



**Fort Smith**  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

# Fort Smith Community Plan & Zoning Bylaw

Community Visit #2

May 14 - 17, 2024



# Project Overview & Timeline



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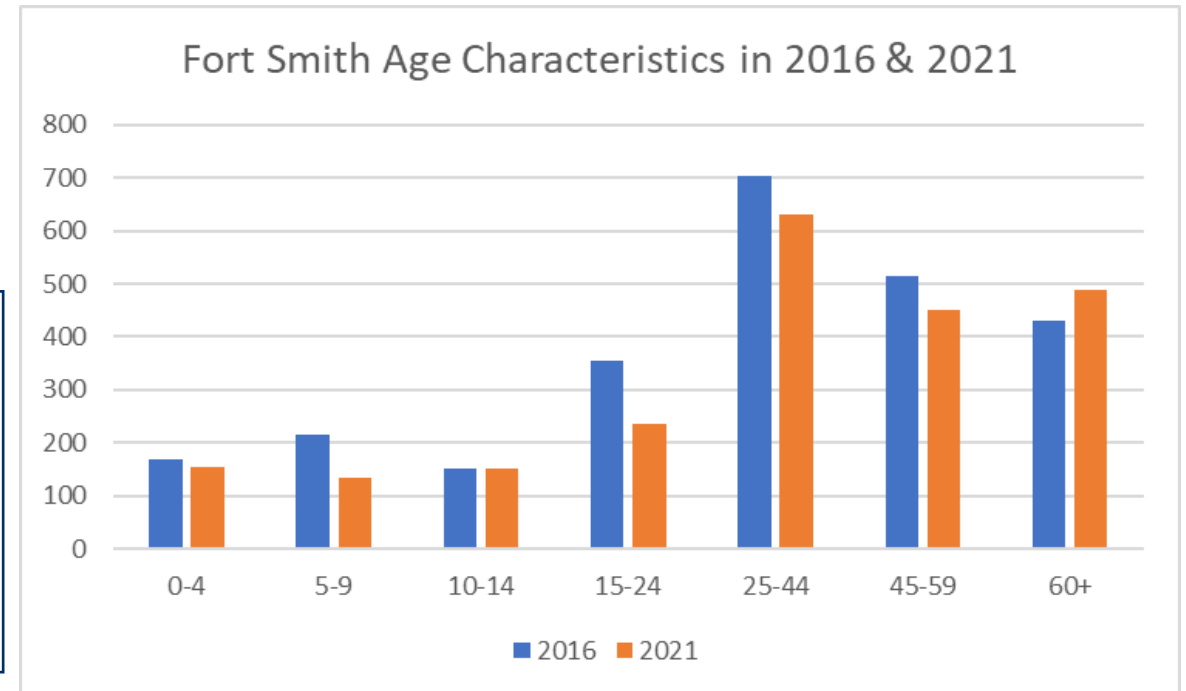
# Background Research

**Population** - in 2021 the Census population of Fort Smith was 2,418 people. Over the last 20 years, the population of Fort Smith has remained relatively stable.

**Shadow Population** - Aurora College students and staff, as well as inmates of the Fort Smith Correctional Complex, represent approximately 300 to 500 people at any given time.

**Future Trends** - 2018 – 2035 population projection suggests the population of Fort Smith should remain relatively stable, but will experience a slight decrease from 2018 to 2035.

**Demographics** – about 30% of residents are aged 25-44. Trend shows a decline in all age cohorts except for those aged 60+. As the population grows older, there will likely be more demand for supportive housing as well as greater consideration for community accessibility.



# Background Research

**Households** - there are 881 occupied households in the Town of Fort Smith.

Approximately 62.5 % of homes in Fort Smith are owned by the occupants, with the remainder being renters. The median value of an owned home is about \$262,000, which is below the territorial average of \$352,000.

## 2023 Fort Smith Housing Needs Assessment

- 33 households are on a waiting list for public housing;
- 40 additional market rental units are needed;
- 100 additional housing units are needed for Aurora College Thebacha Campus students and staff; and
- Overall, at least 225 housing units are required in Fort Smith to meet current housing needs.

### Land Use Supply and Demand

- there is enough supply available for all population and residential density mixes.
- there is more than enough commercial and industrial land supply to satisfy population growth to 3,200.



