



# **District of New Hazelton: Official Community Plan**

**Bylaw No. 388, 2025**



**DISTRICT OF NEW HAZELTON**

**OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN**

---

A bylaw to guide long-term vision and strategic land use decisions within the District of New Hazelton  
pursuant to Part 26 of the *Local Government Act*

---

**WHEREAS** the Council of the District of New Hazelton wishes to adopt a new Official Community Plan pursuant to section 876 of Part 26 of the *Local Government Act*.

**NOW THEREFORE** the Council of the District of New Hazelton in open meeting assembled enacts as follows:

1. This bylaw may be cited for all purposes as the District of New Hazelton Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 388, 2025.
2. The District of New Hazelton Official Community Plan Schedule “B” attached to and hereby forms part of this bylaw.
3. District of New Hazelton Bylaw No. 322, 2016 cited as District of New Hazelton Official Community Plan Bylaw and any amendments are hereby repealed.

READ A FIRST TIME this 8th day of September, 2025

READ A SECOND TIME this 8th day of September, 2025

PUBLIC HEARING HELD pursuant to section 890 of the Local Government Act this 2nd day of February, 2026.

READ A THIRD TIME this 2nd day of February, 2026

ADOPTED THIS 2nd day of February, 2026

---

Gail Lowry

Mayor

---

Brooke White

Corporate Officer

# Table of Contents

<b>1.0</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION AND LOCAL CONTEXT</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	What is the Official Community Plan?	1
1.2	The Planning Process	3
1.3	History of the District New Hazelton	9
1.4	Background Information	12
1.5	Community Partnerships	18
<b>2.0</b>	<b>VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES</b>	<b>21</b>
2.1	Community Vision	21
2.2	Guiding Principles	22
<b>3.0</b>	<b>COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>25</b>
3.1	Economy and Economic Development	25
3.2	Climate Resilience and Emissions Reduction	28
3.3	Agriculture and Food Security	30
3.4	Health and Quality of Life	32
3.5	Housing	34
3.6	Arts and Culture	36
3.7	Infrastructure and Utilities	37
3.8	Environment	40
3.9	Leisure, Recreation & Educational Facilities	42
3.10	Sense of Community	46
<b>4.0</b>	<b>LAND USE DESIGNATIONS</b>	<b>49</b>
4.1	General Policies	49
4.2	General Residential	50
4.3	Rural Residential	52
4.4	Commercial	53
4.5	Community Use	54
4.6	Industrial	55
4.7	Rural Resource	57
<b>5.0</b>	<b>IMPLEMENTATION</b>	<b>59</b>

# 1.0 INTRODUCTION AND LOCAL CONTEXT

## 1.1 What is the Official Community Plan?

An Official Community Plan (OCP) is the highest-order document for a local government and helps to guide future planning and decision-making within the community. The development of an OCP is governed by the *Local Government Act*, which describes an OCP as “a statement of objectives and policies to guide decisions on planning and land-use management, within the area covered by the plan, respecting the purposes of local government.” (*Local Government Act* S.471.1).

Section 473 of the *Local Government Act* outlines specific requirements for OCPs, including:

- Statements and map designations for the area covered by the plan respecting the following:
  - the approximate location, amount, type and density of residential development required to meet anticipated housing needs over a period of at least 20 years;
  - the approximate location, amount and type of present and proposed commercial, industrial, institutional, agricultural, recreational and public utility land uses;
  - the approximate location and area of sand and gravel deposits that are suitable for future sand and gravel extraction;
  - restrictions on the use of land that is subject to hazardous conditions or that is environmentally sensitive to development;
  - the approximate location and phasing of any major road, sewer and water systems;
  - the approximate location and type of present and proposed public facilities, including schools, parks and waste treatment and disposal sites;
  - other matters that may, in respect of any plan, be required or authorized by the minister.
- Housing policies of the local government respecting affordable housing, rental housing and special needs housing.
- Targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the area covered by the plan, and policies and actions of the local government proposed with respect to achieving those targets.
- The consideration of policy guidelines regarding the process of developing and adopting official community plans.
- The consideration of provincial policy guidelines related to transit-oriented areas.

An OCP provides a framework to guide the future vision for the community and can address:

- Character of existing and proposed land use and development;
- Infrastructure servicing requirements;
- Economic, environmental, physical design and development and social considerations;
- Quality of life, health and well-being considerations;
- Future growth and housing needs;
- Community energy auditing and management;
- Transportation networks and strategies;
- Community development; and
- Provisions of amenities and services.

An effective OCP results in:

- A level of certainty to residents and landowners regarding the location and nature of land use and development in the community;
- A framework to guide District Council, staff, businesses and citizens in strategic decision-making and implementation of long-term goals;
- A mechanism to advance collaboration and reconciliation with local First Nations and surrounding local governments;
- A tool to advocate senior levels of government for improved services and amenities; and
- A roadmap to guide zoning and subsequent implementation measures.

An OCP is a living document and should be reviewed periodically to ensure alignment with new trends within society and changing circumstances within the planning area boundaries. As such, following careful consideration by Council, policies and land use designations in an OCP may be revised through adoption of an amending bylaw following the provisions outlined within the *Local Government Act*. While OCPs were typically reviewed every 5-10 years, recent legislative requirements outlined by the Province now require that OCPs are reviewed every 5 years to ensure alignment with the most recent housing needs reporting.

Once an OCP is adopted as a bylaw, the Community Plan becomes “official”, and all future land use decisions made by Council must be consistent with the objectives and policies outlined in the Plan.



## 1.2 The Planning Process

The planning process for updating the OCP involved several key milestones that ensured thorough community involvement and strategic decision-making. These milestones included:



**Initial Staff Review:** The process began with a detailed review by the District staff to identify the primary goals and objectives that needed addressing in the updated OCP.

**Housing Needs Report:** To meet both legislative requirements and gain a comprehensive understanding of current trends, demographic changes, and housing needs in a 5- and 20-year period, the District finalized an interim Housing Needs Report (HNR) at the end of 2024.

**Community Engagement:** To gain community feedback and introduce the planning process, the District conducted community engagement in May 2025. This included a survey for New Hazelton residents, a business survey, stakeholder meetings (including neighboring municipalities, businesses, and community organizations and service providers), and an open house.

**Drafting the OCP:** Based on the feedback from stakeholders and the data collected, a preliminary draft of the OCP was created, outlining proposed policies and land use designations.

**Revisions and Refinement:** The draft OCP was revised and refined based on the input from District Staff and Council, ensuring that all concerns and suggestions were adequately addressed.

**Final Council Review:** The revised OCP was presented to the District Council for final review and approval.

**Adoption and Implementation:** Upon Council's approval, the OCP was adopted as a bylaw, becoming the official guiding document for all future land use decisions.

## 1.2.1 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The District of New Hazelton initiated the OCP process in the summer 2024. Public insight into the Plan was sought through a variety of engagement methods, including:

### *Community Survey*

A survey was made available from the end of November 2024 through January 24, 2025. The survey, promoted via social media, the project webpage, print media, and email, received 44 responses.

### *Farmer's Market Booth*

A booth was set-up at the Hazelton Farmer's Market on Sunday, May 25, 2025, from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm. Residents were informed on the OCP planning process and invited to share their concerns, comments, and suggestions through one-on-one conversations.



### *Community Open House*

A series of panels seeking input on a variety of topics was set up in the Erwin Stege Community Centre from 5:00 – 8:00 pm on Tuesday, May 27, 2025. Project Team members were available to help guide residents through the panels and provide background context when needed. Residents were provided pens and Post-it notes and encouraged to provide comments directly on the panels.

### *School Engagement Sessions*

Engaging the community's youth was a priority for the District, especially since only a single resident under the age of 30 responded to the community survey. To seek input from this age cohort, three in-person engagement sessions were conducted at local schools:

- New Hazelton Elementary School
  - Grades 5-6 class
  - Grades 6-7 class
- Hazelton Secondary School
  - Grade 9 class



Youth were asked to identify what they liked about the community and what they would improve.



## ***Business Survey***

Businesses operating in New Hazelton were provided with an online survey via email. The survey was designed to obtain insight into the opportunities and challenges facing business owners in the District. The survey remained open from May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025, through June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025, and 8 responses were received.

## ***Local First Nations***

An informational poster and background information on the OCP process was sent to local First Nations. The intent of this correspondence was to inform the communities on the OCP project and seek input on how each Nation would like to be involved in the process. No responses were received.

## ***Stakeholder interviews***

Interviews with various stakeholders were conducted in-person and virtually throughout the planning process. These stakeholders included various community groups, health care providers, District staff, recreation groups, surrounding local government, seniors housing facilities, among others.

Key themes from this community engagement are summarized in Section 1.2.2.





## 1.2.2 KEY THEMES

The following priorities emerged as common themes among residents and stakeholders throughout the engagement activities.

### *Housing*

The need for new and affordable housing emerged as a top priority for several community members. Housing issues were expressed as a variety of needs, including:

- **Supportive Senior's Housing** – The Roche View Lodge is currently full and has a wait list of 9 individuals. While the community currently has 6 assisted living units, long-term care typically includes a stay at the Wrinch Memorial Hospital or a move to Smithers or Terrace. There is a desire to provide better local options to allow residents to age in place;
- **Local Workforce** – Several business owners and community service providers indicated that a lack of rental housing is a barrier to attracting and retaining workers;
- **Emergency Shelter** – While there is a women's shelter locally, there is no emergency shelter available to the community at large;
- **Derelict Buildings** – There are a number of abandoned/derelict buildings in the community which could help to address identified housing needs. Stakeholders and residents suggested the District explore opportunities to incentivize developers and property owners to undertake renovations to these buildings;
- **Diversity in Housing Typology** – Although single-family housing is typically the most desired housing form in the area, several residents and stakeholders mentioned the need for more diverse housing forms. While this includes duplexes, and other multi-unit housing, many residents also mentioned tiny homes and mobile homes as potential options.

### *Increased Services and Amenities*

Residents and business owners emphasized the need for more retail services and recreational amenities in the District. They highlighted the importance of increasing business opportunities and enhancing community vibrancy. Additional services could attract new businesses, create jobs, and improve the overall quality of life. Enhancing local services would also contribute to a more dynamic community atmosphere, making the District a more desirable place to live and work.

## *A Collaborative Approach*

A common theme expressed by stakeholders and residents was the need to take a collaborative approach among surrounding local governments and First Nations in addressing shared priorities. Topic areas such as housing, recreational facilities, social supports, emergency services, environmental protection, food security, among others, are priorities with the residents of the District of New Hazelton, Village of Hazelton, Regional District of Kitimat Stikine and neighbouring First Nations. Rather than each community tackling these issues in isolation, there is a sentiment among locals that more could be achieved locally through pooling resources. The development of the Upper Skeena Recreation Centre was identified as an example of what could be accomplished through local communities working together towards a shared vision.

While the Upper Skeena Recreation Centre was recognized by, it is to note that New Hazelton has other partnerships with the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine, the Village of Hazelton, and other neighbouring communities for shared services. These include transit, library, economic development, tourism, water systems, road rescue, fire department and mutual aid, essential, and hospital services.

## *Highway 16 Impacts*

While Highway 16 provides opportunities through increased traffic and efficient access to markets, residents and stakeholders indicated that having a highway as the main thoroughfare also comes with some negative impacts, including:

- **Safety** – residents and stakeholders indicated that vehicles often travel through town at high speeds, resulting in safety concerns for pedestrians; and
- **Reduced access to commercial businesses** – there is no on-street parking along Highway 16. Residents indicated that this impacts access to commercial businesses around the commercial core of the District.

## *Youth Activities*

Students expressed they often have a hard time finding areas or places to hang out safely to have a fun time with friends. They identified a need for youth-friendly businesses and local organizations that can accommodate youth in the community. Common amenities identified by the youth include indoor recreation facilities (mini golf, bowling, weightlifting facilities, indoor pool), bike pump track, and expanded skatepark. It is noted that a bike track and skatepark expansion have recently been undertaken on the Gitanmaax reserve lands and it may not make sense to duplicate these efforts. As well, the Upper Skeena Recreation Centre has a wide variety of programming for youth, including a fitness centre with weight lifting. This highlights the benefits in undertaking a collaborative, regional approach to recreational services and amenities.

## ***Food Security***

Many residents and community groups identified a need for access to locally grown, nutritional food and ongoing support of food security programming. Recommendations provided for the District outlined include:

- Continue to support the Hazelton Farmers' Market (including exploring a larger venue and providing power);
- Establish an indoor space for the Farmers' Market so it could be held year-round;
- Establish a community garden;
- Explore composting systems in collaboration with local farms;
- Support food sustainability initiatives throughout the Hazeltons; and
- Support the development of the Hazelton's livestock operations.

