

Town of Fort Frances



COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Modified to incorporate amendments authorized by By-Law 02/03-B

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1.0 PLAN BACKGROUND

1.1. Foundation and Basis

The Town of Fort Frances has undertaken a number of studies in recent years that recognize the changing role of the Town towards economic development and the need to facilitate a broader and more diverse range of uses throughout the community.

Various and significant areas of the community are available for development and although the permitted uses generally exemplify the current and anticipated uses, it is recognized that the opportunity exists to attract and broaden potential prospective developers to the Town of Fort Frances through innovative and unprecedented methods.

In June 2002 Council considered and approved in principle, the establishment of various financial incentive programs as a means toward attracting development to the community.

This Community Improvement Plan was adopted by Council and represents a strong indication by Council to the community that the future health and vitality of the Town is important and that the Community Improvement Project Areas identified, and defined by by-law, are deserving of special attention.

The Planning and Development Division will administer this Community Improvement Plan, with assistance provided by various other Departments and Divisions assigned the responsibility for specific implementation of projects.

1.2. Strategic Plan

In the fall of 2001, Council for the Town of Fort Frances initiated a series of strategic planning sessions geared toward establishing a common set of priorities for the community. Facilitated by Margaret Wanlin with assistance from community members and staff, the strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats of the community were identified and recommendations made to utilize, remedy, achieve and reduce those issues defined.

Strategic planning sessions continue on an ongoing basis to determine the specific steps necessary to facilitate the established priorities and with further analysis of the Strategic Plan appearing to indicate a number of goals and objectives directly and indirectly related to economic development, this community improvement plan is a means to that end.

The Strategic Plan of the Town of Fort Frances, adopted by Council on November 26, 2001, contained the following goals and action strategies together with recommendations towards achievement:

- To deliver core services in an efficient and effective manner
- To have in place a level of information technology that is competitive within the region

and country

- To work in collaboration with neighbouring First Nations on issues of economic development and other areas of mutual interest
- To examine and, where appropriate, implement strategies which generate revenues from within the Town and as a result of partnerships outside the Town
- To be proactive and flexible in attracting and maintaining the commercial/industrial tax base
- To complete the waterfront development project to meet community needs
- To be proactive in design and marketing to attract tourists and become a tourist destination.
- To optimize the opportunity of our location on the border and proximity to American markets

1.3 Official Plan and Zoning By-Law

The project areas subject to this Community Improvement Plan consist of those areas designated as “Working”, Resource Development”, “Recreation”, Living Area” and “Downtown Business” Areas” shown on Schedule “A” of the Town of Fort Frances Official Plan and more specifically zoned as commercial, industrial and resource development on Schedule “A” of Town of Fort Frances Zoning By-Law #8/98.

It is intended that future development of the Town provide increased opportunities for public access, encourage a greater mix of land uses, and recognize and protect existing key natural features.

This Community Improvement Plan constitutes the legislative basis and context for the implementation of these ongoing programs and has been developed in accordance with Section 28 of The Planning Act (R.S.O. 1990, c.P.13.), as amended. The Town of Fort Frances Official Plan was approved by MMAH on August 19, 1998. Section 3.1.8. thereof (entitled “Community Improvement”) designates the entire Town of Fort Frances as a community improvement area and, in addition to policy statements contained throughout, describes the Town’s policies for community improvement pursuant to Part IV of The Planning Act (R.S.O. 1990, c.P13).

2. COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

2.1 Introduction and Purpose

The Community Improvement Project Areas (C.I.P.A.) of the Town of Fort Frances were designated by By-law # 01/03 of Council on February 10, 2003 in accordance with Section 28 of

The Planning Act (R.S.O. 1990, c.P.13.). A public meeting of Council to consider this Community Improvement Plan was held on October 28, 2002, notices of which were published in the Fort Frances Times on October 7, 2002, October 9, 2003 and October 23, 2002.

This Community Improvement Plan will accomplish the following:

- Facilitate the efficient and orderly implementation of the community improvement policies of the Official Plan of the Town of Fort Frances
- Identify and describe the Community Improvement Project Areas to which this plan relates
- Provide rationalization and the fundamental basis of the Community Improvement Project Areas
- Confirm the commitment of the Town of Fort Frances to encourage and support continued economic growth and investment in the community geared toward rehabilitation, renovation and relocation through utilization of unprecedented and innovative means.
- Provide a brief and general outline of the Incentive Programs endorsed by the Town of Fort Frances.
- Provide sufficient flexibility to enable Council to make minor changes to the Plan without formal amendment.

2.2 Identification of Community Improvement Project Areas

The boundaries of the Community Improvement Project Areas are shown on Figure 1 attached to and forming a part of this Community Improvement Plan.

It is the intent of Council that opportunities for development not be limited to a specific area of the municipality and, to that end, has designated three distinct project areas that collectively represent the entire municipality. Specific projects, distinct to a Project Area have been identified as well as general projects that relate to the municipality in its entirety. Specific projects must be within a designated Community Improvement Project Area to qualify for financial incentives offered in accordance with this Plan.

Amendments to the boundaries of the Community Improvement Project Areas may be enacted by by-law of the Town of Fort Frances Council in conformity with the community improvements policies of the Town of Fort Frances Official Plan.

