



CITY OF YELLOWKNIFE

COMMUNITY PLAN BY-LAW NO. **XXXX**

ADOPTED XXXX XX, 2026

COMMUNITY PLAN BY-LAW NO. 5007, AS AMENDED IS HEREBY REPELED

DM #XXXXXX

Acknowledgement

With deep gratitude, City of Yellowknife recognizes the invaluable contributions of Indigenous Partners, residents, stakeholders, and council in shaping this Community Plan. Guided by our shared commitment, we have come together to create a Plan that reflects the values of our community and lays out an inclusive, sustainable vision for our City's future - toward 2050 and beyond.

The City of Yellowknife respectfully acknowledges that we gather, work, and govern within the homelands of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation, the Tłı̨chǫ people, and the North Slave Métis.

We honour their enduring connection to this land and recognize the living laws, knowledge, and stewardship that continue to guide and protect this place. In our work, we commit to walking in partnership and respect, making decisions that honour Ancestors, uplift communities, and care for the generations yet to come.

We recognize all First Nations, Métis, and Inuit who live, work, and contribute to the life of Yellowknife, alongside all residents who now call this city home. Together, we share responsibility for strengthening this community and caring for the land and one another.

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1 INTRODUCTION

This document is the Community Plan of the City of Yellowknife: YK 2050 and it may be referred to as the Plan or YK 2050. It has been prepared in accordance with the *Cities, Towns and Village Act S.N.W.T. 2003, c.22*, as amended, and the *Community Planning and Development Act, S.N.W.T. 2011, c.22*, as amended (the *Act*).

1.1 What is a Community Plan?

A Community Plan is a policy document that serves as a long-term roadmap for a community's physical development. It sets out a community's vision, goals, and policies for how land will be used and developed over the long term, usually 20 to 25 years.

1.1.1 Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of YK 2050 is to create a policy framework that sets out a vision for the future growth and development of Yellowknife over the next 25 years. However, the Plan shall be updated every 8 years in accordance with the *Community Planning and Development Act*. YK 2050 provides policy direction on the timing and location of growth, and addresses questions like: Where will new homes and businesses be built? How will the city provide essential services, like water and roads? How will development balance environmental, social, and economic considerations? YK 2050 has been prepared in accordance with the statutory requirements of the Act. It is based on a comprehensive review of land use, population and economic growth, the city's affordable and attainable housing needs, the environment and climate change, transportation, and infrastructure services. The background analysis draws on a series of foundational studies, including the *Population, Employment, and Land Need Projections to 2050* (August 7, 2025), *Housing Needs Assessment* (2024), and *Climate Action Plan* (February 25, 2025).

1.2 Strategic Priorities

The YK 2050 update process is developed by refining the City of Yellowknife's vision and goals for long term growth. It is built on city's aspiration while responding to current challenges such as housing and infrastructure needs, environment and climate change, and social equity. The strategic priorities outlined below establish the key policy areas that will guide future land use, development sequencing, and city's infrastructure planning. Recognizing that this is a living document, these priorities will be revisited and refined through each phase of the update process.

- **Housing Policy that increases affordability and attainability**

The focus on housing in YK 2050 is on expanding the housing supply across the full continuum and addressing affordability barriers for Yellowknifers. Yellowknife faces a significant shortage of affordable, adequate, and suitable homes. Over 10% of Yellowknife households are facing Core Housing Needs (CHN); housing is unaffordable for many, inadequate (major repairs needed) or unsuitable (too few bedrooms). Renter households are disproportionately affected, with 18% of tenant households in CHN compared to 5% of owner households (*Housing Needs Assessment, 2024*). YK 2050 promotes intensification, land supply, and housing mix strategies to support affordable and attainable housing solutions.

- **Servicing and Infrastructure**

YK 2050 informs future infrastructure capacity, guides modern and sustainable servicing systems, and plans proactively for climate change and emergency resilience, through land use that promotes efficient and sustainable growth. The priority will include policies for infrastructure requirements in specific development scenarios.

- **Mobility and Transportation Networks**

The objective is to have a transportation system that is safe, efficient, and accessible for all modes. A key long-term goal is to gradually shift the transportation mode share from private motor vehicles to active transportation and public transit. YK 2050 supports year-round active transportation, connecting existing and future developments through an integrated network of trails, sidewalks, and bike lanes.

- **Environment and Climate Action policy**

The policies of YK 2050 support energy conservation and efficiency, reduced greenhouse gasses, improved air quality, active transportation or transit-oriented development, and green infrastructure. This strategy utilizes existing infrastructure efficiently (water, sewer, roads) and supports compact development for future resilience.

- Environmental Protection and Stewardship

A key goal is to conserve, protect, and restore the natural environment. YK 2050 supports the stewardship of land, water, and habitat by recognizing natural features as part of an interconnected system. It introduces policies that promote protection, preservation, and rehabilitation, while ensuring future development remains sensitive and responsive to the natural environment.

- Climate Action – Adaptation & Mitigation

YK 2050 advances climate change adaptation and mitigation by directing growth through sustainable land use and responsible development practices. This includes managing land use and growth patterns to reduce emissions, preserving and enhancing natural systems alongside the built environment, encouraging low-carbon, climate-resilient developments, and promoting sustainable transportation options. Together, these actions strengthen the city's ability to prepare for and respond to climate change while supporting a more resilient and livable community.

- **Public safety and Wildfire Protection**

YK 2050 focuses on a reduction in public cost and risk. It supports wildfire protection through Fire Smart practices, fuel management, and preparedness; making sure future growth is both safe and resilient.

- **Economic Development**

Downtown revitalization, tourism, and the use of incentives, cost-sharing, and partnerships to encourage growth and development are prominent in the policies of YK 2050. Economic development goals and objectives are support by plan policies.

1.3 How to Read This Plan

YK 2050 establishes the city’s interests and direction for land use and development. The Plan is the highest-level guiding policy document for land use in the city. Its policies form the regulatory basis for how land is used and developed. Policies are intended to be read and applied collectively, recognizing that several policies may apply to any given proposal and must be interpreted in relation to one another to advance the Plan’s themes, goals, and objectives.

These policies represent the minimum standard for development; development may exceed them where appropriate. The city may issue supplementary guidelines, standards, or bulletins from time to time to support consistent and effective implementation of this Plan.

1.3.1 Community Planning Approach

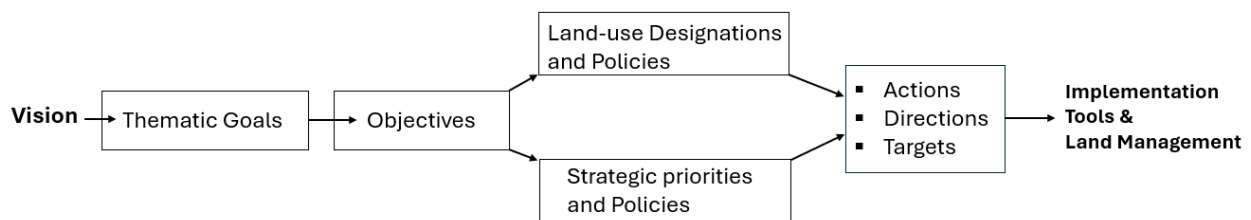
The approach to YK 2050 is to use land in an economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable manner. It prioritizes affordable housing, and efficient use of existing infrastructure to support intensification while balancing compact mixed-use development with new development in select greenfield areas. The Plan aims to strengthen connectivity, boost climate resilience, safeguard natural systems, and enhance public safety, while cultivating a vibrant, thriving urban economy.

1.3.2 Structure of the Community Plan

YK 2050 is divided into 6 major sections, as follows:

- Section 1 – Introduction
- Section 2 – Community Context
- Section 3 –YK 2050 – Vision, Thematic Goals and Objectives
- Section 4 – Land Use Designations and policies
- Section 5 –Strategic Priorities and Policies
- Section 6 – Implementation

Figure 1: Structure of the Community Plan



YK 2050 is organized around a systematic and forward-looking framework guided by a vision shaped by the voices of community members. This vision is expressed through six thematic goals with a series of objectives, each charting a path toward the community’s aspirations over the next 25 years.

To realize this vision, the Plan identifies 37 guiding objectives that collectively advance the principles of sustainability, resilience, and inclusivity. These objectives are implemented through a comprehensive set of policies aligned with land use and the city’s strategic priorities.

The policies are supported by a series of policy directions, actions and targets.

Together, these elements provide a clear and actionable roadmap for achieving the community’s long-term goals and objectives.

1.3.3 Interpretation

YK 2050 must be read in its entirety. Reading only specific sections or policies in isolation does not reflect the overall intent of the document.

The Plan utilizes specific policy terms to delineate the expected level of compliance or discretion required of the Approving Authority:

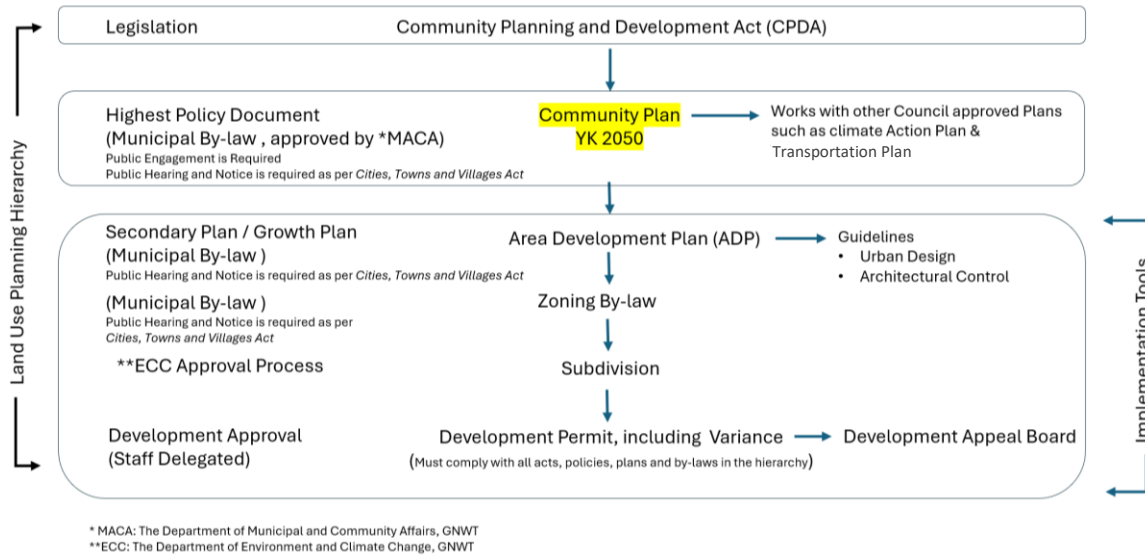
- ‘Shall’: Means mandatory compliance. Policies containing this term must be met in all circumstances. The use of this term is linked to legislation or city by-laws.
- “Must”: Means compliance with the policy or the implementing or supporting document requirements (Climate Action Plan, Transportation Plan, etc)
- ‘Should’: Means compliance in principle. This term requires adherence unless it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Approval Authority that compliance is impractical or undesirable due to valid planning principles or circumstances unique to a specific application. Proposed alternatives must still achieve the general intent of the policy.
- ‘May’: Means discretionary compliance or a choice in applying policy.

The Plan is intended to be a long-term strategy. While the CP outlines desired outcomes and directions, no representation is made that any particular site is automatically suitable for a specific purpose; site conditions must be assessed on a case-by-case basis during subsequent development application reviews.

1.3.4 Hierarchy and Alignment within the Planning Framework

YK 2050 is prepared in accordance with the *Cities, Towns and Village Act S.N.W.T. 2003, c.22* as amended and *the Community Planning and Development Act, S.N.W.T. 2011, c.22* as amended (the Act). This Plan serves as the highest policy plan as it relates to growth and development of the City of Yellowknife. **Figure 2** below shows the relationship between territorial legislation, YK 2050, and tools used for implementing the Plan:

Figure 2: Land Use Planning Framework



YK 2050 guides how growth will be managed and implemented through other subordinate Plans, by-laws and guidelines:

1. **Statutory Consistency:** All lower tier planning tools, including the Area Development Plans (ADPs), Zoning By-laws and Development Permits must conform to the policies of YK 2050.
2. **Implementation Tools:** The Plan's policies are brought to life through specific implementation tools and processes:
 - **Area Development Plans:** Provide detailed policy and frameworks for lot division, road layouts, servicing & infrastructure, design guidelines and phasing within specific land-use designations.
 - **Zoning By-law Amendments:** Regulates the use, erection, and form of buildings and structures.
 - **Plan of Subdivision:** A plan of subdivision is registered with the Land Titles Office to formally establish the boundaries and legal descriptions of land parcels as approved by the authority having jurisdiction.
 - **Development Permit Applications:** A Development Permit, including any minor variance from zoning regulations, is required for specific projects to ensure compliance with the city's zoning by-law, development standards and design intent. All proposed developments must align with the goals, objectives, and policies outlined in YK 2050. A Development Permit is delegated to city Development Officers and may be appealed to the city's Development Appeal Board.
3. **Integrated Planning:** YK 2050 is not independent of other city plans. It was informed by major strategic documents, including but not limited to:
 - Smart Growth Development Plan (2010)
 - Natural Area Preservation Strategy (2010)
 - Strategic Waste Management Strategy (2018)

- Grow: Yellowknife Food and Agriculture Strategy - Implementation Plan (2021)
- Yellowknife Tourism Strategy (2025-2028)
- Community Emergency Plan (2025)
- City of Yellowknife Community Wildfire Protection Plan Review (CWPP) (2025)
- Climate Action Plan (2026)
- Transportation Plan (draft 2026)

1.3.5 Who Should Use the Community Plan?

YK 2050 provides policy direction for all parties involved in the future development and administration of the city:

- **City Council and Administration:** The Plan provides strategic direction for managing growth and change, prioritizing strategic initiatives and services, and guiding land use and mobility decisions.
- **Developers and Landowners:** The Plan provides vision and certainty for growth and change, supporting private sector investment to build commercial, industrial, and residential developments. The Plan sets minimum standards through policy regarding intensity, infill, diversification of housing options, and servicing.
- **Residents and Community Organizations:** Residents can use the Plan to understand where Yellowknife is headed, how policies aim to strengthen communities, and how their input (gathered during engagement activities) informed the Vision and Thematic Goals. It also establishes where development occurs and how regulating bylaws direct development.
- **Indigenous Partners:** The Plan recognizes the necessity of respectful government-to-government relationships with Indigenous Governments, such as the Yellowknives Dene First Nation (YKDFN), Łutsel K'e Dene First Nation and North Slave Metis Alliance (NSMA). Land use policies are influenced by this commitment, including the necessity of respecting the **Akaiicho Interim Land Withdrawal** areas and process.

1.3.6 Plan Maintenance and Monitoring

YK 2050 is a **dynamic and living document** that must be updated every 8 years in accordance with the *Community Planning and Development Act, S.N.W.T. 2011, c.22*. It is continuously monitored to ensure legislative compliance.

- **Review:** Administration will monitor the Plan on an ongoing basis to update it as-needed, implementation progress, and emerging trends. Changes to legislation or settlement of land and resource matters between governments, such as the Akaiicho Agreement negotiations or reconciliation efforts, may impact policies and require amendments.
- **Reporting:** The City will provide an annual report from the Planning and Development Department detailing how objectives, policies and targets are being met or advanced. This process enhances public accountability and informs future business planning cycles.

2 COMMUNITY CONTEXT

2.1 City Context

The City of Yellowknife is the capital city of the Northwest Territories (NWT). It is home to the Legislative Assembly of the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) and serves as the administrative, economic, logistical and cultural hub of the Territory. Yellowknife is also home to the Territorial headquarters of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and the Canadian Armed Forces Joint Task Force North (JTFN).

Yellowknife is an important regional transportation hub for the distribution of goods to many communities and remote mining operations throughout the NWT and Western Arctic. Distribution of goods are by road and air, with many goods shipped by ice road in the winter months. Yellowknife serves as a strategic airport hub between smaller communities in the NWT and western Nunavut, and larger cities in southern Canada such as Edmonton, Calgary, and Vancouver.

The city maintains a close relationship with its surrounding natural environment. It is located on the shore of Great Slave Lake, the second largest freshwater lake in Canada, and several smaller lakes are within the municipal boundary. Many of Yellowknife’s residents enjoy outdoor activities such as hiking, canoeing, skiing, snowmobiling, fishing, and hunting.

Yellowknife is located on the traditional territory of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation (YKDFN), the Tłı̨chǫ people and the North Slave Metis.

One YKDFN community is currently located inside the City Boundary: Ndilo. Some YKDFN members live within other areas of the city, amongst a growing number of Indigenous residents from the Territory and broader region. Many Tłı̨chǫ citizens live, work, and study in Yellowknife. The North Slave Métis Alliance represents Section 35 rights bearing Métis whose Ancestors have long lived in the region.

