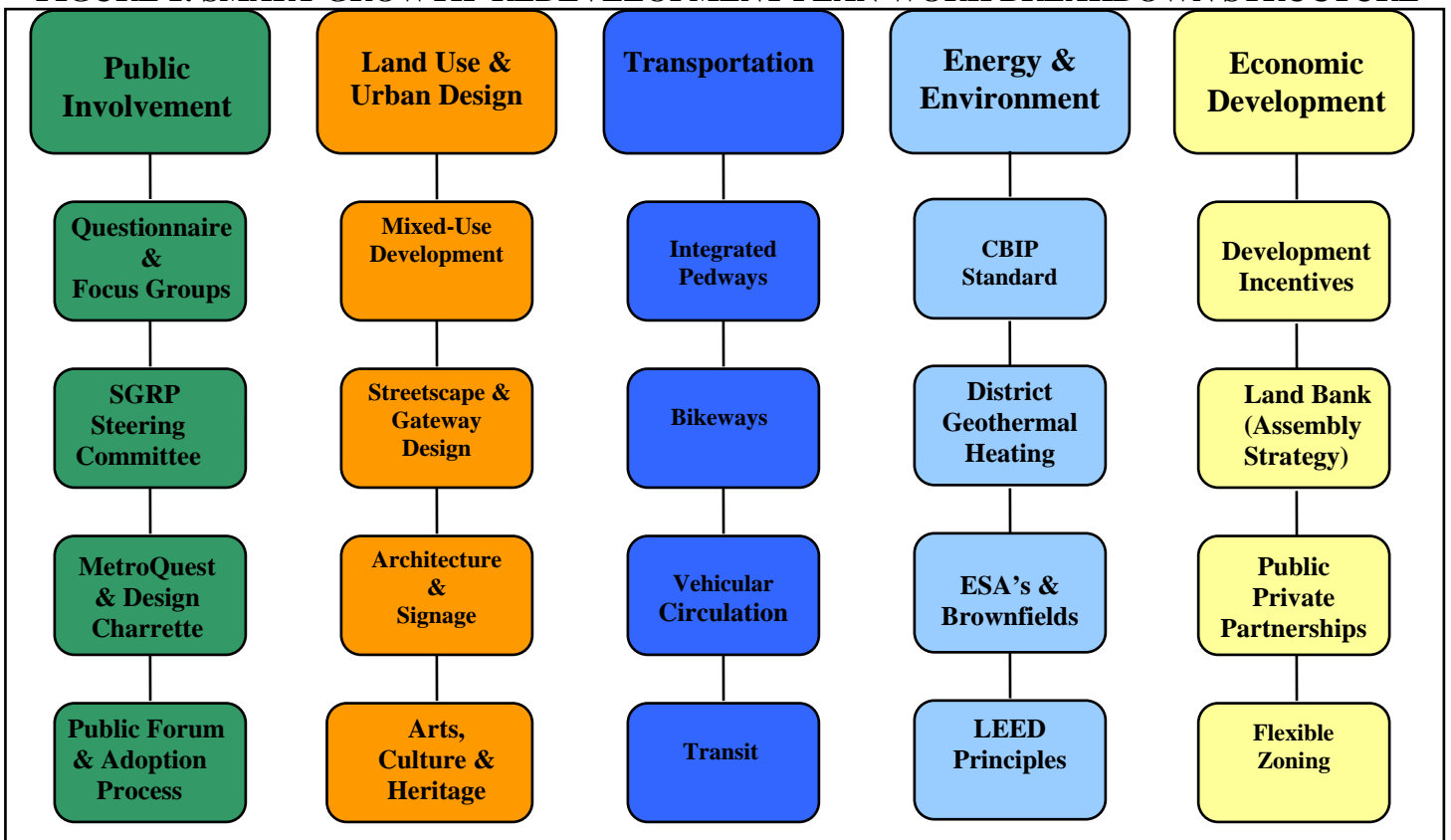
DOCS-#119746

I. INTRODUCTION

Over the past several decades the Planning and Lands Division has completed numerous mid to long range planning documents to guide the City of Yellowknife’s urban growth and development. These plans have resulted in the identification of concepts and objectives relating to the environment, economic development, land use control, urban form and design, and quality of life. Though many broad goals and policies have been established, a holistic action-oriented approach and vision is needed for implementation and realization of such objectives. In this context, *The Yellowknife Smart Growth Redevelopment Plan* proposes a strategy for the City’s core area, waterfront, primary commercial districts, and entranceways to the City. The objective of the *Plan* is to apply an integrated approach to development and redevelopment based on smart growth principles.

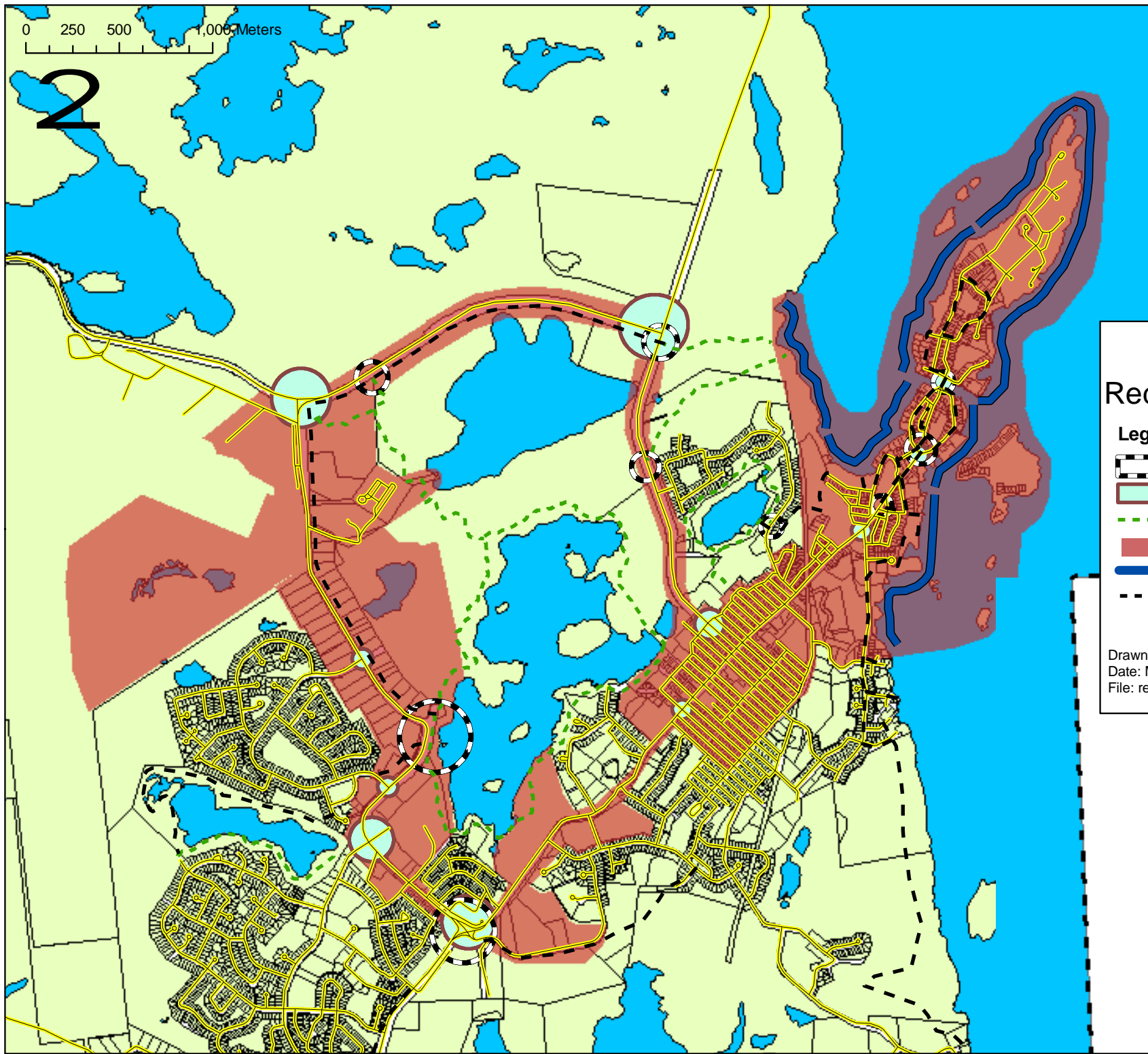
In light of the growth and development pressures and growing community interest in planning for Yellowknife, a smart growth strategy is timely. Unlike conventional suburban development, smart growth principles encourage a more sustainable urban form by promoting compact development, integrated land uses, quality of life, economic revitalization, and environmental protection. By integrating the five broad areas illustrated in Figure 1 – Public Involvement, Land Use and Urban Design, Transportation, Energy and Environment, and Economic Development - the Plan will encourage the redevelopment and smart integration of the built-up area through various development and redevelopment initiatives.