## ***Active Transportation***

While residents indicated that the local trail systems were one of New Hazelton's strengths, many also mentioned how they would like to see improvements to the trail networks and bike paths around the community. Comments included increasing the number of local trails, increasing accessibility, and improving their safety.

## ***Emergency Preparedness***

Health providers and community members mentioned the importance of emergency preparedness in the community with the increased wildfire occurrence and drought conditions. Northern Health mentioned the importance of a partnership to undertake an emergency plan that involves the Wrinch Memorial Hospital.

## ***Tourism***

Residents and business owners often discussed the need for more tourism opportunities. They noted that greater awareness of existing attractions within the District and surrounding areas is important. Suggestions included enhancing signage before entering the District and improving the curb appeal of the main street through public art initiatives.

## ***Mental Health and Substance Use Services***

Both residents and community services have highlighted the need for enhanced community health resources to support youth and community members. Beyond the emergency shelters referenced earlier, insufficient mental health services were perceived as a strain on the capacity and resources of Wrinch Memorial Hospital. There is an on-going initiative to establish a mental health facility in Terrace, which the District supports and will advocate for.

These insights were reviewed and incorporated into the OCP where appropriate.

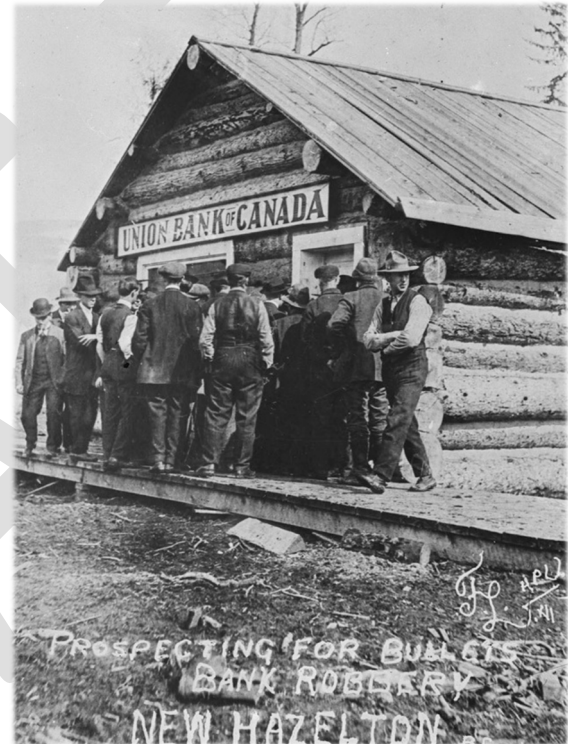
## 1.3 History of the District New Hazelton

New Hazelton's story begins with the construction of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, which played a pivotal role in shaping the community's identity and future. The railroad was built on the south side of the Bulkley River, prompting the establishment of both South Hazelton and New Hazelton. During construction, the location of the area's railway terminal was fiercely debated. Railway agents advocated for South Hazelton, anticipating profit from land sales, while merchants and miners from New Hazelton lobbied for their already established townsite. Ultimately, New Hazelton was selected as the terminal location, offering superior grades for transporting goods and a strategic site for loading ore. The New Hazelton section of the line was constructed between 1911 and 1912, turning the town into a major supply center and setting the stage for decades of growth. The inaugural passenger service arrived on September 6, 1914, affirming New Hazelton's role as a thriving hub in Northwest BC.

Amidst this rapid development, New Hazelton gained notoriety for two dramatic events: the Union Bank of Canada robberies in 1913 and 1914. The first occurred in November 1913, with masked thieves escaping with \$19,400. The second, on April 7, 1914, was similarly bold. Both robberies, followed by dramatic pursuits and eventual justice, left lasting marks on the community, reflecting the shifting social landscape of a town propelled by railway prosperity.

In response to growing needs for accessibility, Robert Kelly commissioned the Craddock Bridge over the Bulkley River in 1913. Rebuilt in 1932 and renamed the Hagwilget Bridge, it spans 262 feet above the river, ranking among North America's highest suspension bridges at the time. This bridge was vital to New Hazelton, providing a direct connection to Hazelton and essential hospital services. By 1953, it replaced the ferry service, further solidifying New Hazelton's importance as a regional link.

Incorporated in December 1980 after several years as an Improvement District, New Hazelton underwent significant transformations, including the establishment of a water treatment plant, wastewater lagoon, new storefronts, financial institutions, parks, outdoor fitness equipment, a playground, seniors housing, a community center, hiking trails, a vibrant art gallery, and a Visitor Center and gift shop. The Mayor and Council, seven members strong, oversee governance and policy, drawing on their extensive experience and long-standing service. Council and staff collaborate with the Village of Hazelton and the Regional District of Kitimat Stikine on regional initiatives—



"Prospecting for bullets, Bank Robbery", Apr. 7, 1914.  
Credit: Jack R. Wrathall, Library and Archives Canada, PA-095740. Copyright: Expired.



transportation, recreation, library, fire protection, road rescue, visitor services, economic development, and more.

The District of New Hazelton and its surroundings have been home to the Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en since time immemorial. The trade of salmon and other natural resources formed the backbone of these Nations' economies, with goods traded through "grease trails" named for the oil from oolichan fish found in local rivers. Gitksan cultural heritage is celebrated in the reconstructed Ksan village north of New Hazelton. The Hagwilget community, of Wet'suwet'en descent, sits directly north, partnering with New Hazelton for water services and exploring mutual aid agreements in fire protection and training. An exhibit highlighting and celebrating both the Pioneer and First Nations history and culture can be found at the Visitors Center. Additional details on surrounding First Nations can be found in Section 1.5.1.

The neighboring village of Hazelton was founded in 1866 by European settlers, with the Hudson Bay Company running the Ackwilgate fur trading post for two years. Hazelton hosted miners during the Omineca Gold Rush (1870-71), and by 1880, the Hudson Bay Company expanded with warehouses in town. By 1888, Hazelton boasted a postmaster, police officer, and jail. Between 1890 and 1915, Hazelton was the largest community in Northwest BC, and the early 1900s brought prosperity. However, the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway's arrival on the opposite side of the river challenged Hazelton's prominence.

Today, New Hazelton offers residents and visitors breathtaking views of the Roche de Boule Mountain range and the commanding peak of Stekyoden. Surrounded by lakes, rivers, and endless opportunities for adventure, New Hazelton and the greater Hazeltons remain a haven for outdoor enthusiasts and those seeking the peace and beauty of life beyond larger urban centres.



"Hazelton to Telkwa", 1911.

Credit: Jack R. Wrathall, Library and Archives Canada, PA-096129. Copyright: Expired.



### 1.3.1 COMMUNITY CONTEXT

#### *The Hazeltons – Upper Skeena*

The Hazeltons officially consist of ten communities in Northwest BC, on or near Highway 16. The communities, a mixture of municipalities, unincorporated settlements and First Nation villages, are flanked by Terrace in the southwest and Smithers in the southeast.

The communities include New Hazelton (population: 602), Hazelton (population: 270), South Hazelton (population: 300), Kispiox Village (population: 536), Kispiox Valley, Sik-E-Dakh (population: 222), Gitanmaax (population: 627), Hagwilget (population: 238) and Two Mile (population: 650). Several communities further west along Highway 16 are also often grouped with the Hazeltons. These include Gitsegukla (population: 448), Gitwangak (population: 500), Kitwanga (population: 200) and Gitanyow (population: 383). To the southeast, the Suskwa Valley and Witset (population: 646) are also commonly grouped with the Hazeltons.

Most of the communities have a few small stores and businesses, but New Hazelton is the service hub, with greater accommodation, retail and dining options.



## 1.4 Background Information

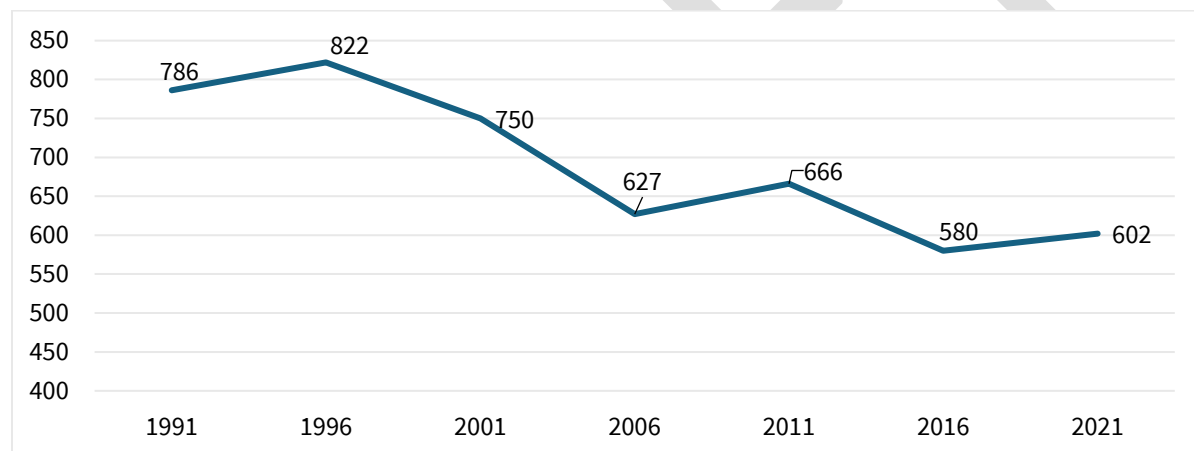
This section highlights key background information from the District of New Hazelton. This includes historic and current population and demographic trends, 5- and 20-year housing needs as identified from the interim Housing Needs Report (2024), and existing community infrastructure.

### 1.4.1 POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

#### *Historic Population*

The District of New Hazelton's population as per the 2021 Census data is 602. In the last 30 years, from the date of the most recent Census, the District's population has declined by 23% (184). Between 1996 and 2006, the District experienced a significant decline of 25%. Between 2006 and 2021 the rate of population declined by 4% (25 people).

*Figure 1: Historic Population*



Source: Statistics Canada Census Program, Census Profiles 1991, 1996, 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016, 2021

#### *Population Projections*

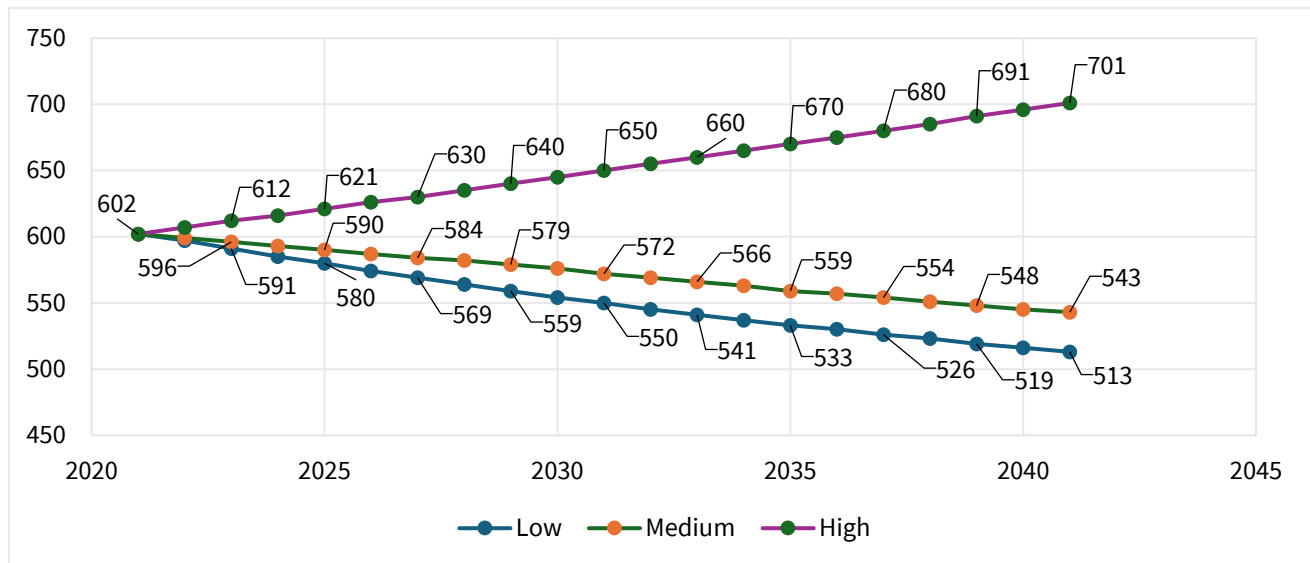
Future population growth in the District of New Hazelton will be influenced by the availability of government services, particularly healthcare and education, and the success of economic development initiatives. Population projections for the District of New Hazelton have been made based on three scenarios:

**Low:** The low growth rate was calculated by using the historic census data of the District of New Hazelton from 2001-2021 which is -0.98% per year on average.