Land within the City is a mix of private and public land controlled by various levels of government and includes 1,034 ha of interim withdrawn lands that are being held during the Akaitcho Agreement negotiations with member Dene First Nations (ADFN). Additionally, publicly held lands include Territorial Parks, Seismic Testing Facilities, airport lands, public highways, and federal land. Each of these parcels remain within the municipal boundary however have been excluded from potential land development consideration.

Of the 10,514 ha of land within municipal boundaries, only 2,422 hectares fall within the City’s Planned Build Boundary and are available to accommodate development over the 25-year planning horizon. Of this built boundary, approximately 34% consists of Commissioner’s and other Territorial Lands that remain under the administrative control of the Territorial Government (**Map 1**).

Within the remaining built area, municipal lands account for approximately 32%, while private lands represent about 26%. The majority of municipally owned “vacant” land is subject to development constraints or is already valued by the community for parks, open space, and recreational use.

While the City has adopted an “intensification first” approach that prioritized redevelopment and infill while it acquired additional commissioners land, the overall capacity of these opportunities is limited. As a result, accommodating long-term population and employment growth will require transfer of larger

areas of currently untenured Commissioner’s Lands from the Territorial Government for future urban development.

2.2 Regional Co-existence and Indigenous Reconciliation

2.2.1 Regional Co-existence

As the Capital of the Northwest Territories and the engine of the territorial economy, Yellowknife continues to demonstrate its resilience and adaptability to a number of interrelated factors and drivers (as discussed in Section 2.3.3) that inform and shape the City’s role in and commitment to regional co-existence with Indigenous governments. These factors and drivers include:

- *Social and demographic changes* including migration from smaller communities and urbanization, that includes continued growth of the Indigenous population making Yellowknife the ‘largest Indigenous community’ in the NWT. This driver, along with an aging population, will continue to affect the demand for and supply of public programs and services by different levels of government. The City remains committed to improving the quality of life for all its citizens.
- *Economic cycles and changing prosperity trajectories* from mine closures and emergence of new industries. The cyclical nature of natural resource extraction, with respect to mining, has a direct impact on Yellowknife’s economy. Recent growth in retail and business activities, along with the conversion of office space into mixed-use development, may create new opportunities and momentum for revitalizing the downtown. Potential federal investment and the rise of tourism in the City and region present new opportunities for economic diversification and growth. Changes in economic activity have a direct impact on the tax base and this will continue to challenge the City Council to balance citizen and business affordability while appropriately managing existing public infrastructure in addition to addressing the infrastructure gap and future needs.
- *Growing economic and social inequality* characterized by homelessness, the challenges related to the cost of living (i.e., housing and affordability), and the broader economic impacts on the City and the Territory stemming from climate change and the erratic nature of the global economy.
- *Legacy planning and environmental stewardship* around two mine sites: Giant Mine is now undergoing active remediation and restoration, creating the groundwork for some future opportunities. As progress continues, potential recreational, and commercial options are expected to emerge and will be carefully considered in the future. Con Mine is being reclaimed, however new mining opportunities may occur at this location.

2.2.2 Indigenous Reconciliation

Community planning encompasses the collective land use needs of residents, businesses and organizations within a community, and does not seek to exclude any from realizing their aspirations and potential. While the Akaitcho Agreement negotiations and YKDFN’s importance to the City has been discussed elsewhere, YK 2050 must also support the City’s efforts toward reconciliation with all Indigenous peoples that are represented in the City and region including the Tłı̨chǫ Government, Deline Got’ine Government, and the North Slave Métis Alliance. Through the 94 Recommendations in the Truth

and Reconciliation Commissions Calls to Action, YK 2050 also incorporate learnings and paths to improved relationships within its policy framework. November 10, 2025, City Council directed Administration to begin engagement with Indigenous partners on the recommendations in *Walking Forward Together: Yellowknife’s Reconciliation Roadmap Report*. The report establishes ten-year goals and a three-year action plan to embed reconciliation into day-to-day practice.

2.2.3 As part of this commitment, the City is actively collaborating with Indigenous governments - including the Deline and YKDFN Governments - on opportunities for future land development, with a focus on expanding housing options and supporting economic growth. YK 2050 will strengthen its policies to ensure reconciliation principles guide decisions across land use, housing, and infrastructure, with the shared goal of improving quality of life for all Yellowknifers. Culture and Heritage

There were people living on these lands long before the City of Yellowknife came into existence. It is important that efforts are made to develop land in a culturally appropriate manner and that the history of the area is acknowledged and respected. The City’s Heritage By-law and *Intercultural Heritage & Placemaking Plan* guides efforts to do this through preservation of historical sites and improvement of public information materials and signage that identifies historic and culturally important areas throughout the City.

2.3 Demography and Land Use

2.3.1 Historical populations trends

The City of Yellowknife’s current population, according to the most recent annual interim estimates by the NWT Bureau of Statistics, was 21,788 in 2024. The official Statistics Canada Census Population Data recorded the population as 20,340 in 2021. Historically, Yellowknife has experienced fluctuating rates of growth. A period of fast population growth was observed from 2001 to 2004, followed by slower growth periods between 2004 and 2006, as well as from 2011 to 2014. The most recent census data from 2021 indicated a 3.9% increase from the 2016 census.

Table 1: Population Change 2006 to 2024

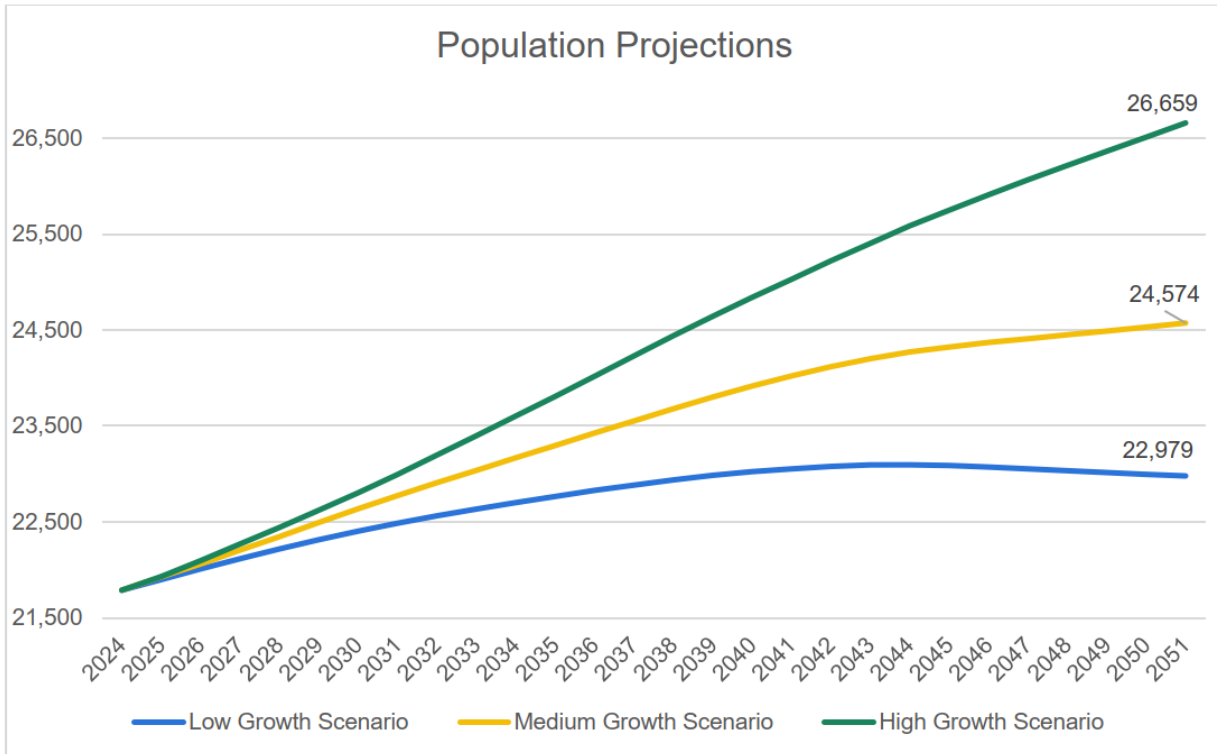
	2006	2011	2016	2021	2024
Yellowknife Population	18,700	19,234	19,569	20,340	21,788
Percentage Change from Previous Census	13.1%	2.9%	1.7%	3.9%	7.1%
NWT Population Count	41,464	41,462	41,786	41,070	44,731
Percentage Change from Previous Census	11%	-0.01%	0.8%	-1.7%	8.9%
Source	Statistics Canada Census	Statistics Canada Census	Statistics Canada Census	Statistics Canada Census	GNWT Bureau of Statistics Estimate

Much of the population change in Yellowknife will be the result of inter-provincial migration from other provinces and territories and intra-territorial migration from other regions of the NWT and Nunavut. This change follows national trends of increasing urban populations and declining rural centres. The average age of the population is also increasing and is currently 35.5 years. While the 65+ age group is growing - nearly 8% in 2021, driven largely by baby boomers choosing to remain in the North - Yellowknife still maintains a comparatively younger demographic profile than the national average of 41.9 years. This relatively younger population, particularly those in their prime reproductive and family-forming years, continues to play a critical role in sustaining the city’s long-term growth, labour force stability, and future housing needs.

2.3.2 Growth Scenarios and Future Projections

The *2025 Yellowknife Population Projections* report provided three scenarios for population growth from 2025-2051. These three scenarios are shown in the figure below.

Figure 3: Population projections for Yellowknife, 2024-2051, at low, medium and high growth scenarios



The Low Growth Scenario is the most conservative, reflecting the mixed growth rates seen between 2011 and 2024. This scenario assumes prolonged economic uncertainty, minimal infrastructure investment, continued high construction costs, and a declining mining sector, resulting in slower population growth and increased aging.

The Medium Growth Scenario captures moderate, stable growth, reflecting the trends seen over the last several years (2016 to 2024). It assumes moderate increases in tourism, mining, military presence, and infrastructure development, alongside stable public sector employment and steady housing development.

Finally, **the High Growth Scenario** captures optimistic conditions or transformative events, reflecting the strongest growth rates seen since 2001 (from 2001 to 2006). This projection assumes significant growth driven by factors such as a major increase in military presence, the completion of large infrastructure projects (like the Arctic Economic and Security Corridor, Mackenzie Valley Highway and/or Taltson powerline), and continued high interprovincial and international migration. This scenario projects the highest population, reaching 26,659 by 2051, which would require accelerated land development planning.

The relatively younger working-age population remains central to sustaining the city’s long-term demographic momentum, labour force capacity, and future housing demand. When combined with emerging national and territorial dynamics - including potential federal investment on infrastructure in Canada’s North, ongoing discussions on Arctic Economic and Security Corridor, the possibility of renewed resource development projects, and a steadily growing tourism sector - the conditions point

toward meaningful upside potential. Given these factors, this plan focused on a high-growth scenario both optimistically and strategically: to position the City to capitalize on future opportunities and to ensure it is prepared for the infrastructure, land use, and housing challenges that accompany the highest-growth trajectory.

2.3.3 Housing

According to Yellowknife’s *Housing Needs Assessment (2024)* 44% of the housing market is made up of single-detached dwellings and a rising proportion of apartments. The period between 2016 and 2021 saw the addition of 400 new units, primarily movable dwellings and apartments under five storeys. The pace of new housing development has slowed significantly in recent years; annual housing completions dropped sharply to between 15 and 55 units annually from 2018 to 2023, compared to the 99 to 151 units completed annually between 2012 and 2017. However, in 2024, 271 and in 2025, 124 housing units were completed but there is still a significant housing shortage for all types of housing especially single family, studio and affordable non-market housing. Due to limited developable land, the strategy for future land supply necessitates continued support for redevelopment and infill of existing areas as well as exploring opportunities for responsible future expansion to the City’s current built boundary.

The City’s current rental market is defined by high costs and limited availability. The average monthly cost for rented dwellings in Yellowknife was \$1,804 in 2021, substantially higher than the national average of \$1,209. In terms of availability, the overall rental vacancy rate, according to the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, stood at 1.9% in 2024, much lower than the conventionally defined healthy range of 3% to 5%. Competition for smaller, more affordable units is particularly intense. Addressing the severe shortage of rentals, particularly for low-income residents, is critical, given that nearly 1 in 4 tenant households currently rely on subsidized housing.

Property values have appreciated dramatically, increasing by 63% from 2006 to 2021. The median value of an owned private dwelling was \$448,000 in 2021, slightly below the national median of \$472,000. However, the average price of a single-detached dwelling rose significantly, reaching an average of \$624,000 in 2024. Correspondingly, the financial pressure on homeowners is significant, with average monthly shelter costs for owned dwellings reaching \$2,358 in 2021.

Demographic shifts are driving changes in demand for housing size and suitability. The average household size in Yellowknife is 2.7 people, a figure that is projected to decrease slightly to 2.61 by 2035. This projection reflects an increasing proportion of single-person households, which grew from 22% to 24% between 2011 and 2021. This signals a growing future need for units with fewer bedrooms. Despite this trend, demand is also projected to require an additional 431 three-bedroom units and 173 four-bedroom units by 2035 to accommodate families and larger multi-generational households.

Housing adequacy, affordability and suitability continue to be issues in Yellowknife.

Core Housing Need means that a household falls short in one or more of the following criteria:

1. Adequate – housing is reported by their residents as not requiring any major repairs;
2. Affordable – dwellings cost less than 30% of total before-tax household income; and,
3. Suitable – housing has enough bedrooms for the size and make-up of resident households, according to *National Occupancy Standard* requirements.

Overall, housing security and affordability remain critical challenges across the city. The *Housing Needs Assessment (2024)* reported that 10% of all households were in Core Housing Need (CHN). The primary factor contributing to this need is affordability, affecting 80% of CHN households (spending over 30% of income on shelter costs). The crisis is heavily skewed toward renters, with 18% of tenant households in Core Housing Need, compared to only 5% of owner households. Housing suitability (too few bedrooms) affects 23% of CHN households, and adequacy (major repairs needed) affects 24%.

2.3.4 Economy and Employment

The City of Yellowknife maintains a notably robust economic profile compared to national benchmarks, yet it faces significant affordability and workforce challenges. In 2021, Yellowknife recorded one of the highest average household incomes in Canada, at \$165,400 before tax, substantially exceeding the national average of \$106,400. In 2025 the city reported a low unemployment rate of 3.7%, significantly below the Canadian average of 7.1%. The workforce is highly engaged, with a 2021 participation rate of 79%, compared to the Canadian rate of 64%. A high proportion of Yellowknife workers (74.9%) hold permanent positions. Despite these high incomes, the cost of living remains substantially higher than the Canadian average, particularly for shelter, food, and transportation, which places financial pressure on many households. These rising costs, particularly high shelter costs for both rental and owned housing, constrain economic mobility and impact the recruitment and retention of workforce talent in essential sectors like healthcare and trades.

The city's employment mix has shifted noticeably over time, moving away from primary extraction industries toward a government and service-oriented economy. However, this balance may shift again in the near future: if new mines are established, employment patterns could realign, as the local labour market has historically responded quickly to changes in mining activity. The economy is currently dominated by the public sector, with Public Administration accounting for 29% of workers in 2021. This sector includes large employers such as the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) and the Government of Canada. From 2011 to 2021, the prominence of public administration increased, growing from 24% to 29% of employment. This growth in the service and government sectors is matched by the largest employment increases between 2006 and 2016 occurring in education, law and social services, and community and government services. This shift reflects a broader national trend away from primary economic activity toward growth in the service sector.

Conversely, the historical foundation of mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction sector has decreased, dropping from 8% to 5% of the workforce between 2011 and 2021. The outlook for the mining industry is challenging, with mining activity likely to decrease unless substantial investment in new mines occurs. This decline is driven by the fact that two of the largest diamond mines in the NWT, Diavik and Ekati, are nearing the end of their commercial life. Diavik is slated to close by 2026, and Ekati and Gahcho Kué are scheduled to close by 2030. These closures, unless new commercially viable resources are discovered, may cause a projected drop in mining-related employment and a resultant decline in revenue for private businesses that provide mining support services.

Moving forward, Public Administration is expected to continue serving as the largest economic sector and Yellowknife will remain a regional hub for government services, transportation, logistics, education, and healthcare. While tourism is currently experiencing growth and is anticipated to continue increasing employment in related fields (accommodation, retail, guiding), these jobs are typically seasonal in nature and offer substantially lower average salaries compared to mining and will not replace all lost mining jobs if new resource development activities do not emerge.

Other drivers of economic activity and employment include substantial government investments: military expansion may increase the number of stationed and support personnel in Yellowknife, and the ongoing Giant Mine Remediation Project is expected to create significant housing pressures as its workforce continues to exceed early projections, with the peak workforce anticipated in 2026 - 2036.