FIGURE 1: SMART GROWTH REDEVELOPMENT PLAN WORK BREAKDOWN STRUCTURE









0 250 500 1,000 Meters

2



Yellowknife Redevelopment Areas

- Legend**
-  Pedestrian Nodes
 -  Minor and Major "Gateways"
 -  Existing Trails
 -  Redevelopment Area
 -  Littoral Area
 -  Proposed Trails

Drawn: BP
Date: March 15, 2007
File: redevelopment_scheme_pednodes.mxd

Within the work breakdown structure, a framework will be created which will foster the interrelationship of smart growth planning principles. The extent to which these principles can be addressed is contingent upon the degree of funding support for the project. In addition to the \$200,000 allocated by the City's 2007 Capital and Operational Budget, additional funding and/or in-kind support is being sought from the *Federation of Canadian Municipalities*, *Indian and Northern Affairs Canada*, and the *Canadian Housing and Mortgage Corporation*. Leveraging these additional resources would result in a *Plan* ranging between \$200,000 to \$600,000.

The Planning and Development Department submitted its *FCM Green Municipal Fund "Intent to Apply" Application (Part A)* and received approval to submit a more detailed Application (Part B) for further evaluation. Since the status of FCM Application will not be known until Summer of 2007, it is envisioned that the public consultation process will proceed prior to the identification of the total available funds for the project. Consequently the Terms of Reference herein has a degree of built-in flexibility, allowing for scope and timeline adjustment and removal or addition of various components (i.e. MetroQuest and Traffic Engineering Analysis). The impact on the funding and scope of the project will be elaborated on further throughout the Terms of Reference.

II. RELATED PLANS AND STUDIES

The foundation for the *Smart Growth Redevelopment Plan* is based in past planning studies. Though these studies are generally aligned with a smart growth redevelopment strategy, many of their objectives remain unrealized. It is the intent of the *Plan* to review and integrate relevant elements from the following planning documents to build a broadly supported action-oriented vision.

A) Old Town Secondary Development Scheme (1991)

In the context of Old Town's juxtaposing land uses, growth pressures, and unresolved tenancy issues, many of the recommendations in the *Old Town Secondary Development Scheme* are still relevant to a redevelopment strategy. The Scheme serves as a general framework to address a range of smart growth principles and redevelopment opportunities including heritage preservation, waterfront access and marina development, open space and trail integration, environmental protection, and a more harmonious integration of land uses.

B) Urban Design Guidelines (1996)

Yellowknife's *Urban Design Guidelines* serve as a reference manual for the identification and protection of viewsheds and vantage points of significant natural and manmade features. Although the *Guidelines* lack a definitive vision or theme, they do outline urban design principles which can be applicable to a broader redevelopment and smart growth initiative. These include gateway and corridor enhancements, landscaping, streetscape and façade design, trail integration, and site planning principles for new developments.

C) Capital Area Development Scheme (1996)

The *Capital Area Development Scheme* was developed by the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) and the City to provide a common vision to development of the Legislative Assembly Building and other future government buildings in the surrounding area. The general land use and design policies seek to maintain and complement the natural setting via high standards for viewshed protection, nature preservation, building design, and landscape maintenance. The Capital Area is surrounded by the defined study area and the *Scheme* will have a significant influence on the land use and environmental components of the *Smart Growth Redevelopment Plan*.

D) Waterfront Management Plan (2000)

The *Waterfront Management Plan* is developed to strategically identify opportunities and constraints to waterfront development. With the primary objective of improving accessibility, addressing land use and occupancy issues, and protecting the natural areas of the shoreline, it shares similar goals to the *Old Town Secondary Development Scheme*. Together these plans provide the foundation for building a redevelopment vision of the Old Town Waterfront Area.

E) Downtown Plan and Development Scheme (2001)

The *Downtown Plan and Development Scheme* is a policy document which targets the redevelopment and revitalization of the downtown core. Various action-oriented initiatives are proposed, including streetscape and façade improvements, a mural program, reinvestment incentives, and targeted infill. The *Smart Growth Redevelopment Plan* will strengthen these initiatives and expedite the revitalization process by formulating a cohesive theme supported by detailed design guidelines, concepts, and policies.

F) Twin Pine Hill Development Scheme (2003)

The *Twin Pine Hill Development Scheme* was developed in 2003 to establish development standards and design criteria for Twin Pine Hill. The *Scheme* calls for a pedestrian scaled development, integrated trails, designated view points, minimal terrain disturbance, and enhanced building and site design features. In the context of the *Smart Growth Redevelopment Plan*, the *Scheme* will serve to facilitate the development of Twin Pine Hill as a transition area between Downtown and the Old Town Waterfront.

G) General Plan (2004)

The *General Plan* sets the broad long-range vision for the growth and development of the City. It highlights a number of relevant smart growth policies, even though it provides a limited vision in terms of a smart growth redevelopment perspective. These relevant policies include the promotion of a compact urban form and vibrant

downtown, alternative (non-motorized) transportation routes, as well as more emphasis on residential infill.

H) *Residential Growth Study (2005)*

The *Residential Growth Study* was developed in response to Yellowknife's surge in housing demand in the context of limited land availability. The *Study* reviewed various properties throughout the City and identified fifteen sites with infill development potential. Despite the relevancy of the recommendations to smart growth and the objectives of the *General Plan*, the *Study* was not adopted by Council, and to date only one of the 15 sites has been targeted for infill development. Based on limited implementation of the *Study* a smart growth redevelopment strategy will need to more effectively address the issues surrounding NIMBYism (Not-In-My-Back-Yard) by exploring opportunities for applying smart growth principles and building community consensus.

I) *Integrated Parks, Trails and Open Space Development Study (2005)*

The *Integrated Parks, Trails and Open Space Development Study* outlines a strategy for an integrated park and trail network throughout the City. In addition to a mine to mine trail system (Negus Point to Giant Mine) the *Study* serves to establish an interpretive system that ties in access points to waterfront areas, residential subdivisions, heritage sites, and wilderness areas. *The Smart Growth Redevelopment Plan* will recognize and enhance these pedway opportunities and integrate them with plans for streetscaping and improvements to vehicular circulation.