**Medium:** The medium population growth scenario is based on the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine's growth rate from 2001-2021 which is -0.37% per year on average.

**High:** BC Stats projects an annual population growth rate of 0.84% from 2021 to 2041, representing the most optimistic scenario. Assuming the average household size identified in the 2021 Census remains consistent at 2.3 persons per household, this projection aligns closely with the anticipated 20-year housing requirement of an additional 202 units.

*Source: 1: Population Projections*



Source: BC Statistics Population Projections and Statistics Canada Census 2021

## Age Profile

The age profile of the District of New Hazelton is generally comparable to that of the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine (RDKS) and British Columbia (BC) more broadly. The District has the youngest median age of the three jurisdictions at 41.2 years. Notably, New Hazelton has a 0-14 year-old population of 19.8%, the highest among the three. Additionally, 19.8% of the District's population is also 65 years or older, 2.6% higher than RDKS. Table 1 outlines the age profiles for New Hazelton, the RDKS, and BC.

*Table 1: Age Profile*

Age Group	DNH	RDKS	BC
0-14 years old	20%	18%	14%
15-24 years old	11%	11%	11%
25-44 years old	23%	26%	27%
45-64 years old	27%	28%	27%
65+ years old	20%	17%	20%
Total population	602	37,790	5,000,880
Median age	41.2	44.8	42.8

Source: Statistics Canada Census Program, Census Profile, 2021



## Changing Demographics

While the overall population of New Hazelton has been in decline over the past few decades, the age profile reveals a community experiencing both youthful potential and aging trends. This may indicate a need for continued investment in schools, childcare, and youth programs, while also highlighting growing demand for health care services and senior housing to support the aging population. These demographic shifts highlight the importance of strategic planning to meet the needs of both younger and older residents, while also creating opportunities to retain and attract working-age individuals essential to the community's long-term sustainability.

### 1.4.2 HOUSING NEEDS

Recent amendments to the *Local Government Act* now require municipalities to incorporate the most recent Housing Needs Reports (HNRs) when preparing or amending OCPs. Sections 585.1 to 585.41 of the *Act* set out detailed requirements regarding the content, publication, update frequency, and regulatory framework of HNRs. These amendments require that HNRs identify the total number of housing units required to meet projected housing needs over a 20-year period. Municipalities must ensure that their OCPs and Zoning Bylaws can accommodate the identified housing need. OCPs must also include housing policies that address each class of housing need identified in the most recent HNR. For the District of New Hazelton, these housing classes include extreme core housing need; homelessness; suppressed households; anticipated household growth; minimum 3% rental vacancy rate; and local demand.

It should be noted that the Province requires that local governments utilize a standard methodology in determining the 5-year and 20-year housing needs. Local governments were provided with the Housing Assessment Resource Tool (HART) to assist them in calculating housing needs. Table 2 includes a summary of the housing need for 2041 as outlined in the 2024 interim Housing Needs Report and as required by the Province.



*Table 2 – Summary of Housing Need (2021 – 2041)*

Component	Number of New Units Needed	
	5-Year Need	20-Year Need
<b>A: Extreme Core Housing Need</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>14</b>
<i>Owned Units</i>	0	n/a
<i>Rented Units</i>	4	n/a
<b>B: Persons Experiencing Homelessness</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>C: Suppressed Household Formation</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>52</b>
<i>Owned Units</i>	13	n/a
<i>Rented Units</i>	0	n/a
<b>D: Anticipated Growth</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>45</b>
<i>Owned Units</i>	16	n/a
<i>Rented Units</i>	8	n/a
<b>E: Rental Vacancy Rate Adjustment</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>F: Additional Local Demand</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>Total Units Needed</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>202</b>
<i>Owned Units</i>	50	
<i>Rented Units</i>	15	

Source: Housing Assessment Resource Tool (HART), 2024

According to the Province's HART, the District must plan for 65 new housing units over the next 5-years and 202 new housing units over the next 20-years. Of the 65 housing units required over the next 5-years, 15 should be rental units.

District Council and staff feel the province's projections do not accurately reflect the local context of New Hazelton, especially considering the sustained population decline being experienced in the community. While the District's OCP and Zoning Bylaw have been updated to accommodate the projected 202 dwelling units over the next 20-years as outlined by the Province, the District does have concerns in meeting this projected demand as it relates to:

- **Land Availability** - The majority of lands surrounding the community's existing infrastructure servicing area are currently under Provincial Crown ownership. While there are private and municipal owned lands beyond these Crown lands, it is not efficient from a planning, cost, sustainability or infrastructure servicing perspective to 'leapfrog' readily developable lands to develop lands beyond. The District aims to work with the Province of BC and relevant First Nations regarding the acquisition of Crown lands within the District to help ensure an efficient and phased approach to future developments.
- **Infrastructure servicing** - While a high-level review indicates that the water and sanitary systems appear to have residual capacity in their original design to meet the housing and population demands outlined in the interim HNR, future assessments are needed to more clearly outline this capacity. Specifically, further investigations are needed to assess the

residual capacity of the sanitary conveyance system, as well as determine the residual capacity of surface water license and fire flow capacity, depending on development areas.

The District intends to work with the Province in addressing the concerns it has in accommodating the required housing needs projections.

### 1.4.3 EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

#### *Water*

The District operates a community water system which services New Hazelton and the community of Hagwilget IR1. The distribution system consists of approximately 15km of watermain, with service boundaries along Young Street to the west, 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the north, Oliver Street to the east, and 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the south. There is a pressure-reducing valve (PRV) station at Pugsley Street and 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue which controls the pressure zone in the northwest area of the District.

Surface water from Station Creek flows by gravity into the water treatment facility; in larger storm events where turbidity is anticipated to exceed acceptable treatment parameters, the surface water flows into an impoundment pond for the sediment to settle before flowing into the treatment plant. The treatment process in the facility consists of slow sand filters and a chlorine contact tank. The treated water then travels to the 1600m<sup>3</sup> steel reservoir for storage prior to flowing by gravity into the distribution system.

A water system assessment of the existing and residual capacity in the distribution system was recently completed. Other features of the water system, such as the overall watershed management, source water quality and quantity, treatment capacity, and storage capacity were not reviewed as part of the assessment. With development anticipated, an overall review of the distribution and treatment capacity of the water system is recommended, along with a review of the current water license.

Parcels outside of the community water system network are serviced through individual on-site water systems with groundwater sources. Should future development be concentrated in these areas, a review to potentially connect these “outlying” areas to the community water system is recommended, depending on findings from the assessment of the existing water system.

#### *Sanitary*

The District operates a wastewater treatment facility consisting of an aerated lagoon with a discharge pipe to an overland treatment area. One of two lift stations in the community is located at Bowser Street and 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue, which collects flow from the northeast portions of community and pumps the flow into a manhole at Bowser Street, just south of Highway 16. The other lift station at Pugsley Street and 9<sup>th</sup> Avenues collects flow from the northeast portions of the community, including the sanitary dump at the Hazeltons’ Visitor Centre, and pumps flow into a manhole at Pugsley Street and 11<sup>th</sup> Avenues. These two manholes, along with the other service connections in the rest of the community flow by gravity into the aerated lagoon. The service area for the community wastewater system is bounded by the same area as the community water system described above.

A condition assessment of the facility was completed in 2018, with no significant issues noted. There were several recommended next steps, with the District choosing to desludge the lagoon to maintain operation. The lagoon desludging has not been completed to date due to lack of funding. A recent line assessment of the sewer collection system, including the lift station capacities, has recently been reviewed, with work continuing over 2025-2026. With development anticipated, an overall review of the conveyance and treatment capacity of the wastewater system is recommended.

Parcels outside of the community wastewater system network are on individual on-site wastewater systems and septic systems. Should development be concentrated in these areas, a review to potentially connect these “outlying” areas to the community wastewater system is recommended, depending on findings from the assessment of the existing wastewater system.

## ***Storm***

The District has storm pipes, culverts, and ditches throughout the community to manage runoff from impervious areas (roads, structures, etc.) and creek flows from Station and Waterfall Creeks. The creek flows are sourced from the Station Creek watershed, while being primarily sourced from Stegyoden Peak to the south of New Hazelton. A majority of these ditches are within boulevards in the road rights-of-way, with curb and gutter only along the Highway 16 roadway.

No localized flooding issues have been noted, and no community-wide stormwater management plan has been assembled. With densification often increasing impervious surfaces, resulting in increased runoff, the District is encouraged to review on-site stormwater management requirements while considering environmental impacts, should there be discharges to Station and Waterfall Creeks.

## ***Transportation***

### **Roads**

Most District roads are paved, with sidewalks, curbs and gutters along both sides of the road along Highway 16. There is a short section of sidewalk with curb and gutter along Laurier Street to support the pedestrian access to the Lookout/Waterfall Trail, beginning at Laurier Street and 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue. There are a few gravel roads which the District maintains, including Vancouver, College, and Templeman Streets, as well as portions of May Street, Pugsley Street N, 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue E.

### **Public Transit**

New Hazelton is serviced by several BC Transit bus routes connecting them to portions of the surrounding area. These include:

**Route 31 – Gitsegukla:** Route services Kispiox to Gitsegukla. Stops between the two terminus stops include Glen Vowell, the Village of Hazelton, the Wrinch Memorial Hospital, Hagwilget, New Hazelton, and South Hazelton.

**Route 32 – West Connector:** Route services Hazelton to Gitwangak. Stops between the two terminus stops include New Hazelton, South Hazelton, and Gitsegukla.



**Route 163 – Hazeltons/Smithers:** Route services between Kispiox and Smithers. Stops between the two terminus stops include Hazelton, the Wrinch Memorial Hospital, Two Mile, Hagwilget, New Hazelton, and Witset First Nation.

**Route 164 – Hazeltons/Terrace:** Route services between Kispiox and Terrace. Stop between the two terminus stations include Hazelton, the Wrinch Memorial Hospital, Two Mile, Hagwilget, New Hazelton, South Hazelton, Gitsegukla, Gitwangak, Gitaus Firehall, Gossen subdivision, Thornhill, and the Mills Memorial Hospital.

### **Railway**

New Hazelton has a train stop on the Canadian National Railway, which provides passenger services through Via Rail Canada. Trains operate several times a week, traveling east to Prince Rupert and west to Jasper, Alberta.

### **Airports**

New Hazelton does not have an airport; the nearest airports are located in Smithers and Terrace.

**Smithers Regional Airport (YYD):** 65km southeast of New Hazelton. This airport charts Air Canada and Central Mountain Air flights directly to and from Vancouver.

**Northwest Regional Airport (YXT):** 140km west of New Hazelton. The airport charts flights from Air Canada, Westjet, and Central Mountain Air directly to and from Vancouver, Prince George and Calgary.

### ***Solid Waste***

The District of New Hazelton completes garbage and recycling pickup every week, with alternating weeks for garbage and recycling. The waste is then transported and disposed of at the RDKS Hazelton Waste Management Facility. There is a bottle return and household recycling depot in New Hazelton at Fielding Street and 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

### ***Power & Telecommunications***

BC Hydro supplies electricity across the District and offers the Power Smart program. Currently, there are no natural gas providers operating in New Hazelton. TELUS, Rogers, and Citywest deliver telecommunications services within the community.

## **1.5 Community Partnerships**

Community engagement undertaken as part of the development of this OCP revealed a strong desire among local residents to take a collaborative approach among local governments and First Nations in addressing shared priorities and initiatives. Through the lens of 'we are stronger together', several locals indicated that more could be accomplished through pooling resources as opposed to working in isolation. Areas identified for potential collaboration include housing, recreational facilities, social supports, emergency services, environmental protection, alternative energy sources, and food

security. The District will continue to engage the Village of Hazelton, RDKS and neighbouring First Nations in these endeavours.

### 1.5.1 INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

The District of New Hazelton is near the boundary of both the Gitxsan and Wet'suwet'en Nations.

The Gitxsan are comprised of six communities: Gitanmaax, Anspayaxw (Kispiox), Sik-e-Dakh (Glen Vowell), Gitanyow, Gitsegukla, and Gitwangak. New Hazelton is situated in the southern portions of the Gitxsan territory, which encompasses an area of approximately 30,000 km<sup>2</sup>.

The Wet'suwet'en traditional territory encompasses an area approximately 21,000 km<sup>2</sup> in size and is comprised of six contemporary First Nations communities: Wet'suwet'en (Broman Lake) Ts'il Kaz Koh (Burns Lake), Hagwilget, Nee-Tahi-Buhn, Skin Tyee, and Witset (Moricetown). The District shares its border with the Hagwilget Village Council to the north.