2.3.5 Land Details and Future Demand

The City of Yellowknife has a relatively low population intensity compared to other cities in Canada of similar size. It has a population intensity of 159.5 people/ km². This intensity suggests that there is a lot of land available for development. However, much of the land within the municipal boundary is currently unavailable for development for a variety of reasons. Overall, the amount of land within municipal boundaries is 13,660 ha. However, a significant amount of this land includes water bodies such as lakes and is not available for land development. When water is excluded, the land within the municipal boundary is 10,514 ha. In addition to water bodies, other land is not available to the City for development due to existing land rights (Akaitcho Interim Land Withdrawal, Federal land, GNWT land, contaminated former mine sites, seismic reserve, Solid Waste Facility and Territorial Park land uses). This land is referred to as ‘Land Not Available’ in **Table 2**. The following table shows the land in hectares and as a percentage of municipal area boundary.

Table 2: City Land Quantum

	Land Area (ha)	Land Area (%)
Total Land in Municipal Boundary (77% excluding water)	10,514	100
Lands Not Available	8,091	77
Available Lands for Development/ Redevelopment (Planned Built Area)	2,422	23
• Commissioner’s Land and other Territorial Lands	816 (34%)	
• City Owned Lands	777 (32%)	
• Private Lands	627 (26%)	
• Other Lands	202 (8%)	

Of the 10,514 ha of land within the City Boundary (excluding water), 8,091 ha (77%) is considered to be allocated with existing rights holders or having existing uses which limit further development. The remaining 2,422 ha (23%) includes un-tenured lands (un-surveyed and surveyed without a current lease holder on Commissioner’s Lands), private lands and municipal lands, which are collectively considered as the City’s Planned Built Area which will accommodate City’s future growth through intensification and new developments. Much of the un-tenured and unsurveyed land within this Planned Built Area is Commissioner’s Land which the City can only acquire after formally requesting it from the GNWT.

Special consideration should be given to the Akaitcho Dene First Nations (ADFN) Agreement negotiations as the City plans its short, medium, and long-term planning. Withdrawn Lands are located adjacent to and within the City’s municipal boundary. Once an agreement is in place, the City will be ready to support ADFN’s interest, reconciliation, and create mutually beneficial outcomes for the community. At present the City does not consider any of the Withdrawn Land as land that is available for future development by other than the Akaitcho members. The Withdrawn Land areas are made in the Maps accompanying YK 2050. The ADFN have identified 1034 ha of land within the municipal boundary of Yellowknife as being withdrawn through the negotiation process.

According to projections spanning 2025 to 2051, Yellowknife’s population is expected to grow. Starting from an estimated 2024 population of 21,788, the High Growth Scenario projects the population to reach 26,659 by 2051, requiring strategic planning for land allocation. This projected growth necessitates additional residential, commercial, and industrial lands.

For residential development, infill opportunities exist in established areas such as Niven, Range Lake, Downtown, and the surrounding central residential areas. Future housing strategies assume a shift towards higher intensity options, with the housing mix anticipated to be 30% single-detached housing, 30% duplexes or row housing, and 40% higher intensity housing units following the existing trend of shifting from lower intensity to higher intensity housing types.

In terms of non-residential land, Yellowknife currently utilizes a high ratio of commercial and industrial land due to its role as a remote commercial base for the entire territory. The 2020 Community Plan used an industrial land ratio of 18.2 ha per 1,000 people. However, updated studies suggest that due to efficiency and market adjustments, the future demand for industrial land may be closer to a reduced ratio of 8 ha per 1,000 people and future demand for commercial land may be closer to 3.5 ha per 1000 people instead of the current 4.36 ha per 1000 people. For the assessment of institutional, parks and open space land, it was determined that the majority of institutional and recreational land demands could be accommodated within existing municipal and public lands.

To accommodate the anticipated growth under the High Growth Scenario (2025–2051), the following estimated additional land requirements must be met:

Table 3: Projected Additional Land Needs for Yellowknife (2025-2051, High Growth Scenario).

Land Use Category	Additional Land Requirements	Notes
Residential Lands – High Growth Scenario	65 ha	Net densities assumptions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22.2 units/ha (single detached dwellings) • 39.5 units/ha (row or town housing) • 69.2 units/ha (higher intensity dwellings such as a 4-storey apartment)
Commercial Lands – High Growth Scenario	17-21 ha	Assumptions for land requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher amount of land needed if using current 4.36 ha/1000 people ratio • Lower amount of land needed if using reduced 3.5 ha/1000 people ratio

Land Use Category	Additional Land Requirements	Notes
Industrial Lands – High Growth Scenario	39-89 ha	Assumptions for land requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher amount of land needed if using current 18.2 ha/1000 people ratio • Lower amount of land needed if using reduced 8 ha/1000 people ratio.

3 YK 2050 – VISION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 What We Heard from Yellowknife

The process for updating YK 2050, was structured around five distinct phases, moving systematically from initial visioning and research to policy development, public and indigenous government engagements, and final legislative approval. The entire process was designed to ensure the Plan is data-driven, and reflects community input, to serve as Yellowknife’s long-term planning and development roadmap. The public engagement, titled ‘Let’s Talk YK 2050’ produced a wide range of feedback that was analyzed and organized into six core community themes. Input gathered through pop-ups, surveys, workshops and comment cards revealed the priorities and aspirations residents hold for YK 2050 Update. These insights highlight both opportunities and challenges, and the resulting six themes directly inform the proposed Vision and Objectives.

Growing YK reflects on achieving environmentally responsible growth, balancing new development with conservation, proactive climate change preparedness, and adopting inclusive strategies to retain residents.

Living in YK reflects how residents experience daily life, from the vibrancy of public spaces to the accessibility of housing, and the sense of safety and belonging in community. Participants consistently underscore the importance of spaces that bring people together year-round, work toward dignity and inclusion, and reflect the city’s cultural & land-based identity.

Working in YK reflects residents’ concerns about economic opportunity, workforce stability, and the need to build a more resilient, community-oriented economy. Feedback emphasizes both the challenges and the opportunities shaping Yellowknife’s local economy, from tourism growth to workforce housing.

Natural YK reflects how residents see nature and the environment as central to Yellowknife’s identity. Community feedback emphasizes the desire to protect natural assets for future generations; while also enhancing access and connectivity so residents can continue to enjoy the city’s unique relationship with the land and water.

Moving Around YK is about safety, connection and enjoyment. Residents have pride in the city’s walkability and bikeability, and a strong desire to maintain and expand these advantages as the community grows. At the same time, they call for improved public transit, safer roads, and a more connected trail network that supports year-round use.

Proudly YK reflects the ways residents describe what makes Yellowknife unique and why they feel connected to the community. Pride in place is rooted in both people and nature, expressed through community closeness, cultural vibrancy, built form, and cherished natural assets.

3.2 Vision 2050

The vision for YK 2050 is to guide land use in a way that strengthens Yellowknife’s economic, environmental, and social well-being. It commits to an inclusive and equitable future where all residents can thrive, while safeguarding the natural environment that defines and inspires our community. Perspectives gleaned from community engagement inform the Vision for the YK 2050:

YK 2050 is a healthy, multicultural, and resilient northern City that honours its distinct identity while embracing innovation and change. The community is inclusive and caring, grounded in a deep commitment to honour, recognize, and respect the inherent rights of Indigenous peoples.

The City’s Growth is smart and sustainable. The City balances renewal, intensification, and new development with the protection of its valued natural landscapes, lakeshores, and defining northern character. Neighbourhoods are linked by an extensive, accessible trail network that brings people closer to the outdoors, supports active living, and strengthens appreciation for the environment.

Downtown is a safe, welcoming, and revitalized heart of civic life - animated by local businesses, culture, and year-round public activity. Yellowknife is a leader in climate resilience, supported by climate-ready infrastructure, innovative planning, and long-term stewardship.

The city offers diverse and affordable housing, accessible recreation, and a vibrant cultural scene that attracts and retains people of all ages. Residents enjoy a thriving standard of living, supported by strong community ties, opportunity, and a shared sense of belonging.

3.3 Thematic Goals and Corresponding Objectives

The Thematic Goals articulate the core values, priorities, and long-term aspirations expressed by residents during public engagement. They distill what the community considers essential to sustaining and enhancing quality of life in Yellowknife. The accompanying Objectives translate these themes into clear, actionable directions informed by both community input and supporting data, ensuring they are grounded in evidence and aligned with the broader intent of the YK 2050 Update.

Thematic Goals	Objectives
<p>Growing YK</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Development will be balanced with the preservation and enhancement of public, green, and blue (waterbodies) spaces to maintain overall environmental quality (GYK-1). ● Growth strategies will maintain the community’s character by ensuring appropriate spacing and compatibility between built forms and land uses (GYK-2). ● New development will be guided by land use policies that prevent conflicting uses and support adaptable, mixed-use, and inclusive built form (GYK-3). ● Promotes urban intensification by encouraging the redevelopment of vacant parcels and the conversion of surface parking lots into high- intensity, mixed-use developments within the city core to maximize existing infrastructure and enhance downtown vibrancy (GYK-4).

Thematic Goals	Objectives
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culturally inclusive and affordability-sensitive growth will ensure Yellowknife remains a community where people of all backgrounds can establish long-term futures. Yellowknife will grow as an inclusive, affordable community that supports long-term futures for all residents (GYK-5). • Natural and man-made hazards risks will be reduced through strengthened emergency preparedness measures and climate-resilient infrastructure (GYK-6). • Green infrastructure, renewable energy, and local food production will be prioritized and integrated into future planning (GYK-7). • Natural resources will be protected and managed for long-term use by safeguarding resource areas from incompatible development, supporting responsible exploration and resource extraction activities (GYK-8). • Wildfire risk will be reduced, and community resilience will be enhanced by ensuring that new development incorporates Fire Smart design, vegetation management, and fuel break strategies to protect life, property, and critical infrastructure (GYK-9). • Light pollution will be minimized, and dark sky conditions will be preserved by ensuring that outdoor lighting associated with new development is appropriately designed, directed, and controlled to protect environmental quality, wildlife, and community character (GYK-10).
<p>Living in YK</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed housing options, affordability spanning incomes, and various tenure types across the City will foster inclusion and livability for all residents (LYK-1). • Downtown revitalization will support local businesses, cultural activities, and an animated, safe social environment for all (LYK-2). • Public and community spaces will support inclusive, and year-round community life and safe public realm (LYK-3). • Land use planning approaches to care, healing, and recovery that are inclusive of, and appropriate for, all residents. • Reconciliation will be embedded throughout every stage of the land-use planning process (LYK-4). • Long term planning will help identify and incorporate water and sanitation infrastructure needs and initiate sustained investment to support future growth (LYK-5). • Human health and environmental quality will be protected by managing development on or adjacent to contaminated sites - identified, assessed and remediated, if required, in accordance with a risk-based approach that ensures safe and appropriate long-term land use (LYK-6).

Thematic Goals	Objectives
<p>Working in YK</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locally owned businesses will have access to supportive development incentives where revitalization or relocation is required, along with the enabling conditions necessary for them to remain viable and continue to thrive (WYK-1). • Safe and healthy workforce housing will be promoted as essential infrastructure in appropriate locations to support local businesses and industries (WYK-2). • Tourism will be supported through appropriate land use policies including infrastructure planning, and development criteria that promote local identity (WYK-3). • The downtown core will be strengthened through policies that attract new businesses and mixed-use development, address barriers to revitalization, and enhance its role as an active civic space. This includes supporting everyday street-level activity, patios, events, and cultural programming that extend vibrancy beyond standard business hours (WYK-4). • Support the integration of housing and employment opportunities to strengthen local economic growth, labour retention, and business vitality by promoting mixed-use development (WYK-5).
<p>Natural YK</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The integrity of Yellowknife’s natural heritage gems including wetlands will be protected as the city grows (NYK-1). • Public access to lakes and green spaces will be enhanced and expanded (NYK-2). • Blue (waterbodies) and green spaces, where appropriate, will be animated for environmentally friendly, passive recreational uses (NYK-3). • Protect and enhance connections between natural and built environments by integrating high-quality public realm, shared amenity spaces, and publicly accessible open spaces to strengthen ecological values, community wellbeing, and access to nature in Yellowknife (NYK-4). • Natural heritage areas shall be protected from the adverse impacts of development. Where impacts are unavoidable, development will minimize effects through appropriate mitigation and rehabilitation measures (NYK-5).

Thematic Goals	Objectives
Moving Around YK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mobility across the city, with a particular emphasis on connections to and from the downtown, will be improved and strengthened (MAYK-1). ● Public transit will be accessible, expanded, and integrated to connect residents to key services, neighbourhoods, and community amenities citywide (MAYK-2). ● Active transportation infrastructure will form a safe, continuous, and year-round network supporting walking, cycling, and other non-motorized modes (MAYK-3). ● A connected and extended trail system will link all neighbourhoods with one another and with Yellowknife’s major natural features and open spaces (MAYK-4). ● Street design will prioritize safety, accessibility, and comfort for pedestrians and cyclists as part of a complete mobility network (MAYK-5). ● Commercial goods transport will be safe, efficient, and prioritized in industrial areas while minimizing conflicts with vulnerable road users like pedestrians and cyclists (MAYK-6).
Proudly YK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Diversity and accessibility will be advanced by through inclusive infrastructure and public spaces across the community (PYK-1). ● The City’s built form will reflect the aesthetics, identity, and Northern character that make Yellowknife distinct (PYK-2). ● Walkable, bikeable, Multimodal, human-scaled public spaces will support community connection and reflect shared local pride (PYK-3). ● Yellowknife’s lakes, rock formations, trails, and tree canopy will remain core to the City’s character and residents’ everyday lives (PYK-4).

4 LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

4.0.1 Context and Strategy for Area Designation Decisions

The land use designations and overlays shown on the Land Use Designation Map (**Map 2a**) illustrate both existing and planned land uses across the City. These designations and overlays provide a clear framework for managing and directing land use over the next 25 years. Planning and development objectives and policy directions associated with each designation and overlay are guided by the City's vision for growth. The City's historical land use, contemporary trends, and anticipated future needs informed the objectives and policies. Collectively, the land use designations and overlays establish the basis for permitted uses, development regulation, and the implementation of the City's strategic planning priorities.

4.0.2 Foundation of the City

Yellowknife exists within the traditional lands of the Yellowknives Dene First Nation, the Tłı̨chǫ people, and the North Slave Métis. The land is not only a physical setting, but a living source of law, knowledge, and responsibility, shaped by relationships that long predate municipal government and continue today. Municipal governance does not stand apart from this history; it is carried within it. Indigenous governance systems are rooted in responsibility to the land, to one another, and to future generations. Western governance systems often emphasize authority and jurisdiction, while Indigenous governance is grounded in responsibility, relationship, and stewardship. When aligned, these perspectives strengthen decisions and create durable outcomes.

The City's role is to exercise its responsibilities through planning, infrastructure, services, and convening authority - in ways that honour Spirit, respect Ancestors, support communities, and care for those yet to come. Reconciliation is made visible through everyday actions, relationships, and decisions that reflect shared responsibility and mutual respect.

As the territorial capital and primary service hub of the Northwest Territories, Yellowknife also holds a broader responsibility to the region. Systems such as housing, health, food security, transportation, and economic opportunity come together here. The City is uniquely positioned to bring partners together, support collaboration across jurisdictions, and help advance shared priorities in practical ways. This convening role is not an added function of municipal government; it is an expression of stewardship and collective responsibility for the well-being of communities across the North

4.0.3 Contemporary Land Use

As Yellowknife's economy has and continues to evolve, its land uses have shifted accordingly. Old Town, for example, has emerged to accommodate a unique mix of commercial and residential uses, and its land use designation now reflects this transformation.

The service sector has become increasingly important, and Yellowknife's role as a centre for government administration continues to anchor the local economy. With many jobs and services concentrated in the downtown core, the land use objectives and policies for this area emphasize not only supporting this concentration but also revitalizing older buildings and under-utilized lands to maintain a functional, attractive, and economically resilient centre.

As the population has grown, so has the demand for housing. Residential areas such as Niven and the Western Residential areas around Range Lake have developed to accommodate housing demand. These residential areas are near a mix of commercial services, educational institutions, and health care facilities. The areas are supported by municipal services and are connected by public transit and multimodal transportation options.

City growth has increased demand for recreational spaces and public services. The Recreation Hub designation highlights the need for accessible recreational amenities and ensures that these facilities can be reached safely and efficiently by all modes of transportation.

Contemporary land use in Yellowknife is increasingly influenced by the City's growing function as a regional transportation hub and potential role within the Arctic economic and logistical corridor. The broader northern connectivity requires coordinated land use, transportation integration, and infrastructure planning to support long-term growth and regional responsibilities.

4.0.4 Emerging Land Use

Yellowknife is positioned for continued growth; a high growth projection shows the population potentially could reach 26,659 by 2051. This level of growth-driven by major infrastructure investments, increased regional activity, and steady migration will require a focus for housing development across all forms of housing, particularly affordable options. Given the limited supply of developable land, future land needs must be met through a balanced approach between intensification, redevelopment, and infill within the existing urban area, while also carefully considering opportunities for new growth areas. As a result, new designated areas have been incorporated into this Plan, supported by objectives and policies that guide responsible expansion and to ensure the City can accommodate long-term growth in a sustainable, efficient manner.

Callout: Low Intensity Development: less than 25 UPH; Medium-intensity between 25-65 UPH, and High-intensity more than 65 UPH.