J) *Yellowknife Community Energy Plan (CEP) (2006)*

The *Yellowknife Community Energy Plan (CEP)* is an action-oriented document which defines 12 recommendations relating to the reduction of greenhouse gases (GHG) and better energy use. The *CEP* gives strong direction for a long-range (i.e. 50-100 year) planning strategy which will address growth management, transportation, better land use (mixed use), building form, and building energy standards. *The Smart Growth Redevelopment Plan* will pursue these recommendations to assist in the realization of the *CEP's* energy efficiency and GHG emission reduction targets for 2014.

K) *Ecological Resources Inventory (2007)*

Through public consultation and mapping analysis the *Ecological Resources Inventory* identified and ranked some 40 Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA's) throughout the City. The ESA's were ranked based on conservation value (geology, flora and fauna, hydrology, riparian connectivity, and natural habitat resilience) and land use development pressure. Many of the identified ESA's are situated within the redevelopment area (i.e. Frame Lake, Twin Pine Hill, McAvoy Rock, and infill sites identified in the *Residential Growth Study*), and the overall strategy and protection policies of the report are highly pertinent to a smart growth redevelopment strategy.

L) Zoning By-law 4404 (2007)

The *Zoning Bylaw 4024* serves as the regulatory document for land planning and development of the City. Pending approval from the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, *Zoning By-law 4024* will be replaced by *Zoning Bylaw 4404*. The new *By-law* incorporates increased standards for landscaping, greenfield standards, and provides opportunities for improved site design, particularly in the downtown. It is envisioned that the *Smart Growth Redevelopment Plan* will further influence the zoning standards by promoting mixed-use developments, architectural standards, more balanced land use patterns for Old Airport Road and Old Town, as enhanced urban (site) design standards.

III. STUDY AREA DEFINED

Illustrated in Map 1, the defined redevelopment area is made up of some 535 hectares of land including the Old Town Waterfront Area, Downtown area, Old Airport Road Corridor, and Highways #3 and #4. Looking at each of these sub-areas the *Smart Growth Redevelopment Plan* will use sustainable indicators, participatory planning techniques, and analysis of existing conditions (zoning, land use, tenure, property assessment, traffic patterns, and site conditions) to formulate site specific urban design concepts and an overall redevelopment theme for the area. The overall theme or vision will be supported by policies and programs to guide the long-range implementation.

A) Old Town and Waterfront Redevelopment Area

Shown in Map 2, the Old Town and Waterfront Redevelopment Area extends from Back Bay, to N'dilo, and along the Yellowknife Bay to Twin Pine Hill. This area is widely recognized by residents and visitors for its unique character, culture and heritage, economic assets, and natural attractions. In many respects this part of the City has the potential to be the cornerstone for tourism, economic development, and recreation. Some of Yellowknife's most important landmark features are located in this area including Joliffe Island, Pilot's Monument, McAvoy Rock, Peace River Flats, Back Bay Ridge, Willow Flats, the Woodyard, and Twin Pine Hill.

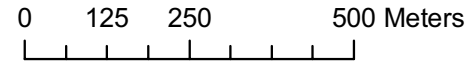
The interrelated challenges associated with redeveloping and enhancing the Old Town Waterfront include conflicting land uses, non-conforming developments (i.e. building encroachments), unresolved tenure/leasehold issues, a marginally developed waterfront, as well as poor accessibility and interconnectivity for vehicles and pedestrians. The redevelopment of the Old Town and Waterfront Area will address the above noted challenges to arrive at a scheme that aims to preserve the heritage and intrinsic character of the area while promoting investment opportunities for balanced mixed use developments.

The redevelopment scheme will engage the public on matters relating to accessibility, land use, and the natural environment, in a manner which that provides clear and practical direction. This scheme will address:



Old Town and Waterfront Redevelopment Areas

- Legend**
- Pilot's Monument
 - Building Footprint
 - Corridor "Gateways"
 - Zoning Code**
 - N'dilo
 - Nature Preservation
 - Old Town Mixed
 - Parks and Recreation
 - Public Service
 - Low Density Residential
 - Medium Density Residential
 - Site Specific



Date: August 22, 2006
 File: SGRP MAP2_ Waterfront(zoning colours).mxd
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- opportunities for land assembly of underutilized/poorly developed parcels;
- a waterfront wharf/boardwalk;
- commercial marina and docking facilities;
- integrated and balanced commercial and public space;
- public parking;
- waterfront/pedway trail connectivity with Niven Lake and other natural landmarks;
- streetscaping;
- heritage preservation; and
- site development standards.

The formulation of Redevelopment Schemes will seek to address the balanced integration or separation of uses (float planes, boats, waterfront parks, pathways, and commercial/residential development) for the five littorals in a manner which meets the objectives of the *Waterfront Management Study (2000)*.

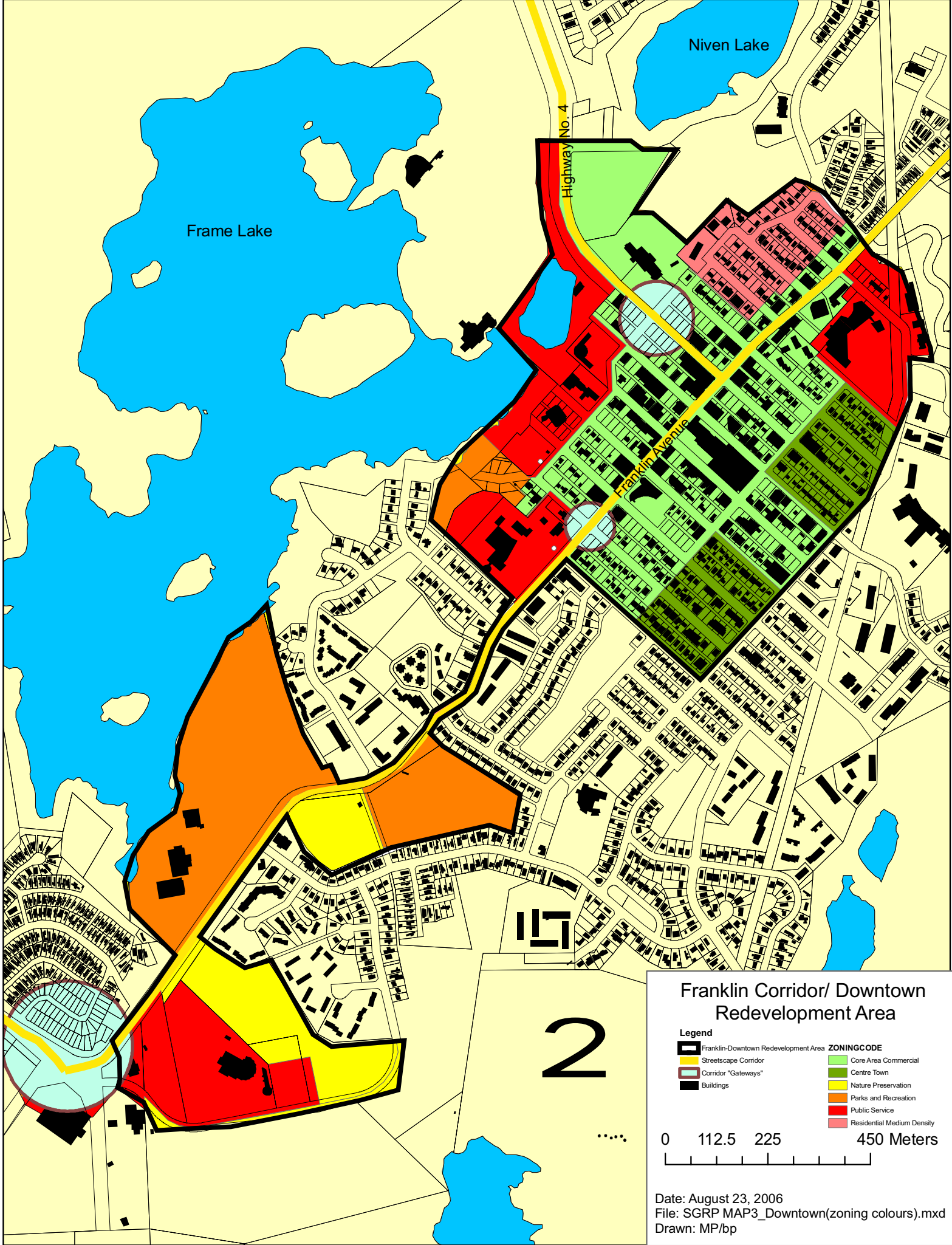
B) *Downtown & Franklin Corridor Redevelopment Area*