2.3 Selection Criteria

The location of the project areas are consistent with the Town's Official Plan policies and

satisfies, in particular, the following community improvement **goals and objectives** of the Town of Fort Frances Official Plan:

- To provide for a variety of housing types to meet the demands of the present and future inhabitants of the Town
- To provide opportunities to develop a diverse range of employment opportunities for present and future residents of the Town
- To ensure there are sufficient lands designated for development opportunities at all times
- To ensure there is sufficient flexibility to adapt to change and opportunities quickly
- To provide for attractive development that will encourage investment in Fort Frances
- The Town will consider incentives to encourage the continued viability of the Downtown Business Area
- To provide areas for residents to enjoy leisure activities and the environment
- To develop a continuous parkland and trail system throughout the Town
- To ensure sufficient land and facilities are available to provide for flexibility and variety in recreational opportunities, and
- To ensure that land uses within the undeveloped portions of the Town do not limit the long term use of the lands for the logical extension of urban services and development

Other key factors that resulted in the selection of the identified Community Improvement Project Areas included:

- An assessment of economic growth and the recognized need for diversification of employment opportunities in the Town as detailed in the Official Plan Background Study prepared by The Planning Partnership; and
- The detailed and stated objectives, obstacles, visions and strategies of the Community Strategic Plan entitled Tomorrow as prepared by The Tomorrow Committee;
- A number of years ago the Waterfront Development Committee, now known as the LaVerendrye Parkway Advisory Committee, was formed. This committee of citizen volunteers was interested in economic, residential and tourist development along the waterfront, specifically enhancing the waterfront area through improvements such as a bicycle path, shoreline rehabilitation, energy efficient lighting and improvements toward ensuring the area is a permanent attraction site.

- The objectives of the Re-Inventing Fort Frances Committee to determine the viability of Fort Frances as a tourism destination and the establishment of the town as a wide area (including the USA) regional center for servicing that industry; to provide a complete strategy and action plan for achieving a viable tourism industry for the benefit of the Fort Frances area; and to evaluate existing tourism infrastructure and make recommendations on refinements of such infrastructure – i.e. signage, parking, historical buildings, etc.

2.4 Project Areas

2.4.1 Town Wide Improvements

The deficiencies and associated opportunities for improvement in the Community Improvement Project Areas, identified in previously referenced documents, and through other investigations, include:

- The development of a municipal wide recreational trail and parks system with an emphasis on the waterfront area
- Improvements to sidewalks and road surfaces to enable safe and comfortable travel by pedestrians, bicycles and vehicles
- The development of a by-pass traffic route for large trucks to reduce conflicts in the core
- Improvements to the water system to provide for sufficient fire flows
- Encourage residents, business owners and service groups to participate in tree planting and street beautification programs
- Developing a menu of available and innovative financial incentives to stimulate development
- Develop a strategy in cooperation with First Nations for Point Park development and explore mutual opportunities and needs.
- Investigate advances in “wire’ and “wireless” technology.
- Improve municipal infrastructure to property line and community services where physically and economically feasible.
- Improve the quality of housing stock and stimulate community pride in ownership and occupancy.

- The provisions of grants or loans to registered or assessed property owners for such purposes as façade improvement, subject to municipal authority under the Planning Act, the Municipal Act and/or any other applicable legislation.
- The rehabilitation of municipal properties and/or the sale, lease or other disposition of municipal land as provided for in the Municipal Act and the Planning Act and/or any other applicable legislation.

2.4.1 Specific Project Areas

For the implementation of this plan, the Town of Fort Frances three “Community Improvement Project Areas have been designated by By-Law. They are the “Resource Development Project Area”, the “Mid-Town Industrial Project Area” and the “Downtown Core & Waterfront Project Area”. The boundaries of the community improvement project areas are shown on Figure 1, which forms a part of this plan. Amendments to the boundaries of the Community Improvement Project Areas may be enacted by by-law of the Town of Fort Frances Council and will require an amendment to this Plan.

Each Project Area is described below along with existing land uses, building condition and potential for development and specific projects relative to each area.

Not all Financial Incentive Programs apply to all Community Improvement Project Areas. Information in this regard can be found in the detailed information found in Appendix “A” attached to and forming part of this Community Improvement Plan.

2.4.1.1 Resources Development Project Area

The Resources Development Project Area, as shown on Figure 1, is comprised of a mixed range of land uses primarily resource development and industrial mixed with a small amount of commercial. The most northerly portion of this area is swampy marsh inaccessible by existing municipal roadways. The project area is approximately 3100 hectares in size. The boundaries of the Resource Development Area can be generally described as the municipal boundary on the north southwest along the CNR Railway line to Eighth Street then west to the boundary line between the Town and the Township of Alberton as shown on Figure 1 attached to and forming part of this Community Improvement Plan.

2.4.1.1.1 Existing Land Uses

The majority of property zoned as Resource Development is vacant with dispersed residential dwellings. Currently the only active industrial use in this project area is a wastewater treatment facility owned and operated by Abitibi-Consolidated, a major pulp and paper company.

The only industrial use currently in the Resource Development Project Area is an

Ontario Hydro One transmission station together with a line which extends from Eighth Street north then proceeding both to the northwest to service the municipalities to the west of Fort Frances, and east to service those areas east of the municipality.

2.4.1.1.2 Existing Building Condition and Potential for Development

To date, no buildings have been identified for demolition or rehabilitation.

In early 1800's subdivision plans were surveyed and laid out in this project area on Frenette Avenue off of Eighth Street north of the CNR railway line. The subdivision has never been pursued and the potential exists for development. Development of this area would result in the current infrastructure (water and sewer systems) being looped that would, in turn, provide a more efficient system and reduce maintenance costs of the municipality as indicated on Figure 3 attached to and forming a part of this Community Improvement Plan.

The municipality is the current registered owner of the property.

2.4.1.1.3 Specific Projects

2.4.1.1.3.1 Truck Route

A Town By-Pass or Truck Route, outside residential areas does not currently exist and transports and other large trucks must utilize streets in residential areas. The potential exists for the establishment of a truck route/by-pass either along or north of Eighth Street to access McIrvine Rd.