4.0.5 Designations and Overlays

YK 2050 designates the following areas within the municipal boundary, as identified in the *Land Use Designation Map (Map 2a)*:

- Downtown (city core and central residential)
- Niven Residential
- West Residential
- Grace Lake Residential
- Frame Lake Residential
- Old Town
- Old Airport Road
- Highway Commercial
- Kam Lake
- Kam Lake South
- Engle Business District

- Mineral Extraction Area
- Solid Waste Management
- Recreation Hub
- Giant Mine
- Special Management Area

Call-out: Land Use Designations - The Plan describes each land use designation, defining its purpose, permitted uses, and its role in the community’s long-term planning. For every designation, the Plan establishes clear objectives and policies with directions on how land should be used, including specific actions and targets to ensure development aligns with the overall vision and goals of YK 2050.

Overlay Areas

YK 2050 identifies the following overlay areas within the municipal boundary, as identified in the Land Use Designation Map (**Map 2a**):

- Capital Area
- Akaitcho (Interim Land Withdrawal)
- Seismological Array
- Natural Heritage Area

Call-out: Overlay areas identify locations with exceptional geological, environmental, economic, or cultural value. These areas require an added layer of direction and control beyond the underlying designation. Each overlay includes targeted objectives, policies and restrictions that safeguard its unique attributes to reinforce the intended purpose of the overlay.

4.1 Downtown

Total Area: 275.2 ha

Downtown, as identified on the *Land Use Designation Map (Map 2a)*, is the hub of the City. It connects the past with the future and provides a variety of services to residents in Yellowknife, residents throughout the Northwest Territories, and visitors and tourists from around the world. It is a destination for employment, culture, arts, recreation, entertainment, shopping, dining and business. The built form includes a mix of office buildings, storefront retail and service commercial buildings, restaurants and bars, institutional and residential buildings, park space and natural areas.

Downtown Yellowknife continues to function as the City’s primary centre for commerce, culture, tourism, and civic life, and is a key focus of current economic and community development initiatives. Since the last Community Plan update, downtown has experienced growth in retail, commercial, and mixed-use development, with an upward trend in new commercial spaces and residential-commercial projects that support a more active and diverse downtown environment.

Building on this momentum, the city updated its Economic Development Strategy and Implementation Plan. The direction is to strengthen the economic base of the City and contribute to sustainable prosperity for residents and businesses.

In parallel, the City and the Yellowknives Dene First Nation (YKDFN) are implementing a Joint Economic Development Strategy with a shared goal of supporting the communities of Yellowknife, Dettah and N'dilo toward maximizing future economic growth and prosperity, develop partnerships for future collaboration and overall benefit to residents.

The Downtown designation includes a large geographic area at the centre of the city. Traditionally downtown was only identified as the core area, however development patterns have created a residential area adjacent to the core area that allows for higher intensity development, a mix of uses and supports easy access to the City Core. This is a transitional middle intensity area that bridges the high intensity City Core with lower intensity areas in other parts of the city.

4.1.1 City Core (Mixed Use)

Total Area: 47.8 ha

The City Core, as identified on the *Downtown – City Core Land Use Designation Map (Map 3a)* is concentrated along the 50th Avenue corridor. It is bound on the north by the Explorer hotel sites on 49th Avenue and to the south by 52nd Avenue. It is bound to the west by 54th Street and to the east by 47th Street. It features a mix of offices, residential, retail, galleries, restaurants, bars, coffee shops, cultural venues, institutional uses, hotels, recreational activities, and open space. This area has developed over decades and has a mix of old and new buildings with various architectural styles.

The City Core is intended to remain the central area of the community and serve as the highest order mixed use centre. The City Core will be the hub of the city's business community, containing the largest office buildings and a blend of professional and business service functions. It is the principal location for administrative offices and professional services to support the logistics sector, tourism, arctic-focused partnerships and nation building projects within the City.

The City balances infill and redevelopment of vacant and underutilized parcels by providing land use flexibility and adaptive reuse of existing buildings, aligned with the City's downtown revitalization goals. Vacant and under-utilized parcels in the City Core will be encouraged for mixed use development with active street level commercial uses and residential on floors above. Intensification will be achieved through mandatory mixed-use along key streets, increased building height and lot coverage to support local businesses, services, and winter vitality. The City Core will grow as a 24/7 community, beyond a government and commercial purpose district.

Call-out: The City Core policies are supported by the objectives outlined in Section 3 under the four thematic goals - Growing, Living, Working, and Moving around YK. The objectives support an adaptable, affordable, efficient, and inclusive City Core. They promote flexible, mixed-use buildings that can respond to changing needs over time. They focus on intensification or redeveloping vacant and underutilized lands and parking lots into higher intensity uses. This approach revitalizes the City Core and makes full use of existing infrastructure. The policies also support diversity and housing affordability, helping to create a community where all residents can remain and build a future.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code (identifying Image)	Policies (from Section 4 - City Core)
Growing YK	GKY-3, GYK-4	New residential developments or redevelopment within the City Core must achieve a minimum net intensity target of 85 Units Per Hectare (UPH). (adapted from 6-a)
	GYK-4	There will be no minimum parking requirements within the City Core. Any new off-street parking for multi-unit dwelling developments must be restricted to a maximum of 0.5 stalls/unit. (adapted from 7-a)
	GYK-4	New surface parking lots will not be permitted within the City Core. (adapted from 2-a)
	GYK-4	Existing surface parking lots are encouraged to redevelop for mixed-use intensification. The City will support the removal of parking-related caveats where they constrain redevelopment. (new policy)
	GKY-3, GYK-4	Adaptive reuse and redevelopment of surface parking lots that include a mix of housing units should be supported through the City’s Development Incentive Program. (adapted from 2-b and 2.c)
	GYK-2	Mixed-use developments with 20 or more residential units that require municipal infrastructure upgrades and public realm improvements may have city led cost-sharing, incentives, or funding mechanisms in place to enhance the development (adapted from 8-a).
	GYK-5	Infill and Greenfield development must meet or exceed with the City’s intensity and affordable housing targets. (new policy)
	GYK-5	Purpose-built rental, Indigenous-led housing, and senior housing developments should be encouraged in the downtown area. (new policy)
Living in YK	LYK-1	New multi-unit dwelling developments with more than 20 units should designate a minimum of 15% of total units as affordable housing, where supported through municipal development incentives, grants, or other offsetting mechanisms to mitigate associated costs. (new policy)

Thematic Goal	Objective Code (identifying Image)	Policies (from Section 4 - City Core)
	LYK-1	New multi-unit dwelling developments with more than 20 units should designate a minimum of 15% of the total units as accessible barrier-free housing. (new policy)
	LYK-1	Multi-unit dwelling developments should provide bicycle parking spaces appropriately splitting between temporary (visitor) and permanent (Resident) use. (adapted from 3-a)
	LYK-2	Street-front building designs must adhere to the Yellowknife Downtown Facade Improvement Guidelines. (adapted from 9-b)
	LYK-2	Street-level parking must not front any major arterial roads in the Downtown Core. (adapted from 9-a)
	LYK -3	Public areas will be designed to accommodate diverse activities and foster a sense of belonging for all ages and abilities. (adapted from 10-a)
	LYK-2	Active frontage, such as patio development along commercial and mixed-use areas should be encouraged in the City Core. (adapted from 14-a)
	LYK - 4	Traditional healing, Indigenous-led services, and cultural practice spaces are encouraged to develop or be part of new development in the City Core. (new policy)
Working in YK	WYK – 1, WYK - 4	Guidelines will be developed toward advancing the establishment of a Business Improvement District along the 50 th , 48 th , and 49 th Street corridors through business engagement (Map 3a). (new policy)
	WYK - 2	City Infrastructure must be developed in accordance with the recommendations from City’s Accessibility Audit and Development & Design Standards Manual. (adapted from 5-b)
	WYK - 4	All new developments or redevelopments along 50 th Avenue and on 48 th street to 53 rd street between 49 th Ave and 52 nd Ave, exceeding three storeys in height, must include ground-level active commercial uses (e.g. office, retail, or restaurant) fronting the street. (Map 3b). (adapted from 14-b)
Moving Around YK	MAYK - 1	A phased implementation approach to the development of active transportation infrastructure should be prioritized in the City Core and surrounding areas in order to fulfill the recommendations of the Transportation Plan. (adapted from 5-a)
	MAYK - 3	A connected network of active transportation infrastructure should be established in the City Core. (adapted from 4-a)

4.1.2 Central Residential

Total Area: 215.5 ha

The central residential area, as identified on the *Downtown - Central Residential Land Use Designation Map (Map 4)*, surrounds the city Core and primarily consists of compact low-intensity residential development. The area is intermixed with some medium-intensity apartments/townhomes and buildings that have seen adaptive re-use for small-scale offices and/or retail spaces. It is a transition area between the high-intensity city core and other area designations like Old Town, the Recreation Hub, and Old Airport Road Commercial. The area is a geographically convenient place to live, as services are easy to access by walking, biking, driving and public transit.

The area is mostly low intensity residential. Due to its proximity to walkable amenities and grid pattern of streets, the areas are suitable for transition to higher intensity residential and multi-use development through infill and redevelopment. Infill opportunities include development of vacant lots or redevelopment of existing developed lots. Back laneways exist from 46th Street to 56th Street that allow access to the rear of the lots that could accommodate smaller alternative forms of infill such as secondary suites, mixed-use amenities or urban agriculture activities. All new developments must be connected to the existing active transportation network, including trails where available, and accommodate alternative modes of transportation.

Call-out: The Central Residential policies are driven by the thematic goals of Growing, Living, Working, Natural, Moving Around, and Proudly YK, with each policy supported by specific objectives found in Section 3 of YK 2050. These objectives promote environmentally responsible growth through urban intensification and climate resilience, utilizing mandates like minimum net units per hectare and reduced parking requirements to increase housing supply and support mixed uses. To enhance livability and inclusivity, the policies require multi-unit dwelling developments to include affordable and accessible housing while expanding investments in public spaces and recreational facilities. The framework also supports and prioritizes a safe, year-round active transportation network that connects neighborhoods to the city core. Finally, the plan protects Yellowknife’s unique Northern identity and natural heritage by planning for public access to nature.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code (identifying Image)	Policies (from Section 4 – Central Residential)
Growing YK	GYK-2, GYK-3	Development must provide a gradual built-form transition from mixed-use to multi-unit dwelling, and subsequently to low-intensity forms. (adapted from 3-a)
	GYK-4	Off-street parking minimums for new developments must be reduced to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondary dwelling units shall have no minimum parking requirement. • One-bedroom and studio units shall have no minimum parking requirement. (adapted from 4-a)

Thematic Goal	Objective Code (identifying Image)	Policies (from Section 4 – Central Residential)
	GYK-4	Zoning By-law amendments should extend the transitional Residential Intensification zone to appropriate Central Residential areas connected to public transit, pedestrian and cycling routes, and amenities, that will encourage more housing supply. (adapted from 4-b)
Living in YK	LYK-1	New multi-unit dwelling developments, with more than 20 units, should designate a minimum of 10% of total units as affordable housing, where supported through municipal development incentives, grants, or other offsetting mechanisms to mitigate associated costs. (new policy)
	LYK-1	Multi-unit dwelling developments should provide bicycle parking spaces appropriately splitting between temporary (visitor) and permanent (Resident) use. (new policy)
	LYK-2	Intensification in the Central Residential designated area should require municipal and private investment in open spaces. (adapted from 2-c)
	LYK-2	All park and recreation facilities should be enhanced throughout the Central Residential zone. (adapted from 2-a)
Working in YK	WYK - 1	Small-scale urban agricultural activities are to be permitted, provided they are accessory to residential uses and do not negatively impact the residential use of the neighbourhood. (adapted from 7-a)
	WYK - 1	Community gardens are to be permitted and encouraged in Central Residential area. (new policy)
Natural YK	NYK-1	Environmentally sensitive land that is difficult to develop because of ground movement, permafrost, or risk of erosion or flooding should remain as dedicated open space. (adapted from 2-b)
Moving Around YK	MAYK-3	Active transportation infrastructure in the Central Residential area should require an implementation plan in order to construct the missing components of it in accordance with the Transportation Master Plan. (adapted from 4-b)

Thematic Goal	Objective Code (identifying Image)	Policies (from Section 4 – Central Residential)
Proudly YK	PYK-4	Development of Tin Can Hill must be designed to minimize disturbance to the natural environment, significant heritage features, and recreational areas. (adapted from 8-a and 9-a)
	PYK-4	Any future developments in Tin Can Hill must consider all other available land development options first and include a justification as part of the Area Development Plan as to why this location is the appropriate site for new development.

4.2 Niven Residential (Residential)

Total Area: 86 ha

Niven, as identified on the *Niven Residential Land Use Designation Map (Map 5)*, is a residential area that is located adjacent to the downtown core and provides easy access to the core of the City by all multimodal transportation modes. It will continue to be a mix of low, medium and high-intensity residential uses with mixed-use activities that will encourage and/or incentivize community-oriented land use functions.

The fringe of Niven is a primary trail network, providing year-round connection from Back Bay to the Capital Area and beyond for walkers, skiers, snowmobilers and cyclists. The natural landscape and the rock cliff on the eastern portion of the designation is an important natural feature that is intended to be preserved. The trails around Niven Lake are important for maintaining permanent public access to Niven Lake. Future strategies should focus on strengthening connectivity between this trail and the City’s broader walking pathways while preserving passive recreation use around the lake.

Call-out: The Niven Residential policies are supported by the objectives outlined in Section 3 under the four thematic goals - Growing, Living, Working, and Moving around YK. The objectives centre on creating a balanced, inclusive, and highly connected urban environment. By managing development and redevelopment that respects the community’s existing built form through compatible land use, the plan ensures the Niven residential area maintains its unique feel. Key to this vision is a commitment to socio-economic diversity, achieved through a mix of housing types and tenure options that make the city accessible to all. Beyond housing, the framework emphasizes a safe and year-round public realm, integrating robust public transit with an extensive active transportation network. This ensures that whether by bus, bike, or foot, residents remain seamlessly connected to both essential services and the city’s iconic natural landscapes.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code	Policies
Living in YK	LYK-1	A full range of housing types across the housing continuum, including single-unit and multiple-unit dwellings, will be permitted. (adapted from 4-a)
	LYK -3	Community amenities shall be provided in accordance with applicable development and design standards. (adapted from 6-a)
	GYK-6	Landscaping must adhere to Fire Smart principles.
Moving Around YK	MAYK - 3	A phased implementation approach to developing increased walking and cycling infrastructure connecting the Niven Lake trail to Frame Lake and Great Slave Lake should be, realized in accordance with the Transportation Plan. (adapted from 1-b)

4.3 West Residential (Residential)

As amended by By-law No. 5102 May 12, 2025

Total Area: 361.6 ha

The West Residential designation, as identified on the *West Residential Land Use Designation Map (Map 6)*, is primarily a residential area. The area is adjacent to the Old Airport Road Commercial area and is commonly known as Frame Lake South and Range Lake. There are some institutional and recreational land uses in the area such as schools, parks, and sport fields. Most of the residential development is in the form of low intensity single family dwellings with some medium intensity residential development such as row-houses, duplexes, and low-rise apartment buildings. The West Residential area is functionally connected to the Old Airport Road Commercial area, where residents access many of their services and daily needs.

The land use in this area will continue to be primarily residential. However, there will be opportunities for other types of activities that are compatible with the existing land uses while enhancing the amenity options within walking distance of residential development. Such amenities could include parks, places of worship, convenience stores, schools, day-cares/day homes, home-based businesses, and home offices. These types of amenities support more complete neighbourhoods by making services more accessible for residents.

Medium intensity residential development, such as row-housing, duplexes, and low-rise multi-unit dwelling buildings, will be encouraged on land adjacent or near to Old Airport Road and parts of Range Lake Road. This type of intensity already exists in the area, and residential lots are within walking distance of amenities such as schools, parks and retail and commercial services.

Improvements to the transportation networks between the West Residential area, Old Airport Road Commercial area, and the Recreation Hub area (identified in *Land Use Designation Map*) will be necessary to accommodate additional development in this area. Specific emphasis will be placed on improving multi-modal transportation such as walking, cycling, and public transportation to better connect the West Residential area to other parts of the City.

Several natural areas such as Range Lake, Balsillie Court, Kam Lake Road/Old Airport Road, are identified natural areas that should be considered for preservation. The Balsillie Court is the area between the West Residential and the Airport Designation; it and Range Lake are not suitable for development because of environmental ground conditions (natural lakes or wetlands). Both locations are to remain natural areas, providing a buffer from airport operations, and continued use for passive recreation, or considered for potential low impact agricultural uses such as raised garden beds.

As amended by By-law No. 5102 May 12, 2025

To redesignate approximately 5.18 ha of site specific, vacant land, to allow for residential development. The land legally described as Lot 1, Block 553, Plan 1907 (located at the corner of Deh Cho Boulevard and Kam Lake Road) is to be removed from the ‘Kam Lake’ land use designation, as designated in City of Yellowknife, Community Plan, By-law No. 5007. Lot 1, Block 553, Plan 1907, is hereby redesignated as ‘West Residential’ land use designation and is subject to the policies of section 4.6 West Residential, as outlined in in the YK 2050, upon the effective date of this by-law (May 12, 2025).