In addition to the *Indian Act* elected Bands and Councils, both the Gitxsan and Wet'suwet'en follow a traditional governance structure based on clans, which are further subdivided into house groups. Each house group is led by a Chief and several Wing Chiefs. Each house has authority over their respective territories. Membership in the hereditary governance model is based on genealogy, which can differ from memberships as identified by the elected *Indian Act* Nations.

The 2021 census reports that 52% (325) of New Hazelton's population identifies as Indigenous, indicating that many members of the surrounding First Nations have come to live in the District. It is also important to note that while the scope of the District's OCP and Zoning Bylaw do not apply to nearby reserve lands, the District does supply water to Hagwilget under a water servicing agreement. Many residents of neighbouring reserve lands also utilize various services provided within the District. For these reasons, it is important to provide opportunities to seek input from neighbouring First Nations.

### 1.5.2 LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

The District of New Hazelton has a strong and long-standing relationship with both the Village of Hazelton and the RDKS. Fostered through a shared commitment to mutual support and collaboration, these three communities, though distinct in governance, work closely together on various initiatives that benefit their residents.

New Hazelton, the Village of Hazelton and the RDKS recognize the importance of pooling resources and efforts to address common challenges and opportunities. Their cooperative approach extends to areas such as infrastructure development, emergency services and preparedness, environmental conservation, tourism, economic development, library services, transit, workforce retention, and cultural preservation. This partnership is grounded in the belief that by supporting each other's governance, they can achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness in serving their populations.

The three governments collaborate through joint planning sessions, community forums, and intergovernmental meetings to ensure that their policies and projects are aligned. This level of coordination helps to avoid duplication of services and promotes a unified vision for the region's future. Together, they strive to create thriving, resilient communities that honour their rich heritage while embracing sustainable growth.

DRAFT

## 2.0 VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

### 2.1 Community Vision

*The people of New Hazelton are proud of their community and its natural setting. New Hazelton's friendly people, diversity of culture, history, character, working class roots and small town atmosphere make it very attractive for people to visit and call home. New Hazelton is a great place for families, children, seniors and others who appreciate a quiet, less complicated lifestyle with the amenities of a complete, yet sustainable community.*

*New Hazelton is a small rural town surrounded by natural forests and water. The community is a safe, inviting place to live, linked to surrounding communities by highways and rail.*

*The community creates shared sustainable economic development through a resilient economy. The existence of a variety of housing types in conjunction with affordable housing has attracted a wide variety of people. New Hazelton has a friendly development environment, which respects the character and sense of place of the community.*

*New Hazelton has strong relationships, and works in collaboration with local First Nations, the Village of Hazelton and the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine on shared priorities and goals.*



## 2.2 Guiding Principles

The OCP process identified important community values and guiding principles. Throughout the engagement process residents, landowners and stakeholders consistently expressed these foundational values. These values provide insight into those aspects of the community that should be maintained and enhanced as growth and development occurs. The District of New Hazelton guiding principles include:

### ***New Hazelton's "Thriveability"***

Ensure a thriving community through supporting the provision of a range of health care, social, educational, recreational, and cultural services and amenities that meet the current and future needs of the community.

### ***Collaboration with Surrounding Communities***

Collaboration with surrounding communities, including local First Nations, the Village of Hazelton, and the RDKS, is essential for fostering a cohesive and thriving region. By leveraging diverse perspectives and resources, New Hazelton can address shared challenges and opportunities more effectively. These partnerships can enhance infrastructure, social services, and joint marketing efforts, leading to sustainable growth and a stronger collective voice in advocating for provincial and federal support.

### ***Sustainability***

New Hazelton aims to meet current needs while ensuring future generations can do the same. Sustainability in New Hazelton relies on community involvement and balancing economic, social, environmental, and cultural well-being now and in the future.

### ***Environment Stewardship***

The surrounding natural resources and beauty are a main reason people choose to live in New Hazelton. The District will take steps to ensure the protection and enhancement of these natural resources through active environmental stewardship.



### ***Economic Diversification***

The District will support the development of a healthy, diversified, sustainable economy that attracts businesses and acts as a regional economic hub.

### ***Improved Aesthetic***

The District will encourage the revitalization and redevelopment of the downtown core and support continuous improvement of the community's overall visual appearance.

### ***Arts and Culture***

New Hazelton will strive to preserve and enhance the community's cultural identity. The District acknowledges and actively supports local societies and volunteer organizations that aim to keep residents engaged in community arts and culture. The District also recognizes the breadth of talented, local artists. The OCP supports New Hazelton's cultural heritage and encourages opportunities to strengthen the presence of arts in the community.

### ***Reconciliation***

New Hazelton will continue to advance on-going reconciliation efforts with neighbouring First Nations communities.

### ***Recreation and Leisure***

Through engagement, residents highlighted the important role sports and recreation play in bringing local communities together. The District recognizes the importance of such facilities and will continue to support recreational opportunities that reflect the diverse needs of residents across all life stages and abilities.

### ***Preserving New Hazelton's Character***

New Hazelton is defined by its stunning, natural surroundings and is shaped by its small-town charm and rich cultural heritage. New Hazelton will continue to preserve and enhance its character by encouraging development and design that reflects and strengthens the community's small town character and by supporting new development in alignment with the vision and direction of the OCP.

### ***Sense of Community***

The District is committed to supporting initiatives that bring people together, enhance quality of life, and strengthen social, cultural, and economic connections throughout the community. By fostering community participation and shared experiences, the District aims to build a resilient, welcoming, and connected community. This is accomplished through community events, encouraging volunteerism, and creating inclusive spaces where residents can gather, celebrate, and engage with one another.

### ***Agriculture and Food Security***

New Hazelton will support local farmers, residents and community organizations in expanding access to locally grown, nutritious foods and strengthening long-term food security programs where possible.



## *Advocacy*

New Hazelton will leverage this OCP to advocate to senior levels of government for improved services, programs and amenities.



## 3.0 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Community Development section of the OCP details objectives and policies for various community development issues, including economic development, food security, energy, environmental protection, and housing. These topics were identified by New Hazelton residents during the community engagement process. Although these objectives and policies may go beyond traditional land-use policies outlined in an OCP, they are also essential to New Hazelton's future growth, health, and evolution.

It is also noted that some of the policy statements and overall direction outlined in this section extend beyond the purview of the District. Due to staffing and funding constraints, the District is also limited in the scope of services it can provide. In this regard, the District will advocate and support others in undertaking several of the initiatives outlined in this section, but will not take a leading role.

### 3.1 Economy and Economic Development

A healthy local economy is essential for a sustainable and livable community. A strong and diverse economy provides resources that allow residents and a community to prosper, as well as brings employment and a solid tax base to support services, leading to healthier lifestyles and greater opportunities for personal fulfilment. With a strong economy a community can achieve a higher standard of development, provide more services and enjoy an overall higher quality of life.

Economic development has been identified by New Hazelton Council as a priority in the District's 2022-2026 Council-driven Strategic Plan. This Council plan outlines an overall economic development goal to promote a diverse local economy with a stable workforce, within strategic objectives including addressing workforce shortages; small business support; diversifying the tax base; and addressing the housing shortage.

Starting in 2022, the RDKS prepared a 2024-2026 Economic Development Strategic Plan for the District of New Hazelton and Village of Hazelton. The Plan includes an economic overview, Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis, and strategic areas of focus. The Strategic Plan also includes the following Vision statement:

*"Transform Hazelton and New Hazelton into dynamic, prosperous communities where the local economy thrives on innovation and diversity, residents enjoy high standards of living, and visitors are drawn to our unique cultural and natural treasures, setting a benchmark for rural economic development."*

Four strategic areas for economic development were identified in the Plan, which include:

- Supporting local businesses and community organizations to thrive;
- Promoting local tourism;
- Supporting and advocating to build a skilled and diverse workforce; and



- Diversifying the economy and tax base.

Through a business survey undertaken as part of the OCP process, the business community highlighted challenges in hiring and retaining skilled, reliable workers, as well as a lack of available commercial spaces.

The District will work to fulfill the goals and objectives outlined in Council's 2022-2026 Strategic Priorities document; implement the action items outlined in the Economic Development Strategic Plan; and strive to address the concerns raised by the business community.

### 3.1.1 OBJECTIVES

- .1 Create a more diversified local economy built on private business, social enterprise, and New Hazelton's strength as a place of collaboration and creativity;
- .2 Create a vibrant local economy that provides sustainable, meaningful year-round employment;
- .3 Encourage economic activities that leverage and complement the region's environmental characteristics, natural qualities, and geographic setting;
- .4 Encourage the development of the urban landscape in a way that is aesthetically pleasing and responsive to the local character of New Hazelton to encourage both tourism and new residents; and
- .5 Promote the development of a vibrant commercial core that leverages the District's position along the Highway and railway corridors.

### 3.1.2 POLICIES

- .1 Encourage initiatives that increase available commercial rental space to support business growth and entrepreneurship;
- .2 Take steps to implement the action items outlined in the 2024-2026 Economic Development Strategic Plan;
- .3 Consider, and take steps to address, the economic development goals and objectives as outlined in the 2022-2026 Strategic Priorities document;
- .4 Explore partnerships with local private and public sectors, and other organizations to support community improvements, local business growth, external investment and joint marketing initiatives;
- .5 Encourage and support entrepreneurship and business development that creates employment opportunities across a range of income levels;
- .6 Support local trade and skill development to build capacity and meet employer needs;
- .7 Support small scale, mixed use commercial development, where appropriate;
- .8 Continue to support businesses by utilizing Northern Development's Business Façade Improvement Program to improve economic viability and community vibrancy;
- .9 Explore options for increasing the walkability of the District's commercial area;

- .10 Support an integrated transportation network for the mobility of people, goods and services;
- .11 Facilitate efforts to enhance and maintain telecommunication services across the community;
- .12 Support the development of renewable energy resources and resource management technologies and related supportive industries;
- .13 Continue to support strategies and actions that will assist in developing year-round tourism opportunities;
- .14 Market the community on its environmental features, natural beauty, and recreational amenities to attract visitors, residents, and investment;
- .15 Promote the advancement of the industrial sector, with an emphasis on clean, green, technological, and sustainable industries, as well as renewable energy opportunities;
- .16 Encourage infrastructure improvements that support long-term economic development in a fiscally responsible manner;
- .17 Continue to provide the timely and efficient approval of permits; and
- .18 Support opportunities that link food security with local economic development initiatives.

## 3.2 Climate Resilience and Emissions Reduction

Through Bill 27, local governments in BC are required to make efforts towards reducing the greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) of their communities. Data from the BC Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy shows that from 2007 to 2022, emissions in the District increased by 0.3% from 3,470 Total Tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e to 3,81 Total Tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e. The main GHG source in New Hazelton was on-road transportation. The data also revealed that residential homes primarily emit GHGs through wood-burning stoves.

New Hazelton conducted a community energy and emissions plan (CEEP) in 2015, which evaluated existing energy use and GHG emissions with the aim of improving efficiency, cutting emissions, enhancing community resilience, managing future risks, and driving economic development. The District of New Hazelton aims to build off of these efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote a renewable energy supply.

CleanBC commits to reducing emissions by 80% from 2007 levels by 2050. While the District will strive to align with this Clean BC target, New Hazelton may revisit this target as part of a review and update of the community's CEEP.

### 3.2.1 OBJECTIVES

- .1 Promote efforts to reduce community greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in alignment with provincial targets while supporting local energy efficiency and sustainability goals;
- .2 Strengthen the community's ability to plan for, respond to and recover from, climate impacts; and
- .3 Implement climate change actions that ensure a sustainable and resilient future by protecting the health of New Hazelton's social, economic, and natural environments.

### 3.2.2 POLICIES

- .1 Leverage Local Government Climate Action Program (LGCAP) funding to undertake initiatives aimed at strengthening the District's resilience;
- .2 Continue to meet the requirements of the Local Government Climate Action Program;
- .3 Consider implementing strategies to meet the District's emissions reduction target, such as:
  - i. Updating the community's energy and emissions profile to identify sources of emissions and establish an updated emissions target;
  - ii. Reviewing and updating the District's Community Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP) to identify opportunities to integrate goals and strategies into land use, transportation, and infrastructure planning to reduce community-wide energy consumption and GHG emissions;

- iii. Continuing to maintain the car charging station located next to the New Hazelton administrative office;
  - iv. Encouraging partnerships with utilities, non-profits, and developers to explore local energy solutions;
  - v. Exploring the possibility of creating and diversifying community energy/renewable energy systems, such as bioenergy and biomass, geothermal, solar, wind and micro-hydro, and collaborating with surrounding government organizations in this endeavor;
  - vi. Inviting local experts or relevant businesses/organizations to set up booths at events to share the services or products they offer that will support GHG emission reductions and energy efficiency;
  - vii. Taking steps to educate the public and development community on green technologies and energy savings; and
  - viii. Inviting BC Hydro to share information about incentives or other programs that are available to encourage efficiency;
  - ix. Considering undertaking an Active Transportation Plan as a means of promoting improved community health and reducing vehicle emissions; and
  - x. Considering establishing an efficient woodstove program.
- .4 Consider implementing strategies to strengthen the community's ability to plan for, respond to and recover from, climate impacts, such as:
- i. Considering undertaking a Climate Adaptation Strategy to align District initiatives with climate resilience needs; and
  - ii. Encouraging the restoration and stewardship projects that protect local ecosystems, biodiversity, and water quality.
- .5 Continue collaborative efforts with neighboring local and regional governments to pursue climate resiliency grants, such as the Climate Action Plan grant.