Development of a truck route is an identified project in the Town of Fort Frances Official Plan and would eliminate disruption to residents and provide easier and more efficient access to the industrial park area where the majority of transports deliver goods.

2.4.1.1.3.2 Core Services - Infrastructure

The majority of property located in the Resource Development Project Area is hindered by the lack of core services such as water and sewer.

The extension of core services via McIrvine Road would greatly increase the potential for development.

2.4.1.2 Mid-Town Industrial Project Area

The Mid-Town Industrial Project Area is comprised of approximately 400 hectares. With the exception of a block of land approximately 100 metres from Highway 11/71 to approximately 200 metres west of McIrvine Road, the Mid-Town Industrial Project Area

can be generally described that the area lying south of Eighth Street and north of the CNR railway line and east of the municipal boundary between the Town and the Township of Alberton as shown on Figure 1 attached and forming part of this Community Improvement Plan.

2.4.1.2.1 Existing Land Uses

The Mid-Town Industrial Project Area is comprised, generally of industrial and residential uses. Approximately two-thirds of this project area, on the westerly side, is comprised of industrial uses with the remainder primarily residential with intermittent site-specific commercial uses.

2.4.1.2.2 Existing Building Condition and Potential for Development

This area is commonly referred to as the prime industrial park of the community. New industrial uses have been directed to this area whenever possible. Of the properties identified as industrial, approximately one-half are municipally owned and generally, available for development.

There have been no buildings identified as requiring demolition or reconstruction to date. Although no specific development projects have been identified in the process of preparing this, there is great potential for development should an interest by an outside party be shown and it is the intent of this plan to open the opportunities for development to Council through the programs outlined elsewhere in this document. Incentive programs may be available where rehabilitation is required.

2.4.1.2.3 Specific Projects

2.4.1.2.3.1 Industrial Park Development

Municipal properties in the industrial park area, specifically fronting Fifth Street West, require backfilling to bring the properties up to grade prior to being available for resale and development.

Municipal properties along Seventh Street West also have great potential for re-development but lack the core services necessary (ie. water and sewer) to attract development.

Enhancements to these areas in the industrial park would attract new industrial uses to as well as encourage existing industrial uses in other less appropriate areas to relocate.

This project satisfies the policies of the Official Plan that “all industrial uses shall be developed on the basis of full municipal services” as outlined in Section 2.2.3.

2.4.1.3 Downtown Core and Waterfront Project Area

The Downtown Core and Waterfront Project Area are approximately 1400 hectares in size. The area covered extends from the west boundary of the municipality approximately 100 metres north of Highway 11/71 to approximately 200 metres west of McIrvine Road where it proceeds north to the CNR railway line. From that point, the north limit of the project area is the railway tracks to the point where it meets with Mill Road on the northeast portion of the municipality. From this northerly project area boundary line it takes in the entire south part of the Town as shown on Figure 1 attached to and forming part of this Community Improvement Plan.

2.4.1.3.1 Existing Land Uses

The majority of property located in the Downtown Core and Waterfront Project Area is mixed residential uses. This project area does contain two primary industrial uses, a quarry located to the northwest of this project area and, in the center, the pulp and paper mill. Of incidental use is the property located immediately adjacent to the north boundary of this project area, specifically along the CNR railway line.

Notwithstanding intermittent commercial properties along Scott Street, there are two primary commercial areas contained within this project area. The first commences from the west boundary of the municipality, along the Highway 11/71 corridor, extending to Keating Avenue, and the second covers from Second Street at Central Avenue south to Church Street at Armit Avenue, which is known as the “Downtown Business Core”.

2.4.1.3.2 Existing Building Condition and Potential for Development

In the industrial zones, specifically, the quarry and the pulp and paper mill, there do not appear to be any structures of interest or concern. However, the structure commonly known as the “Old CN Station” on Fourth Street does have the potential for redevelopment, rehabilitation and revitalization and appears to fit with the general intent of this Plan and the incentive programs to be implemented.

The commercial areas of this project area appear to offer the most significant potential for development, specifically along the Highway 11/71 corridor and in the downtown business area. Over the past few years, business have either located or relocated to the highway corridor resulting in a number of new structures. As such, there is no concern or special interest in any of the existing buildings at this time. There is, however, the potential for new and continued development in this area, as there exists sufficient vacant land along Highway 11/71 right through to the east limit of Town.

Of specific interest in the downtown core is an abandoned high school. This structure became vacant approximately four years ago when a new high school was constructed

in the west end of the community. This property appears to possess considerable possibilities for redevelopment and rehabilitation.

In the downtown core, there also exist various structures that have potential for rejuvenation and restoration. It is anticipated that incentive programs will encourage property owners to focus property improvement on the street appearance of the building as well as upgrade structural repairs.

Located in this Project Area is approximately 9 hectares of land owned by Abitibi-Consolidated, the local pulp and paper company. This property currently zoned as Open Space “OS” and is used for storage of pulp for mill processing purposes. There is potential, once this property is no longer required for this purpose, that it would be available for remediation, if required, and re-development.

The Pithers Point Park is located in this project area. This park is used for tourism and recreational purposes and possesses the potential for betterment through private/public partnerships.

The Rainy River District School Board currently owns approximately 37 hectares of vacant land on Shevlin Avenue at Sixth St. East. This property is zoned as open space in the zoning by-law and as Recreation Area of the Official Plan. This property appears to have great potential for either housing or soft municipal development such as institutional use. Uses compatible with adjacent properties will be encouraged but will require an amendment to the Official Plan if not permitted in the Official Plan.

