



North Peace Fringe Area - Official Community Plan

Community Questionnaire (February 2006)

SUMMARY

In February 2006, 510 questionnaires were sent out to residents/owners of the planning area. Responses were received from 160 individuals (3 week deadline period extended by one week) representing a response rate of 31%. The results of the questionnaire provided insight to the opinions of some residents and owners of the planning area, in order to assist in guiding growth in the community for the next 5 years.

Respondent Profile

The 'respondent profile' section of the questionnaire sought to find out background information about the residents living within the North Peace Fringe area, with the following summarized:

- the majority of respondents have lived in the plan area for **over 20 years**
- are property **owners** rather than renters
- almost an even number of female respondents as males
- most common number of **persons per household** is 2
- are between the **ages of 45 - 64 years**
- the 3 most common places of residency are **Charlie Lake, Mcleod Sub. and Airport Sub.**
- the majority reside on **residential lots** ranging between **4.5 to 10 acres** in size
- the majority of respondents **place of work** is inside the **City of Fort St. John**

Community - Land Use Issues

The following reflects the respondent's feelings about their community: parcel size preferred for residential use, their familiarity with the ALR and what housing type and services are a priority:

- **rural Residential** (from 4.5 to 20 acres) lots are preferred for new residential development
- **large Holding** (greater than 155 acres) lots are not needed for residential development
- resident's knowledge about the ALR was evenly distributed across the scale from being Highly familiar to not familiar, therefore, **more information about the ALR is needed**
- **single Family Dwelling** (72%) is the Highest priority given to housing type', next to affordable and senior housing
- 58% of respondents felt consideration for **sewer and water services** be given to the rural area

The respondent's feelings relating to the type of **land use development that will promote a healthy community** are summarized as follows:

- provide more **sewer services** (26) *No's in brackets indicates frequency of topic addressed by different respondents*
- allow for more residential development (22)
- preserve and protect agricultural productive lands (21)
- provide for water services (18)
- maintain and enhance public facilities, such as trails, parks and ice arenas (15)
- retain the rural character; quiet family living (11)
- restrict the amount of oil and gas development (9)
- separate industrial development from residential areas (9)

Other facilities or improvements mentioned included: road maintenance, clearly written official community plans, enforcement issues, and protection of air, water and the natural environment.

The majority of respondents indicated that the three **(3) most important assets** desired in the rural fringe area were: 1) Water and Sewer Services 2) Road improvements/maintenance and 3) Recreation facilities, ie trails

Economy

Regarding the economy, the participating respondents expressed concern about the importance of **preserving agricultural land** and working toward a **balanced point for residential development** in the rural fringe area, with support for Home Based Business in the residential areas provided they were **non-intrusive and limited in size**. In relation to the businesses operating in the fringe area, there was **strong support for the establishment of guidelines to manage the form and character of commercial/industrial development**. Further, an indication of **strong support was given to the Regional District to work with other authorities to manage oil and gas activities** in the fringe area with management approaches to focus on restricting oil and gas activity next to residential areas (41) in addition to a high level of concern relating back to human health and air quality (14). Other common management options suggested were:

- directional drilling or no drilling near residential areas
- establish setback distances between residential areas and oil/gas facilities
- independent monitoring of activities in order to hold the companies responsible

Environment

The importance of **protecting the natural environment was strongly supported** by the respondents who suggested that it would be beneficial to **establish guidelines near any water sources, next to oil and gas facilities and along wildlife corridors**. Further, it was clear that the majority of questionnaire participants felt that the **3 most important environmental concerns or issues** for the rural fringe area were: **Oil and Gas contamination, Air pollution and Water Protection**.

Regarding **recreational facilities or opportunities** for this area, the majority of respondents indicated they would like to see **more trails (walking, riding and biking)** developed, with the next issue of importance focusing on the maintenance of existing facilities and the retention of public access or improvement to waterways.

Finally, the open ended question offered respondents a space to express concerns or issues relating to their community and highlighted the following **main themes**:

- environmental Protection
- recreation facilities - more trails and arenas (ice surface and horse back riding areas)
- road maintenance /upgrades and safety issues
- more services to residential areas (sewer and water)
- plan for more residential development in the rural fringe area
- restrict oil and gas activities near residential areas
- direct industrial/commercial development to highway corridors with established guidelines
- lack of Enforcement by Regional District
- protection of the agricultural industry

A full copy of the Questionnaire Report Results can be obtained at the Regional District office in Fort St. John.

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