# Proposed New Goals and Strategic Objectives

## Proposed New Vision:

The Town of Fort Smith will be a healthy and vibrant community that provides residents with a high quality of life through promotion of efficient land use and service delivery, and the preservation and enhancement of heritage, culture, and the natural environment, while still retaining its small-town feel.

## New Community Plan Priority Goals

The Priority Goals are:

1. Promote a variety of housing options;
2. Build a strong, local and diverse economy;
3. Preserve and enhance the culture of Fort Smith and its people;
4. Promote a healthy, connected and active community;
5. Protect our natural environment; and
6. Provide high quality services and infrastructure.

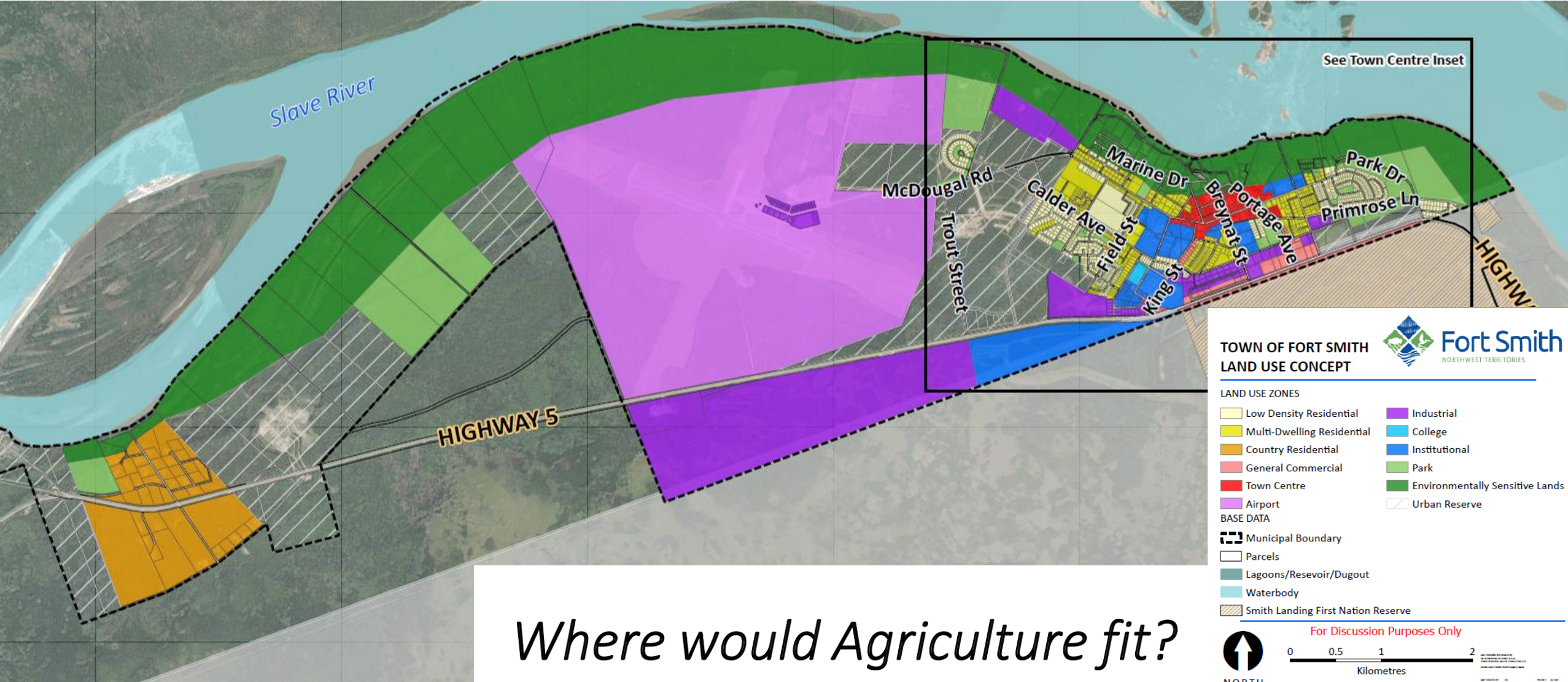
## New Community Plan Objective

The Objectives are:

1. Provide specific objectives and policies that will guide future development taking growth and the effect on existing municipal services into account;
2. Establish the type, location and rate of future community growth including re-development within Town;
3. Establish land use objectives and strategies that will guide Council on decisions with respect to land use development, by describing locations for development and redevelopment to meet future needs;
4. Identify available land for future development to meet demand and allow for economic development and growth;
5. Provide opportunities for various modes of transportation within the Town;
6. Protect environmentally sensitive lands and provide green spaces and recreation areas for residents and visitors.



