

# COMPREHENSIVE RURAL PLAN AND ZONING BYLAW WORK PLAN

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Peace River Regional District is looking to the future, to realize the potential of its rural character and assets. Streamlining and modernizing the planning and land use regulatory framework is one step toward that goal. Over the years, planning in the Peace River Regional District has become disjointed and fragmented. Planning and land use are currently guided by seven documents – four official community plans (OCP), and three zoning bylaws.

This is an innovative program that will take advantage of new tools for comprehensive planning in rural areas to create both a rural plan and a zoning regulation. A total area of approximately 19,000 square kilometres will be covered by this project. Being able to use all the tools of an OCP and zoning bylaw in this new comprehensive bylaw will enable modernization and streamlining of rural planning in the region.

In a comprehensive way, important rural issues such as the following, can be addressed. This list is not exhaustive, but it provides an idea of the potential content:

- Planning for Agriculture
- Industrial Development in the Rural Area
- Residential Development and Subdivision in the ALR
- Local Community Development
- Hazards
- Inter-governmental cooperation
- Rural Services and Infrastructure
- Environmental Stewardship
- Water resources
- Rural Diversification
- Inter-link to Land & Resource Management Plans
- Facilities

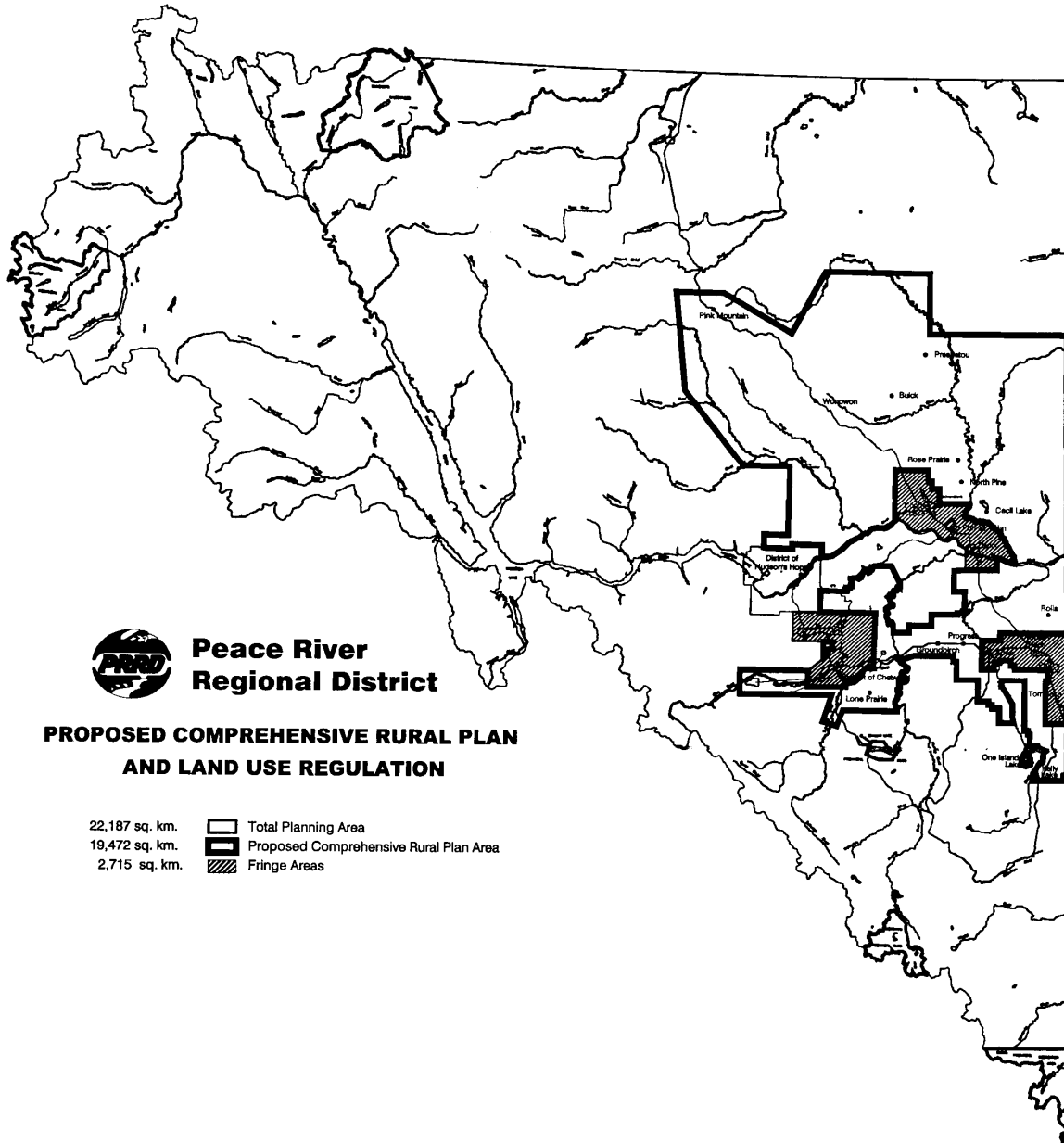
The information requirements of this project will encourage the development of a regional GIS. This can be assisted by enlisting the participation of utility companies, BC Assessment Authority, Land Reserve Commission, Ministry of Agriculture, Crown Land Registry Services, Ministry of Energy Mines and Petroleum Resources, Ministry of Environment, Oil & Gas Commission and Ministry of Forests.

