

Swan Lake Commercial Area and Neighbourhood Plan Terms of Reference

Background

The Swan Lake Corridor is located within Electoral Area “B” of the Regional District of North Okanagan and is situated 1 km north of the City of Vernon. Located to the east of Swan Lake is a collection of commercial, industrial, residential, rural residential and agricultural land uses. The corridor has historically been identified and designated as a commercial district and future growth area which is to meet the growing economic and commercial land needs of the North Okanagan.

The Electoral Areas B and C Official Community Plan, Bylaw 2626, 2014 undertook a comprehensive public consultation process. During that consultation it was determined that the land lying between Highway 97 and Pleasant Valley Road is envisioned to accommodate a mixture of commercial uses subject to comprehensive planning and design guidelines. The land lying between Highway 97 and Swan Lake is envisioned as predominantly open space, parkland and promoting agricultural land areas where appropriate. This pattern is expected to offset a more intensive development pattern east of the highway, maintain aesthetic value, protect the lake for its environmental attributes and provide an attractive foreground for the tourist and highway commercial uses across the road and for those visitors entering the community along Highway 97. It is a goal of this plan to support a variety of commercial land uses along the entire extent of the corridor between Highway 97 and Pleasant Valley Road and the City of Vernon Boundary.

In 1997 a Swan Lake Commercial District Sector Plan was completed to help guide the growth and development of the corridor. This Plan required reconsideration due to a number of factors including the sensitive environmental conditions that affect the ability to manage sewage and stormwater. A moratorium on re-zoning applications within the Swan Lake Commercial Corridor was in place for a period of at least ten years prior to 2003 due to the lack of sewer. The exact date it began is undetermined but it was discussed in the 1980s and was definitely in place in 1993. The moratorium was dissolved with the 2003 OCP which included policies stipulating specific servicing requirements including provisions for on-site sewage disposal. From 2003 to 2012 13 rezoning and 1 ALR exclusion application were received for the area, only four were adopted. Staff generally did not support applications due to the lack of servicing, and the applicants proposing commercial uses which were not consistent with that of the Swan Lake Commercial District Sector Plan. During the 2014 Electoral Areas “B” and “C” Official Community Plan review, the Swan Lake Commercial District Sector Plan was reviewed and removed from the OCP as it was too detailed and no longer applicable.

The need to develop a new Swan Lake Commercial Area Plan was acknowledged during the 2014 Electoral Areas “B” and “C” OCP review:

7.1.8 The Regional District will consider undertaking the development of a Swan Lake Commercial Area Plan to identify a new future vision for the area as well as opportunities for the provision of sanitary sewer services.

Additionally, in light of recent studies on the development of a waste water treatment plant within the corridor it is prudent to review the residential designations within the plan area to ensure the highest and best use of these lands is achieved.



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Purpose

These terms of reference will shape the process for the development of a Commercial Area and Neighbourhood Plan that will:

- outline a new vision for the corridor and surrounding lands based on provisions of sewer service to the area;
- review the land use designations based on infrastructure development and capacity (Waste Water Treatment Plant);
- review the Official Community Plan policies for residential expansion into historic nodes and new areas; need to identify any potential policy conflicts- e.g. Country Residential to Small Holdings or Country Residential to Residential land uses;
- maintain a rural feel with a dark sky approach and design that respects the rural context;
- consider Regional Growth Strategy implications as it relates to growth areas, future growth areas, rural protection areas and servicing;
- review and identify direction and opportunities highlighted for the corridor in the Regional Employment Lands Action Plan and Regional Agricultural Plan;
- take into consideration the Swan Lake Wildlife Management Area; and
- identify linkages with the Township of Spallumcheen's Southeast Sector Plan, City of Vernon Official Community Plan and OKIB's plans for future land use.

Goal

The goal of creating a Commercial Area and Neighbourhood Plan is to identify and address the long term planning objectives, policies and guidelines for the Swan Lake Corridor and surrounding lands. An Official Community Plan does not always address specific land-use issues at the neighbourhood level, therefore, this plan will provide direction for residents, land owners, the community as a whole and developers about how the area may be developed with sewer service factored in. This plan would be included in the Electoral Areas "B" and "C" Official Community Plan through an amendment.

This process will not address or consider:

- Exclusions or land use designation changes of ALR lands except those not subject to ALC regulations (Section 23 ALC Act) or other decisions already approved or contemplated by the ALC;
- Lands west of Swan Lake are not included in the plan area; and
- Development of lands on the east shore of Swan lake designated Country Residential between Stickle Road to Redwing Road are not contemplated for any land use designation changes through this process.

Plan Area

The study area includes- the corridor and surrounding lands from the south along the City of Vernon boundary, to the east along L & A road to McLennan Road, to the north along the Township of Spallumcheen boundary and to the west down the center of Swan Lake, as shown on the attached map.