Call-out: The policies for the West Residential area are guided by four primary thematic goals: Growing YK, Living in YK, Natural YK and Moving Around YK - with particular focus on active transportation and transit connectivity, land use diversity, environmental management, and housing affordability and intensity. The objectives aim to ensure infrastructure is safe and accessible for all ages, while allowing for a strategic mix of institutional, commercial, and recreational uses that complement the residential fabric and transition in scale between low-rise residential areas and large-footprint mixed-use, commercial and industrial blocks. Policy aims to prioritize housing variety and intensification throughout the designation with the highest intensity development concentrated along transit corridors. Natural heritage areas identified in the West Residential area will have environmental protections through the natural heritage overlay.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code (identifying Image)	Policies (from Section 4 – West Residential)
Growing YK	GYK-2	Institutional uses that are compatible with neighbourhoods are permitted. (adapted from 3-a)
	GYK-2	All non-residential or higher intensity residential development must be compatible with existing residential land uses. (adapted from 8-a)
	GYK-3	Community-scale commercial (e.g. convenience store, personal services etc.) uses are permitted. (adapted from 3-b)
	GYK-3	Large commercial and mixed-use facilities should be limited to sites along Arterial or Collector Roads or be contiguous with local service facilities. (adapted from 3-d)
	GYK-3	Mixed-use development, featuring street-level commercial space with residential units above, should be encouraged where the West Residential and Old Airport Road designations abut to create a seamless, dynamic transition between the two areas. (new policy)

Thematic Goal	Objective Code (identifying Image)	Policies (from Section 4 – West Residential)
	GYK-3	Land uses should facilitate a gradual transition in scale and intensity between low-intensity residential areas and adjacent medium-intensity mixed-use/commercial uses to improve the interface between these zones. (new policy)
	GYK-5	Multi-unit medium-intensity residential development that are compatible with the existing residential uses should be permitted. (new policy)
	GYK-2	Shared parking options may be utilized for new multi-unit dwelling developments to reduce off-street parking requirements. (New Policy-Based on Engagement Report)
	GYK-4	Residential intensification should be permitted along the transit corridors. (adapted from 6-a)
	GYK-6	Landscaping must adhere to Fire Smart principles.
Living in YK	LYK-1	A full range of housing types across the housing continuum, including single-unit and multiple-unit dwellings, will be permitted. (adapted from 7-a)
Natural YK	NYK-1	Natural areas of Balsillie Court and Range Lake must remain part of the natural heritage and act as a buffer between the Airport and West Residential Area. (adapted from 4-a)
	NYK-2	Community Park and recreation uses will be permitted. (adapted from 3-c)

4.4 Grace Lake (Residential)

Total Area: 27.5 ha

Grace Lake, as identified on the *Grace Lake (Residential) Land Use Designation Map (Map 7)*, is an estate-style residential area. The lots are two to three times larger than an average City lot.

Compared to other residential areas, Grace Lake is located away from public amenities and services like retail shopping, recreational facilities, and other public facilities. It is located approximately five km from the downtown core area of the city.

The land use in this area will continue to be low to medium-intensity residential. Other uses, such as industrial and commercial activity, will not be permitted, with the exception of home-based businesses.

Given the low population intensity of the area and the distance to other built-up areas of the city, it is unlikely that public transit service will be extended to this area. No extension of piped water (drinking water or wastewater services) to this area is contemplated for the planning period contemplated by this plan.

Grace Lake is a natural heritage resource that is used by many residents for passive recreation activities. Development along the south shore of Grace Lake will provide a buffer along the shoreline that will allow for public access.

Call out: The Grace Lake Residential policies are supported by the objectives outlined in Section 3 under the three thematic goals – Growing, Natural and Moving around YK. The objectives centre on fostering sustainable community growth by prioritizes the preservation and expansion of "green and blue" spaces, ensuring that all residents maintain high-quality access to nature and waterbodies. The policies support context-sensitive land use by promoting mild intensification through secondary dwelling units and promote environmental protection to avoid future land-use conflicts.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code	Policies
Living YK	LYK-1	Residential development may include up to two secondary dwelling units and one primary dwelling on one lot. (new policy)
	GYK-6	Landscaping must adhere to Fire Smart principles.
Natural YK	NYK - 2	Public access to the south shoreline of Grace Lake should be maintained for recreational activities. (adapted from 4-a)
Moving Around YK	MAYK - 4	A phased implementation approach to developing a trail network that connects Grace Lake to the Cities existing trail network should be realized in accordance with the Transportation Plan. (adapted from 4-b)

4.5 Frame Lake

Total Area: XXX ha

The Frame Lake area, as identified on the *Frame Lake Land Use Designation Map (Map 8)* provides a framework and direction for improving existing public spaces, preserving natural and cultural heritage, and managing future growth in part of the Capital Area.

The Frame Lake designation is an area identified for growth and development. Development will include a mix of primarily residential and some commercial uses, incorporating a mix of residential forms from low to medium and some high-intensity development. The focus will be to integrate new development seamlessly with the natural environment. Trails and future transit extensions will link the Frame Lake Residential area with the Niven Residential area and the Downtown, creating a cohesive network of open spaces and multi-modal transportation routes. This will ensure that as new development occurs, the community retains its signature access to the trails, institutions, and shorelines.

The designation also respects significant ongoing land tenure processes, specifically the Akaitcho Interim Land Withdrawal. This overlay identifies Commissioner’s Land of interest to the Akaitcho Dene First Nations, ensuring their identified land interests are protected during negotiations with the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Government of Canada. Any future development in these areas is coordinated through intergovernmental cooperation to ensure that the eventual settlement strengthens the cultural identity of the Capital Area.

Call-out: The objectives for this designation are to prioritize environmentally responsible and inclusive growth. This is achieved by mandating minimum shoreline buffers that incorporate the McMahon Frame Lake Trail to protect or improve its integrity, and by encouraging large residential developments to provide a full continuum of housing, including specific percentages of affordable and universal design units. Policies guide a gradual transition in building scale from intensive mixed-use near Old Airport Road to neighbourhood-oriented residential forms, utilizing Area Development Plans to identify necessary community amenities, parks, and infrastructure sequencing. To foster a complete community, the policies encourage diverse housing types and permits cultural and institutional uses such as traditional healing spaces, while simultaneously enhancing connectivity through improved transit options, active transportation networks, and new links to the McMahon Frame Lake Trail system.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code (identifying Image)	Policies
Growing YK	GYK-1	The Bristol Pit should be preserved for year-round recreational use, specifically for activities such as snowboarding, skiing, skateboarding, and mountain biking. Future enhancements will be limited to those that build on existing winter and summer recreational activities.
	GYK-2 GYK-3	New residential development near Old Airport Road will establish a gradual transition in scale, moving from intensive mixed-use forms near the main corridor to neighbourhood-oriented residential forms farther east from Old Airport Road.
	GYK-3	New development shall not exceed the height restrictions set in the Yellowknife Airport Zoning Regulations SOR/81-472.
	GYK-3	Area Development Plans will be used as a tool to guide development in the area.
	GYK-3	New development shall ensure the preservation, continued access, and expansion of the Lakeview Cemetery.
	GYK-5	A mix of different housing types, including low to medium intensity residential and high intensity mixed-use development, shall be permitted in accordance with the Frame Lake Residential Area Development Plan.
	GYK-5	Non-market housing is encouraged in the Frame Lake Area.
	GYK-5	Purpose-built rental developments should be encouraged. Indigenous-led Housing should be included.
	GYK-6	Landscaping must adhere to Fire Smart principles.
	LYK-3	Accessible and universal designed public space, neighbourhood parks, and community amenities should be identified in the Area Development Plan and incorporated into new residential development.
	LYK-5	New development within the Frame Lake area shall be connected to municipal water and sewer services, in accordance with the

Thematic Goal	Objective Code (identifying Image)	Policies
		standards and sequencing outlined in Section 10 Subdivision and Development Sequencing.
Working in YK	WYK-3	Live-work residential dwelling units shall be permitted along arterial or major collector roads to allow for neighbourhood-scale commercial.
Natural YK	NYK-1	Land use changes should establish a minimum of 15 metres of buffer zones along lakeshore of Frame Lake to maintain the integrity of the Frame Lake Trail and prevent shoreline privatization.
	NYK-1	Buffer areas of 15 meters shall protect shorelines in their natural state from development.
	NYK-1	New development should incorporate, where necessary, engineered solutions to maintain the natural drainage channels between Jackfish Lake, Frame Lake, and Niven Lake. Where possible there should be no adverse impacts on adjacent properties.
	NYK-2	Frame Lake Trail should be improved to become more accessible to people of all ages and abilities.
Moving Around YK	MAYK-3 MAYK-4	All new developments should be connected with multi-modal transportation networks linking to the existing city networks in accordance with the Transportation Plan.
	MAYK-4	Cycling and pedestrian infrastructure in the Frame Lake designation area require implementation to enhance the existing networks and construct the missing components of it in accordance with the Transportation Plan.
	MAYK-2	All new developments within the Frame Lake designated should be planned in alignment with future public transit infrastructure in accordance with the Transportation Plan.
Proudly YK	PYK-4	Any new development should be designed to preserve and enhance special views, specifically those of the Legislative Assembly, The Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, Somba

Thematic Goal	Objective Code (identifying Image)	Policies
		Ke' Park and the Ceremonial Circle.

4.6 Old Town

Total Area: 92.9 ha

Old Town and Latham Island, as identified on the *Old Town Land Use Designation Map (Map 9)*, is recognized as an integral part of Yellowknife’s recent history and a major part of the unique character and personality of the community. It will continue to include eclectic building forms, human-scale streets, modern and rustic materials, an active and natural waterfront, prominent rock outcroppings, and a diversity of people and activities that reflect the independent, industrious and artistic culture of Yellowknife. The eclectic and historic nature of the area is a major tourist draw, including unparalleled views of the city and Yellowknife Bay from the Bush Pilots Monument. It is important to recognize, protect, and celebrate the unique features of the area so that residents and visitors can continue enjoying Old Town’s charm.

Land uses and associated activities in Old Town should be balanced to preserve the organic and historic built form of the area while addressing the growth pressures of increased tourism and commercial interest. Old Town and Latham Island are also not served by year-round piped water services. This restricts some types of land uses due to the limited capacity and high cost of trucked water services versus piped water services.

The area specific objectives and policy statements are intended to protect and enhance the cultural heritage value of Old Town while allowing it to continue to evolve and adapt to the broader contemporary economic, environmental, and social objectives of the City of Yellowknife. There are several open spaces or natural areas in Old Town that have been identified for a high level of protection. These include, Niven Lake East (Fritz Theil Rock), Bush Pilots Monument, McAvoy Rock, Willow Flats, Peace River Flats, Latham Island E Shoreline, Willow Flats Shoreline and the School Draw Shoreline. All areas are intended to remain as natural areas and future adjacent development is to enhance these features.

Old Town will continue to accommodate a mix of residential and commercial uses. It will continue to serve as a destination for Yellowknife residents and visitors year-round as they access a broad variety of activities and services from Old Town including:

- Unique restaurants and pubs
- Boutique bed & breakfast accommodations
- Historical buildings
- Bush Pilots Monument
- Float plane bases

- Old Town guided walk
- View of the houseboat community
- Natural features (rock outcrops)
- Access to Yellowknife Bay which supports winter events like the Snow King and festival and ice racing
- Location of a several tourism operators

Old Town and Latham Island are also an important link to the Yellowknives Dene First Nation (YKDFN) Community of N'dilo. It provides the only land-based access to this community. The YKDFN are an important part of the history of Old Town and lived in the area long before the existence of Old Town. The YKDFN will continue to be an integral part of Old Town, Latham Island and Jolliffe Island, as reconciliation processes and commitment to regional co-existence evolve. This area's objectives and policies will respect and complement the Community of N'dilo and the YKDFN.

Water access to Great Slave Lake from Old Town is important for boaters, float plane operators, recreational vehicles (motorized and non-motorized), and for shoreline viewing or swimming. Access to the water for the public will be maintained and enhanced.

The vision for the area will reflect the careful and incremental redevelopment of key sites and waterfront areas to add additional activities and increase public waterfront access, while at the same time respecting the organic and historic form of the area.

Call-out: Guided by six thematic goals, the Old Town designation establishes policies that balance sustainable residential and commercial redevelopment opportunities with the preservation of the area's unique heritage and natural environment. Policies support this balance by limiting auto-oriented uses, and encouraging sensitive redevelopment of residential and commercial land, while maintaining Latham Island primarily for residential use. Economic and cultural vitality is promoted through adaptive re-use of historic buildings, relocation of incompatible industrial uses, and protection of waterfront access for aviation and tourism along the causeway. Environmental protection is prioritized through the preservation of key landmarks such as Bush Pilots Monument, Willow Flats, and natural shorelines, with environmental studies required where bedrock or shoreline alterations are proposed.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code (identifying Image)	Policies
Growing YK	GYK-1	Motor vehicle-oriented uses such as non-accessory surface parking lots and drive-thrus are not permitted (adapted policy 3-a)
	GYK-2	Only residential development will be permitted on Latham Island except for home-based businesses and properties with direct access to the causeway. (adapted from policy 9-a)
	GYK-3	Redevelopment and retrofitting of residential and commercial uses should be permitted in all applicable areas, except Latham Island, where development should maintain the established residential form and land use pattern of the neighbourhood. (adapted from policy 15a)
	GYK-4	Off-street parking minimums for residential and commercial uses will be reduced. (adapted from policy 4a)
	GYK-3	Lot consolidation will be encouraged to facilitate residential and commercial development that provides public access to the waterfront. (new policy)
	GYK-3	City owned lands fronting the waterfront should be redeveloped to provide public access. (new policy)
	GYK-3	Incentives for relocation of incompatible industrial and storage uses out of Old Town to industrial designations will be supported. (new policy)
	GYK-6	Landscaping must adhere to Fire Smart principles.
Living in YK	LYK-1	Medium intensity multi-unit residential development will be permitted. (adapted from 14-a)
Working in YK	WYK-3	The causeway/narrows area between Latham Island and the mainland will be preserved for commercial operations namely aviation and supporting uses, tourism operator activities that require waterfront access and boat docks. (adapted from 11-a)

Thematic Goal	Objective Code (identifying Image)	Policies
	WYK-1	Old vacant buildings with heritage significance that represent the historical activities that were once prominent in the area may be incentivized to accommodate adaptive uses. (adapted from 8-a)
Natural YK	NYK-1	New development should not adversely impact natural geographic features and the environment. (adapted from 1-a)
	NYK-1	Any alteration of significant natural bedrock and shoreline features should be avoided if possible. If alteration of natural bedrock and shoreline features is unavoidable, a professional environmental and/or geotechnical study will be required. (adapted from 1-b)
	NYK-1	Niven Lake East (Fritz Theil Rock), Bush Pilots Monument, McAvoy Rock, Willow Flats, Peace River Flats, Latham Island E Shoreline, Willow Flats Shoreline and the School Draw Shoreline should be preserved as natural areas. (adapted from 17-a)
Moving Around YK	MAYK-1	A phased implementation approach to the development of cycling infrastructure shall be realized in Old Town to fulfill the requirements of the Transportation Plan. (adapted from 7-a)
	MAYK-1, MAYK-5	New development or redevelopment in Old Town must demonstrate there is no undue pressure on on-street parking and appropriate mitigation measures are provided as part of the development approval process. (new policy)
Proudly YK	PYK-1	City infrastructure should be developed in accordance with the recommendations from the City's <i>Accessibility Audit and Development & Design Standards Manual</i> . (adapted from policy 6-c)
	PYK-2	Adaptive re-use of historical buildings, particularly those in deteriorated condition, will be encouraged. (adapted from 8-b updated)

4.7 Old Airport Road (Mixed Use)

Total Area: 102.5 ha

Old Airport Road, as identified on the *Old Airport Road - Land Use Designation Map (Map 10)* serves as a major transportation and commercial hub for the City and the Northwest Territories. Historically developed with large-format retail and surface parking, the 25-year planning horizon for the area supports a transition to a high-intensity, mixed-use corridor designed to support a more complete and inclusive community. Policies that have an * apply when municipal services are available to service the lot and/or development.

The city is actively promoting mixed-use, multi-unit commercial and residential development, including market and non-market housing, health-sector housing, live-work units, assisted housing, special care housing, and student-oriented housing to move away from purely auto-oriented activities. While the corridor will continue to meet the community's commercial needs, the strategy focuses on:

- **Transit-Supportive Intensity:** Concentrating high-intensity residential and commercial spaces along the main thoroughfare to encourage public transit use and walkability.
- **A "Complete Community" Model:** Integrating a range of residential options to enliven the area throughout the day, ensuring the district remains active long after business hours.
- **Institutional Integration:** Maintaining the area's role as a healthcare hub, including the Stanton Territorial Hospital and the medical clinic and outpatient rehabilitation services in the Łiwegqatı Building, while surrounding them with supportive institutional and professional services.