## 3.3 Agriculture and Food Security

New Hazelton aims to cultivate a thriving and sustainable food culture grounded in robust local food production, traditional knowledge, and environmental stewardship. The District benefits from a strong agricultural and food security network supported by local initiatives. Residents and community organizations are committed to expanding access to locally grown, nutritious foods and strengthen long-term food security programs.

Approximately 50% of the OCP plan area is designated as within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), under the Provincial *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and *Agricultural Land Reserve Regulation*. The District recognizes the Agriculture Land Commission (ALC) as the primary agency responsible for the protection and regulation of ALR lands and supports its mandate to preserve agricultural land for current and future generations. While the community supports the ALR and mandate of the Agricultural Land Commission, District staff and Council have indicated that the current ALR boundary may not reflect the actual agricultural capability of the land base. New Hazelton may seek to collaborate with the ALC to re-examine the ALR boundaries to meet long-term growth and housing demands.

### 3.3.1 OBJECTIVES

- .1 Protect the availability and long-term viability of agricultural land to support the community's ability to produce local, sustainable foods, foster self-sufficiency, promote food security, and improve economic diversity;
- .2 Continue to support existing food security initiatives;
- .3 Encourage small-scale food production on residential properties of all sizes; and
- .4 Support residents of New Hazelton in having the opportunity, knowledge and resources to grow, access, and enjoy affordable, nutritious, and locally produced food.

### 3.3.2 POLICIES

- .1 Support the ALC's mandate to preserve farmland and encourage the preservation of lands with agricultural value and farming potential;
- .2 Collaborate with the ALC to encourage to undertake a review of the current ALR in consideration of actual agricultural considerations;
- .3 Ensure use of land within the ALR is in accordance with the Agricultural Land Commission Act and Agricultural Land Reserve Regulation;
- .4 Support the establishment of backyard gardens and small-scale food production within all residential areas;
- .5 Encourage sufficient buffers where a property is adjacent to ALR lands consistent with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food's 'Guide to Edge Planning';

- .6 Support and promote educational workshops that raise awareness about food production, preservation techniques, and sustainable agriculture practices;
- .7 Encourage and support local farming initiatives, and explore economic incentives and diversified uses of ALR lands, while maintaining and protecting the intent of ALR lands;
- .8 Continue to support the Hazelton Farmers' Market as a hub for local food access and economic activity;
- .9 Explore opportunities to enhance the Hazelton Farmers' Market, including expanded space, electrical access, and the potential for an indoor venue to support year-round operation;
- .10 Explore opportunities for more community gardens to increase access to fresh produce and strengthen community connections; and
- .11 Explore a local composting system to reduce food waste in collaboration with local farmers, organizations, and the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine.

## 3.4 Health and Quality of Life

Ensuring resources and services are in place to support the physical, mental and social well-being of residents of all ages is of critical importance in ensuring a high quality of life in New Hazelton.

Through engagement as part of this project, both residents and community service providers highlighted the need for enhanced community health resources to support youth and community members. Insufficient mental health services and the lack of an emergency shelter were specifically identified as gaps in existing services.

Health providers and community members also mentioned the importance of emergency preparedness in the community, especially given the increased wildfire occurrence and drought conditions. In 2020, the District of New Hazelton partnered with the Village of Hazelton to hire a Fire Smart Educator. While wildfire hazard data is available through the Provincial Strategic Threat Analysis, this data is general in nature and the District would benefit from undertaking a specific Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan.

### 3.4.1 OBJECTIVES

- .1 Maintain and enhance the quality of life in New Hazelton;
- .2 Maintain and enhance community safety;
- .3 Support reliable and equitable access to emergency services for all residents; and
- .4 Ensure the community is prepared for natural disaster events.

### 3.4.2 POLICIES

- .1 Maintain and Enhance the quality of life in New Hazelton by:
  - i. Supporting the provision of accessible primary healthcare services for the elderly, promoting a positive and "barrier-free" environment to encourage healthy, active aging;
  - ii. Supporting strong community support systems for children and youth and encourage early childhood education services within the community;
  - iii. Advocating senior levels of government for improved mental health and substance abuse services and supports;
  - iv. Collaborating with other levels of government, non-governmental agencies and health care providers to ensure the best use of resources in support of a wide range of services;
  - v. Encouraging that recreational, leisure, cultural programs, activities, and facilities are affordable, inclusive, and responsive to the diverse needs of the community;
  - vi. Supporting the establishment of additional emergency shelters in the region;
  - vii. Promoting educational programs that support healthy lifestyle choices;

- viii. Continuing to support, and participate in, the Hazeltons Community Accessibility Committee;
  - ix. Continuing to take steps to ensure adherence to the Accessible British Columbia Act, including finalizing and implementing the community's Accessibility Plan;
  - x. Supporting services and programs that provide employment opportunities for people with disabilities; and
  - xi. Supporting the establishment of collaborative networks of community service providers to share information and improve access to services such as childcare, healthcare, education, public safety, social services, culture, and heritage.
- .2 Maintain and enhance community safety by:
- i. Continuing to support the New Hazelton Volunteer Fire Department; and
  - ii. Communicating regularly with the local RCMP detachment on public safety matters within the District.
- .3 Ensure the community is prepared for natural disaster events by:
- i. Encouraging resident involvement in community-based safety and prevention programs related to fire, crime, traffic, emergency preparedness, and community design;
  - ii. Continue working in collaboration with local First Nations and surrounding local governments to encourage a coordinated approach in the delivery of emergency services;
  - iii. Considering undertaking an Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan, which includes the involvement of the Wrinch Memorial Hospital;
  - iv. Continuing to seek funding for, and support, FireSmart initiatives; and
  - v. Considering undertaking a Wildfire Resiliency Plan.



## 3.5 Housing

Housing is an integral part of a socially sustainable community and plays a large role in well-being of community members. Throughout the OCP engagement process, housing was consistently identified as a primary concern by community members, business owners, and service providers. Similarly, the 2024 interim Housing Needs Report for New Hazelton highlighted comparable perspectives shared by residents, including:

- Housing affordability;
- Rental availability (market and non-market);
- Supportive housing for seniors or those with special needs;
- Family-sized housing options;
- Diversity in housing typology; and
- Emergency and shelter housing.

As noted in Section 1.4.2, recent Province of BC legislation requires that the District plan for 65 new housing units over the next 5-years and 202 new housing units over the next 20-years. Given the population decline experienced in the community over the last 30 years, the District disputes these housing projections. The District also feels that the standardized approach implemented by the province does not adequately address the unique local context faced by rural northern communities. While the District is in compliance with the legislation and has amended its OCP and Zoning Bylaws to accommodate the housing needs outlined in the 2024 Interim Housing Needs Report, the District is in disagreement with the legislative requirements and encourages the province to exempt small, rural communities such as the District of New Hazelton from future requirements related to Housing Needs Reporting.

The following objectives and policies seek to address housing challenges and respond to community needs by ensuring a sufficient supply of appropriately zoned land, improving regulations, and supporting necessary services through effective land use planning.

### 3.5.1 OBJECTIVES

- .1 Encourage a diversity of housing types and densities that meet the current and projected housing needs of the community;
- .2 Encourage the development of an affordable housing stock;
- .3 Promote and preserve the development of rental accommodations in appropriate areas;
- .4 Promote housing options for individuals with special needs, including senior's housing and independent living facilities; and
- .5 Continue to promote the development of emergency and shelter housing in the region.

### 3.5.2 POLICIES

- .1 Advocate senior levels of government for greater supports to address housing needs related to seniors housing, affordable housing and for individuals experiencing homelessness;
- .2 Undertake regular updates to the District's Housing Needs Reports in adherence to provincial legislation, while continuing to advocate to the Province of BC that small, rural communities, such as the District of New Hazelton, be exempt from such future requirements;
- .3 Encourage a mix of housing types by supporting increased densities through multi-family developments in appropriate locations;
- .4 Support age-friendly housing and services to attract retirees and allow residents to 'age in place';
- .5 Support mixed-use buildings with commercial use on the ground floor and residential use above the commercial use in the District's commercial zones;
- .6 Support the inclusion of a diverse range of dwelling unit sizes in multi-family and affordable housing developments, including family-oriented units, bachelor suites, and accessible units for people with disabilities;
- .7 Collaborate with the Province of BC and relevant First Nations to acquire Crown lands within the District to meet the projected housing needs of the community;
- .8 Explore options to incentivize the redevelopment of properties containing derelict or abandoned structures;
- .9 Encourage infill developments on properties serviced by the community water and sewer systems;
- .10 Continue to support accessory dwelling units, including garden suites and secondary suites, in compliance with provincial legislation;
- .11 Consider the development of an Accessory Dwelling Unit Guide; and
- .12 Support community groups and housing providers in the development of affordable housing and housing for those experiencing homelessness in New Hazelton.

## 3.6 Arts and Culture

Arts and culture are central to New Hazelton's identity, contributing to livability, diversity, education, entertainment, economic growth, and quality of life. Supporting heritage, arts, recreation, and community events fosters cohesion and involvement. The community aims to sustain its unique culture by respecting its history, embracing diversity, and promoting a vibrant arts scene.

### 3.6.1 OBJECTIVES

- .1 Encourage and support the arts and culture community, including the performing, visual, literary, historic and multimedia arts;
- .2 Encourage the continual development of a physical inventory of arts projects displayed in public spaces, both indoor and outdoor;
- .3 Continue to address the social and cultural needs of the community; and
- .4 Highlight and honour the rich and diverse histories, cultures and members of both the local Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

### 3.6.2 POLICIES

- .1 Encourage community programming for a variety of artistic disciplines;
- .2 Collaborate with other municipalities, school districts and other agencies to plan and coordinate arts initiatives;
- .3 Encourage the use of theatres, spaces and venues for public participation, education and enjoyment of culture through the planning and design of buildings, open spaces and public areas, including the street environment;
- .4 Support local artists;
- .5 Continue to encourage the incorporation of local Indigenous art in District facilities and public spaces;
- .6 Recognize and promote cultural excellence and diversity within the community, including the professional and amateur, the traditional and innovative, the aspiring and the established;
- .7 Encourage opportunities and resources for education, participation and enjoyment of arts, culture and heritage for all residents; and
- .8 Continue to promote the use of parks, civic buildings and public spaces for public art, performances, festivals and exhibitions.

## 3.7 Infrastructure and Utilities

This section establishes objectives and policies for water, sanitary, storm, solid waste, power and gas, and transportation infrastructure and utilities. A more comprehensive summary of existing infrastructure can be found in *Section 1.4.3*. The District's infrastructure and transportation networks are illustrated on Schedules C and D respectively.

The District has been proactive in the management of its infrastructure, undertaking regular updates to the community's Asset Management Planning program, which was originally developed in 2016. Asset Management has also been identified by New Hazelton Council as one of four strategic priorities in the District's 2022-2026 Strategic Priorities document.

In 2025, New Hazelton also completed a high-level Water System Assessment. This assessment did identify areas where minimum fire flow requirements were not being met, as well as potential vulnerabilities in instances where water supply is reliant on a single water main. Potential improvements to address the noted issues are also provided in the assessment.

The District's community water system services New Hazelton and the Hagwilget IR1 reserve lands. For this reason, it is important the District continues to work with Hagwilget to stay appraised of any future on-reserve growth and development.

Additional infrastructure improvements identified by the District include:

- A watermain looping project on Churchill Street and Young Street; and
- Desludging of the wastewater treatment lagoons.

It should also be noted that, as per recent legislative requirements, the Province of BC is requiring the District to plan for the addition of 202 dwelling units over a 20-year timeframe. In order to accommodate such growth, the District would likely need to pursue the development of lands outside the current community water and sanitary sewer service areas. A long-term infrastructure management plan is needed to help guide the District in planning for the future needs of the community.