The Swan Lake Corridor abuts the boundaries of both the Township of Spallumcheen to the north and the Okanagan Indian band to the west and City of Vernon to the east and south. The corridor is adjacent to Swan Lake which is one of the most important wetland



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habitats in the south central interior of British Columbia. The foreshore of Swan Lake contains extensive areas of marsh, cattails, reeds and sedges with high biodiversity values. Regionally, wetlands are an endangered habitat type due to encroachment and degradation brought about by human settlement and land development. The lake is a resting and feeding stop for migratory birds in the spring and fall. Over 200 bird species have been observed at the lake. In the past, Swan Lake was nationally recognized for its value to staging and breeding waterfowl and contained a rare nesting colony of Western Grebe, which has now disappeared but may be recoverable with proper management and long-term protection. The conservation history of Swan Lake dates back to 1922 when this unique wetland was proposed to become a bird sanctuary. The lake and surrounding upland have local significance for small mammal, reptilian and amphibian production.

Objectives and Scope of Work

The Regional District has the following objectives broken into three phases for establishing the Commercial Area and Neighbourhood Plan:

Phase I

- Review the 1997 Swan lake Commercial District Sector Plan;
- Review the 2016 and 2017 Swan Lake Land Use and Water Quality Assessment by Western Water and Associates;
- Review Urban Systems North Okanagan Wastewater Recovery Project Conceptual Collection System;
- Create an inventory of commercial and industrial zoned lands that identifies:
 - existing businesses within the Swan Lake Corridor (number of car dealerships, versus storage centers vs garden centers etc.);
 - total number of vacant parcels and area; and
 - total number of underutilized parcels;
- consider / explore the possibility for green infrastructure requirements such as constructed wetlands, permeable surfaces and green boulevards- which may result in the creation of guidelines for a Development Permit Area;
- Inventory the number of Non-ALR lots designated Residential, Small Holdings and Country Residential that have the potential for development and densification.

Phase II

1. Stakeholder and Public Engagement.

In addition to the public hearing required as a part of the Bylaw approval process, public engagement should include the following:

- A communications and public relations strategy to ensure a broad discussion of this process and its linkages to the North Okanagan Wastewater Recovery Project are made;



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- need to ascertain the level of support for sewer service expansion to the various commercial, industrial and residential nodes within the Plan Area.
- At least two Public Open Houses at venues located within the Swan Lake Corridor;
- Create a Steering Committee with commercial, industrial and residential property owners. The Electoral Areas “B” and “C” Directors will appoint one Advisory Planning Commission member to sit on the Steering Committee. This committee will assist in overseeing the planning process- identifying community issues; providing feedback on proposed meeting locations and times; identifying any other key stakeholders within the plan area that need to be consulted; assist with engaging the general public within the planning process; and reviewing / discussing the draft plan.
- Early in the process, other local governments, community groups and associations, First Nations and senior government agencies will need to be contacted to determine their objectives and to ascertain how they would like to participate in the planning process. Representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, Agricultural Land Commission, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, Interior Health Authority, Okanagan Indian Band, City of Vernon and the Township of Spallumcheen should be considered. These representatives would provide expert advice and feedback into the planning process and review of the draft plan.

Phase III

1. To analyze issues and community values that are brought forward through Phase I and II of the planning process. Determine if and how these issues and values should be addressed in the plan.
2. To review and present various options for commercial, industrial and residential densification within the Swan Lake Corridor and surrounding lands based on:
 - the assumption that sewer services become available to the plan area. It is also important that consideration be given to Section 473.1 of the Local Government Act as it pertains to the approximate location and phasing of any major road, sewer and water systems.
 - provide a list of assumptions with each proposed scenario on the challenges and opportunities that may arise i.e. residential densification next to ALR lands may increase pressure for exclusion of these lands to accommodate additional growth and development.
3. Information gathered during the development of this plan is to also inform a future vision, goals and objectives for the plan area if sewer is not available.
4. To prepare and present a draft Swan Lake Commercial Area and Neighbourhood plan for public review and comment.
5. To prepare and present a Swan Lake Commercial Area and Neighbourhood plan and initiate the referral and approval process, including:



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- preparing bylaws for the inclusion of the plan into the Electoral Areas “B” and “C” OCP;
- Attendance at the Public Hearing; and
- Revisions to and submission of the final Swan Lake Commercial Area and Neighbourhood plan.

Timing of Work:

The Consultant will be expected to carry out all work required to develop a comprehensive Commercial Area and Neighbourhood Plan for the Swan Lake Corridor and surrounding lands by September 2018.

The goal is for the Planning Process to start in March of 2018.

Phase I- March 2018

Phase II- April 1, 2018- May 31, 2018

Phase III – June 1, 2018 –July 31, 2018

Participants

The Regional District Planning and Building Department will lead the process through the use of consultants. Participants will include residents and property owners of the plan area and surrounding lands, business owners including commercial and industrial properties, the Okanagan Indian Band, local, provincial and federal government ministries and departments.

