



FORT CHIPEWYAN AREA STRUCTURE PLAN

ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY DRAFT

May 2015 – March 2016

Updated February 14, 2018



Engagement Overview

A series of engagements was held between May 2015 and March 2016. The intent was to re-engage the community of Fort Chipewyan on the Area Structure Plan, to identify or confirm issues, and to reflect those in an updated plan. A number of meetings and other engagements were held, and include:

- meetings with representatives from First Nations and Métis leadership
- meetings with local community groups (e.g., Nunee Health, volunteer fire department and others)
- workshops with municipal employees
- open houses for all members of the community

A full list of engagements is provided:

- May 6, 2015, open house attended by multiple municipal departments (Planning, Bylaw, Parks, and Indigenous & Rural Relations)
- October 2, 2015, meeting with ACFN Special Projects lead and Community Engagement Coordinator
- October 2, 2015, meeting with Mikisew Cree First Nation (MCFN) CEO and Senior Advisor to Council
- November 20, 2015, meeting with MCFN representative from Mikisew Technical Services
- November 27, 2015, email feedback from Parks Canada
- December 9, 2015, meeting with ACFN Special Projects lead and Community Engagement Coordinator
- December 10, 2015, drop-in to Keyano College
- December 10, 2015, meeting with Métis Local 125 President, Office Manager and Consultant
- February 3, 2016, meeting with ACFN Special Projects lead
- February 4, 2016, meeting with MCFN CEO and representative from Mikisew Technical Services
- February 4, 2016, meeting with Métis Local 125 President, Office Manager and Consultant
- March 2-3, 2016 meeting with Athabasca Delta School staff
- March 2-3, 2016 workshops with RMWB staff
- March 3, 2016 meeting with Elders at MCFN Elder Care Centre
- March 3, 2016 meeting with Nunee Health staff
- March 3, 2016 meeting with volunteer fire fighters
- March 4, 2016 meeting with Métis Elders at Métis Local 125 office
- March 4, 2016 meetings with Bicentennial Museum staff, Northern Store Manager, Pool Hall Owner, and RCMP staff
- March 4, 2016 open house (held at arena during hockey game)

Document Organization

This document summarizes the comments received from these engagements. Comments are summarized and organized under four key themes (topic areas).

THEME 1: PROTECT THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

WHAT WE HEARD ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT

- Water pollution, air pollution and decreasing lake levels are concerns; water pollution and impacts from oil sands and hydroelectric developments are threatening aquatic environment and the ability to consume fish.
- Decreasing lake levels are threatening the viability of water transport.
- There should be rules for industry to not pollute Lake Athabasca.
- Lake Athabasca should be opened for commercial fishing again.
- Trails are being impacted by quads and heavy equipment, damaging vegetation, traditional areas and strawberry picking areas.
- Traditional land uses are important, but most occur outside the hamlet boundary.
- There are concerns about the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan (LARP), which proposes development of the Richardson Backcountry for public and commercial uses (e.g., cabins, docks, ATV trails, etc.). First Nations claim these lands as traditional lands and oppose development.



WHAT WE HEARD ABOUT THE LAKEFRONT AREA

- This area should remain residential, we don't want to see the area transition to more tourism uses. Tourism uses along Lucas Avenue were proposed in a previous version of the ASP. *(In an informal poll of those engaged between March 2 and 4, 24 of 33 respondents replied that residential development next to the waterfront area should remain 'as is' and not transition to more tourism uses).*
- There is value in keeping the waterfront area natural.
- Waterfront is most important and attractive place in Fort Chipewyan.
- Waterfront is used by people arriving by canoe.
- Protect the land for traditional land uses along waterfront area.
- Concern about water quality and the water level of Lake Athabasca and in the lakefront area.

WHAT WE HEARD ABOUT AMENITIES IN THE LAKEFRONT AREA

- Don't want to see hotels and apartments along the waterfront, B&Bs are alright.
- Recreation uses in this area are fine, they can help boost tourism.
- Amenities are needed: washrooms/change areas, picnic tables, fire pit, lighting, garbage containers, plaques/interpretive signage and trails. The community would like input on the exact amenities as there were conflicting opinions about the amenities and scale of improvements desired.
- Would like to see more docks and dredging of the Lake.
- More maintenance and cleaning is needed in the area.
- Some people would like to see the Sundance structures relocated.
- Mixed opinions on the Place-Making installations (e.g., boulders, boardwalk area, Monument Hill platform and stairs), some like them and others do not.
- Mixed opinions about a waterfront trail; some would like a walking trail linking Dog Head Reserve to Monument Hill, while others do not think a trail is needed; general concerns with ATV being used on trails and a need for enforcement.