2.4.1.3.3 Specific Projects

2.4.1.3.3.1 Waterfront Development

Now known as the LaVerendrye Parkway Advisory Committee, the Waterfront Development Project was initiated a number of years ago through a group of citizen volunteers interested in economic, residential and tourist development along the waterfront. Enhancements to this area include a bicycle path, shoreline rehabilitation, energy efficient lighting and improvements toward ensuring the area is a permanent attraction site. Funds provided by the Heritage Foundation and capital budget for the current year and the five-year forecast will facilitate this project.

This project will satisfy the following works, identified in the Official Plan:

- Additional tree planting and other landscaping within road allowances and/or in public open space areas
- New energy-efficient luminaries along streets and/or in public open spaces and pole replacement/relocation as required.

- The development of recreational trail and bike path
- Improvements to sidewalks to enable safe and comfortable travel by pedestrians and bicycles.

2.4.1.3.3.2 Street Beautification

The entrances to town limits has been a topic of much discussion in the past and, as a means toward encouraging residents and business owners to improve the appearance of these areas, the Town has taken the initiative to proceed with permanent methods of beautification. A budget of \$40,000 has been allocated for cosmetic improvements with the goal of substantive capital improvements over the next two to three years.

The Official Plan encourages, at section 3.1.3, that “entrances to Town shall be designed to create a positive first impression to visitors and residents”. This project will satisfy this objective.

2.4.1.3.3.3 Sidewalk and Road Re-Surfacing

Through identification of repairs to sidewalks and streets throughout all of the Community Improvement Project Areas, the objections of Section 3.1.8 (ii) of the Official Plan relating to safe and comfortable travel by pedestrians, bicycles and vehicles are met. Operations staff identifies, on an ongoing basis, areas requiring attention, and work is completed as capital budget permits.

2.4.1.3.3.3 Re-Inventing Fort Frances Initiative

The Re-Inventing Fort Frances Committee was formed to determine the viability of Fort Frances as a tourism destination and to provide a complete strategy and action plan for achieving a viable tourism industry for the benefit of the Fort Frances area. Through this initiative, the existing tourism infrastructure will be evaluated and recommendations made on refinements of such infrastructure – i.e. signage, parking, historical buildings, etc. The contract for this project has been awarded and will commence from August 1, 2002 to July 31, 2003.

2.5 Economic Development Financial Incentive Programs

In May of 2001 Council considered a report outlining various Economic Development Financial Incentive Programs and, directed further investigation by various Committees of Council. Financial incentives were further discussed throughout the strategic planning sessions and a recommendation brought forward by the steering committee to Council to proceed. Council ratified the Strategic Plan on November 26th, 2001.

On June 10, 2002, Council, by resolution, authorized the initiation of a Community Improvement Plan process in parallel with the Economic Development Financial Incentive Plan as a priority project and, thus approved, in principle the incentive programs outlined and considered previously.

The re-development of vacant and under-utilized properties has been identified as a significant issue in many North American municipalities. These sites often possess substantial redevelopment potential and, in many instances, would result in a significant community benefit if rehabilitated and reused. In addition, the more efficient use of land, increased tax assessment, creation of additional jobs and better utilization of infrastructure would be realized.

It is anticipated that redevelopment in the project areas would complement and strengthen the area as well as support surrounding uses currently in existence.

The Municipal Act prohibits “bonusing” through giving or lending money or property, guaranteeing borrowing, leasing or selling property at below fair market value or giving an exemption from a levy, charge or fee. Providing tax relief to an area or granting exemption from any development fees would generally constitute “bonusing”. However, an exception is made in the Municipal Act when municipalities are exercising powers within the context of a Community Improvement Plan, prepared in accordance with the Planning Act and approved by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

If a financial incentive program is established through a Community Improvement Plan, the Town may make grants or loans to the owners of lands and buildings to pay for the cost of rehabilitating such lands and buildings, and would not be considered “Bonusing”.

For the implementation of this Plan, the Town of Fort Frances has been divided into three parts, the “Community Improvement Project Areas”, which have each been defined and designated by by-law as a Community Improvement Project Area. This Community Improvement Plan has been prepared to implement the community improvement works identified in the Official Plan as well as enable the Town to offer development grant or loan programs to encourage development, redevelopment, revitalization and rehabilitation throughout the community, specifically, to allow the value of future increases in tax revenues as a result of increased assessment to pay the costs associated with site remediation, demolition of structures existing on the date the Plan is approved by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. .

A range of municipal financial and planning incentive programs has been included in Appendix “A” of this Community Improvement Plan. These programs may be considered by Town Council in the future to encourage redevelopment, revitalization and improvement of the existing and future development in the Community Improvement Project Areas. Council’s discretion in implementing one or more of these programs will be dependent on the need for the program, the potential benefits and costs, establishing an effective implementation framework and the availability of budget. Programs that are not authorized by Section 28 of The Planning Act do not constitute part of the Community Improvement Plan but are intended to augment the Community Improvement Plan programs.

It is proposed that the incentive programs commence on the date this Plan is approved by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The Treasurer will prepare an Incentive Program Status Report on an annual basis for Council Review. The Financial Incentive Programs outlined will continue as the annual budget permits and Council directs. Owners of properties participating in any of these programs may be eligible for the grant subject to eligibility requirements of the program and specific limiting legislation.