The Downtown is the heart and identity of a community, and the primary district for business, culture, and social services. The overall strategy for Yellowknife's Downtown, outlined in the *Downtown Plan (2001)*, has been actively pursued by the *Downtown Enhancement Steering Committee (DESC)*. Although the *Downtown Plan* and *DESC* have been successful in a number of initiatives including façade restoration, a murals program, and streetscape features, the direction, support and investment can be significantly strengthened by a detailed vision and theme, design guidelines, redevelopment incentives, and a more broadly defined area.

Illustrated in Map 3 the Downtown Redevelopment Area bridges Old Airport Road and the Old Town Waterfront via Franklin Avenue. This area bears the greatest potential for outdoor public art, streetscaping, and application of façade improvements and signage guidelines. In addition to preparing detailed streetscape plans, and façade improvements for several streets, the redevelopment plan for the Downtown will identify and create opportunities for amenity space, and infill development (residential and commercial).

C) *Old Airport Road Redevelopment Corridor*

The Old Airport Road Redevelopment Corridor, which extends from the intersection of Franklin Avenue to Highway #3, is the largest commercial arterial district in Yellowknife and a major “gateway” entrance to the City. Given the significance of the Old Airport Road Corridor in terms of vehicular traffic and visitors entering the City, it deserves to be highlighted and celebrated as a major streetscape corridor. Unlike Downtown and the Old Town Waterfront, this commercial arterial is more automobile oriented consisting of “big box” developments (Extra Foods, Co-op, Canadian Tire) service industries, and small retail/service/office related uses. The wide right-of-way and large parcels/parking lots provides ample opportunity for improvements to streetscaping, pathways, and decorative treatment.



Frame Lake

Niven Lake

Highway No. 4





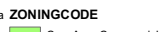
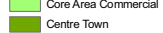

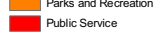
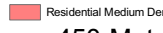
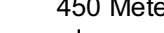
Franklin Avenue

15

2

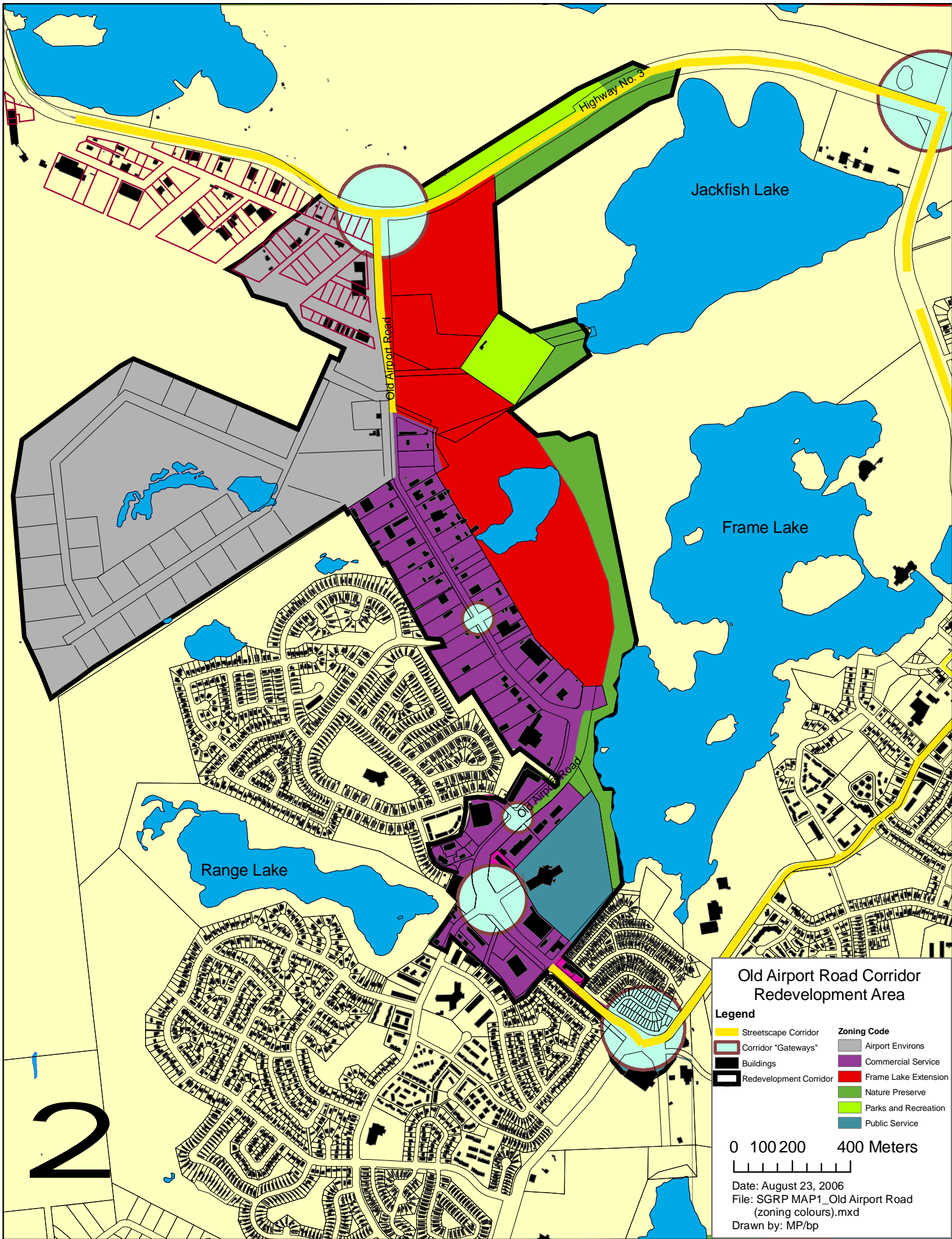
Franklin Corridor/ Downtown Redevelopment Area

Legend

-  Franklin-Downtown Redevelopment Area
-  Streetscape Corridor
-  Corridor "Gateways"
-  Buildings
-  Core Area Commercial
-  Centre Town
-  Nature Preservation
-  Parks and Recreation
-  Public Service
-  Residential Medium Density

0 112.5 225 450 Meters

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Old Airport Road Corridor Redevelopment Area

- Legend**
- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| Streetscape Corridor | Airport Environs |
| Corridor "Gateways" | Commercial Service |
| Buildings | Frame Lake Extension |
| Redevelopment Corridor | Nature Preserve |
| | Parks and Recreation |
| | Public Service |

0 100 200 400 Meters

Date: August 23, 2006
 File: SGRP MAP1_Old Airport Road (zoning colours).mxd
 Drawn by: MP/bp

2

From a redevelopment perspective, the Old Airport Road Redevelopment Corridor consists of three primary areas. Illustrated in Map 4 these are as follows:

- a) *Commercial Service Zone* – Consisting of a ±57 hectare built-up area extending from Franklin Avenue to south of Cemetery Road. The existing land uses in this portion of the Corridor, varying from “big box” retail to service industry (i.e. trucking and storage), imply a zone in transition and in need of a redevelopment vision to encourage more balanced and compatible commercial development.
- b) *Frame Lake Extension* – The transfer of ±67 hectares of Commissioner’s Land to the City will provide development opportunities in the form of commercial, institutional, or residential uses. As this land is situated within the Capital Area, careful consideration needs to be given to the formulation of a Development Scheme which is both sensitive to the principles in the *Capital Area Development Scheme*, and which improves the attractiveness and sustainability of the Old Airport Road Redevelopment Corridor.
- c) *Airport Environs Boundaries* – Situated within the southeast quadrant of the Yellowknife Airport lies ±57 hectares of developable land. The GNWT Department of Transportation has proposed a 31 lot subdivision consisting of 10 airside lots accessible to the runways, and 21 lots for general use.