Future development will follow a scaled intensity approach. Higher intensity projects will be prioritized directly along Old Airport Road, with building heights and intensities tapering down as they move further from the primary corridor. This ensures an appropriate transition into surrounding areas while maintaining the corridor's commercial function through flexible mixed-use policies.

Call out box: The Old Airport Road policies are supported by the objectives outlined in Section 3 under the four thematic goals Growing, Living, Working and Moving around YK. The objectives support urban intensification and vibrancy by transforming vacant and under-utilized lots and parking areas into high-intensity, mixed-use developments that respect the surrounding community form and function. Growth is supported by inclusive land-use policies that protect local businesses through incentives and promote a unique local identity for tourism. To ensure a highly livable environment, the plan integrates an accessible public transit system with a safe, year-round active transportation network, prioritizing pedestrian comfort and non-motorized mobility within a cohesive urban fabric.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code	Policies
Growing YK	GYK-2	New development along Old Airport Road should prioritize locating off-street parking behind buildings to enhance the quality of the streetscape and reduce the visual impact of surface parking.
	GYK-2	Support functions, such as loading and servicing areas, are to be located at the rear of lots and be adequately screened.
	GYK-3	Proposed land uses adjacent to the Stanton Hospital shall not conflict with the function, services, and safety of the hospital.
	GYK-3	*New developments on lands fronting Old Airport Road should be mixed-use.
	GYK-4	*New vehicle-oriented development should not have vehicular access from Old Airport Road and may be serviced from accessible existing or new service roads.
	GYK-4	*Existing vehicle-oriented uses should be encouraged to be redeveloped into transit-supportive developments.
	GYK-4	*Mixed-use developments are encouraged to incorporate at least two storeys of commercial or retail space at the ground and second levels to accommodate large-format retailers, with residential units integrated above or to the rear of the site.
	GYK-4	Shared parking options may be utilized between adjacent uses to reduce off-street parking requirements.
	GYK-6	Landscaping must adhere to Fire Smart principles.
Living in YK	LYK -3	* Buildings oriented towards Old Airport Road should feature a clearly defined primary entry point opening directly onto the public sidewalk.
	LYK-3	Commercial development must meet universal design standards.
	LYK-3	*Sidewalks should be developed with amenities like trees, benches and bus shelters as part of complete street in accordance with the Transportation Plan.
	LYK-3	New development should be sited adjacent to the street to provide direct access for multi-modal transportation and minimize interaction with vehicle parking areas.
	LYK-1	*Mixed-use residential development may be incentivized to encourage medium to high-intensity residential and commercial development along Old Airport Road.
	WYK-2	*Healthcare sector housing and essential workers housing, live-work units, assisted housing, special care housing, and student housing will be permitted.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code	Policies
Working in YK	WYK - 3	*Commercial hotels and motels will be permitted within the corridor.
	WYK - 1	Heavy and light industrial activities will be incentivized and encouraged to relocate to the Engle Business District.
Moving Around YK	MAYK - 3	*Infrastructure development should prioritize eliminating gaps in walking cycling and trail networks in accordance with the Transportation Plan.
	MAYK - 5	Commercial and mixed-use development should be designed to accommodate walking, cycling, and public transit.

4.8 Highway Commercial Area

Highway Commercial, as identified on the *Highway Commercial Land Use Designation Map (Map 11)* is an area strategically situated along Highway 3, serving as a vital gateway within the proposed Arctic Economic and Security Corridor. This location presents a unique opportunity to develop a highway-oriented commercial hub that supports regional mobility and the efficient movement of freight. By accommodating a range of commercial services, the site will bolster local economic activity and strengthen the City’s role as a primary service center for corridor-related trade and travel. Given its position along a key regional transportation route, the lands present opportunities to support regional mobility and freight movement while also accommodating complementary highway commercial uses that could contribute to local economic activity and strengthen the City’s role in servicing corridor-related travel and trade.

A portion of these lands include the interim withdrawal lands, as identified on the *Akaiicho (Interim Land Withdrawal)* overlay map. Any proposed development within these areas requires proactive support and meaningful collaboration with the Akaiicho Dene First Nations.

To balance these vehicle-heavy uses with safety and aesthetics, the policies require that direct access from Highway 3 be limited using service roads, where appropriate, while also mandating the inclusion of safe pedestrian routes and the maintenance of existing trail networks in the area.

The designation also prioritizes environmental and cultural protection by enforcing a 15-metre buffer along Jackfish Lake, maintaining natural drainage channels, and strictly protecting nearby landmarks like Bristol Monument Park and Lakeview Cemetery from development impacts.

Call-Out: The primary purpose of this designation is to accommodate a diverse range of highway-oriented commercial services that support regional transportation and the traveling public. To ensure the long-term health of the City’s core, this designation focuses on large-format, vehicle-dependent uses—such as automotive sales and service, freight logistics, and specialized traveler services—that require significant space and highway visibility. This approach is intentionally designed to complement, rather than compete with, the boutique retail, pedestrian-scale services, and high-intensity hospitality concentrated in the Downtown, Old Town and Residential-Commercial (RC) areas.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code (identifying Image)	Policies
Growing YK	GYK-2	Commercial service development will primarily serve auto-oriented uses to avoid competition with smaller-scale community oriented and downtown retail services.
	GYK-3	New development within this designation shall not exceed the height restrictions set in the Yellowknife Airport Zoning Regulations (SOR/81-472).
	GYK-6	Landscaping must adhere to Fire Smart principles.
Natural YK	NYK-1	Buffer areas of 15 metres are required adjacent to the shoreline of Jackfish Lake.
	NYK-1	New development should incorporate, where necessary, engineered solutions to maintain natural drainage channels to Jackfish Lake and not impact the territorial highway systems through storm water management.
	NYK-1	Bristol Monument Park and Lakeview Cemetery and the trails connected to these areas should be protected from and incorporated into future development.
Moving Around YK	MAYK-1 MAYK-5	Development will include active transportation connections and safe pedestrian routes to ensure the safety of non-motorized transportation in accordance with the Transportation Plan.
	MAYK-4	Existing trail networks in the area will be maintained or enhanced and separated from the highway network.
	MAYK-6	Direct access to commercial development from Highway 3 should be limited and primary access for lots are to be from a service road.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code (identifying Image)	Policies
	MAYK-6	All new development or access connections fronting Highway 3 must obtain a permit from the GNWT Department of Infrastructure and adhere to all territorial highway setbacks and access regulations.
Proudly YK	PYK-2	Development visible from public roads or the highway may be required to incorporate visual screening such as landscaping or fencing to hide outdoor storage and parking areas from public view.

4.9 Kam Lake (Light Industrial)

As amended by By-law No. 5102, May 12, 2025

Total Area: 188 ha

Kam Lake, as identified on the *Kam Lake Land Use Designation Map (Map 12)* is an area that supports the production and sale of goods and services in the City. Historically, Kam Lake was the primary light industrial area of the City. It was not designed to accommodate residential amenities such as parks, sidewalks or piped services. Currently, its primary land use activities include light industrial and commercial activities. Some parcels have accessory dwelling units that are intended to support the primary industrial or commercial uses. The commercial uses tend to have a quasi-industrial form whereby they may be designed with large outdoor storage areas, impound areas with high fences, heavy equipment on site, or large warehouse components that do not integrate well within residential streetscapes and neighbourhoods. These activities may also generate noise, vibrations, emissions and other nuisances that are not compatible with residential activities.

The area is a motor vehicle-dominated environment, away from neighbourhoods and pedestrian-oriented streetscapes. Landscaping has typically been used to screen property boundaries, and this will continue to be a requirement.

Emerging industries that require lower land intensity, such as agriculture, animal services, animal shelters, horticulture, food processing and packaging, manufacturing of goods or artisanal products (carvings and others) may be accommodated on the larger lots in Kam Lake. Residential land uses may continue to be accessory (secondary) to the primary land use activity. Workforce Accommodation policies of **Section 6.0** may apply within this designation. Land uses that are better suited to the City Core or other areas of the city, will be encouraged to relocate to make space for new activities better suited for Kam Lake.

The area will remain a low intensity area with wider street widths and wide road shoulders. The primary purpose of the road network in the area is to support the safe movement of larger vehicles and equipment. However, Kam Lake Road is an important connection between the City Core and Old Airport Road for residents in Grace Lake. Separate walking and cycling infrastructure may be developed in sequence with major road repairs or the Transportation Plan.

New heavy industry land uses, which are not compatible with agricultural uses, or accessory dwellings, must be located in the Engle Business District or other areas that are designated for heavy industrial uses.

Call-Out: The Kam Lake designation is specifically intended for light industrial and quasi-industrial commercial activities that require large outdoor storage areas or generate nuisances incompatible with traditional residential neighbourhoods or service commercial areas. Its core function is to support the production and sale of goods, safely accommodate the movement of large vehicles and equipment, and provide space for emerging lower-intensity industries such as agriculture, food processing, animal services, and artisanal manufacturing. To preserve this specialized light-industrial focus, residential uses are strictly limited to accessory dwellings that support primary commercial operations.

Incompatible commercial uses are encouraged to relocate to the City Core, and new heavy industrial uses are explicitly prohibited and directed to the Engle Business District.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code (identifying Image)	Policies
Growing YK	GYK-1	Any new development near the west shoreline of Kam Lake should preserve the existing natural heritage, maintain and expand public access, and protect view corridors to the lake. (new policy)
	GYK-2	Buffering and visual separation between lots should be provided. (adapted from 10-a)
	GYK-2	Subdivision of new lots must be contiguous to existing developed lots with appropriate lot sizes and access for light industrial commercial activities. (adapted from 13-a and 1-a)
	GYK-3	All new subdivided lots and developments must front on a municipal road to ensure adequate emergency response access. (new policy)
	GYK-3	Visual separation should mitigate land use conflicts and safety issues between adjacent parcels. (adapted from 10-a and 10-b)

Thematic Goal	Objective Code (identifying Image)	Policies
	GYK-6	Subdivision of new lots and site design for new development must incorporate adequate emergency-response access and on-site fire mitigation-measures. (adapted from 7-a)
	GYK-6	Landscaping must adhere to Fire Smart principles. (adapted from 10-c)
	GYK-7	Urban agricultural activities, which may include equine operations may be permitted as long as the effluent (nutrient management of animal waste) is effectively managed on site. New development must demonstrate that an effluent management plan has been prepared in accordance with Canadian best practices and that no adverse impacts are expected on adjacent properties. (new policy)
	GYK-7	Staging, plant growing facilities, and logistics for Commercial Urban Agriculture businesses may be permitted. (adapted from 12-a)
	GYK-3	Land uses adjacent to West Residential area should be limited to workforce accommodation, commercial and community services to provide a compatible transition. (new policy)
	GYK-3	New large commercial uses, such as large box stores, should be encouraged to develop and relocate in Kam Lake. (new policy)
	GYK-3	Artisan workshops and facilities that generate dust, odour, or noise may be permitted where space requirements are met. (adapted from 4-a)
Working in YK	WYK-2	Residential land use must be accessory to the primary land use. <i>(Note: This aligns with maintaining business as the primary focus while permitting essential on-site housing).</i> (adapted from 2-a)
	WYK-2	Workforce accommodation shall be permitted.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code (identifying Image)	Policies
	WYK-1	New development that includes Animal services may be permitted. New kennels will be encouraged to locate to the Kam Lake South area. (adapted 15-a)
	WYK-4	Community or commercial activities better suited to the City Core should be relocated to appropriate locations. (adapted from 14-a)
	WYK-1	Existing heavy industrial activities should be encouraged to relocate to the Engle Business District. (adapted from 6-b)
	WYK-3	Tourism-related staging, storage, and warehousing may be permitted. (adapted from 11-a)
Moving Around YK	MAYK-1	New public road networks must be designed to ensure connectivity to adjacent lands and existing municipal rights-of-way. (new policy)
	MAYK-4	A phased implementation approach to developing a trail network that connects Kam Lake to the Cities existing trail network should be prioritized, in accordance with the Transportation Plan. (new policy)

4.10 Kam Lake South

Total Area: 356.6 ha

Kam Lake South, identified on the *Kam Lake South Land Use Designation Map (Map 13)* is an area that is intended to be the home for the dog sledding community. Dog kennels and accessory residential uses as required for dog mushers that may wish to live on the same property as their dogs, will be permitted. The City recognizes the traditional and historical importance of dog sledding in the community and the access to trails and lakes that have been established because of a long-term tenure in this area of Yellowknife. There is an active community of dog mushers who keep their dogs in this area and have developed a network of trails and access points that allow them to regularly run sled dog teams.

The area also supports some light industrial activities, such as animal shelters and quarrying, and has the potential to support increased tourism and commercial recreation activities, as well as potential agriculture activities. Other tourism or commercial recreation activities, such as snowmobile tours or potential aurora viewing, may also be permitted in the area. Agricultural uses, including greenhouses, small-scale farms, and animal husbandry, will be permitted. Workforce Accommodation policies of section xxx may apply within this designation. Accessory dwelling units that support permitted tourism, commercial recreation and agriculture operation will be permitted. Any potential development must be aware that dog lots are present in this area and will remain.

There is an active quarry that has been operating in the area for over 40 years. This quarry is run by a private business, and the quarry land is leased from the City. That quarry will expand in the near future to meet demand for aggregate material. Quarrying activity will continue as a private use, and adjacent uses will be complementary to allow for safe operations of the sites. To reduce impacts to the Grace Lake South subdivision, a natural vegetation buffer will be maintained between the quarries and residential properties of other designations. As the quarry pits are exhausted of resources, a reclamation plan will be implemented.

Infrastructure to support low-impact tourism, commercial recreation activities and Workforce Accommodation uses may be required at the time of development in this designation, no expansion of municipal water or sewer piped services is contemplated. This may include uses such as aurora viewing operations, snowmobile facilities, and the like. Recognizing the importance of access to the lake for many of these operators, development of these uses will be encouraged to begin near the western shore of Kam Lake and push westward as infrastructure allows. To maintain public access to the shore of Kam Lake, the City will develop a trail network.

Any light industrial activity will remain in the area north of the causeway. Light industrial activities, similar to those found in the Kam Lake designation, will be restricted in the area south of the causeway. Future dog lots, tourism and recreational commercial operations, agriculture activities, Workforce Accommodation and the quarry will be the only activities south of the causeway in this designation. The primary transportation mode in the area are motor vehicles. However, there is a network of trails that are used frequently by dog mushers, snowmobilers and other recreational users. The connectivity and lake access of this trail network will be preserved. The road design needs to account for activities associated with dog running, and speed limits and signage will reflect this. The area will remain a low-intensity, area with wide streets, as it is intended to support the safe movement of larger vehicles and equipment. Any new low-intensity land uses must not conflict with the intent of the area, which is dog lots, tourism, commercial recreation and agricultural activities, as well as quarrying.

The westernmost portion of this designation is Commissioner's Land under the administration of the GNWT. To allow for more comprehensive planning of this area, the City may apply to acquire this land from the GNWT.

Call out: The Kam Lake South designation emphasizes a pragmatic, functional approach to growth that prioritizes land-use compatibility and the protection of existing industrial operations. By implementing strategic land use policies, the plan ensures that new development is compatible with the area's existing uses and are supported by appropriate on-site or communal service standards.