Although a specific program may have additional eligibility requirements, the following general requirements apply for all programs:

- a) The applicant must be the registered owner or tenant of the property or have an equitable interest in the property. An Agent may act on behalf of the applicant with required authorization.
- b) Applications shall be submitted, on forms provided and supported by documentation as required, to the Administering Department of the program in question.
- c) All applications for assistance under this program will be considered subject to the availability of funding and upon approval of Council.
- d) The properties must be located within one of the identified Community Improvement Project Areas to which the grant or loan program applies.
- e) The property shall be developed such that the amount of the work undertaken is sufficient to result in the re-assessment of the property;
- f) In the case of development of vacant or cleared sites within a project area for new buildings, to determine the pre-development assessment base for these projects, the assessment shall be based upon the assessment roll of the previous year, as last revised, used for the current taxation year;
- g) The subject property shall not be in a position of property tax arrears at the time of application nor throughout the term of the program, including utility charges;
- h) The total value of funding under any and all programs to any individual site shall be limited to the total value of the rehabilitation, renovation or conversion undertaken.
- i) Property owners who have previously defaulted under any Town loan program will not be eligible.
- j) Grants/loans will not be given retroactively to recognize projects that have begun without application to the program. Applications must be received prior to any works being done to the associated building or property.

- k) Loan commitments are valid for a period of one year and will expire if the work proposed is not completed within that time period. Agreements may contain for extension of a further six-month period upon approval by Council.
- l) The Town, entirely at its own discretion, may enter into a new agreement with any subsequent owners of the property to receive outstanding payments under the program.
- m) The Town may discontinue any of the Financial Incentive Programs at any time; however, any participants in the program prior to its closing will continue to receive the grants as were determined through agreement for their properties.
- n) Development proposed shall comply with applicable zoning regulations or qualify for zoning amendment to be accommodated.

2.6 Alternate Community Improvement Projects

Should any of the above projects not be feasible in the discretion of Council, or for other reasons of necessity, alternate community improvement projects and works may be undertaken without amending this plan. Such other works are set out in Appendix “B” attached to and forming part of this Community Improvement Plan. Specific municipal projects, in addition to those shown in Appendix “B”, may be added to this Plan by appendix and shall include the project and any sources of financing, recognizing that no sources of financing have been identified at this time.

2.7 Development Charges

The Development Charges Act permits municipalities to give full or partial exemptions for some types of development. In accordance with the Development Charges Act, a municipality may exempt specific areas, including Community Improvement Project Areas from the application of a development charges by-law.

Currently the Town of Fort Frances does not charge development fees under The Development Charges Act. This is viewed by Council to be a valuable incentive toward encouraging development in the Town and, for this reason, has been included as promotional information in this document.

2.8 Implementation

The implementation of this plan may, at times, require amendments to the Official Plan and Zoning By-Law and, through the process of the planning amendments, the Town will have regard for the Provincial Policy Statement; specifically in regards to such issues as contaminated sites, land use compatibility, natural heritage and cultural and archaeological resources, which will be addressed through the appropriate measures and studies.

2.8.1 Role of Council

- i) To adopt this Community Improvement Plan and the corresponding Economic

Development Financial Incentive Plan in principle.

- ii) To promote development or re-development opportunities; and
- iii) Ensure appropriate funding, as a direct expenditure through the annual budget process and utilization of the Economic Development Reserve, to implement the initiative of the Community Improvement Plan and the Economic Development Financial Incentive Plan.

Other funding sources identified for the projects outlined in the Community Improvement Project Areas include, but may not be limited, to:

- Funding assistance opportunities such as provincial programs on a cost-sharing or grant basis with the Ministries of Culture, Tourism and Recreation, Environment and Energy, and Transportation, Ministry of Northern Development and Mines.
- Fundraising initiatives of neighbourhood groups and service clubs, and
- Site specific improvements undertaken by property owners and arising either in part or wholly from improvements facilitated by this Community Improvement Plan

3. REVISIONS TO THIS PLAN

This Plan is intended to be generic so that as additional municipal projects are identified, they can be undertaken without amendment to the Plan, as long as they meet the policies of the Official Plan and encourage revitalization and redevelopment throughout the community.

From time to time, Council for the Town of Fort Frances may review and amend any of the terms and eligibility criteria of the programs described in this Community Improvement Plan without amendment to the Plan.

Program additions to this Plan will require a formal amendment in accordance with Section 28(4) of The Planning Act, requiring notice of a public meeting of Council, adoption by Council, and in consultation with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

4. APPROVAL OF MINISTER OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS AND HOUSING

In accordance with Section 28 of the Planning Act, RSO, 1990, c.P.13, this Community Improvement Plan and the Economic Development Financial Incentive Programs will not come into effect until approved by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

5. CONCLUSION

This Community Improvement Plan conforms to the Town of Fort Frances Official Plan and, more specifically, to the community improvement policies contained in Section 3.1.8.

The approval of this Community Improvement Plan will provide the legislative basis and context for incentive programs that have been identified to foster redevelopment and economic development and private sector investment in the Town of Fort Frances.

The amount the Town would pay back to property owners, through this program, has the potential to be significant. The Town would ultimately pay all costs associated with site remediation and the demolition of structures within the project area. However, these costs would be paid with revenue that might not have otherwise been realized if it were not for these programs. The incentive programs included and outlined in this plan are viewed as a long-term benefit to the Town as tax revenues would ultimately increase in the long run.

Issues outside the parameters of this Plan, but supportive of further development in the project areas, have been, and will continue to be examined and assessed as identified.