With the three primary areas in mind a redevelopment concept for the Corridor will consist of a comprehensive land use analysis. From a functional standpoint, the aspects of zoning, proposed land uses, and development impacts will be assessed with relation to traffic volumes, circulation patterns, and pedestrian safety. Recommendations for improvements will be pursued with the intent of encouraging harmonious and balanced development. From an aesthetic perspective the streetscape appearance will be addressed via concepts for decorative lighting, landscaping, commercial and public signage, and architecture and site design.

D) Areas Beyond Redevelopment Area

Although the intent of the smart growth strategy is to concentrate mixed use development within the existing built-up area, the scope of the Plan is envisioned to extend beyond the boundaries of the primary redevelopment area. In this regard the impact of city-wide transportation networks (vehicular and greenway) will be considered, along with commercial energy standards, LEED, protective options for Environmentally Sensitive Areas, options/impacts of new residential or industrial development, and so on. Tin Can Hill or the Airport West Industrial District for example are both targeted for Development in the General Plan, however their impacts on an integrated transportation network, intensification of the core, or redevelopment of areas such as Old Airport road needs to be addressed as part of the broader smart growth strategy.

IV. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The public participation process will garner opinions and ideas from Yellowknife residents, businesses, and stakeholder groups to ensure a redevelopment plan that is sustainable and representative of the broader public interest. Between 2007 to 2008, several consultative approaches will be applied to develop, enhance, and formalize the redevelopment theme. This holistic participation process will increase the viability and overall community support of the *Plan* by fostering public ownership of the programs and policies necessary for implementation.

A) Questionnaire Survey

A Questionnaire Survey will be mailed to residential households to gain initial impressions and opinions on the redevelopment area. These surveys will provide the framework for identifying redevelopment opportunities, constraints, and principles related to smart growth. It is intended that the surveys would be issued in March for analysis and review in April 2007.

B) Focus Group Sessions

A series of Focus Group Sessions will be conducted over a five day period with targeted interest groups in April - May 2007. The sessions will validate and expand upon the findings of the Questionnaire Survey and solicit more detailed input on redevelopment strategies relating to housing, urban design, commercial development, transportation, economic development, recreation, and building energy standards. The information will be used by the Planning and Development Department as well as a Design Consultant to identify strategic parcels for assembly, preliminary concept development, and the design of programs and policies to facilitate the implementation strategy. Figure 2 below is demonstrative of the intended scope of the stakeholder consultation:

FIGURE 2: FOCUS GROUP STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

Chamber of Commerce	RCMP	Aurora College
Hotels	Industry, Tourism & Investment	Ecology North
Developers/Builders	NWT Housing Corp	Service Clubs: Rotary, Elks
Diamond Mines	MACA	Capital Area Steering Committee
Realtors	Health and Social Services	Yellowknife Heritage Committee
Aurora College	Indian and Northern Affairs Canada	Downtown Committee (DESC)
Great Slave Yacht/Cruising Club	Environment and Natural Resources	CEP Committee
Get YK Clean Committee	Education Culture and Employment	City Departments
Float Plane Association	Airport/Transportation	Seniors
Recreation Groups	NWT Arts Council	Youth
Engineers, Planners, Architects	CMHC	First Nations
Arctic Energy Alliance	FCM	Resident Groups
	Aurora Arts Society	

*This is a preliminary stakeholder list, additional stakeholders may be added as directed by Council and Administration.

C) Smart Growth Redevelopment Plan (SGRP) Steering Committee

Subsequent the initial public consultation stage, a *SGRP Steering Committee*, representative of diverse community interests (social, environmental, economic, cultural, etc), will be formulated. Under the guidance of the Planning and Development Department, the *SGRP* Committee will identify guiding principles; work with and provide direction to consultants; review and recommend preliminary policies, guidelines, and concepts; facilitate subsequent public consultation stages; and endorse the adoption and implementation of the *Plan*.

D) MetroQuest Workshop

MetroQuest (www.envisiontools.com) is an interactive planning support tool that has been used by municipal jurisdictions throughout North America to support smart growth planning by evaluating alternative future scenarios. The tool facilitates stakeholder engagement in the identification of alternative growth scenarios to facilitate a community-supported long-range (i.e. 50 year) plan which addresses the integration of land use planning, infrastructure, and transportation. The utilization of MetroQuest is contingent upon funding support from the *FCM Green Municipal Fund* and it would be employed concurrently throughout other stages of public consultation.

E) Community Redevelopment Charrette

A three to five day Design Charrette would be scheduled for the Spring of 2008. The Charrette will involve between 50-100 stakeholder participants and will be planned and administered by the Planning and Development Department, with the support of the Steering Committee, other municipal Departments, Design Consultant, and other professionals. The Charrette will allow for a community based definition and refinement of various design concepts and themes for specific areas of the City of Yellowknife.

F) Public Forum

The Public Forum will be held in the Fall/Winter of 2008 to summarize findings and solicit feedback from the general public. The forum will entail a presentation, display of design concepts, and draft copies of the *Plan*. Comments and impressions will be solicited and considered prior to the final draft of the *Plan* which will be presented to Council for adoption.

G) Administration and City Council

The Project Management Team will consist of the Planning and Development Department as well as Managers and Directors from other Departments. Given the magnitude of the *Plan*, Council's involvement and buy-in is essential, particularly during the larger public consultation components. Subsequent the preliminary consultation stages it is anticipated that two Councilors would be appointed to the Steering Committee which will assist in guiding the direction of the *Plan*. Regular

reports will be presented at various milestones of the project for Council's consideration (i.e. summaries of consultation process, design concepts, draft policies) It is expected that Council will be reviewing and approving/amending various elements of the planning process and design concepts as they develop.

V. LAND USE AND URBAN DESIGN

The land use and urban design component of the *Plan* will take a progressive planning approach to the form and function of the redevelopment area. Existing land use patterns and zoning, for example, will be challenged by strategies for intensification and mixed-use developments to promote more livable communities. The land use strategy will be complimented by streetscape design, a defined architectural vernacular, and detailed gateway concepts to build a themed appearance to the redevelopment area. These design principles and concepts will be strongly supported by both heritage and culture to highlight Yellowknife's unique character and "sense of place".

A) Mixed Use Development

With the most fundamental smart growth indicator being compact mixed-use developments, redevelopment or intensification strategies are implied to be the most direct and effective means to urban revitalization. Within the three redevelopment sub-areas, the *Plan* will seek to balance development intensification with appropriate land use and zoning. The approach will take into consideration growth management scenarios, and the trade-offs between conventional (urban sprawl) and regeneration of existing commercial areas.