### 3.7.1 OBJECTIVES

- .1 Ensure a reliable water supply, sanitary, solid waste, and storm water infrastructure that meets the present and future needs of the community;
- .2 Provide access to high quality infrastructure services to all community residents in a fiscally responsible manner;
- .3 Continue to ensure sustainable water management by developing and implementing strategies to manage and conserve water resources;
- .4 Support the reduction of waste entering the landfill;
- .5 Support the Ministry of Transportation and BC Transit's development of a safe and efficient road network; and



- .6 Continue to collaborate with RDKS, the Village of Hazelton, and neighbouring First Nations to ensure the provision of timely and sufficient transportation infrastructure and services, fostering connectivity and encouraging pedestrian movement as well as alternative modes of transportation.

### 3.7.2 POLICIES

- .1 Take steps to assess future water and sanitary sewer infrastructure needs, including expanding distribution networks to underdeveloped areas such as the bench west of downtown, industrial lands north of the railway, and District Lot 319;
- .2 Continue to undertake regular updates to the District's Asset Management Planning Program;
- .3 Take steps to ensure the location and construction of infrastructure and utilities are sensitive to environmental concerns;
- .4 Leverage existing and future funding agreements and programs in the management of the District's infrastructure services;
- .5 Consider reviewing and updating the District's infrastructure utility rates;
- .6 Consider the development of a district-wide stormwater management plan for future developments to help protect existing creeks and natural assets;
- .7 Consider undertaking a strategic management program aimed at reducing sewer and storm water infiltration;
- .8 Maintain and enhance the community's water infrastructure services by:
  - i. Taking steps to advance the Churchill Street and Young Street watermain looping project;
  - ii. Considering the findings and recommendations as outlined in the 2025 Water System Assessment;
  - iii. Considering looping all water lines where appropriate within the District;
  - iv. Engaging with Hagwilget to stay apprised of future on-reserve growth and development as it relates to community water system servicing;
  - v. Ensuring public notification and reporting of water quality problems; and
  - vi. Reviewing the enhancement of water treatment and storage capacity and fire flow capacity to accommodate projected population growth and ensure community safety and resilience.
- .9 Support water conservation in the District by:
  - i. Supporting public educational programs that encourage responsible water use and conservation technologies; and
  - ii. Encouraging the use of low flow water fixtures.
- .10 Maintain and enhance the community's sanitary sewer infrastructure servicing by:
  - i. Considering the modifications to the sewage treatment process as outlined in the 2020 effluent quality assessment. This includes identifying potential funding sources to facilitate lagoon remediation, with the aim of prolonging its operational lifespan and improving the overall effectiveness of the sewage treatment system;

- ii. Pursuing funding to undertake a desludging of the wastewater treatment lagoons; and
  - iii. Conducting a thorough review of the Bowser Street and Pugsley Avenue lift stations, along with the residual pipe capacities, to ensure they can handle increased flows from future development.
- .11 Promote the efficient management of the District's solid waste by:
- i. Continuing to partner with the RDKS to ensure effective solid waste management services for New Hazelton;
  - ii. Working with the RDKS to encourage more inclusive recycling options and green technologies; and
  - iii. Supporting the reduction of landfill waste through recycling and composting through community-led initiatives.
- .12 Maintain and enhance transportation networks in the District by:
- i. Considering undertaking an Active Transportation Plan;
  - ii. Promoting safe pedestrian and bicycle travel as alternatives to automobile travel; and
  - iii. Considering the exploration of traffic calming methods along Highway 16 to increase safety.



## 3.8 Environment

New Hazelton's natural environment is a central asset that underpins its economy, tourism, and industry. Residents most often cite the area's natural beauty—like the Bulkley River and Stegyoden Mountain—as what they value most about living here.

Protecting the natural environment within and surrounding the District is vital for maintaining water quality, ecosystem health, and community livability. The OCP recognizes that people are part of the ecosystem, and that both the economic and social wellbeing of the community are deeply interdependent with the natural environment. The District accepts its responsibility as a steward of the natural environment and will take steps to integrate sustainability into all planning and decision-making activities.

### 3.8.1 OBJECTIVES

- .1 Identify, protect, enhance and restore environmental resources for the long-term benefit of wildlife, natural ecosystems and the enjoyment of current and future residents and visitors;
- .2 Promote land use and development practices that respect the natural environment while allowing for responsible growth; and
- .3 Protect and enhance environmentally sensitive areas including natural watercourses, riparian areas and steep or unstable slopes.

### 3.8.2 POLICIES

- .1 Collaborate with surrounding government organizations and communities to support and advance alternative and renewable energy sources, such as solar, wind and geothermal energy projects;
- .2 Support leadership and education in promoting water conservation and sustainability;
- .3 Support sustainable development by:
  - i. Encouraging future developments in existing developed areas;
  - ii. Supporting the development of compact, walkable neighbourhoods; and
  - iii. Taking steps to ensure new development and redevelopment of property adheres to the 'Environmental Best Management Practices for Urban and Rural Land Development' (Ministry of Environment) and 'Develop with Care: Environmental Guidelines for Urban and Rural Land Development in British Columbia' guidelines where applicable.
- .4 Encourage the protection of wildfire and wildlife habitats by:
  - i. Encouraging the enhancement of wildlife and wilderness connectivity opportunities through natural corridors and surrounding watersheds;
  - ii. Striving towards achieving Bear Smart Designation through the District of New Hazelton support of a Bear Aware program, and increasing efforts to implement Bear Aware recommendations to reduce bear-human conflict;
  - iii. Encouraging efforts by communities, businesses and individuals to reduce bear-human conflicts;
  - iv. Working with senior levels of government to ensure the protection of important salmon habitats within the District; and
  - v. Taking steps to ensure the protection and enhancement of riparian areas.

## 3.9 Leisure, Recreation & Educational Facilities

### *Leisure and Recreation*

Sports and recreation initiatives have been shown as a way of bringing the local and regional communities together, with examples including:

- Upper Skeena Recreation Centre – cited as an example of what can be accomplished when local communities work together towards a common goal;
- Upper Skeena Recreation Centre slo-pitch league – the District of New Hazelton makes its ball field available to the local slo-pitch league, which includes 8 teams from throughout the Hazeltons; and
- Allen Park – local seniors gather weekly in the park to utilize the outdoor fitness equipment.

It is important to ensure recreational opportunities are available for residents of all ages and abilities. An overview of the existing recreational facilities and resources is provided below.

### *Outdoor Recreation*

The general region of the Hazeltons (The District of New Hazelton, the Village of Hazelton, Electoral Area B, Kispiox, Hagwilget, Gitanmaax, and Sik-E-Dakh) is known for its winter and summer outdoor recreation opportunities including fishing, biking, hiking, boating, skiing, snowmobiling, and more.

### *Allen Park*

Allen Park is located along Highway 16 and includes a playground, gazebo covered cooking area and picnicking area, paved walking path and outdoor exercise equipment for public use.

### *Ball Field*

The District maintains a ball field on May Street. Some residents did indicate a desire for improvements to the field including covered bleachers, improved parking areas, and levelling of the outfield.

### *Skate Park*

A skate park is located among commercial businesses along Highway 16.

### *Tennis and Pickleball*

Tennis and pickleball courts are located at the corner of McLeod Street and 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

### *Trail Network*

The District offers several hiking trails within its boundary including the Breakover Trail, the Lookout/Waterfall Trail, the Station Creek/Hagwilget Peak Trail, and the Eagle Down Trail which connects to many Hazelton Trail Society trails.



## ***Upper Skeena Recreation Centre***

While located outside of the District's boundary, the Upper Skeena Recreation Centre serves the residents of New Hazelton. The Centre is operated under the Canadian Recreation Excellence Corporation on behalf of the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine. The Centre has an ice-skating arena with spectating area, gymnasium with basketball, volleyball, and other courts, weight and cardio room, a dance program, and board room.

During engagement, several ideas were brought forward by residents for potential new recreational amenities or improvements to existing facilities, including a swimming pool, expanded skate park, a bike pump track, new hiking trails and the addition of a water park and/or concrete ping-pong tables at Allen Park. It should be noted however that the undertaking of any future recreational improvements would have to be considered through the lens of the staffing and funding constraints of the District.

## ***Educational Facilities***

New Hazelton is located in School District #82 which services elementary and high schools from Terrace to New Hazelton. Typically, youth in New Hazelton would be enrolled at New Hazelton Elementary School or Hazelton Secondary School. Cross boundary (of typical school catchment) students who live in New Hazelton may also attend Majagaleehl Gali Aks (John Field) Elementary School in the Village of Hazelton.

New Hazelton Elementary is the only school within the New Hazelton municipal boundary. The school services Kindergarten through Grade 7, and 2024/2025 enrollment includes 90 total students. Enrollment for the school has generally been trending downward since 2010/2011, when 207 students were enrolled. New Hazelton Elementary is the only standard elementary school in the region, and it does host youth from the surrounding areas. No additional future school sites have been identified for New Hazelton.

Hazelton Secondary School is outside of the District of New Hazelton's boundary in the Village of Hazelton, but services the Grade 8 to 12 population of the District and greater area. Being the only high school in the area, it also services the Village of Hazelton and surrounding communities including Gitanyow, Hagwilget, Gitanmaax, Gitsegukla, Gitwangak, Sik-E-Dakh, Anspayaxw, and Tse-Kya. The school has an enrollment of about 375 students.

Coast Mountain College is the only post-secondary institution in the area, serving twelve communities in the region including the District of New Hazelton. The campus offers university courses, social and health sciences, trades, continuing education, workforce training certifications, and an Elders' College to support local seniors with mobility, health, and fraud awareness.

### 3.9.1 OBJECTIVES

- .1 Ensure a variety of recreational opportunities are available for residents of all ages, backgrounds and abilities;
- .2 Protect strategic parks, open space and other natural areas;
- .3 Foster a healthy, active and involved community environment, which sustains community well-being through leisure and recreation services and facilities;
- .4 Maintain and enhance the community's parks and trails system to meet the needs of current and future residents and visitors; and
- .5 Work in collaboration with School District #82 to ensure the current and future educational needs of the community are met.

### 3.9.2 POLICIES

- .1 Maintain and enhance recreational facilities, programming and amenities by:
  - i. Working in collaboration with local First Nations and surrounding local governments in the delivery of regional recreational facilities, programming and amenities;
  - ii. Supporting the provision of regional recreational activities for all ages, backgrounds and abilities;
  - iii. Taking steps to improve and expand District-owned park facilities, including playground equipment to CSA standards and continue to maintain the cleanliness of parks;
  - iv. Encouraging and exploring safe youth activities and facilities both locally and regionally such as soccer, softball, baseball, basketball, skateboarding, etc.;
  - v. Continuing participation in, and support of, the Upper Skeena Recreation Centre Advisory Committee;
  - vi. Continuing to support the Upper Skeena Recreation Centre slo-pitch league by providing access to the New Hazelton ball field; and
  - vii. Promoting and supporting accessibility and accessible amenities in recreational facilities and amenities.
- .2 Maintain and enhance local parks and trails by:
  - i. Exploring opportunities to partner with community stakeholders and other government agencies to facilitate parks and trails improvements in New Hazelton;
  - ii. Considering the undertaking of a Parks and Recreation Plan;
  - iii. Considering the undertaking of a Trail Network Plan and/or Active Transportation Plan;
  - iv. Ensuring new developments consider the need for parks and greenspace;
  - v. Exploring opportunities to undertake upgrades to the ball field, including covered bleachers, improved parking areas and a levelling of the outfield;

- vi. Promoting and encouraging neighbourhood open spaces that are conducive to impromptu sports activities and play, specifically encouraging larger neighbourhood parks rather than pockets of smaller parks; and
  - vii. Supporting the establishment of future community facilities on lands adjacent to the downtown.
- .3 Work in collaboration with School District #82 on matters related to future student enrollment and land needs, as well as the provision of recreational facilities and programming.



## 3.10 Sense of Community

Through engagement activities, residents highlighted the strong, tight-knit nature of New Hazelton. Many residents spoke of the supportive and friendly people, as well as the opportunity to form meaningful connections through local events and services, creating a welcoming and inclusive environment. There is a desire among residents to continue to foster this strong sense of community. Key considerations in the endeavor include:

### *Collaboration*

Collaborating with surrounding communities was a recurring theme in the community and stakeholder engagement undertaken as part of the development of this OCP. All surrounding communities face similar capacity and funding constraints. Housing, recreational facilities, social support, emergency services, environmental protection, and food security are among the areas where residents see the potential for significant improvements through pooled resources.

New Hazelton remains committed to pursuing opportunities for collaboration with neighbouring communities and governments to achieve common objectives. The District actively engages in ongoing partnerships with neighbouring communities, which have facilitated local initiatives and enhanced regional connectivity. Moving forward, the District will look for opportunities to inform residents about these cooperative efforts through public awareness campaigns and project reports that highlight the outcomes of collaborative work.