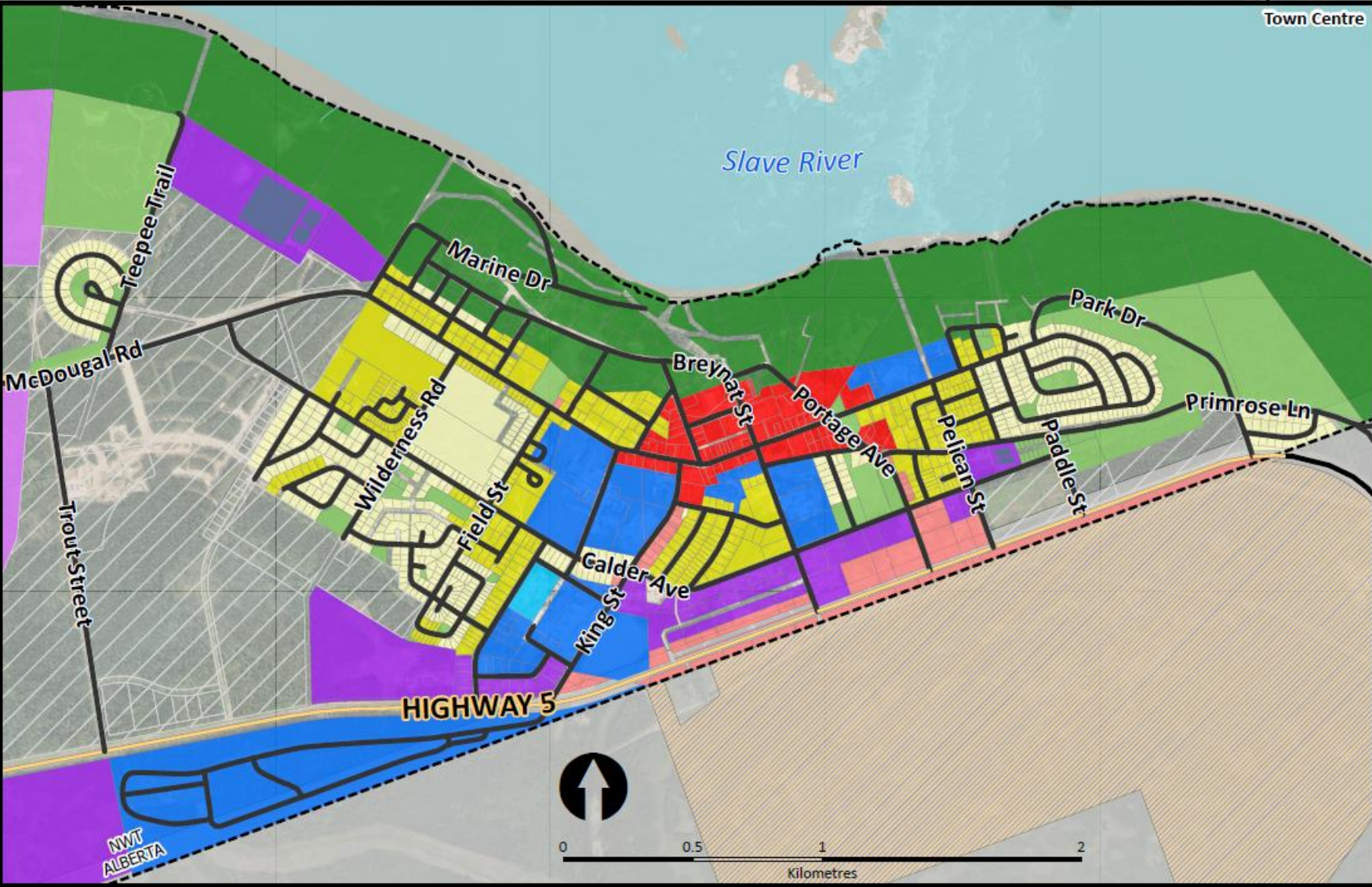
# Proposed Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw Concept



*Where would Agriculture fit?*



# Proposed Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw Concept



**TOWN OF FORT SMITH  
LAND USE CONCEPT**



**LAND USE ZONES**

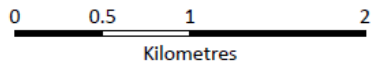
- Low Density Residential
- Multi-Dwelling Residential
- Country Residential
- General Commercial
- Town Centre
- Airport
- Industrial
- College
- Institutional
- Park
- Environmentally Sensitive Lands
- Urban Reserve