A key component of this project will be the use of an inter-agency working group that can help provide advise and resources.

The project will be performed in two stages and take approximately 18-24 months:

- Stage 1:     **Background Research** – GIS development, demographic research, review existing plans and reports;
- Stage 2:     **Rural Dialogue** - preliminary public input, issue identification, analysis.
- Stage 3:     **Plan Development** – policy options; public review; agency referral; bylaw adoption.

# 1.1 Planning Area



## **2.0 OVERALL PLANNING FRAMWORK**

In the fall of 1998 the Regional Board endorsed a proposal to rationalize, streamline and update the planning framework of the Regional District. The proposal included the following:

1. A consolidated zoning regulation for the fringe areas of Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, and Fort St. John, intended to provide greater continuity between the sub-areas.
2. One, comprehensive OCP/zoning bylaw, for the rural area beyond the community fringes, intended to simplify planning in the rural areas.
3. Updated community plans for the three fringe areas, intended to accommodate the different character of each fringe area.

This project constitutes the second step in achieving the overall planning framework for the region. For efficiency, the zoning bylaw developed in step one will provide the foundation for zoning in the comprehensive bylaw developed in step two. This will also help provide consistent regulation across the region.

## 3.0 WORK PROGRAM

This section describes the tasks proposed to complete this project, summarized as follows:

### Stage 1 Background Research

1. Project Start-up
2. Mapping
3. Research and Data Collection

### Stage 2 Rural Dialogue

4. Preliminary Consultation
5. Issue Identification and Analysis
6. Background Report

### Stage 3 Plan Development

7. Draft Plan Outline
8. Goals, Objectives and Policies
9. 1<sup>st</sup> Draft Comprehensive Rural Plan and Zoning Regulation
10. Public Review and Agency Referral
11. 2<sup>nd</sup> Draft Comprehensive Rural Plan and Zoning Regulation
12. Bylaw Adoption

Tables 1 and 2 provide a detailed breakdown of the tasks, an indication of timing, and budget estimates.

## 3.1 STAGE 1 BACKGROUND RESEARCH

### Task 1 Project Start-up

Project start-up will include meeting with regional district staff and the PRRD Rural Issues Committee (RIC) to review the project scope and refine the work program. The RIC will supervise the project on behalf of the Regional Board, and will review final products for recommendation to the Board.

Also at this time, an invitation will be made to affected government authorities and agencies to participate on an inter-agency working group. This working group will be asked to provide technical advice and help identify resources in support of the project.

In addition to the working group, reference will be made to an agricultural advisory committee. To guide the project through an inclusive process, a consultation and communications plan will be prepared for approval by the RIC.

### Task 2 Mapping – Agricultural Geographic Information System (GIS)

The study area for this project is expansive and good mapping data will be critical for supporting analysis and communicating the results. It is proposed to build on the Ministry of Agriculture's pilot project for an Agricultural GIS. With assistance from the Ministry, a GIS database will be developed that will be an important planning tool not only for agriculture but also for industry. A land use inventory and consolidation of existing data will form the foundation.

### Task 3. Research and Data Collection

This task involves the collection of base data about the region. A demographic profile and projections for the next 5 and 10 years will be developed. Profiles of each rural community will also be developed, to ensure that they are recognized and integrated into the plan. An exhaustive review will be made of existing plans, reports, studies, economic strategies, solid waste plans, etc., will also be undertaken. A general review of the regions geography will also be made, in particular to begin to identify both environmentally sensitive areas, and hazardous areas.