6. DEFINITIONS

- 6.2. **“Building”** means a structure consisting of walls, roof and floor or a structural system serving the same purpose.
- 6.3. **“Community Improvement”** means the planning or re-planning, design or redesign, resubdivision, clearance, development or redevelopment, reconstruction and rehabilitation, or any of them of a community improvement project area, and the provision of such uses, buildings, works, improvements or facilities, or spaces therefore, as may be appropriate or necessary.
- 6.4. **“Community Improvement Plan”** means a plan adopted by Council and approved by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for community improvement of a community improvement project area and constituting a schedule of works for the maintenance, rehabilitation, repair and/or development of public and privately owned facilities and lands,
- 6.5. **"Community Improvement Project Area"** means an area within a municipality, the community improvement of which in the opinion of the Council, is desirable for community improvement because of age, dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangement, unsuitability of buildings, deficiencies or for any other reason.
- 6.6. **“Contaminated Site”** means derelict, dysfunctional or under-used industrial and commercial facilities where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination.
- 6.7. **“Council”** means the Municipal Council of the Corporation of the Town of Fort Frances.
- 6.8. **“Development”** means the construction, erection or placing of one or more buildings or structures on land or the making of an addition or alteration to a building or structure that

has the effect of increasing the size and usability thereof.

- 6.9. **“Economic Development Financial Incentive Plan”** means the document adopted by Council for the Town which sets out various incentive plans to encourage redevelopment, rehabilitation, renovation and restoration to properties within designated community improvement project areas.
- 6.10. **"Fill"** means material such as gravel, stone, soil, sand, etc. used to raise the elevation of an area.
- 6.11. **"Official Plan"** means a comprehensive long-range plan for land use which guides growth and land use change in a municipality. It usually contains a text setting out goals, objectives and policies and schedules showing proposed land uses and transportation routes.
- 6.12. **“Programs”** means incentives offered by Council to encourage economic growth in accordance with the Community Improvement Plan.
- 6.13. **"Redevelopment"** means the demolition of existing buildings for replacement with new.
- 6.14. **"Rehabilitation"** means to bring back to a former capacity or condition. For example, to improve a vacant or deteriorated building for occupancy.
- 6.15. **“Renovation”** means to restore to a former better condition. For example by repairing or rebuilding)
- 6.16. **"Restoration"** means to return a building to a prior condition. For example, the restoration of existing heritage buildings (not to be confused with redevelopment).
- 6.17. **“Town”** means the Corporation of the Town of Fort Frances