Economic stability remains a core pillar, focusing on maintaining a safe and accessible environment for the regional industries and workforce accommodations that sustain the local economy. The strategy enhances the area’s connectivity and recreational commercial value by improving public access to lakes and green spaces. This vision will be supported by a multimodal transportation network designed to improve safety and connectivity, linking Yellowknife’s natural features with its diverse neighbourhoods through integrated trails and road designs aligned through the Transportation Plan.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code	Policies
Growing YK	GYK-2, GYK-3	Kennels will not be permitted in Kam Lake South, along the south shoreline of Grace Lake. (adapted from 1-a and 1-e)
	GYK-2	Vegetation buffers must be maintained between commercial Urban Agriculture uses and the Grace Lake Residential areas. (adapted from 3-c)
	GYK-2	Vegetation buffers must be maintained around quarry sites to minimize disturbances to adjacent uses. (adapted from 6-c)
	GYK-3 GYK-6	New quarry operations or expansions should be permitted in this area. (adapted from 5-a) Landscaping must adhere to Fire Smart principles.
	GYK-3	New development in Kam Lake South must be compatible with quarrying and dog kennel activities. (adapted from 6-b)
Living in YK	LYK - 5	New development shall only be permitted along existing municipal roadways. (adapted from 7-b) New development may be permitted along existing road allowances where upgrades are made to facilitate safe access in accordance with city minimum standards.
	LYK - 5	New Development will be permitted along the western shore of Kam Lake and may progress westward where infrastructure is developed. (adapted from 2-d and 7-c)
Working in YK	WYK - 1	Non-exclusive access to Kam Lake for kennel operators may be provided through identified easements. (adapted from 1-b)
	WYK - 2	Residential land use may be accessory to the primary land use where regulated in the zoning by-law. (adapted from 4-a)

Thematic Goal	Objective Code	Policies
	WYK - 1	New development supporting tourism, commercial recreation and commercial Urban Agriculture activities should be permitted on parcels that are accessible by existing City roads. (adapted from 2-b and 3-b)
	WYK - 2	Residential land uses shall be accessory to the primary land use. (adapted from 4-a)
	WYK - 2	Workforce accommodation shall be permitted. (new policy)
	WYK - 3	New development supporting tourism operations should be granted access to the west shore of Kam Lake to support operations. (adapted from 7-a).
Natural YK	NYK - 2	Public access to the Kam Lake waterfront is to be maintained. (adapted from 1-c and 2-c)
Moving Around YK	MAYK - 4	The dog mushing trail network will be preserved. (adapted from 1-d)
	MAYK - 4	A phased implementation approach to developing a trail network that connects Kam Lake to the Cities existing trail network should be prioritized, in accordance with the Transportation Plan. (new policy)
	MAYK - 5	Safety for dog teams and motor vehicle traffic should be maintained through appropriate traffic control measures. (adapted from 8-c)

4.11 Engle Industrial Business District (Industrial)

Total Area: 289.2 ha

Engle Industrial Business District, as identified on the *Engle Industrial Business District Land Use Designation Map (Map 14)* is intended to accommodate a variety of general industrial and business industrial uses. The Engle Business District Area Redevelopment Plan identifies the following zones:

- **Business Industrial Zone:** Intended for lower impact business industrial uses to be located along the Deh Cho Boulevard to provide a physical buffer from heavy industrial uses.
- **General Industrial:** The primary purpose of the land is to provide a suitable location for heavy industrial uses prone to admit noise, odour, vibrations and dust.
- **Growth Management:** Provides a land bank for future development to encourage buildup of industrial uses within the boundaries of the Area Development Plan.
- **Nature Preservation:** To preserve natural areas in the Area Development Plan Area and provide a natural buffer from surrounding waterbodies.

Traditional primary heavy industrial uses traditionally found in Yellowknife that are appropriate for the Engle Business District include but are not limited to:

- Bulk fuel storage
- Industrial commercial use
- Construction and manufacturing
- Diamond facility
- Defence facility
- Public facility uses and structures
- Natural Resource Extraction
- Office space accessory to permitted activity
- Fabrication and manufacturing
- Warehousing
- Wholesale and trade
- Transportation facility (staging for winter road)

Opportunities for the adaptive reuse of buildings to house alternative uses may be considered. However, these opportunities should not restrict the relocation or location of heavy industrial uses to the area. The City may also consider uses that support the resource extraction industry. Elements associated with heavy industrial uses create conflict when paired with human habitation, therefore the lands are not suitable for residential uses as accessory or otherwise.

Call out: The Engle Business District objectives prioritize economic resilience and industrial compatibility, ensuring a steady supply of land for long-term growth and the burgeoning defense industry. Strategies focus on maintaining the district's operational integrity by preventing conflicts with non-industrial uses and minimizing negative impacts to the Natural Preservation areas located within the district.

To support industrial efficiency and safety, the plan emphasizes improved road connectivity to the highway corridors and mineral and aggregate resource areas, ensuring the transportation network can accommodate heavy operations and emergency access.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code	Policies
Growing YK	GYK-2, GYK-3	New development in or adjacent to the Engle Business District must be compatible with industrial operations. (adapted from 1-c)
	GYK-2, GYK-3	Visual separation should be used to buffer industrial activities from adjacent non-industrial uses. (adapted from 3-a)
	GYK-3	New subdivision design must include lot size, site access, and utility services capable of accommodating high-intensity industrial uses. (adapted from 2-a)
	GYK-3	New development must meet the restrictions set in the Yellowknife Airport Zoning Regulations SOR/81-427. (new policy)
	GYK-3	Major facilities (extractive, processing, defence, manufacturing) should be planned and developed minimize and mitigate any potential adverse effects from odour, vibrations, dust, noise and other contaminants, minimize risk to public health and safety, and to ensure the long-term operational and economic viability of the major facilities in accordance with territorial or federal guidelines, standards and procedures. (new policy)
	GYK-6	Site design must incorporate adequate emergency response access and on-site fire mitigation measures. (adapted from 6-a)
	GYK-6	Landscaping must adhere to the Fire Smart Principles. (new policy)
	GYK -1	Dehcho Boulevard will be developed as a primary industrial corridor, prioritizing upgraded infrastructure for heavy vehicle traffic and other transportation modes in alignment with the Transportation Plan. (new policy)

Thematic Goal	Objective Code	Policies
Working in YK	WYK - 1	Heavy industrial activities should be incentivized and encouraged to relocate to the Engle Business District. (adapted from 1-b)
Natural YK	NYK - 1	Industrial development should be designed and operated to minimize negative impacts to environmentally sensitive areas and water resources. (adapted from 7-b)
Moving Around YK	MAYK - 1	Transportation networks shall accommodate large industrial vehicles in accordance with the City’s appropriate Road Classification and any future Truck Route By-law as identified in the Transportation Plan (adapted from 4-a)

4.12 Mineral Extraction Area

Total Area: 533.6 ha

The City of Yellowknife is located within the Yellowknife Greenstone Belt. The Yellowknife Greenstone Belt (YGB) consists of a north-south-oriented, near-vertical series of metavolcanic rocks located in the Archean Slave Province of the Northwest Territories. The YGB runs along the west side of Yellowknife Bay, adjacent to the shore of Great Slave Lake. This formation hosts significant mineral deposits, both metallic and non-metallic.

Mining in the City of Yellowknife is regulated by the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) through the Northwest Territories Mining Regulations under the *NWT Lands Act*. The GNWT manages mineral rights, exploration, and royalties, with the industry. The *Mineral Resources Act* was passed in 2019, outlining when projects can extract and sell minerals; regulations include work permits, requirements, reporting and royalties. Oversight of mineral tenures, like prospecting permits and leases, is the responsibility of the Mining Recorder’s Office within the Department of Industry Tourism and Investment (ITI). Mining projects may require additional authorizations, such as land-use permits or water licences.

Territorial lands in the City of Yellowknife are managed through the GNWT Department of Environment and Climate Change, and Lands and Water, Lands by the *Northwest Territories Lands Act* and its related Regulations. The rights to sub-surface materials are administered through the Mining Regulations. This includes mining rights and minerals beneath the surface, including those under Commissioner’s Land.

The policies of YK 2050 do not regulate mining exploration or underground mining operations. The Mineral Extraction policies designate lands where mining may occur or is occurring and include directions for the use of the surface of the land to ensure compatibility with adjacent land uses.

The intent of the Mineral Extraction policy is to encourage geological surveys, exploration, development and mineral production within the areas of high mineral potential. Policy also recognizes and provides for similar activities in areas of lesser mineral potential. In the mining sequence, it is the intent to ensure the proper closure and rehabilitation of closed mines or mineral mining operations prior to any subsequent land use. All mineral mining operations will be undertaken in compliance with the *Mineral Resources Act* and other relevant legislation. Though nearly the entire City is within a significant area of mineral potential, to aid planning, existing and potential mining sites are identified on **Map 15** (excluding Giant Mine site) and will be included in a corresponding zone of the City of Yellowknife Zoning By-law.

Mineral Extraction policies apply to the whole site (which may include multiple parcels or leases) of an active or potential mining operation. Mineral Extraction designated lands are areas where a high level of mineral exploration, mining development and mineral mining operations occur in the City. These lands have geophysical and geochemical properties that are conducive to mineral exploration. It is these lands where mining development and mineral extraction will occur and have a greater likelihood of success. Land within the Mineral Extraction designation is segregated as significant areas of mineral potential since these areas are intended to be protected from activities that would preclude or hinder mineral mining operations, their expansion or continued use or which would be incompatible for reasons of public health, public safety or environmental impact.

The City will support and cooperate with the mining industry in minimizing or avoiding adverse impacts of mineral mining operations in and around the built urban form and to this extent intends to achieve the best balance between the economic importance of mining and the development of a healthy, liveable and safe urban community. The development and operation of a mine may be permitted within the city, subject to an amendment to YK 2050. On lands already developed for urban uses and on lands identified as suitable for intensification, mineral resource activities shall be limited to exploration only.

On undeveloped lands, but adjacent or contiguous to existing development, the city will consult with the GNWT and the mining industry on the potential impacts, if any, of proposed development on the establishment of new mining operations prior to rendering any development approvals. New development will be subject to any required separation distances. In areas not designated for development, a technical report will be required to substantiate the need for non-resource related development within or adjacent to known mineral deposits or areas of mineral potential.

New or expanded mining operations and exploration activities should incorporate reasonable operational protocols and mining techniques to mitigate the impacts of drilling, blasting, and other related activities on any adjacent sensitive land uses and municipal infrastructure.

YK 2050, mineral extraction and supporting uses are considered equal to industrial land uses in applying separation distances and influence area requirements. The actual influence area will be determined by technical studies, as required by the GNWT guidelines. The identification of the Mineral Extraction designation is not intended to preclude mining exploration or development outside of these areas. The city encourages mining-related activities in all areas with mineral potential, subject to compliance with

the *Mineral Resources Act*, other relevant legislation and the relevant policies of YK 2050. The City will establish appropriate standards in the zoning by-law to govern separation distances and setbacks for mineral extraction operations.

Rehabilitation to accommodate subsequent land uses will be required after extraction and other related activities have ceased. Progressive rehabilitation will be undertaken where feasible. Mine waste may be considered for use as aggregate provided that sufficient testing is completed to ensure that the material is not acid-generating and that it does not contain metals or other compounds harmful to the environment. Mine tailings should not be considered as potential aggregate supply except for use as backfill material in a mineral mining operation.

Mine waste and tailings are considered mine hazards and are subject to the *Mineral Resources Act* and are to be rehabilitated as part of a mine closure. The *Mineral Resources Act* must be considered, with required approvals in effect, prior to using rehabilitated mine waste or tailings as aggregate.

Call-out: The City protects mineral resources to be managed for long-term use by safeguarding extraction areas from incompatible development, supporting responsible exploration and mining activities, and coordinating with the GNWT to regulate operations. Objectives include minimizing environmental and community impacts through effective buffering, mitigation, and monitoring measures; ensuring public health, safety, and infrastructure considerations are addressed; requiring rehabilitation and enabling sequential land uses; and supporting transparent decision-making through appropriate zoning controls, public engagement, and evaluation of broader community benefits.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code (identifying Image)	Policies
Growing YK	GYK-8	Land uses permitted at Mineral Extraction sites may include: producing mines, mining-related uses, mineral aggregate uses, smelting and refining uses, to be detailed further in the zoning by-law.
	GYK-8	Where lands designated for Mineral Extraction are not pre-zoned for mining purposes, an amendment to the Zoning By-law shall be required. In considering such an amendment to permit a new or expanded mining or mining-related use, the city will evaluate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. potential environmental impacts, ensuring that new mining operations are located to minimize impacts on natural heritage features and functions; ii. indirect impacts on municipal infrastructure, utilities, and services; iii. compatibility with surrounding land uses; and, iv. the overall benefit of the mining or mining-related use to the City of Yellowknife.
	GYK-8	Industrial uses that will not preclude future mining activities may be permitted subject to zoning permission and development agreement, where appropriate.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code (identifying Image)	Policies
	GKY-8	Mineral resources must be responsibly managed by protecting them for long-term use.
	GKY-8	Mineral resources should be protected from incompatible uses. Mineral Extraction areas should be protected from development that would preclude or hinder the establishment of new operations or access to the resource unless: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. the resource use would not be feasible; or, ii. the proposed land use or development serves a greater long-term public interest; and, iii. issues of public health, public safety and environmental impact are addressed.
	GKY-8	The city will work with the GNWT to control and regulate surface operations.
	GKY-8	New lot creation for residential development, including onsite residential uses or worker accommodations, must not be permitted on lands designated as Mineral Extraction.
	GKY-8	Past producing mining operations or active mining operations are subject to the provisions of the Mineral Resources Act and any other legislation, with respect to rehabilitation and/or closure.
	GKY-8	Mining companies must establish a schedule of key milestones and triggers for the development of mineral mining operations and any subsequent phases of development to be provided to the city.
	GKY-8	Mining companies should establish a program of public consultation and transparent information disclosure on an ongoing basis.
	Natural YK	NYK -5
NYK -5		Proper and progressive rehabilitation of closed mines will be required.
NYK -5		A buffer must be established as a distinctive feature separate and apart from a mineral extraction operation.
NYK -5		The buffer zone must be designed to mitigate the impacts of mineral mining operations on air quality (e.g. dust, odour, and chemical fugitive emissions), noise and vibration, visual appearance and any other nuisance factors. A buffer zone may consist of a combination of natural geographic features (e.g. topography, landscape), and designed components such as berms, landscaping, and separation distances.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code (identifying Image)	Policies
	NYK -4	Appropriate buffering and mitigation measures for active extraction activities - including noise, dust, blasting, storage of overburden and waste rock, truck traffic, and other nuisance effects - must be implemented to minimize or eliminate impacts on adjacent land uses and to protect public health and safety. Such measures will also address any temporary, interim, or permanent modifications required to public infrastructure, including roads and utilities, and provide for their reinstatement and/or relocation as necessary.

4.13 Solid Waste Management (Industrial)

Total Area: 264.7 ha

The Solid Waste Management designation, as identified on the *Solid Waste Management Land Use Designation Map (Map 16)* is an area that is designated for the City’s solid waste disposal. The current Solid Waste Facility (SWF) is located within this area, along with quarries. The designation currently provides enough space to manage the City of Yellowknife’s solid waste disposal requirements.

The Solid Waste Management designation will provide the appropriate space and allow for appropriate uses that are necessary for the city to achieve its waste management objectives and diversion targets as set out in the *2018 Strategic Waste Management Plan*.

As the existing landfill cells near capacity, new cells will be developed. Increased diversion rates and/or lower disposal rates will prolong the life of the existing landfill cells.

Although the majority of the waste diversion and processing takes place at the Solid Waste Facility, there are efforts to increase waste separation at the source. In order for the City to meet its waste diversion targets, additional waste sorting at source will need to be implemented throughout the City at private residential properties, commercial properties, and public facilities. This means that land use requirements throughout the City will need to consider the need for appropriate waste sorting facilities, such as organics and recycling receptacles.

Call out: The objectives for the Solid Waste Management designation integrate sustainable growth with long-term infrastructure resilience. By prioritizing appropriate spacing and land-use compatibility, the city aims to mitigate the impact of waste facilities on residential areas. The plan emphasizes proactive long-term planning to identify sanitation infrastructure needs, ensuring that sustained investment keeps pace with future urban expansion and environmental requirements.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code	Policies
Growing YK	GYK-2, GYK-3	Visual separation will be used to buffer the activities at the solid waste site from adjacent land use activities (adapted from 3-b).
	GYK-2, GYK-3	Distinct uses within the solid waste site will be separated from each other. (adapted from 3-c)
	GYK-3	Development proposals within 450 metres of the Landfill Industrial boundary shall comply with the General Sanitation Regulations of the Public Health Act and associated activities. (adapted from 1-b)
	GYK-3	New developments compatible with solid waste management activities may be considered. (adapted from 8-b).
Living in YK	LYK - 5	New infrastructure or upgrades to existing solid waste management infrastructure will be permitted. (adapted from 3-b)
	LYK - 5	Additional land acquired from the GNWT will be for landfill capacity. (adapted from 2-b)
	LYK - 5	Quarrying activities may be permitted in the Solid Waste Management designation. (adapted from 8-a)

4.14 Recreation Hub (Recreational)

Total Area: 63.7 ha

The Recreation Hub, as identified on the *Recreation Hub Land Use Designation Map (Map 17)*, connects Downtown to Old Airport Road. Many of the City’s recreation facilities are located in this area, including:

- ATCO Aquatic Centre
- Yellowknife Community Arena
- Yellowknife Curling Club
- Yellowknife Tennis Club
- The Multiplex
- The Fieldhouse
- Tommy Forrest Ball Park

The proximity of this area to other amenity-rich areas like Downtown and Old Airport Road, makes this area a strategic location for recreational facilities and provides opportunities for other types of complementary land uses. Recreational facilities are well used by both residents and visitors to the City from other Territorial communities and from outside the Territory. The area hosts trade shows, sports

tournaments, Christmas bazaar and craft sales, community garage sales, picnics and other community events that need large gathering spaces. Some high- intensity residential development on the 50th Avenue corridor may also be considered.

This area includes a fire hall used for emergency services such as emergency medical response, fire response, hazardous materials response, and rescue services. The area is also home to the City’s public works yard. These land uses will continue to be accommodated in this area.