**BASE DATA**

- Municipal Boundary
- Parcels
- Lagoons/Reservoir/Dugout
- Waterbody
- Smith Landing First Nation Reserve






For Discussion Purposes Only



# Proposed Residential Objectives and Policies

## Proposed Residential Zone Types

-  Low Density Residential
-  Multi-Dwelling Residential
-  Country Residential

Objectives	Policies
1. Have a diversity of housing options available for residents.	a) The Town will encourage the development of a variety of residential lots and housing types. b) Approved subdivisions will include lots of various sizes to facilitate development of various housing types.
2. Maintain an inventory of land where dwelling units can be built.	a) The Town will ensure that enough land is available to meet demand for residential development.
3. Reduce vacant and derelict housing in existing residential areas.	a) Council will promote the development of vacant residential lots and the redevelopment of lots with derelict buildings.
4. Maintain an appropriate drainage system so that surface water is directed away from new development and existing structures to existing watercourses.	a) As a part of climate change mitigation and infrastructure management, new development will connect to the existing drainage system to collect and redirect surface water away from existing infrastructure and known areas where water will pool.
5. Improve the safety and efficiency of residential lot development.	a) All lot layouts shall consider the location of the residential unit, accessory structures, parking, service vehicle access, traditional uses, and appropriate lot line setbacks while having regard for FireSmart planning.





# Low Density Zone

## Proposed Uses

Permitted Uses	Discretionary Uses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Accessory Building</li> <li>✓ Accessory Use</li> <li>✓ Care Home</li> <li>✓ Caterer (Commercial)</li> <li>✓ Community Garden and Greenhouse</li> <li>✓ Cultural Uses</li> <li>✓ Dwelling – Single Detached</li> <li>✓ Dwelling – Secondary Dwelling</li> <li>✓ Dwelling – Duplex</li> <li>✓ Dwelling – Manufactured Home</li> <li>✓ Dwelling – Modular Home</li> <li>✓ Dwelling – Seniors Housing Facility</li> <li>✓ Dwelling – Mixed Use Building</li> <li>✓ Historical Site</li> <li>✓ Home Occupation</li> <li>✓ Neighbourhood Convenience Store</li> <li>✓ Parks and Playgrounds</li> <li>✓ Place of Worship</li> <li>✓ Public Utility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Day care facility</li> <li>• Temporary use or building</li> </ul>

## Current – Single Detached Dwelling Residential Requirements

	Permitted or Conditional Uses
Minimum Site Area:	557 sq.m.
Maximum Lot Coverage:	30%
Minimum Front Yard Setback:	6.0 m
Minimum Rear Yard Setback:	4.0 m
Minimum Side Yard Setback:	1.5 m
Maximum Building Height:	10.5 m



# Multi-Dwelling Residential Zone

## Proposed uses

Permitted Uses	Discretionary Uses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Accessory Building</li> <li>✓ Accessory Use</li> <li>✓ Care Home</li> <li>✓ Caterer (Commercial)</li> <li>✓ Community Garden and Greenhouse</li> <li>✓ Cultural Uses</li> <li>✓ Dwelling – Duplex</li> <li>✓ Dwelling – Multiple Unit</li> <li>✓ Dwelling – Seniors Housing Facility</li> <li>✓ Dwelling – Mixed Use Building</li> <li>✓ Historical Site</li> <li>✓ Home Occupation</li> <li>✓ Neighbourhood Convenience Store</li> <li>✓ Parks and Playgrounds</li> <li>✓ Place of Worship</li> <li>✓ Public Utility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Day care facility</li> <li>• Temporary use or building</li> </ul>

## Current – Multi Dwelling Residential Requirements

	Dwelling type		
	Single Detached Duplex Semi Detached	Row houses	Apartments
minimum site area	557 m <sup>2</sup>	930 m <sup>2</sup>	800 m <sup>2</sup>
maximum lot coverage	30%	30%	30%
minimum lot width	n/a	n/a	n/a
minimum front yard	6 m	6 m	8 m
minimum side yard	1.5 m	3 m	4 m
minimum rear yard	4 m	4 m	8 m
maximum building height	10.5 m	10.5 m	12 m