One of Yellowknife's biggest land use challenges in the context of smart growth is the intensification. Despite the continued emphasis on downtown intensification targets (i.e. 25% of all new housing in the central core) by various planning documents (i.e. *General Plan*, *Downtown Plan*, *Residential Growth Study*, and *CEP*), there has been limited progress in achieving this goal. Clarified objectives and a renewed commitment to these growth management opportunities is essential to a smart growth agenda. Based on previous reports, public consultation, and site/land use analysis, the *Plan* will identify more suitable opportunities for intensification and offer land assembly and incentive strategies (see Economic Development) to facilitate such development.

The second major challenge to the land use and infill component are the areas in land use transition. The land use patterns of both the Old Town Waterfront and Old Airport Road need to be revisited to create more attractive and harmonious environments. In terms of the former the issue is primary one of accessibility, reintegration of the waterfront, and provision of uses more conducive to tourism and recreation. For the latter it is the sensible integration with the Capital Area and its surroundings, an improved streetscape, and shift away from light service industry to retail and residential development. The *Plan* will address this through the formulation of development schemes, streetscape design, rezoning, and a relocation strategy for existing uses.

B) Streetscape and Gateway Design

The land use or function of a particular neighbourhood is complimented by its form or appearance. The objective of the streetscape design element of the *Smart Growth Redevelopment Plan* is to improve the identity, curb appeal, and comfort of streets within the redevelopment area. Within this framework the Plan will provide concepts to accommodate the relationships between streetscape design, land use, building architecture and site design.

The streetscape features will aim to enhance the identity, curb appeal, and comfort of Yellowknife's major streets and corridors. Though some streetscaping elements have been pursued under the *Downtown Plan*, a more detailed design and cohesive theme will be developed to blend landscaping, lighting, decorative sidewalks/crosswalks, bus shelters, banners, and street furniture. In addition to the Downtown, the *Plan* will redesign the streetscape appearance along major corridors such as Franklin Avenue, Old Airport Road, Highways 3 & 4, and less prominent commercial roadways in Old Town.

The streetscape design will be supplemented by the development of "gateways" along frequently traveled vehicular and pedestrian corridors. Situated at prominent vehicular intersections (i.e. Highway #3 and Old Airport Road) and pedway nodes, "gateways" provide opportunities to demarcate points of transition and arrival. The *Plan* will develop design concepts along redevelopment corridors by incorporating public art, welcoming signage, landscaping and surfacing materials, and lighting, and other design features.

C) Architecture and Signage

Complimenting the streetscape design is the need for a defined architectural vernacular for Yellowknife's commercial areas. Though eclectic façade designs are desirable in a commercial district, minimum architectural standards ought to be considered to establish an underlying harmony and unified appearance to storefronts. The scale and placement of common architectural building elements (i.e. rooflines, parapets, cornices, sign band areas, awnings and entranceways) along with choice of building materials, colour schemes and fenestration (window placement) serve to enhance or diminish the rhythm and character of the street.

The *Plan* will provide both façade redevelopment concepts and architectural guidelines to promote quality building design. The *Façade Improvement Program* which is governed by the *Downtown Enhancement Steering Committee (DESC)* provides an incentive framework for encouraging these improvements. Extending these incentives to the entire redevelopment area and basing them on an architectural theme will serve to improve the streetscape appearance of Yellowknife's main commercial areas.

The final streetscape and architectural design element is the coordination and application of quality standards for commercial (advertising) and public signage.

This will entail the creation of commercial sign guidelines and public signage concepts (i.e. street signs) for the three sub-areas. These guidelines and concepts will assist in developing a unified streetscape theme by addressing all signage types (i.e. façade signs, projecting signs, freestanding signs, pylon signs, awning signs, and so on).

D) Arts, Culture and Heritage

Yellowknife's culture and heritage is the unifying element of the land use and urban design component of the *Plan*. Opportunities for highlighting this element are present in building architecture, the streetscape, and land use anchors. Creating an environment where Yellowknife's rich history, traditions and innovation can be creatively expressed will strengthen this theme.

In terms of architecture, the *Plan* recognizes the expression of Yellowknife's history reflected in its heritage building and sites. The historical relevance of many of these buildings and sites is documented in a historical building inventory managed by the *Yellowknife Heritage Committee*. The *Plan* will work from this foundation to establish criteria for heritage building designation, preservation guidelines, and incentives or grants for restoration.

Along with the architectural features of heritage buildings, the streetscape and open spaces provide a venue for the display and celebration of culture and heritage. Public art forms can be creatively explored and incorporated into storefronts, signage and banners, street corners, pocket parks, gateways, and undeveloped lot frontages. Exploring these opportunities, the City's streetscaping initiative will serve as a catalyst for business community, artists, and other groups to brand Yellowknife's various commercial districts.

In concert with architecture and the streetscape, targeting land use anchors based in indigenous themes is a powerful means of strengthening local arts and culture. Central plazas, artist cooperatives, commercial marinas, and public markets are examples of such anchors, all of which are appropriate to the Yellowknife context. Through the public consultation process the *Plan* will identify the public interest in commercial anchors and appropriate sites which will serve to build critical mass and bolster opportunities for local arts and culture

VII. TRANSPORTATION

Smart growth planning has brought to the forefront the role and impact of transportation networks in defining the future growth, land use, and density of a neighbourhood. The long-term quality of life impacts stemming from this relationship encourage the need for a more balanced design and development approach which acknowledges the benefits of alternative transport modes. Beyond additional roadway networks to improve vehicular circulation, the *Plan* will promote the redevelopment of existing corridors and the establishment of off-road networks, to facilitate pedestrian and non-motorized forms of transport.

A) Integrated Pedways

Several plans have stressed the importance of pedestrian connectivity throughout Yellowknife, the most recent being the *Integrated Parks, Trails, and Open Space Development Study* that proposes a trail from Negus Point to Giant Mine. In addition to this trail network the City's Public Works and Engineering Department continues to expand the pedestrian infrastructure network throughout various areas of the City. The *Plan* aims to accelerate the development of these pedways while incorporating design features to facilitate interconnectivity to the broader transportation system, development anchors, and activity nodes.

Despite plans for an integrated trail network, construction has in some instances been precluded by land tenure issues, pending developments, and undefined development standards. As with other redevelopment opportunities, the development of a comprehensive trail network requires a more aggressive land banking and assembly process. While large block transfers on the periphery of the redevelopment area (i.e. Tin Can Hill or Niven Lake Phase 8) will eventually create significant redevelopment opportunities, greater challenges existing in built-up areas such as the Old Town Waterfront where municipal ownership or tenure is piecemeal. The *Plan* will foster partnerships and provide a land banking/assembly approach for key areas to facilitate trail development.

The streetscape pedway system consisting of sidewalks is an integral part of Yellowknife's roadway network. Promoting safe, active, and comforting pedestrian environments that tie into the streetscape applies a combination of design standards and balanced land use planning. In addition to sidewalk designs for redevelopment corridors (i.e. Old Airport Road), the *Plan* will promote pedestrian scaled environment via sidewalk design concepts and standards, land use and site planning, and traffic calming features.

B) Greenways Network

In addition to an integrated pedway system, many capital cities in North America have designated multi-purpose greenways and bikeways. In this regard, the objective is to create a safe, comfortable, and convenient environment for youth, families, and seniors to cycle, rollerblade, jog, or walk. With the downtown core serving as the hub it is envisioned that this greenway network would extend to the periphery of the redevelopment area and beyond, serving to facilitate alternative (non-motorized) modes of transport.