### *Reconciliation*

The District of New Hazelton recognizes the significance of reconciliation as a fundamental aspect of community development. Reconciliation involves acknowledging the historical and ongoing impacts of colonization on Indigenous peoples and working collaboratively to build respectful, inclusive relationships. By prioritizing reconciliation, New Hazelton aims to foster a community characterized by mutual respect and shared prosperity. This includes engaging with Indigenous communities, preserving cultural heritage, and ensuring that development initiatives benefit all residents, thereby promoting social cohesion and sustainable growth, advancing truth and reconciliation efforts.

### *Community Groups and Non-Profit Organizations*

Local community and non-profit groups provide and maintain a variety of services and facilities which help to meet the social, recreational and cultural needs of the community. The District wishes to recognize the important role these groups play in the community and support them in their endeavors.

### *Volunteerism*

Volunteerism plays a vital role in the social fabric of New Hazelton. This strong spirit of volunteerism not only strengthens community resilience and civic pride but also fills critical service gaps in a small, rural setting. Recognizing and supporting volunteer efforts is essential to maintaining the vibrancy, connectedness, and well-being of the community. As many volunteers are aging, encouraging young

volunteers is vital to ensuring New Hazelton's tradition of community involvement continues for future generations.

### ***Community Events***

Community events in New Hazelton are an important expression of local identity, culture, and connection. Community events bring residents and neighbouring communities together, strengthening social bonds and fostering a strong sense of belonging. These events often rely on the dedication of volunteers and local organizations, and play a key role in community well-being, economic activity, and intergenerational connection. Supporting and expanding these events contributes to a vibrant, inclusive, and welcoming community.

### ***Community Communications***

Effective communication is essential to building trust, transparency, and engagement between the District of New Hazelton and its residents. Timely, accessible, and inclusive communication ensures that community members are informed about local initiatives, services, events, and decision-making processes. By using a range of communication methods including website, social media, newsletters, and community meetings, the District can better reach its diversity of residents. Strengthening communication also encourages greater civic participation, supports emergency preparedness, and fosters a more connected and resilient community.

#### **3.10.1 OBJECTIVES**

- .1 Collaborate with neighbouring First Nations, the Village of Hazelton and RDKS on shared priorities and regional initiatives;
- .2 Encourage continued partnerships with local First Nations communities to support and advance meaningful reconciliation efforts;
- .3 Support a strong, resilient network of local non-profits and volunteer organizations that contribute to community well-being;
- .4 Foster a culture of volunteerism by recognizing, promoting, and facilitating opportunities for community members to contribute;
- .5 Support community events that reflect local heritage, celebrate cultural diversity, and strengthen the community's well-being; and
- .6 Promote open, transparent, and accessible communication between the District and its residents.



### 3.10.2 POLICIES

- .1 Work in collaboration with neighbouring communities and the RDKS to identify shared priorities and coordinate resources and efforts;
- .2 Advance reconciliation efforts by:
  - i. Exploring strategies and opportunities to work collaboratively with neighbouring First Nations and to celebrate and honor Indigenous heritage and culture throughout the community; and
  - ii. Engaging with local First Nations and Indigenous peoples to better understand how New Hazelton can support and advance reconciliation in meaningful and respectful ways.
- .3 Foster a strong sense of community by:
  - i. Supporting local non-profits, cultural organizations, and volunteer organizations in the delivery of social, recreational, cultural and education programs;
  - ii. Recognizing and celebrating the contributions of volunteers through public acknowledgement and community recognition initiatives;
  - iii. Working in collaboration with community groups in the development of community events to promote community connections and attract tourists;
  - iv. Supporting initiatives that connect residents, organizations, and local leaders; and
  - v. Maintaining and improving communications with residents through a variety of means including the District's website, social media, newsletters, and community meetings, to ensure timely and equitable access to information.
- .4 Continue to maintain the Visitor Centre to provide tourists and potential residents with current information regarding local businesses, services and amenities.

## 4.0 LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

This section outlines objectives and policies related to specific land uses within the District. These land uses are illustrated in Schedule B and include General Residential, Rural Residential, Commercial, Community Services, Industrial and Rural Resource uses.

### 4.1 General Policies

The following policies apply to all land use designations within the District of New Hazelton.

#### 4.1.1 POLICIES

- .1 Consider utilizing Smart Growth planning principles to promote developments that integrate transportation and land use decisions, including the exploration and adoption of alternative road standards, bicycle lanes, pedestrian movement and mixed uses;
- .2 Encourage Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) in all developments;
- .3 Reference the strategic priorities and associated goals and objectives, as outlined in the 2022-2026 Strategic Priorities document, in future decision-making in the District;
- .4 Advocate to senior levels of government on priorities, concerns and issues outside the direct purview of the District;
- .5 Encourage development applications to consider risks associated with natural hazards, including wildfire, flooding, steep slopes, rock fall, and unstable soils, including requiring reports from qualified professionals to assist the District in deciding what conditions or requirements it will impose;
- .6 Encourage the protection of environmentally sensitive areas;
- .7 Encourage the protection of archaeological sites under the provincial *Heritage Conservation Act*;
- .8 Utilize the BC Provincial government's Remote Access Archaeological Database to learn about known archaeological sites and areas likely to contain as-yet unrecorded archaeological sites to support informed decision-making and ensure the suitability of development activities across the District;
- .9 Consider the 'Guidelines for New Development in Proximity to Railway Operations' in the District's development approvals processes;
- .10 Ensure the District's development approvals processes are efficient, consistently applied and align with the direction outlined in this OCP; and
- .11 Encourage future growth and development that is efficient from a planning, cost, sustainability and infrastructure servicing perspective.

## 4.2 General Residential

As per the recent interim Housing Needs Report, the housing composition within the District as of 2021 included 77% single-detached dwellings, 4% mobile (manufactured) homes, 7.5% semi-detached homes, 7.5% row homes, and 4% apartments with less than 5-storeys. Recent housing construction has been limited, with 6 new single-family dwellings, 4 modular homes, and 1 mobile home being constructed between 2013 and 2024. In 2021, 7 short-term housing units for women fleeing domestic violence were also constructed.

As per recent legislative requirements, and in alignment with the 2024 interim Housing Needs Report, the District must ensure the OCP and Zoning Bylaws can accommodate 65 dwelling units over a 5-year timeframe and 202 units over a 20-year timeframe. A spatial analysis of residential vacant lands was undertaken to assess how well positioned the District is to accommodate these needs. While this analysis did confirm there are sufficient vacant lands zoned for residential uses to accommodate the 20-Year housing needs as outlined in the District's 2024 interim Housing Needs Report, it should be noted that the analysis did not take site specific development constraints, such as steep slopes, soils conditions and drainage issues, into consideration. There is also a need to further assess the District's water and sewer infrastructure to identify any improvements required to accommodate the identified housing needs and associated population growth.

Given the availability of land in the community core, along with the infrastructure constraints in developing lands outside this area, the District will encourage infill development within the existing infrastructure servicing area as the priority for meeting the identified housing needs. The District does own District Lot 319, located in the northern portion of the community. This 63 hectare lot is zoned for residential use and has been identified for long-term community growth. However, the parcel is located well outside the District's existing infrastructure servicing area and would require significant infrastructure improvements to service development here.

It should also be noted that the majority of the lands surrounding the community's existing infrastructure servicing area is currently under Provincial Crown ownership. While there are private and municipal owned lands beyond these crown lands, it is not efficient from a planning, cost, sustainability or infrastructure servicing perspective to 'leapfrog' readily developable lands to develop lands beyond. The District will seek to work with the Province of BC and relevant First Nations regarding the acquisition of crown lands within the District to help ensure an efficient and phased approach to future developments

### 4.2.1 OBJECTIVES

- .1 Encourage a range of high-quality housing types, tenures and densities, which can meet the diverse needs of, and attract, individuals and families of varying income levels and demographics;
- .2 Ensure sufficient land is available to meet the existing and projected housing needs of the District; and
- .3 Support home based business ventures.

### 4.2.2 POLICIES

- .1 Direct residential uses to the areas designated as Residential on Schedule B;
- .2 Encourage infill development within the District's existing infrastructure service area;
- .3 Permit the development of single-family, duplex, multi-unit and affordable housing developments within the Residential land use;
- .4 Encourage affordable, rental and special needs housing, including seniors housing, with a preference for locations in close proximity to existing amenities and services;
- .5 Continue to permit garden suites and secondary suites in compliance with provincial legislation;
- .6 Encourage new residential development to take advantage of natural amenities including tree stands, view potential, natural features and view corridors;
- .7 Restrict mobile homes to mobile home zoned areas;
- .8 Work with local First Nations and the Province of BC to acquire Provincial Crown lands to meet the District's identified housing needs, as well as ensure future growth is efficient from a planning, cost, sustainability and infrastructure servicing perspective;
- .9 Consider undertaking a development and infrastructure servicing plan for D.L. 319;
- .10 Continue to permit home-based businesses to operate from residential homes; and
- .11 Consider reviewing District bylaws and policies to ensure there are no undue burdens or strains on home based businesses.

## 4.3 Rural Residential

The Rural Residential land use generally includes larger, rural lots that embraced the rural lifestyle and culture of the area. All of these parcels are farmlands and are within the Agricultural Land Reserve. This designation is meant to preserve the rural and agricultural character of lands outside of the community core by limiting subdivision and development of properties in such areas.

Rural residential lands are found in the western portions of the District of New Hazelton and are typically serviced by an on-site water supply through wells and individual septic systems.

It is noted that, while the overall intent of this land use is to encourage larger lot developments that align with the mandate of the Agricultural Land Commission, the District does recognize that there are existing small lots within this land use designation that do not align with this mandate. The *ALC Act* does permit low-density residential uses within the ALR. The District is also aware of potential exemptions from the restrictions on the use of agricultural land set out in the *ALC Act* for parcels less than 2 acres, however a local government cannot make this determination. As a result, the District will direct affected landowners to the ALC to discuss their specific circumstances.

### 4.3.1 OBJECTIVES

- .1 Maintain the existence of larger lot sizes and rural living opportunities in New Hazelton;
- .2 Encourage sustainable rural development without rural sprawl;
- .3 Ensure development in Rural Residential areas consider impacts on the natural environment as well as environmentally sensitive areas;
- .4 Preserve the character of existing rural residential areas; and
- .5 Support and encourage home based businesses on parcels within the Rural Residential designation.

### 4.3.2 POLICIES

- .1 Direct rural residential uses to the areas designated as Rural Residential on Schedule B;
- .2 Encourage uses and development in compliance with the *ALC Act and ALR Regulations* for portions of the land use designation within the ALR;
- .3 Direct affected landowners to the ALC to explore potential exemptions from the restrictions on the use of agricultural land set out in the *ALC Act* for parcels less than 2 acres;
- .4 Encourage newly created lots within this designation to have a minimum parcel size of 4,000 square meters (one acre);
- .5 Support agricultural uses in Rural Residential areas;
- .6 Encourage buffers between agricultural and residential uses as per the Ministry of Agriculture and Food's 'Guide to Edge Planning';
- .7 Encourage the protection of riparian areas and natural corridors; and



- .8 Permit home based businesses and cottage industries to operate from rural residential homes.

## 4.4 Commercial

The District of New Hazelton's commercial lands are oriented along the Highway 16 corridor and 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue, with the majority of existing businesses located within a downtown core concentrated between Laurier Street and Pugsley Street. Highway commercial uses extend on both sides of the highway corridor through the centre of the community.

Most vacant lands designated for commercial uses are located in the eastern portions of the District, as well as along Highway 16 between College Street and Brewster Street. Both of these areas however are not currently serviced with community water and sewer infrastructure and significant infrastructure improvements may be required to support commercial developments in these areas.

There is also a vacant parcel of land designated for commercial uses along Highway 62, between 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue. While some recent activity has taken place on these lands, including the demolition of previous existing buildings and a rezoning from R-2 to C1, no other development applications have been received by the District at this time.

In total, there are approximately 8 hectares of developed commercial lands within the District of New Hazelton. In addition, there are approximately 40 parcels, (about 12 hectares) of vacant commercial land, providing ample room for commercial infill over the next 10 years. However less than 10 of these vacant lots have Highway 16 frontage and all are under 0.60 of a hectare in size, making them unsuitable for any large-scale highway commercial development unless adjacent lots are amalgamated.

The downtown core contains a variety of retail shops, restaurants and financial institutions, as well as smaller lot residential developments. During the OCP community engagements, residents voiced their strong desire for more commercial options within New Hazelton. Many highlighted the need for greater variety in retail and service offerings to better meet the needs of the community.