# Country Residential Zone

## Proposed uses

Permitted Uses		Discretionary Uses
✓ Accessory Building	✓ Dwelling – Mixed Use Building	• Automotive Service Station
✓ Accessory Use	✓ Eating Establishment	• Hotel and Motel
✓ Care Home	✓ Educational Facility	• Temporary Use or Building
✓ Caterer (Commercial)	✓ Historical Site	
✓ Community Garden and Greenhouse	✓ Home Occupation	
✓ Cultural Uses	✓ library	
✓ Day Care Facility	✓ Medical and Health Services	
✓ Dwelling – Single Detached	✓ Museum	
✓ Dwelling – Secondary Dwelling	✓ Office	
✓ Dwelling – Duplex	✓ Parks and Playgrounds	
✓ Dwelling – Manufactured Home	✓ Personal Services	
✓ Dwelling – Modular Home	✓ Place of Worship	
✓ Dwelling – Multiple Unit	✓ Public or Quasi-Public Use or Building	
✓ Dwelling – Seniors Housing Facility	✓ Public Utility	
	✓ Recreational Facility	
	✓ Retail Store	

## Current– Country Residential Requirements

Minimum Site Area:	1.2 hectares
Minimum Lot Width:	45 m
Minimum Front Yard Setback:	15 m
Minimum Rear Yard Setback:	15 m
Minimum Side Yard Setback:	6 m
Maximum building height	10 m



# Discussion on home-based business/occupations

Operates out of a residential location. This includes businesses where you may be working in different areas throughout the town, but administrative activities are done in the home. Some examples of home-based businesses include;

- online retail,
- contracting,
- cleaning services,
- photography, and
- catering.

*Some businesses may be more visible and involve customers and/or employees coming to the home.*

## Proposed Rules

1. Business must comply fully with the regulations of the Zoning Bylaw.
2. Total floor area of any accessory building (garage, shed) needed for business operations (maximum limit is 60 m<sup>2</sup>).
3. Total number of employees working on site at the same time who do not reside in the dwelling is 2.
4. Any trailer used as on-site storage is limited to 1 and can be no larger than 5.5 m x 2.6 m in size.
5. Business vehicles (those with a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating of 4,600 kg or less) cannot be parked on site for any longer than is necessary to load or unload the vehicle.
6. No commercial equipment or materials can be stored outdoors.
7. No outdoor speakers or amplification systems allowed.
8. No outdoor business activity (except for Home Based Child Care)
9. Dangerous goods, industrial vehicles, equipment and materials are prohibited
10. The business does not include any noxious, offensive or objectionable uses.



# Proposed Agricultural Zone

## Proposed Definition

The use of the land for agricultural purposes such as the raising of crops and livestock. May include accessory uses for packing, treating, or storing produce.

Objectives	Policies
1. To reduce the burden of food insecurity on the population of Fort Smith.	<p>a) Council and administration will support initiatives that increase food security in the community.</p> <p>b) The Town will partner with local groups to maintain community gardens aimed at serving populations most in need.</p>
2. Encourage local food production.	<p>a) Where appropriate, food production practices shall be allowed within the Town. This includes but is not limited to agriculture, greenhouses, and traditional practices such as harvesting and hunting.</p> <p>b) Council and administration will support the development of regulations to permit the keeping of chickens in residential areas.</p>
3. Agriculture Support	<p>a) The Town shall support a viable agricultural economy by allowing different types and sizes of agricultural operations.</p>

Permitted Uses	Discretionary Uses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Accessory Building</li> <li>✓ Accessory Use</li> <li>✓ Agricultural Use</li> <li>✓ Caterer (Commercial)</li> <li>✓ Community Garden and Greenhouse</li> <li>✓ Dwelling – Single Detached</li> <li>✓ Dwelling – Secondary Dwelling</li> <li>✓ Dwelling – Manufactured Home</li> <li>✓ Dwelling – Modular Home</li> <li>✓ Home Occupation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temporary use or building</li> </ul>