Town of Fort Frances Community Improvement Project Areas

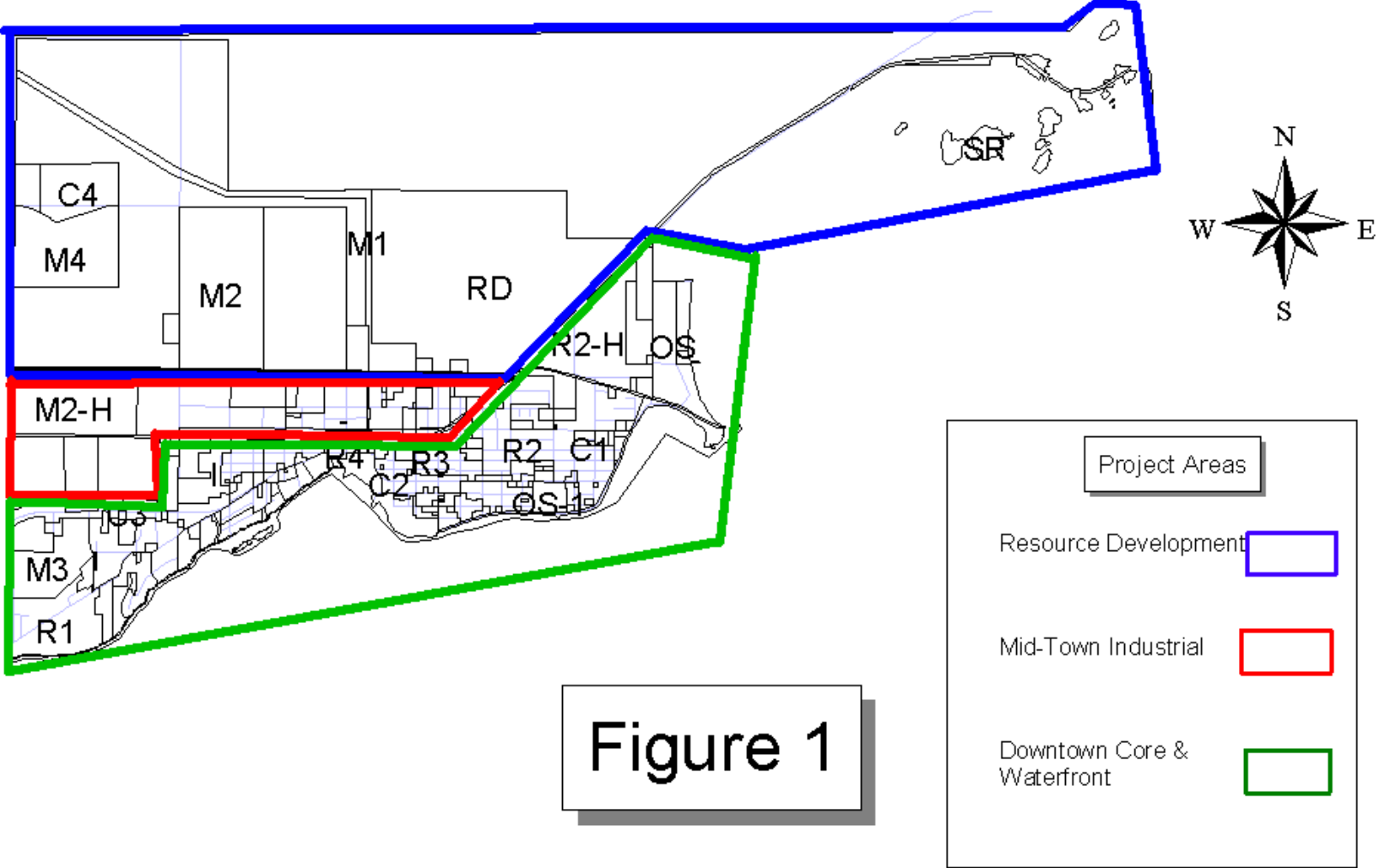


Figure 1

Town of Fort Frances - CIPA Existing Land Uses

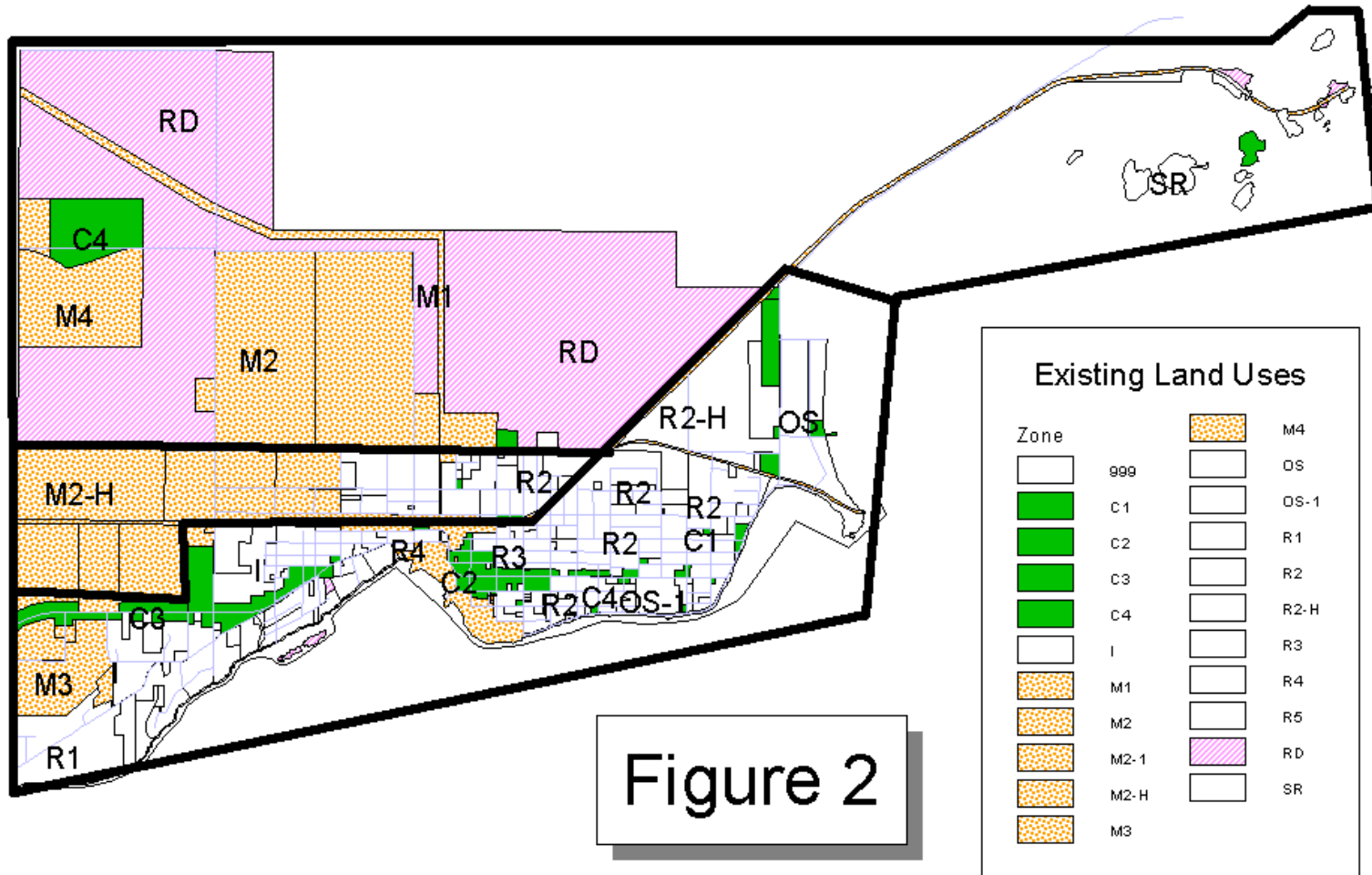
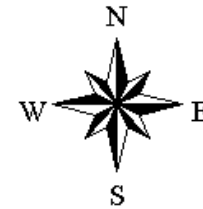
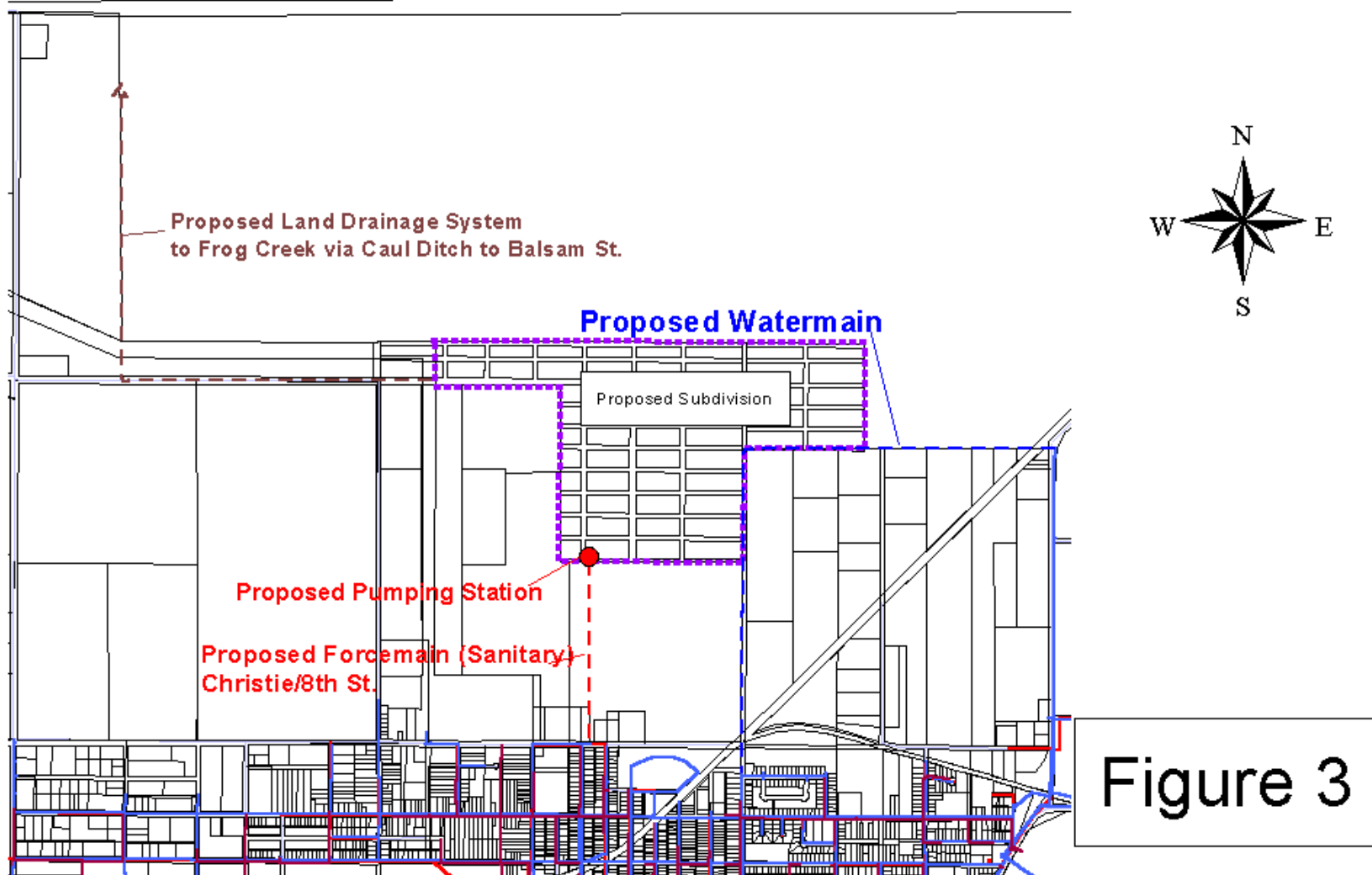