The greenway system could consist of on- and off-street laneways constructed in accordance with available roadway and right of way (R.O.W.) widths, vacant public land, or underutilized private lands subject to agreements. Although portions of the off-street greenway could overlap with the integrated natural trail systems, the greenway portion would be hard-surfaced (i.e. asphalt) and built with a substantial width (i.e. 3 – 4.5 metres) to provide proper circulation. Where feasible, on-street greenways could be

designed with a demarcated laneway (i.e. 1.5 to 2 metres) and a distinct physical and visual separation (i.e. curbing, colored pavement, or line-striping) to provide increased safety and comfort from automobile traffic.

In the context of both smart growth and redevelopment, the opportunities for establishing greenways present themselves in a number of areas including existing corridors (i.e. Highways #3 and #4); redevelopment corridors (i.e. Old Airport Road); and future roadway networks (i.e. Tin Can Hill, or the Kam Lake Bypass Extension). In this broad context it is envisioned the *Smart Growth Redevelopment Plan* will work interdepartmentally and with other external groups (i.e. Ecology North's Transportation Issues Committee) to identify practical options for greenway integration based on user demand and the development opportunities and constraints.

C) Vehicular Circulation

The infill and greenfield development opportunities that Yellowknife chooses to pursue over the next several decades will ultimately define the vehicular patterns, traffic demand, parking requirements, and level of service (LOS) of its roadway network. The smart growth strategy will apply this information to forecast land use and development scenarios to predict trip generation and the ability of the network to efficiently service future traffic demand. Thus while potential future roadway networks for commercial or residential subdivisions (i.e. Niven Lake, Tin Can Hill, or Kam Lake Bypass Extension) have not been constructed, the impacts of their design on the City transportation system can be measured and adjusted accordingly.

Proper assessment of vehicular circulation requires a City-wide transportation analysis, looking beyond the redevelopment area. The *Smart Growth Redevelopment Plan* will provide concepts relating to roadway extensions, roadway redevelopment (i.e. Old Airport Road), and on- and off-street public parking design (Downtown and Old Town Waterfront Area). The degree to which the *Plan* will take into consideration the City-wide transportation system however is contingent upon additional funding support from the City's *FCM* application. This additional funding would allow for a more comprehensive review of the City's transportation network, including trip generation analysis based on forecasted growth and development.

D) Transit (Transit Oriented Design)

In addition to being an ongoing initiative of the City, increased transit ridership is an objective common to the *Community Energy Plan* and smart growth principles. From the smart growth perspective, increased ridership is largely a function of development density, land use mixtures, and the degree to which a district is pedestrianized. Transit Oriented Design (TOD) or Transportation Demand Management (TDM) recognizes the interplay of these factors and seeks to establish residential and commercial centres which are designed to maximize access to transit and non-motorized forms of transport.

The *Smart Growth Redevelopment Plan* acknowledges that increasing ridership through land use and urban design is a long-term objective, but one that can have measurable impacts over time. Based on this objective, the *Plan* will identify existing and potential

mixed high density districts which can be more supportive of a public transit system. In doing so, it is envisioned that over time these origin and destination nodes or TOD districts will serve to strengthen transit and decrease automotive dependency.

VIII. ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

In light of the increasing global acknowledgement of the correlation between climate change and greenhouse gas emissions, the smart growth development approach gains increasing relevance to urban planning. Compact infill development, mixture of land uses, increased pedestrianism, and a reduction in automobile dependency all bring positive environmental impacts. In addition to other smart growth elements, this component of the *Plan* aims to raise awareness and support for energy efficiency, sustainable site design, and the protection and enhancement of the natural environment.

A) Commercial Building Energy Standards (CBIP)

The *Yellowknife Community Energy Plan (CEP)* establishes targets for building energy conservation and reduction in greenhouse gas emissions such as the Energuide 80 rating for residential construction, or the Commercial Building Incentive Program (CBIP) standard for commercial construction. The CBIP standard targets a 25% reduction in energy use of a building beyond the requirements of the Model National Energy Code for Buildings (MNECB).

The *CEP* suggests that GHG emissions could be reduced by 21,600 tonnes per year by 2024 (4% reduction) if the EGH 80 and CBIP standards were implemented by 2009. A phased-in approach to the residential standard is currently being considered for incorporation into the Building Bylaw, whereas the *Smart Growth Redevelopment Plan* will look at opportunities for applying the CBIP standard. In light of the targets in the *CEP* for energy efficient buildings standards to be in place by 2009, the *Plan* will undertake a consultation process with the business community and local construction associations to determine opportunities for implementation. Given that most commercial buildings are located within the redevelopment area, the opportunities for integration of CBIP with redevelopment opportunities are significant.

B) District Geothermal Heating

In conjunction with the *CEP*, the City is seeking federal (*FCM*) funding support to explore the potential for earth-based energy for space heating. The project entails the assembly of a team of experts in underground geothermal energy to explore the recently abandoned Con Miramar Mine as the heat source for geothermal pump application. The Con Mine, which is within City limits runs under the City with water temperatures measured as high as 35 degrees Celsius. With the primary energy input for the project being hydro-generated electricity, an opportunity exists to displace significant amounts of heating oil.

The successful implementation of the project would dramatically impact Yellowknife's energy consumption while simultaneously encouraging redevelopment and reinvestment

opportunities. The Mine's close proximity to the downtown may provide the potential to service highly concentrated commercial and residential areas. The *Smart Growth Redevelopment Plan* will look to support the initiative and explore the opportunities for mobilizing public interest and the business case for development.

C) Environmentally Sensitive Areas

Although Yellowknife possesses a wealth of undeveloped open space, much of which is ecologically sensitive, forced growth pressures will continue to make protective options increasingly more challenging. The identification and ranking of Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) in the *Ecological Resources Inventory* (2007) provides a basis for establishing these conservation priorities. To be meaningful and effective however, these priorities must be supported by a more comprehensive land use and development strategy.

Increased building density and infill development are two smart growth objectives that can create conservation opportunities within both urban and suburban areas. In light of the unrealized infill targets mentioned earlier, a broader community supported strategy and level of commitment is required. The *Smart Growth Redevelopment Plan* will build greater public consensus during the consultation process to identify land assembly and reinvestment opportunities in the redevelopment area. This approach to infill development, coupled with more restrictive zoning standards for designated ESA's (i.e. Nature Preservation Districts), will over the long term lead to more results oriented conservation practices.

D) LEED Principles

A holistic sustainable building design standard which more strongly reflects smart growth principles is Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED technology). In addition to energy efficiency, LEED measures and credits buildings and sites which save resources, reduce storm water runoff, and reduce pollution. Points are awarded based upon performance criteria to provide varying levels of certification – Certified, Silver, Gold, or Platinum.

Within Yellowknife the Greenstone Building is the only newly constructed building that has the potential of being designated a LEED building. The *Plan* will seek public and stakeholder opinion on implementing the LEED standards as well as the more holistic sustainable building construction guidelines found under LEED. Based on the input from the public consultation, the development of LEED Guidelines could serve as a model for future large scale developments in the City. As noted in a subsequent section, an incentive structure might be worth of consideration to encourage both the CBIP and LEED standard.