## Where in Town would the Agriculture Designation fit?



# Proposed Town Center Objectives and Policies

Objectives	Policies
1. To encourage mixed-use development in the core of the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Council and administration will work with other development stakeholders to promote mixed-use development.</li> <li>b) The development permitting process will be made flexible to allow for a variety of residential, commercial and community uses in the Community Core area.</li> </ul>
2. To recognize the Community Core as a hub for residents and visitors alike.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The Community Government will promote the development of commercial, cultural and tourism uses in this area.</li> </ul>
3. To improve accessibility to the Community Core for all residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Walking and cycling infrastructure within and connecting to the Community Core area will be improved.</li> </ul>
4. To direct new commercial development to the Community Core area where appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The Community Government will encourage new commercial developments to consider existing vacant or underutilized surveyed lots in the existing Community Core area for development before new Commercial areas are developed.</li> </ul>
5. To explore opportunities for promotion of local culture in the Community Core.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The Town will work residents and key stakeholders/organizations to find opportunities for cultural or historic displays in the Community Core.</li> </ul>

# Proposed Commercial Objectives and Policies

Objectives	Policies
1. Reduce the number of existing vacant commercial lots.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The Town will encourage the (re)development of vacant commercial lots prior to pursuing commercial development in other areas.</li> </ul>
2. Increase the diversity of business types.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The Town will support a variety of commercial uses in the community by providing a flexible permitting process.</li> </ul>
3. Reduce barriers for small businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Commercial lots should be provided in a variety of sizes to support businesses of various sizes and intensity.</li> </ul>
4. Allow for mixed-use, multi-purpose buildings within the Town.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The Town will allow for mixed-use properties that allow the construction of residential units about commercial units in accordance with the policies of the Zoning Bylaw.</li> </ul>
5. Support economic diversification.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The Town should pursue opportunities to diversify the local and regional economic base by promoting and attracting value-added industries and by working with Olds College to develop industries related to the College's areas of educational focus and expertise.</li> </ul>



# Proposed College Campus Zone

Objectives	Policies
1. Work with Aurora College Thebacha Campus to provide sufficient land supply on which the college and related institutional buildings can be situated.	<p>a) Ensure Aurora College is supplied with enough land to meet its ongoing needs.</p> <p>b) Work with College staff to subdivide or develop land for new College-related uses, as necessary.</p>
2. Develop and maintain partnerships for economic development, including a strong relationship with Olds College.	<p>a) When possible, coordinate to develop components of Aurora College within other parts of the Town.</p> <p>b) The Town should pursue opportunities to diversify the local economic base by promoting and attracting value-added industries, and by working with Aurora College to develop industries related to its areas of educational focus and expertise.</p>
3. Ensure the college campus has the necessary services and businesses to meet the needs of students.	<p>a) Allow the operation of businesses within the College Campus that support students and faculty.</p> <p>b) Allow commercial uses that demonstrate a training and applied learning connection to one or more academic programs offered by the College.</p>
4. Improve accessibility within the campus as well as connections to other parts of the Town.	<p>a) Walking infrastructure connecting College Campus lands to other areas will be improved by the Town or developers.</p>

Permitted Uses	Discretionary Uses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Accessory buildings</li> <li>✓ Accessory uses</li> <li>✓ Accessory retail sales</li> <li>✓ College uses &amp; activities permitted by the Post-secondary Institution</li> <li>✓ Day care</li> <li>✓ Dwelling – Duplex</li> <li>✓ Dwelling – Multiple Unit</li> <li>✓ Dwelling – Mixed Use Building</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Educational residences</li> <li>✓ Financial Services</li> <li>✓ Fitness Centre</li> <li>✓ Joint use facilities</li> <li>✓ Libraries</li> <li>✓ Mechanized excavation, stripping and grading</li> <li>✓ Recreation facilities</li> <li>✓ Parks and playgrounds</li> <li>✓ Parking facilities</li> <li>✓ Public utility buildings</li> <li>✓ Schools</li> <li>✓ Signs</li> <li>✓ Staff residences</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any use that is similar, in the opinion of the development authority, to the permitted uses described in this section.</li> </ul>	



# Proposed Institutional Objectives and Policies

Objectives	Policies
1. Improve accessibility to Institutional areas.	a) Walking infrastructure linking institutional lands to other areas of Town will be improved by the Town or developers identified at development permit or subdivision.
2. Consider the development of new or expanded community amenities.	a) Council and administration will support the development of community food programs including gardens, and greenhouses.
3. Maintain the Town of Fort Smith Cemetery.	a) The Town shall maintain the cemeteries including the maintenance of a map identifying grave names.
4. Manage the orderly development of new Institutional uses.	a) Community uses that cannot be accommodated within the existing built area should be located within the Future Growth Area.
5. Consult the community on locations of new Institutional facilities.	a) Council and administration will consult with residents on the preferred location for new Institution (Community Uses) and facilities.
6. Make use of vacant and/or underutilized Institutional areas	a) Council and administration will support re-development former library building, old fire hall (should new one be developed) and other such assets.

