



## REQUEST FOR DECISION

File # 3900-20

Report To: **Mayor and Council**  
From: **Jennifer Decker, Director of Development Services**  
Presenter: **Charly Caproff, Planner II**  
Subject: **Administration Report No. 0005/26**  
**Zoning Bylaw Update - Phase One**  
Meeting: **Committee of the Whole**  
Meeting Date: **March 23, 2026**

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### **CAO'S COMMENTS:**

N/A

### **OPTIONS:**

Following the adoption of the Fort St. John Official Community Plan in December 2025, an update to the Zoning Bylaw was required to incorporate the revised Development Permit Areas with guidelines and exceptions to ensure high quality development activity in Fort St. John.

### **DEFINE THE TOPIC:**

The City of Fort St. John Official Community Plan No. 2616, 2025 was adopted by City Council in December 2025. Amendments were made to the Development Permit Areas (DPA) and associated mapping as part of the OCP update. The OCP designates the DPA areas and describes the special conditions or objectives that justify the designation. Local governments have the option to list the DPA guidelines, which state how the development activity should occur given the special conditions or objectives in the DPA (e.g. protection of development from hazardous conditions or revitalization of an area in which a commercial use is permitted), in the Zoning Bylaw.

The Zoning Bylaw now must be updated to include the revised DPA designations, along with updated guidelines and exemptions that are streamlined and encourage high quality development activity in Fort St. John.

## **KEY INFORMATION:**

### **Project Scope**

#### Development Permit Area Guidelines

City staff will draft new and revise existing guidelines for the following Development Permit Areas, as specified in the OCP:

- Downtown Development Permit Area
- General Commercial Development Permit Area
- Highway and Service Corridor Development Permit Area
- Multiple Family Residential Development Permit Area
- Parkwood Southlands Development Permit Area

Improving community accessibility for seniors and those with disabilities emerged as a community priority during public engagement for the OCP. To support the DPA guideline amendments, the City of Fort St. John has retained WSP Canada Inc., who will provide City staff with technical memorandums. The goal is to create guidelines that incorporate accessible design principles; improve the provision of amenity space for multi-family residential developments; encourage high-quality, attractive residential and commercial developments; and create visual interest along the Alaska Highway, encouraging travelers to stop in Fort St. John.

#### Development Permit Area Exemptions

Revisions are proposed to the current DPA exemptions, to improve clarity of when a Facade Development Permit is required and to add exemptions for emergency works to prevent, control or reduce immediate threats to life or property, and works undertaken by the City of Fort St. John.

#### General Zoning Bylaw House-Keeping

City staff have kept a record of minor revisions that should be made to the Zoning Bylaw. These include adding definitions, rewording of zoning provisions to improve clarity, and removal of redundant or unnecessary wording. Some of these proposed revisions will be incorporated into phase one of this project. Staff are currently reviewing all zones and definitions as part of this work.

### **Tentative Timeline**

April - June 2026 - Open house(s) and online public engagement for the project

End of May 2026 - Final technical memo received from WSP; wrap-up of project

Monday, June 22, 2026 - draft Zoning Bylaw amendment presented to Council, public hearing scheduled (subject to Council resolution)

Monday, July 13, 2026 - Zoning Bylaw amendment receives a public hearing, third reading, and adoption (subject to comments from the public hearing and Council resolution)

## **RELEVANT OBSERVATIONS:**

N/A

**COMPLIANCE WITH STRATEGIC PILLARS:**

Vibrant Community – Invest in community safety, social, cultural, and recreational programs.

Economic Development – Enhance community economic development to provide opportunities and sustainability for Fort St. John.

Managing Assets – Build and manage assets that support the current and future needs of the community.

**COMPLIANCE WITH STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:**

Vibrant Community – Revisions to the DPA guidelines focus on improving site design and development standards, creating a more accessible, inviting neighbourhoods and commercial areas.

Economic Development – Revisions to the DPA guidelines and phase one house-keeping amendments prioritize streamlining of requirements and improving bylaw clarity. By making the Zoning Bylaw more user-friendly, the intention is to encourage development activity in Fort St. John.