Figure 2

Town of Fort Frances Looping of Infrastructure



APPENDIX "A"

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
FINANCIAL INCENTIVE PROGRAMS**

Programs:

A. Property Value Revitalization Program (*Residential, Multi and Commercial Classes*)

This program is designed to stimulate new development and the redevelopment of vacant or under-utilized lands and buildings. Developing and improving properties within existing serviced neighborhoods and commercial districts encourages community pride, improves property values for adjacent properties, and minimizes future infrastructure investments.

Applies to the: Resource Development Project Area
 Mid-Town Industrial Project Area
 Downtown Core and Waterfront Project Area

B. Diversification Development Program

This program is designed to encourage growth and stabilization in both jobs and municipal taxation revenue for the community. Developments or redevelopments of properties for commercial/industrial uses in sectors such as manufacturing, processing, machining, environmental or technology related businesses such as call centers and non-competitive professional services are eligible.

Retail businesses and most service-based businesses are not eligible.

Applies to the: Resource Development Project Area
 Mid-Town Industrial Project Area
 Downtown Core and Waterfront Project Area

C. Brownfields Development Program

This program is a joint initiative of the Province of Ontario and the Town of Fort Frances. It is designed to encourage and promote brownfields redevelopment. The program is designed to mitigate the costs of developing on brownfields by providing financial incentives to clean them up and replace them with productive economic land uses, thereby improving both economic opportunities and environmental conditions in the town.

Applies to the: Resource Development Project Area
 Mid-Town Industrial Project Area
 Downtown Core and Waterfront Project Area

D. Façade Loan Program

This program aims to improve upon the appearance of numerous commercial properties throughout the Town of Fort Frances. It is understood that smaller scale commercial activities contribute greatly to the economic vitality and health of the commercial sector within the town. This program builds upon these successes, resulting in long lasting physical improvements to the assets of commercial property owners/authorized tenants, and to bring about aesthetic improvements to the commercial areas.

Applies to the: Resource Development Project Area
 Mid-Town Industrial Project Area
 Downtown Core and Waterfront Project Area

Incentives for all listed programs will be awarded either through grants or in kind services. No tax rebates or in kind service agreements amounts will exceed the new generated tax revenue amounts resulting from the property improvements. Some programs may be offered in conjunction with external entities such as the Province of Ontario or the RRFDC.

“In-Kind” services include but are not limited to contributions of staff, equipment or other services, such as

- Tipping Fees
- Grade Set Fee
- Fees for services connect
- Driveway Crossing approach/entrance fees
- Printing of Maps as may be required
- Application Fees for
 - Zoning Amendment
 - Official Plan Amendment
 - Minor Variance
 - Consent
 - Site Plan Control
 - Subdivision Agreement
 - Agreements such as
 - Easement
 - Encroachment
 - Other as may be required
- Building Permit Fees
- Sign Fees
- Plumbing Permit Fee
- Photocopies
- Business Licenses – as may be required for contractors, etc.
- Land Purchases at or below market value