# Proposed Industrial Objectives and Policies

Objectives	Policies
1. Encourage the development of industrial land with appropriate uses.	a) The Town will promote the development of its industrial lands with appropriate uses. b) The Town will ensure that existing industrial lots are developed prior to the creation of new lots for industrial uses.
2. Maintain an inventory of lands where industrial activities may expand to or occur.	a) The Town will preserve industrial designated lands for industrial uses.
3. Consider how the future landscape of industrial land needs might shift.	a) As new types of industry are proposed, Council and administration will at their discretion deem them suitable or not suitable for industrial lands.
4. Reduce the nuisance impacts of industrial activities on the community.	a) Development in industrial areas shall be buffered with vegetation or natural landscaping along road frontages and along lot lines abutting land uses which are not industrial in nature. Where possible, these buffers should preserve existing vegetation.





# Proposed Park and Open Space Objectives and Policies

Objectives	Policies
1. To preserve access to parks and recreation areas.	a) Walking and cycling infrastructure within and connecting to Community Use Areas will be improved.
2. Consider the development of new or expanded community amenities.	a) Council and administration will support the development of amenities identified to best suit the needs of the Town. b) Council and administration will support the development of a fenced dog park.
3. Protect existing parks and green spaces.	a) All existing trails, parks, and playgrounds shall be maintained to a standard appropriate to the Town.
4. Explore the possible tourism-related opportunities in the area.	a) The Town will consider incentives to establish tourism-related services. b) The Town will look at ways that the administrative burden of operating in the tourism sector in and around Fort Smith can be lessened.

# Proposed Environmentally Sensitive Areas Objectives and Policies

Objectives	Policies
1. Protect the environmentally sensitive lands in the Town.	a) No new permanent development shall be permitted on these lands. b) No new or temporary roads shall be permitted in the identified environmentally sensitive areas. c) Removing or cutting vegetation within ESAs shall be restricted unless necessary for FireSmart activities.
2. Monitor threats to Environmentally Sensitive Areas.	a) The Town will monitor the Environmentally Sensitive areas for concerns or threats. b) The Town will provide information to the community about flood risks and erosion risks.
3. Allow for land use activities that do not negatively impact environmentally sensitive areas.	a) The Town may allow low-impact development in environmentally sensitive areas such as parks, trails, or small structures for recreational or educational purposes.
4. Provide access to the shoreline for all.	a) Any new residential developments and major developments on existing lots shall be set back from the ordinary high-water mark by at least 30.0 metres.



# Proposed Fire Break Objectives and Policies

Objectives	Policies
1. Develop Firebreaks within Town of Fort Smith	a) Create areas of open space to act as a barrier to slow or stop the progress of a bushfire or wildfire
2. Maintain Firebreaks within Town of Fort Smith	<p>a) Maintain a strip of open space no less than #m wide to act as a barrier to slow or stop the progress of a bushfire or wildfire</p> <p>b) Keep areas clear of vegetation or other combustible materials</p> <p>c) New development within and adjacent to the Fire Break areas shall be subject to the Fire Chief.</p>
3. Prohibit land uses that interfere with the maintenance and functionality of FireBreaks.	<p>a) The Town shall review applications for development adjacent to and near Firebreaks to prevent undue impact on their maintenance and functionality</p> <p>b) Uses in the locations surrounding the airport and aerodrome shall not be permitted if they impede maintenance and functionality of FireBreaks, as decided by the Town's Fire Chief.</p>

# Proposed Airport Objectives and Policies

Objectives	Policies
1. Maintain existing airport functionality.	a) New development within and adjacent to the airport shall be subject to the most current Transport Canada regulations for the operation of an airport.
2. Prohibit land uses that interfere with the safe operation of the airport.	<p>a) The Town shall review applications for development adjacent to and near the airport to prevent undue impact on their operations.</p> <p>b) Uses in the locations surrounding the airport and aerodrome shall not be permitted if they impede the safe operation of the airport in any way. Such uses may include but are not limited to the creation of steam or smoke, uses which attract wildlife or birds, or uses which create electronic interference.</p> <p>c) Buildings and structures surrounding the airport may be limited in height in accordance with the policies of the Land Use Bylaw.</p>