Managing Assets – As our population grows and economic conditions change, it is important to have a Zoning Bylaw that supports community needs and priorities.

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION:**

- Feedback on project timeline
- Comments on project scope

**DETERMINED DESIRED OUTCOMES  
(If the essential question is answered)**

**KEY RESULT:**

Development permit area guidelines that are clear, visual, streamlined and objective (where suitable).

**UNINTENDED OUTCOMES:**

Development permit area guidelines that do not achieve the stated objectives.

**DEPARTMENTS CONSULTED ON THIS REPORT to achieve the key results (pros and cons)**

N/A

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment 1: Zoning Bylaw Phase One Presentation

**RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:**

Charly Caproff, Planner II



# Zoning Bylaw Update

March 23, 2026



# Background

## OCP and Zoning Bylaw

- OCP adopted Dec. 8, 2025
- Update prioritized revisions to DPAs and DPA mapping
- Guidelines and exemptions remain in the Zoning Bylaw
- Zoning Bylaw to be updated in phases



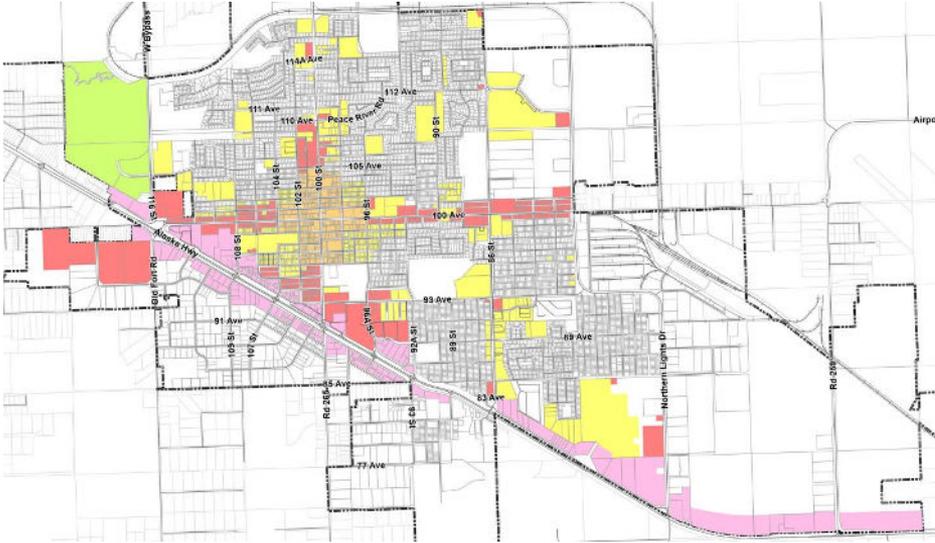
# What are DPAs?

## High-Quality Future Development

- Areas in the City where new development activity should meet form and character, hazard, or environmental protection guidelines.
- Guidelines may encourage pedestrian-friendly, attractive store frontages in the downtown, new multi-family residential development to integrate with the existing neighbourhood character, and/or protection of sensitive/endangered ecosystems.



# Form and Character DPAs



## Legend

- Municipal Boundary
- Parcel Lots
- Form and Character Development Permit Areas**
  - Downtown Development Permit Area
  - General Commercial Development Permit Area
  - Highway and Service Corridor Development Permit Area
  - Multiple Family Residential Development Permit Area
  - Parkwood Southlands Development Permit Area
- Railway



# Project Scope

## DPA Form and Character

- Accessibility improvements
- Site layout and urban design
- Landscaping

## Priorities

- Clear
- Visual
- Streamlined
- Objective (where suitable)



# Project Scope

## DPA Exemptions

- Minor alterations or additions
- Emergency works
- SSMUH development

## House-Keeping

- Staff review of zones, definitions, and minor wording revisions to improve clarity



## Tentative Timeline

Zoning Bylaw Phase One



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Thank you