## **3.2 STAGE 2 RURAL DIALOGUE**

### **Task 4. Preliminary Consultation**

The region is vast and no single consultation method will be sufficient. This is an important step to ensure that residents and stakeholders in the region have an opportunity for participation in development of the plan. A survey will be performed to identify the planning issues that are important to residents in the region. Consultation will also occur with First Nations, local community organizations, and sector specific organizations. The project will be highlighted on the PRRD website with the ability to receive input. Finally, a series of workshops will be held around the region, to sit down face-to-face and listen to the area residents. An interim report will summarize the findings of the preliminary consultation for consideration in development of the plan.

### **Task 5. Issue Identification and Analysis**

Using a framework of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, a report will be prepared based on the initial research and preliminary consultation. This report will highlight the issues needing to be addressed in the plan. Strengths will include identification of assets, resources, organizations, and other characteristics that will strengthen the region for the future. Weaknesses in the region that could detract from the realization of future opportunities will be identified i.e. lack of infrastructure. Opportunities as identified by the research for future development and enhancement of the region will be outlined. Finally, any perceived or anticipated threats to the prosperity of the region will identified.

### **Task 6. Background Report**

The background report will compile the results of tasks 3, 4, & 5. The report will be reviewed by the working group and the RIC to check content and consider issues that may have been overlooked. A final report will be tabled with the Regional Board. The background report will form the basis for developing goals, objectives and policies for the comprehensive rural plan and zoning bylaw.

## **3.3 STAGE 3 PLAN DEVELOPMENT**

### **Task 7. Draft Plan Outline**

Using the background report as a base, an outline will be developed for the comprehensive rural plan and zoning bylaw. Most of this work will focus on the rural plan. A regional zoning bylaw has recently been developed which can form the base for the zoning component of this project, although minor modifications may be required. The outline will guide and focus further work on the plan. The RIC, inter-agency working group, and agricultural advisory committee will have input into developing the outline.

### **Task 8. Goals, Objectives and Policies**

Following the draft outline and with reference to the background report, goals objectives and policies will be proposed. In as much as the issues are addressed, the goals outline in section 849 of the Local Government Act will be considered. Specific objectives and policy options directed toward achievement of the identified goals will be proposed. An initial draft will be reviewed and evaluated by the RIC, inter-agency working group, and agricultural advisory committee. It is expected that the GIS will be an essential tool for analysis and support of this

task. The product of this task will be a discussion paper of the proposed goals, objectives, and policies including the results of their evaluation.

### **Task 9. 1<sup>st</sup> Draft: Comprehensive Rural Plan and Zoning Bylaw**

In this step, mapping for both the rural plan and the zoning is developed in support of the preferred goals, objectives, and policies. The mapping is then consolidated with the text into the first draft of the comprehensive bylaw. The draft bylaw will be reviewed by the RIC, inter-agency working group, and agricultural advisory committee before initial public review and agency referral is conducted.

### **Task 10. Public Review and Agency Referral**

This begins the public review of the draft comprehensive bylaw. This step is similar to Task 4, except that input is now requested on an actual document that is the result of the preliminary consultation. A bulk mailed newsletter will be developed summarizing the comprehensive bylaw and informing the public how they can participate. Referrals and consultations will be made to First Nations, School Districts, and government. Referrals will also be made to community organizations and sector specific organizations identified from Task 4. The draft bylaw and a means to respond will also be made available on the PRRD web site. A series of open houses will be conducted around the region to provide face-to-face opportunity to discuss the proposed bylaw. The results of the review will be summarized in a report.

### **Task 11. 2<sup>nd</sup> Draft: Comprehensive Rural Plan and Zoning Bylaw**

Results of the public review and agency referral will be reviewed with the RIC, inter-agency working group, and agricultural advisory committee. Revisions will be made as necessary and the bylaw will be prepared for formal consideration by the Regional Board.

### **Task 12. Bylaw Adoption**

This task includes the steps required by statutes for adoption of the bylaw. After first reading consultation necessary to meet the requirements of section 879 of the Local Government Act will be considered. Second reading will consider any necessary revisions which may include use or density at this stage. The bylaw will then be prepared for formal public hearings which will occur around the region. The results of the public hearings will be considered by the Regional Board at third reading were further minor revisions (excluding use or density) may be addressed. The bylaw will then be referred for any statutory approvals, after the receipt of which, final adoption will be considered.