### 4.4.1 OBJECTIVES

- .1 Support new and existing businesses and enterprises in New Hazelton;
- .2 Ensure adequate lands designated for commercial uses to accommodate a variety of commercial uses; and
- .3 Promote a strong civic presence and a high level of public amenity.

#### 4.4.2 POLICIES

- .1 Direct commercial uses to the areas designated as Commercial on Schedule B;
- .2 Consider evaluating zoning, taxation and restrictions placed on businesses and work to accommodate business and commercial interests when practical;
- .3 Consider working with the Ministry of Transportation and Transit to evaluate the impacts of Highway 16 on local business;
- .4 Support the infill of existing vacant business properties before designating new commercially zoned areas;
- .5 Encourage the use of vacant storefronts within the downtown core;
- .6 Consider options for improving pedestrian movement within, and through, the District's downtown core;
- .7 Support mixed commercial and residential uses in lands designated for commercial;
- .8 Promote active storefronts at the ground level and restrict the proportion of non-retail uses on the ground floor;
- .9 Support advertising and marketing of the District's available commercial lands;
- .10 Review opportunities to leverage the District's position as a regional hub;
- .11 Consider policies and initiatives to encourage businesses to relocate to New Hazelton;
- .12 Consider a revitalization of the downtown core;
- .13 Encourage public art in the downtown core; and
- .14 Continue to encourage and support businesses to maintain appearances of store fronts and landscaping through the Façade Improvement Program.

### 4.5 Community Use

Community services include parks and recreational facilities; District administrative offices; places of worship; cemeteries; health care facilities; emergency services; educational facilities; public works and infrastructure; and other community facilities. Such uses are located throughout the District, with notable facilities and amenities including:

- New Hazelton Elementary School;
- District of New Hazelton Administrative office;
- Erwin Stege Community Centre;
- Misty Rivers Art Gallery;

- New Hazelton Fire Hall;
- Local RCMP Detachment;
- Various churches;
- Tennis courts;
- Allen Park;
- Ball field; and
- New Hazelton Municipal Cemetery.

The District also has large tracts of land designated for existing nature parks and potential future parks and recreation areas, including the lands encompassing the Waterfall and Lookout Trailhead, lands along the Bulkley River, and the area encompassing the Breakover Trailhead parking area.

It should be noted that additional direction regarding leisure, recreational and education facilities is outlined in Section 3.9.

#### 4.5.1 OBJECTIVES

- .1 Encourage adequate civic and institutional facilities and amenities to meet the needs of the community;
- .2 Maintain and enhance existing municipal-owned facilities; and
- .3 Ensure community services are considered in future developments.

#### 4.5.2 POLICIES

- .1 Direct community services to the areas designated Community Services on Schedule B;
- .2 Explore options for the future development of the remainder of the District-owned parcel in which the District's administrative office and Erwin Stege Community Centre are located;
- .3 Permit infrastructure servicing improvements and facilities in all areas of the District;
- .4 Maintain and enhance District parks and recreational facilities;
- .5 Require parkland dedication at the time of subdivision as per the Local Government Act. Council may require payment in lieu of parkland dedication at the time of subdivision;
- .6 Continue to maintain the New Hazelton Municipal Cemetery;
- .7 Continue to maintain parking and access to the District's trail network; and
- .8 Work in collaboration with School District #82 on matters related to future student enrollment and land needs, as well as the provision of recreational facilities and programming.

## 4.6 Industrial

Industrial lands in the District run predominantly along the CN Rail right of way corridor. New Hazelton also encompasses the former Carnaby Sawmill site within its boundaries, serving as a satellite piece of

industrial lands. Although the sawmill is currently out of operation, it represents potential for future industrial use and development within the area.

In total, there are approximately 211.5 hectares of lands designated for industrial uses within the District, with the Carnaby sawmill site representing approximately 134.8 hectares. Within the community core, there are approximately 78 hectares of land designated for industrial, with the vast majority being vacant. It should be noted however that a significant portion of these lands are within swampy lowlands on the north side of the CN railway tracks and may face constraints to future development.

New Hazelton currently has two Licences of Occupation for sand and gravel purposes. The Ministry of Transportation and Transit also holds two reserves for such purposes. These sand and gravel tenures are situated in the north east corner of the District and are currently accessed via the Ross Lake Road. Together, these four tenures encompass an area of 166.8 hectares.

#### **4.6.1 OBJECTIVES**

- .1 Support a variety of light, general and heavy industrial uses in existing industrial areas;
- .2 Encourage the development of industrial sites throughout the plan area where it can be clearly demonstrated that operational impacts (e.g. noise, smell, traffic) can be adequately mitigated to the benefit of neighbouring non-industrial properties;
- .3 Support a diversified local economic base;
- .4 Minimize detrimental effects of industrial development on the natural environment and surrounding areas; and
- .5 Support and encourage diverse sustainable industrial activities.

#### **4.6.2 POLICIES**

- .1 Direct industrial uses to the areas designated as Industrial on Schedule B;
- .2 Consider evaluating zoning, taxation and restrictions placed on industry and work to accommodate industrial development opportunities when practical;
- .3 Market the District as “Open For Business” and highlight opportunities for industrial development;
- .4 Support future industrial development of the Carnaby Sawmill site;
- .5 Encourage and promote:
  - i. The development of high paying and labour intensive industries;
  - ii. Environmentally friendly industries; and

- iii. The development of an eco-industrial park and/or business park.
- .6 Encourage high quality site design, including extensive landscaping and visual buffers from industrial uses, in particular where industrial uses abut residential uses;
- .7 Work in collaboration with CN Railway regarding future industrial developments along the railway corridor;
- .8 Encourage and support industrial developments that strive to balance the environmental, economical and social values of the District;
- .9 Continue to maintain the District's Licences of Occupation for sand and gravel purposes to ensure the long-term needs of the District can be met; and
- .10 Work in collaboration with the Ministry of Transportation and Transit in the management of sand and gravel resources within the District.

## 4.7 Rural Resource

Rural Resource uses primarily encompass the undeveloped forested lands located along the periphery of the District boundary. These lands have the potential for various resource extraction activities such as forestry, energy development and potentially mining. These lands are also utilized by community members for various forms of outdoor recreational activities, including biking, snowmobiling, hiking and off-road vehicle use. In managing these lands, the District will strive to balance economic development opportunities with the environmental and recreational values these lands provide.

It is noted that a portion of the lands designated as Rural Resource overlap with the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). As noted in Section 3.3, the District is committed to supporting the ALR and mandate of the Agricultural Land Commission. This commitment ensures that agricultural lands are preserved for future generations and contribute to the sustainability and food security of the community.

### 4.7.1 OBJECTIVES

- .1 Minimize the conflicts between extraction activities and adjacent land uses;
- .2 Preserve and utilize viable agricultural lands to foster self-sufficiency, promote food security and improve economic diversity;
- .3 Support resource extraction activities and other economic development initiatives in rural areas of the District;
- .4 Support various forms of outdoor recreation activities in rural areas; and
- .5 Strive to balance the economic, environmental, cultural and social values of residents in future development and use of the District's rural areas.



## 4.7.2 POLICIES

- .1 Direct rural uses to areas designated as Rural Resource on Schedule B;
- .2 Encourage the implementation of the “Agriculture and Food Security” policies as outlined in Section 3.3 on Agriculture designated properties;
- .3 Encourage year-round outdoor recreational uses on lands designated as Rural Resource;
- .4 Work with provincial agencies and private companies in the planning and management of resource extraction activities on lands designated Rural Resource and ensure such activities exercise sound environmental stewardship;
- .5 Encourage agricultural uses and resource extraction activities to be buffered from adjacent properties which do not share the same land uses;
- .6 Take steps to ensure key community hiking, biking and off-road vehicle trails are considered in future development and land use activities;
- .7 Support the protection of local watersheds;
- .8 Encourage minimal stream crossings;
- .9 Recognize the aesthetic, environmental and social values that forests provide and ensure adequate forest lands within the District are maintained;
- .10 Encourage a connected network of greenways and open space within the District through the establishment of community parks and trail systems;
- .11 Encourage aggregate extraction activities to consider, and mitigate against, potential impacts to adjacent lands; and
- .12 Support low-density residential uses on private lands designated Rural Resource.

## 5.0 IMPLEMENTATION

An OCP is a statement of objectives and policies to guide decisions on planning and land-use management. The OCP provides a long-term vision for the community, as well as guidance on how to achieve this vision. An OCP is a living document and should be reviewed periodically to ensure alignment with new trends within society and changing circumstances within the plan area boundaries. Recent changes to the *Local Government Act* do require an OCP be reviewed every 5 years when an updated housing needs report is received

In order to fulfill the vision expressed in this OCP, the policies contained in the previous sections must be implemented. The process of implementation includes many different elements, which reflect legislative authority, municipal procedures and Council policies. The following is a brief summary of common strategies and tools available to the District for OCP implementation.

### Map Schedules

This OCP is comprised of the following map schedules to help guide future growth and development within the District and implement the vision outlined in this plan:

- Schedule “B” Land Use illustrates the community’s vision for the location of future land uses within the District;
- Schedule “C” Infrastructure provides an overview of the District’s existing water, storm and Sanitary infrastructure servicing, as well as identifies areas of future improvements and expansion;
- Schedule “D” Environmentally Sensitive Areas illustrates mapped wetlands, steep slopes (greater than 20%), and riparian areas within the District;
- Schedule “E” Major Road Network and Trail Network outlines the existing road and travel network with the District, as well as identifies potential future roads; and
- Schedule “F” provides an overview of the Sand and Gravel Deposits within the District, including both the District’s Sand and Gravel Tenures and the Ministry of Transportation and Transit’s mapped sand and gravel reserves.

### Zoning Bylaw

The Zoning Bylaw is the primary tool that a municipality can use to implement the policies and plans in an OCP. Amendments to the District’s Zoning Bylaw may be necessary to ensure that it remains consistent with the policy direction set in the OCP. Uses that are not explicitly permitted in the District’s Zoning Bylaw may be permitted on a temporary basis through issuing of a Temporary Use Permit, as per the *Local Government Act*.

## ***Development Permit Areas***

Section 488 (1) of the *Local Government Act* states that an OCP may designate Development Permit Areas for the following purposes:

- a) Protection of the natural environment, its ecosystems and biological diversity;
- b) Protection of development from hazardous conditions;
- c) Protection of farming;
- d) Revitalization of an area in which a commercial use is permitted;
- e) Establishment of objectives for the form and character of intensive residential development;
- f) Establishment of objectives for the form and character of commercial, industrial or multi-family residential development;
- g) In relation to an area in a resort region, establishment of objectives for the form and character of development in the resort region;
- h) Establishment of objectives to promote energy conservation;
- i) Establishment of objectives to promote water conservation;
- j) Establishment of objectives to promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions; and
- k) Mitigation of the effects of displacement on tenants who will be or have been displaced from their rental units in relation to a redevelopment or proposed redevelopment, as those terms are defined under section 63.1 of the *Community Charter*.

While this OCP does not designate any such Development Permit Areas, consideration should be given to designating such areas in the future to address specific hazards, offer environmental protection or to implement form and character guidelines for areas such as the downtown core.

## **Development Approval Information**

Sections 484 – 487 of the *Local Government Act* allows a local government to specify and establish development approval information requests through an OCP. However, if an OCP includes such a provision, the local government must, by bylaw, establish procedures and policies on the process for requiring development approval information and the substance of the information required.

The District has not implemented any bylaws related to development approval considerations, nor is there an intention to do so at this time. However, the possibility of introducing such bylaws may be considered in the future.

## **Council Policies**

District Council may, by resolution, adopt policies in various subject areas affecting the implementation of the Official Community Plan.

All municipal plans, strategies, policies, bylaws and reports to Council prepared after the adoption of the OCP must include a “Context Statement” that:

- reference the objectives and policies of the OCP, and
- describes how the document contributes to the achievement of the OCP.

All municipal plans, strategies, policies, bylaws and staff recommendations to Council must be consistent with the Official Community Plan.

### ***Fiscal Program***

Implementation of many policies contained in this OCP depends on the expenditure of District funds. The Five-Year Financial Plan and annual reporting must reflect the policies of the OCP with regard to the physical infrastructure and action items.

### ***Organizational Capacity***

The effective implementation of this OCP will require the District to have stable staffing, governance and decision-making processes in place. New Hazelton recognizes this and has included organizational capacity as a strategic priority in the Council-driven 2022-2026 Strategic Priorities document. Specific objectives identified by the District in this regard include staff recruitment, staff training, staff retention and succession planning.

### ***Community Involvement***

Building public awareness and understanding of the objectives of the OCP and its policies are integral to achieving effective implementation. Community involvement in New Hazelton is essential to maximize community benefits and minimize negative impacts. The District will continue to work towards improving its communications and engagement practices in the implementation of this OCP.