IX. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Economic Development and Incentive Strategy component of the Plan will explore opportunities for funding the implementation of the redevelopment initiative through

investment/development incentives, public private partnership models, and alternate revenue sources. Some of these concepts have been discussed via previous planning documents such as the *Downtown Plan*, however further review is required to determine the feasibility of establishing such models. Some of these are noted below:

A) *Development Incentives*

Development Incentives are used in revitalization strategies to encourage and assist residents, developers, and businesses to pursue infill and redevelopment opportunities. Incentive models such as Grant Subsidies, Land Sales, Tax Increment Financing (i.e. five-year phased abatement 100%-80%-60%-40%-20%), Permit Fee Adjustments etc. can be explored in the context of an integrated Redevelopment Program for Yellowknife. Such a Program would seek to encourage investment in the redevelopment area. Some of the Development Incentives to be considered are as follows:

- i. *Residential Infill Incentives* – In order to meet the targets for infill housing specified in the Downtown Plan, Residential Growth Study, and General Plan, the City will need to more aggressively promote and facilitate investment opportunities to attract residential infill development. Despite the demand for core area housing, the limited availability and high cost of land development warrants incentives to encourage land assembly and development of a mix of medium and high density housing types.
- ii. *Commercial Infill and Redevelopment* – In built-up commercial districts, incentives for commercial infill or redevelopment investment may be implemented to offset higher land values, land assembly/demolition/relocation costs, and negative redevelopment perceptions. Within Yellowknife such an incentive may be evaluated in terms of attracting investment to develop challenging properties, redevelop blighted areas, or relocate undesirable land uses.
- iii. *Brownfield Redevelopment* – In addition to the two gold mines which have significant levels of arsenic contamination, there are a number of known contaminated sites within the redevelopment area. The provision of incentives for brownfield redevelopment allows developers to pursue the development of orphaned sites by offsetting costs relating to environmental investigation and remediation.
- iv. *Façade and Site Improvement* – Governed by the Downtown Enhancement Steering Committee, the City currently has a Façade Improvement Program for the Downtown in the form of a matching grant to a maximum of \$7,500. In the broader redevelopment context consideration should be given to (1) extending the grant to the other two redevelopment areas: Old Town and the Old Airport Road Corridor and (2) including grant provisions for site improvements (i.e. landscaping, lighting, paving, curbing, etc.) of built-up sites. All grants should be awarded to encourage conformance to the *Zoning Bylaw* and potential Architectural and Landscaping Guidelines, and (3) stronger direction and

ownership from the business community via coordination with a Business Improvement District.

- v. *Heritage Restoration* – Despite the fact there is no Territorial Legislation regarding Heritage Designation, the City has an inventory of heritage buildings/properties in need of restoration and repair. The establishment of Heritage Preservation Guidelines as well as incentives for restoration of heritage buildings/properties would assist businesses and non-profit organizations in taking a proactive approach to preserving heritage buildings. Given the level of investment involved this grant/incentive is typically significantly higher than a façade improvement grant.
- vi. *CBIP Energy Incentive* – As outlined in the *Community Energy Plan* promotion CBIP may include a combination of public awareness, regulations, and incentives. The consultation process will provide an opportunity to determine the feasibility of a CBIP incentive which could be incorporated into the overall program for the redevelopment area.
- vii. *LEED Development* – Although capital costs of LEED technology are slowly becoming more economical, and life cycle operational costs do eventually transform into long-term cost-savings, significant upfront capital expenditures are required for buildings to meet a high level LEED. In conjunction with the *Community Energy Plan* a tiered incentive structure may be considered for developments based on the level of LEED certification (bronze, silver, gold or platinum).
- viii. *Smart Growth Design* – While many aspects of smart growth provide the opportunity to conserve resources, the environment and servicing costs, some development projects do require additional investment on the part of developers in terms of site infrastructure. Providing development incentives in exchange for the incorporation of design features which promote quality of life need to be explored. Such designs include mixed use developments, structure/underground parking, integrated pedways, amenity space, quality architectural design, and public art.
- ix. *Outdoor Public Art* – In tandem with the Mural Program operated by the DESC and Aurora Arts Society, an incentive program should be considered for the promotion of Outdoor Public Art throughout the redevelopment area. Ample opportunities exist for incorporating such art in the streetscape, boulevards, lot frontages, park space, or under-utilized spaces.

B) Land Bank (Assembly Strategy)

Land Banking/Assembly Strategy – One of the most important long-term initiatives a City can pursue in terms of economic development and redevelopment is a strategic land assembly plan. Although the City is the largest property owner throughout the redevelopment area, the assembly of key parcels within certain areas of Old Town and

the Downtown would provide substantial opportunity to pursue more viable development projects.

Offsite Development Levies – Monies from the Land Development Fund have typically been utilized for the development of greenfield residential subdivisions in the City. Based on models from other cities, consideration could be given to the incorporation of Offsite Development Levies for all new greenfield developments. Monies from such a levy could be allocated to parks, infrastructure, and redevelopment outside of the development boundaries. For example, an allocation of 1/3 of Offsite Levies to redevelopment would provide the City of Yellowknife with additional revenues to apply a more strategic approach to redevelopment.

C) Public Private Partnerships

Business Improvement District (BID) – Business Improvement Districts, Special Improvement Districts, or Business Improvement Zones are becoming increasingly more common amongst cities throughout North America and Europe. A BID is an area where business owners choose to be assessed a fee or levy, which is collected on their behalf, for use in improving and promoting their business area. The impact of BIDS in revitalizing business areas through initiatives such as commercial advertising, festivals and events, and physical improvements has been demonstrated across Canada. Subject to strong support from the business community, there is the opportunity for several BIDs in Yellowknife.

Parking Revenue – The Downtown Plan discusses the allocation of parking revenue dollars from on-street parking (\$300,000 per year) for Downtown related infrastructure programs and projects. Consideration might be given to partnering with the business community and making the allocation of these dollars subject to matching funds from a Business Improvement District levy.

D) Zoning Development Controls

Flexible zoning requirements and/or relaxed permit fees (i.e. development or building permit fees) within redevelopment districts can provide developers with the extra-incentive needed to pursue a project. Density Bonusing, Transferable Development Rights, or waiving certain application fees can be provided to a developer who meets or exceeds other developments requirement. In the context of the redevelopment area the *Plan* can assess the application of flex-zoning and public receptivity to permit fee relaxation.

X. ANCHOR CONCEPTS

Commercial, institutional, and recreational uses are anchors for reinvestment and revitalization, and when carefully planned, can significantly improve the quality of life and “sense of place” within a community. Plans for a number of recreational/institutional anchors (i.e. Somba K’e Civic Plaza, Fieldhouse, or the Court House), will bolster community interest and redevelopment opportunities in those areas of the community. Therefore in addition to these institutional and

recreational opportunities, other anchor concepts need to be identified to allow for orderly development and smart growth. Similar consideration and planning needs to be given to integrating future commercial anchors (i.e. “big box” or “power centre developments” on Old Airport Road), mixed use developments, and attractions.

In addition to those noted above, various reports and planning documents have identified the potential for the following additional anchors:

- Mixed Use Convention Centre
- Commercial Centres - “Big Box” or “Power Centre Developments”
- Pedestrian Mall
- Public Market
- Civic Gathering Places (Pocket Parks, Central Park, Town Square)
- RV Park
- Waterfront Development (Public Private Partnership)
- College Campus/R&D Centre
- Artists Co-operative
- First Nations Government
- Heritage Buildings/Sites

The preliminary consultation process will identify the sentiment and interests of the general public and stakeholder groups with reference to potential land use anchors. Based on overall desirability, planning analysis, and economic feasibility, the viability of potential uses concepts can be assessed in relation to potential sites. The mid to latter stages of the public consultation process (i.e. focus groups and design charrettes) will allow for the development and integration of the practical concepts into the other aspects of the *Plan*. This element of the *Plan* will greatly assist the City in establishing an integrated vision for the redevelopment area, allowing for a proactive and strategic approach to land assembly and long range planning.