THEME 2: RESIDENTIAL, COMMERCIAL AND OTHER DEVELOPMENT AREAS

WHAT WE HEARD ABOUT RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING

- Many types of households are in need of housing: young families, singles, elders, workers/staff, persons who don't qualify for band housing, members of the Métis community.
- Lots of people are living in multi-generational situations to 'make do.'
- Many people want to come back to Fort Chipewyan but can't find housing/land; the number of people is unknown.
- Small houses and low-income housing are needed.
- You should ask owners in each area what types of housing and densities they want to see.
- Mixed opinions about higher density / multi-family housing
 - Many respondents felt that multi-family housing should go anywhere because housing is badly needed. *(In an informal poll of those engaged between March 2 and 4, 2016, 25 of 40 respondents replied that apartments and townhouses ("higher-density housing") should be allowed in all residential areas).*
 - Some residents expressed concerns about multi-family housing in single family areas.
 - Existing higher density forms of housing (e.g., duplexes, 6-plexes) found in the community are generally acceptable;
 - Multi-family housing needs to have adequate parking for vehicles, boats, etc.
 - People want to walk on grass; row houses are better because you can have a small yard.
 - Concerns about more disturbances and noise.
 - Concerns with building taller than 2 stories; fire department may not be able to respond; more training and equipment needed for responders.
 - Housing above storefronts won't work because there's not enough business growth to support a strip mall.



- Mixed opinions about additional single detached housing in the downtown; some don't want single family homes using up large lots, while others felt that existing homes should be grandfathered in and that mobile homes are a reality in Fort Chipewyan.
- Mixed opinions about infill development (use of vacant lots)
 - Need for housing and lack of land means infill is needed.
 - Housing options like suites and garden suites might work for some.
 - Don't like infill because lots are not accessible: people are not willing to sell their vacant lots, many lots held by families for a long time, or are owned by the Federal Government for band members only.
 - Vacant lots are not easy to develop, may be costly, have constraints and are difficult to consolidate (if scattered) to create multi-family housing.
 - Concerns about being too close to neighbors, crowding.
 - The real issue is a lack of willing sellers, not a lack of land.
 - Some owners are trying to sell their lots at high prices (e.g., \$100,000) but there are no buyers at those prices.
- Strong desire for new lands
 - There is likely limited but vocal demand for country residential lots; there is a preference for un-serviced, 2+ acres lots; the Municipality should subdivide land and make it available for individuals to develop.
 - Sandy Bay/McDermott Avenue area is ideal; did Municipality ever study the northern tip of Sandy Bay?
 - New areas are expensive to develop, and there are no places to grow due to outcrops, muskeg, etc.
 - Concerns that only a few (e.g., mainly the First Nations) would be able to afford to develop; there is no developer interest.
 - Concern about whether the proposed costs reported by the Municipality's technical studies are true, costs seem too high.
- Workers housing
 - We need a worker housing, hotels, lodges and B&Bs.
 - Prefer to keep work camps away from town; camps cause social issues when not well managed.



- Temporary worker housing could look nicer, blend into the neighbourhood better (e.g., with patios, amenities); we need it as permanent housing, not typical trailer-style housing.
- We can use Yellowknife as an example, they have similar land characteristics. Why do we not use the same concept/ideas?
- Wood Buffalo Housing should invest in Fort Chipewyan.

WHAT WE HEARD ABOUT A PROPOSED MIXED-USE CORE AREA

- Overall, there is support for a mixed use Core area and the uses being proposed (commercial, institutional, residential).
- A wide range of uses are desired: gas station, mechanic garage, personal services, cafés, multi-use building, banks, offices, health services, recreation, business incubator, etc.
- Mixed opinions about allowing housing, including additional single family housing and higher density housing, in the Core area.
- Many downtown lots may not be available for residential development.
- Industrial uses are generally not desired in the Core area.
- The concern with possible hydrocarbon contamination of some lots may affect the ability to develop them.
- Derelict buildings are a problem.
- The Municipality should clean up the downtown.



WHAT WE HEARD ABOUT COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- Commercial uses are more important than residential; we don't want to see a loss of commercial space in order to get more residential.
- Direct commercial development to Mackenzie Avenue and not in the waterfront area (e.g., Lucas Avenue).
- Existing commercial land is enough.
- Lodge should be rebuilt where it was.
- The Municipality should give grants to help encourage small business.

WHAT WE HEARD ABOUT INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

- Industrial uses are not desired in the Core area.
- The fish plant should align with nearby uses, be relocated to industrial areas, or be redeveloped (e.g., office, restaurant, boat museum, etc.).
- Safety concerns with propane tanks being downtown.

WHAT WE HEARD ABOUT TOURISM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- There are mixed opinions about tourism development; some feel a need to boost tourism activities while others don't feel there is community interest.
- Support for small business, it is difficult for start-ups to find rental space.
- Balance tourism and local community uses; keep tourism culturally appropriate as they shouldn't change community flavor.
- Lack of accommodations and public transportation for visitors.
- We need worker housing, hotels, lodges and B&Bs.
- Tourism amenities should go in the Core area, including hotels.
- Need another grocery store, which will help make prices cheaper.
- Would like more air travel companies and flights.
- We need more funding for training to help get better jobs, skills.



THEME 3: HISTORICAL RESOURCES AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

WHAT WE HEARD ABOUT HERITAGE

- Heritage sites need to be preserved.
- The cemetery is an important issue as the existing cemetery is running out of capacity; do we have a new cemetery site?
- Cemetery maintenance is important.
- Need to boost tourism activities (e.g., eco-tourism, culture-based activities, etc.).

WHAT WE HEARD ABOUT RECREATION

- There are mixed opinions about use of ATVs in the community.
- Would like more planned trails and fewer unplanned trails; unplanned trails are creating noise and vegetation damage; separate ATV trails might limit use/impacts on other trails.
- Would like to see a formal trail in the lake area, only for walking and snowshoeing (not ATVs).
- Facilities are good but there is a need for more activities and programs for youth.



THEME 4: MUNICIPAL SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

WHAT WE HEARD ABOUT ROADS AND SIDEWALKS

- Concerns about the condition of the road to the airport, repairs are needed.
- No concerns with roads, people need to follow traffic rules.
- Would like sidewalk continued to the Dog Head area.
- Place-Making installations have narrowed the road between the Northern Store and Post-Office, reducing parking and visibility; the narrowing makes the transport of dangerous goods even more unsafe here; need crossings and lights here.
- Would like speed bumps on MacKenzie Avenue; however, people should follow traffic speeds; educate people so they obey the rules.

WHAT WE HEARD ABOUT OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLES (OHVs)

- There are mixed opinions about OHVs/ATVs; many feel that they are dangerous, noisy and damage walking trails; there isn't community resolve yet to limit their use on roads.
- Lots of informal trails around town, but no clearly planned ones for walking, biking or ATV use.
- Staging areas do not make much sense in rural areas; people drive everywhere on ATVs.



WHAT WE HEARD ABOUT WATER TRANSPORTATION AND RELATED INFRASTRUCTURE

- Big Dock is very valuable to the community and there are concerns about its possible sale and privatization.
- The two docks (Big Dock, provincial dock) are inadequate because of poor lighting, parking, maintenance; concerns with the integrity of boat launch, depth of water, ramp condition, etc.
- Dredging at Big Dock is needed, but Transport Canada no longer does it.
- Concerns about Site C Dam (Peace River) and its impact on water levels of Lake Athabasca.
- Want to see more water transportation, such as hovercraft (i.e., proposed transit service to Fort McMurray).
- Need water level markings along the Athabasca River to ensure boater safety.



WHAT WE HEARD ABOUT WATER AND SEWER SERVICES

- Concerns with the existing water intake pipe location; there are concerns with water quality in the Lake and a strong desire to see the intake location moved (i.e., further up the lake, to nearby lakes, etc.).
- Overall, most people appear happy with current service levels.
- Service levels are not the same as in Fort McMurray.
- Sewage dumping is not good, need to improve it.
- Need a water treatment plant like they have on Suncor site; water gets recycled many times.
- Would like to see the west side of the community serviced.
- Want to see piped water and sewer to Dog Head Reserve, more partnerships between Municipality and First Nations.
- Water needs to be tested, can Municipality send out water quality results monthly?



WHAT WE HEARD ABOUT RECYCLING AND GREEN ENERGY

- Want more recycling as some residents drive their recyclables to Fort McMurray.
- Want the Municipality to explore alternative energy; Fort Chipewyan has long days in summer and strong winds, good for solar and wind energy.

WHAT WE HEARD ABOUT EMERGENCY SERVICES

- Volunteer fire department lacks “mutual aid” of another nearby fire department.
- Concerns with building heights more than two stories; the fire department may not be able to respond; more training and equipment needed.

OTHER CONCERNS YOU SHARED WITH US

- Need a bypass road around the community for large trucks and the transport of hazardous goods and fuels.
- Lack of summer access to Wood Buffalo National Park; the only access is by boat.
- Would like a second access road into Alison Bay Reserve.
- Lack of public transportation between downtown and the airport; the only option for visitors is taxi.
- Would like more air travel companies and flights to Fort Chipewyan.