Call-out: Yellowknife’s Recreation Hub is designed to be the centralized home for the city's large-scale recreational facilities, taking full advantage of existing services and transportation networks. Built for accessibility and safety, the Hub prioritizes seamless multi-modal travel, featuring dedicated parking for vehicles and bicycles, safe access for transit users, and a well-maintained, year-round trail system for pedestrians and cyclists connecting to the Multiplex and Fieldhouse. Beyond recreation, the area serves as a vital base for emergency services, ensuring protected space for future growth and highly efficient transportation routes for prompt response times. To foster a dynamic and flexible mixed-use environment, the Hub also welcomes medium- and high-intensity residential builds, along its arterial roadways.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code	Policies
Growing YK	GYK-3	Medium and high intensity residential development may be permitted if located along arterial roadways. (adapted from 5a)
	GYK-3	Recreational facility development must incorporate universal design principles.
	GYK-6	Emergency services will be maintained within the Recreation Hub area. (adapted from 4a)
		Development of the Recreation Hub should consider and preserve space for future expansion of emergency service facilities. (adapted from 4b)
		Landscaping must adhere to Fire Smart principles.
Living in YK	LYK -3	New recreational facility development should be encouraged to develop in the Recreational Hub. (adapted from 1a).
Moving Around YK	MAYK - 4	Improvements to connectivity of existing trail networks, connecting the Recreation Hub with other areas of the City should be completed in accordance with the Transportation Plan. (adapted from 3a)

4.15 Giant Mine (Industrial)

Total Area: 1051.7 ha

Giant Mine, as identified on the *Giant Mine Land Use Designation Map (Map 18)*, is a former gold mine. The area is contaminated with arsenic trioxide and fibrous asbestos, and it is currently in the process of being remediated by the Federal Government. The remediation is a multi-year project, and the remediation is expected to be complete during the term of this plan and far into the future. During this time areas that are now accessible to the public, such as the Giant Mine boat launch, will have limited or completely restricted access. No other non-remediation related land uses will be permitted at the site until remediation is complete. Given the complexity of the remediation process, it is possible that remediation work will take much longer.

Remediation of the area will be carried out in a manner that is environmentally sound, socially responsible and culturally appropriate. As a result of the environmental assessment process, the federal government agreed to remediate the former town site at Giant Mine to a residential standard. The City will work with the Government of Canada, the Government of the Northwest Territories, the Yellowknives Dene First Nation, and all other parties involved in remediation to ensure that the area is remediated to the highest possible standard within a reasonable timeline, as well as identifying and mitigating land use impacts to the greatest extent possible. The City will also work with other parties to ensure that planned remediation activities pose little risk to City residents.

No development activity is currently permitted in this area. The area will only be used for remediation activities until remediation is completed. After remediation is complete, the City will re-evaluate opportunities for development of this area only if it is deemed safe to do so on the advice of remediation experts and legally permitted by higher orders of government.

Call out: The overarching objectives for the Giant Mine area prioritize long-term management and public safety through the rigorous management of legacy contaminants. The site must be remediated to specific standards, ensuring that soil and water quality do not pose risks to the surrounding community or the broader ecosystem. Furthermore, any future land development is strictly contingent upon verified site safety and compliance with senior government regulations. The policy framework recognizes the site transition from a contaminated former mine to a safer, stable landscape that does not adversely impact adjacent lands or human health.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code	Policies
Growing YK	GYK-3	Remediation construction schedules should be maintained through coordinated site management and operational alignment. (adapted from 1-b)
	GYK-3	Contaminated land and water should be remediated to applicable environmental standards prior to site occupancy. (adapted from 2-a)

Thematic Goal	Objective Code	Policies
	GYK-3	The former town site should be remediated to a residential land-use standard. (adapted from 2-b)
	GYK-3	Future land development may only be permitted on sites verified as safe for the intended use and in compliance with senior government regulatory requirements. (adapted from 3-a)
	GYK-6	Development and site conditions should not result in adverse health or environmental impacts on adjacent lands. (adapted from 1-a)

4.16 Special Reserve

The areas designated as Special Reserves represent land set aside for specific, vital purposes that are currently outside of the City's direct jurisdictional control. These reserves include significant facilities or land holdings, including the Yellowknife Airport and the North Slave Correctional Complex. Because these areas are governed by specific institutional mandates or other levels of government, the City's role is to acknowledge their unique status within YK 2050 while recognizing the specific development controls and limits that apply to them.

4.16.1 Special Reserve – Airport

Total Area: 716.2 ha

The Yellowknife Airport, identified on the *Airport Land Use Designation Map (Map 19)* is the primary airport facility for passengers and cargo serving the City of Yellowknife and the region. It is also the largest hub for air traffic in the Northwest Territories and parts of Western Nunavut. The Airport is owned and operated by the GNWT Department of Infrastructure, and an *Airport Area Development Plan* exists to guide and regulate the land use activities on the Airport designated lands. The City of Yellowknife has no zoning authority on airport lands.

Despite the fact that the City has no jurisdiction on Airport lands, airport development still has an impact on land use in other parts of the City. The airport is also one of the largest employment centres in Yellowknife and generates significant economic development for the region. There is potential for the City to collaborate with the airport on economic development and national defence opportunities and the City will pursue these opportunities where they align with their planning and development objectives.

The City maintains a buffer between the Airport and residential areas for noise abatement and safety purposes and there are building height restrictions in place in parts of the City due to the orientation of the Airport’s runways. The Airport also leases parcels of land for commercial development. This impacts the adjacent land uses because they will need to be compatible with the airport leased land. This also influences the overall supply and demand of commercial land in the City.

Call-out: The Airport Designation is established to protect the long-term operational integrity and safety of aviation services by ensuring all development is strictly compatible with airport and federal requirements. A primary focus is the prevention of sensitive land-use encroachment, such as residential development, which could compromise the technical and acoustic needs of the facility. Growth within this designation is guided by a principle of inter-governmental cooperation, ensuring that economic and defence opportunities on Airport lands provide mutual benefits to the City and the Government of the Northwest Territories while supporting broader regional and national development goals.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code	Policies
Growing YK	GYK-3	Limited development within the airport buffer area may be permitted and it must be compatible with airport operations. (adapted from 1a)
	GYK-3	New sensitive development must be located outside the NEF 25 line, as per the Airport Noise Exposure Forecast (NEF) contours, as updated from time to time by the GNWT for the Yellowknife Airport.
	GYK-3	Residential development is prohibited in the Airport area. (adapted from 1a)
Working in YK	WYK - 1	Economic development on Airport land should prioritize opportunities that provide mutual benefit to both the City, GNWT and Federal Government. (adapted from 2a)
	WYK-1	Federal government defence uses are permitted. (new policy)

4.16.2 North Slave Correctional Complex

Total Area: 16.7 ha

The North Slave Correctional Complex, as identified on the *Land Use Designation Map (Map 20)* is a correctional facility run by the GNWT Department of Justice. It is between the Western Residential designation and the Recreation Hub. It is within the jurisdiction of the GNWT, and it will stay in its present location for the foreseeable future. The City will work with the GNWT to ensure that adjacent land uses do not conflict with the facility.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code	Policies
Growing YK	GYK-3	Development adjacent to the North Slave Correctional Complex should be compatible with the security and operational requirements of the facility. (adapted from 1a)

4.17 Special Management Area

Total Area: 3266.2 ha

The Special Management Area, as identified on the Land Use Designation Map (**Map 21**) is land that is not currently designated for a specific land use. It is land that will support future growth. Growth Management Land/areas are important to the economic success of the city and our quality of life. These rural areas are a system of lands that may include mineral or aggregate resources, agricultural areas, natural heritage features and areas, and other resource areas. Growth Management and built-up areas within the municipal boundary are interdependent in terms of markets, resources and amenities. It is important to leverage GM assets and amenities and protect the environment as a foundation for a sustainable economy.

Council will consider the re-designation of Special Management lands to another designation, under the following conditions:

- a. The amendments are being considered in the context of the eight-year review of YK 2050, or, if prior to the eight-year review, there is an acceptable assessment and justification of the need for the re-designation; and,
- b. The development area has proximity to required infrastructure, including roads and municipal services.

Call-out: To ensure the long-term resilience and vibrancy of the Special Management Area, growth strategies prioritize safety and sustainability, proactively reducing risks from natural and man-made hazards through emergency preparedness and the integration of climate-resilient infrastructure. Future development will be governed by clear land-use policies designed to minimize conflicting uses and foster adaptable, inclusive, and mixed-use environments that evolve with our needs. The tourism sector will be supported by aligning infrastructure planning with development criteria that celebrate and promote local identity. The city will provide locally owned businesses with the incentives and enabling conditions necessary for successful revitalization or relocation, ensuring they remain viable and continue to thrive as integral parts of the community.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code	Policies
Growing YK	GYK-2	Development in growth management areas must be compatible with rural form, scale, and appropriate service levels. (new policy)

Thematic Goal	Objective Code	Policies
	GYK-3	Development must avoid the unjustified or uneconomical expansion of infrastructure and services. (new policy)
	GYK-3	Permitted uses and activities on GM lands within the municipal boundary shall include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Natural resource management; b) Resource-based recreation; c) Agriculture and agriculture-related uses; d) Home occupations and industries; e) Mineral and aggregate extraction; and, f) Tourism-related rural land uses. (adapted from 1-a)
	GYK-6	Natural hazard protection infrastructure, including fuel breaks and salt facilities, may be permitted within growth management areas. (new policy)
	GYK-2	Development that is compatible with the rural landscape and sustainable on rural service levels should be encouraged. (new policy)
	GYK-3	Growth and development may be directed to growth management areas in accordance with the policies in the Special Management Area or through redesignation. (new policy)
Living in YK	WYK - 3	Sustainable tourism opportunities that leverage indigenous, cultural, and natural assets should be encouraged. (new policy)
	WYK - 3	Recreational and tourism opportunities should be promoted to enhance the local economic base. (new policy)
	WYK - 1	Diversification of the economic base and employment opportunities should be incentivized to promote the development of goods, services, and materials, specifically, value-added products, that support large-scale infrastructure projects and the sustainable management of resources. (new policy)

4.18 Land Use Overlays

Land Use Overlays are designated for areas that require additional development controls or specific management rationales that differ from the existing land use designations. These overlays are applied to sites with unique constraints, such as unresolved land claims where development may be withheld, or the presence of sensitive federal and territorial infrastructure, including seismologic equipment used for geological study. The purpose of this section is to provide context for these designations and to acknowledge that these areas are subject to specific limits and regulatory controls that often fall outside of the City's direct jurisdictional authority.

4.18.1 Capital Area

Total Area: 363.8 ha

The Capital Area overlay, as defined on the *Capital Area Overlay Map (Map 22)* is a key political and cultural gathering area for people of the NWT. The area is home to the institutions that represent the political capital of the Northwest Territories, and it is a significant historical resource. Non-governmental uses in the area include commercial, institutional and may in future include other compatible uses. It is a diverse and vibrant area situated in a natural setting. Prior to the establishment of Yellowknife, the Capital Area lands held prime hunting, fishing, and trapping lands for the Yellowknives Dene First Nation. The Capital Area preserves the natural setting around Frame Lake, and it is home to the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories, the City of Yellowknife City Hall, and the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre. The McMahon Frame Lake Trail forms a pedestrian and cycling necklace around Frame Lake, connecting the territorial functions with the civic functions of the city, including Yellowknife's showcase public open space, Somba K'e Civic Plaza and Family Park.

As identified in the Capital Area Development Plan, the area is representative of the Northwest Territories in many aspects:

- Politics and Government – the Legislative Assembly, City of Yellowknife City Hall, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Department of National Defence;
- Culture & Heritage – Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, traditional area for the Yellowknives Dene (including withdrawn land);
- Housing Choice – characterized by smart growth principles, facilitating compact design and mixed-use development;
- Recreation – McMahon Frame Lake trail, Somba K'e Civic Plaza, and Bristol Pit;
- Tourism – Popular tourist destination; and,
- Natural Environment.

The Capital Area Overlay is identified in the 2017 Capital Area Development Plan. To maintain the intent of the Capital Area, there are ten guiding principles for new development, including placing emphasis on the form and quality of development on key lands that compose the edge of the Capital Area and that contribute to the function of the Capital Area.

Call out: The Capital Area Overlay policies are guided by the Capital Area Development Plan. The policies emphasize sustainability and enhancement of spaces, ensuring that natural landscapes and waterbodies are integrated into the city’s growth to maintain high environmental quality enhancing access to Yellowknife’s key cultural and institutional spaces.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code (identifying Image)	Policies
Growing YK	GYK-1	Development proposed in proximity to the McMahon Frame Lake Trail will include a natural buffer to help preserve the area shoreline and outdoor experience for trail users.
	GYK-1	Development near shorelines must maintain natural buffers including a minimum 15-metre buffer along the shore of Frame Lake and 15-metre buffers on other shorelines to protect ecosystem functions and prevent privatization.
	GYK-2	New development must prioritize human-scale, mid-rise, and mixed-use formats. Surface parking lots are not permitted with the exception of mixed-use developments near Old Airport Road.
	GYK-3	All development must comply with the objectives and policies of the Capital Area Development Plan. Any new long-range plans to develop within the Capital Area Overlay must be incorporated as an amendment to the Area Development Plan.
	GYK-3	Land use in the Capital Area Overlay must remain flexible to allow a range of compatible institutional, cultural, and government functions alongside other uses such as residential and commercial uses to prevent underutilization and create dynamic spaces.
	LYK-3	Key civic spaces should be enhanced with placemaking initiatives, public art, and infrastructure to support accessible, year-round community gathering.
	LYK-4	Development must respect the Akaitcho Interim Land Withdrawal.
Working in YK	WYK-3	Tourism, cultural, and commercial service uses that are supported by the policies in the Capital Area Development Plan are permitted and supported.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code (identifying Image)	Policies
Natural YK	NYK-1	The natural state of rock outcrops, topography, and native vegetation within the Capital Area Overlay should be preserved, and/or integrated into site designs.
	NYK-2	Public access to the shoreline must be protected and enhanced.
	NYK-2	New development should ensure the continuous connection of the Frame Lake Trail system.
Moving Around YK	MAYK-2	All new developments within the Capital Area Overlay must be planned in alignment with public transit infrastructure in alignment with the Transportation Plan.
	MAYK-3	New developments must ensure that site designs integrate multimodal access and reinforce existing walking and biking connections between Niven Lake, designations within the Capital Area Overlay, Old Airport Road, and Downtown
	MAYK-4	The McMahon Frame Lake Trail system must be maintained, and enhanced with active transportation infrastructure, including adequate lighting and consistent wayfinding signage for safe, year-round use.
Proudly YK	PYK-2	Building design, public art, and landscaping should complement the surrounding natural environment, utilizing local materials, where possible, and celebrating Indigenous culture and the distinct Northern form of Yellowknife.
	PYK-4	Buildings and developments should be sited and designed to preserve and enhance special views capes, specifically visual connections to the Legislative Assembly Building, the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, Somba K'e Park, and the Ceremonial Circle.

4.18.2 Akaitcho (Interim Land Withdrawal)

Total Area: 1034 ha

Akaitcho, as identified on the overlay *Land Use Designation Map (Map 23)* is withdrawn land that is being held until an agreement between the Akaitcho Dene First Nations (ADFN) and the Government of Canada is settled. The residents of Yellowknife value and respect First Nations’ culture, traditions, governments, and stewardship of the land. The ADFN is in the process of negotiating with the GNWT and Canada to complete an agreement on land, resources and self-government. The ADFN represents the collective environmental, social, political, cultural, and economic interests of the Deninu Ku’e First Nation, Lutselk’e First Nation, and Yellowknives Dene First Nation. One component of the negotiations has involved the identification of lands of interest to the ADFN, of which 1,034 hectares of land are located inside the existing boundary of the City of Yellowknife. An Interim Land Withdrawal Agreement was signed in 2006 to protect the identified lands from being sold or leased during the course of negotiations. This Agreement stipulates that no new interests can be created on the withdrawn lands until negotiations between the ADFN, GNWT, and the Government of Canada are finalized.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code	Policies
Growing YK	GYK-3	All future development of withdrawn lands, once Agreement is settled, will comply with the City’s development standards and by-laws.
Living in YK	(LYK - 4)	Relevant municipal information should be accessible to all parties involved in the Akaitcho Dene First Nations land, resource, and self-government negotiations. (adapted from 1a)
	(LYK - 4)	Development on withdrawn Commissioners lands must be prohibited until an Agreement is finalized or other mechanism is in place removing the lands from withdrawal. (adapted from 2a)

4.18.3 Seismological Array

Total Area: 897.3 ha

The Yellowknife Seismological Array overlay is a reserve operated by the Geological Survey of Canada as identified on the *Land Use Designation Map (Map 24)*. This is a reserve that is used for monitoring underground seismic activity. The City does not have jurisdiction on the reserve lands. Any proposed development activity falls under the jurisdiction of the Government of Canada.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code	Policies
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Growing YK	GYK-3	Development on lands within or adjacent to federal jurisdictions shall be subject to federal review and coordination. (adapted from 1a)
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4.18.4 Fred Henne Park and Yellowknife River Park

Total Area: 537 ha and 6.84 ha

The Fred Henne Territorial Park and Yellowknife River Park overlay are identified on the *Land Use Designation Map (Map 25)*. Both are territorial parks, one a campground and one a day-use park under the jurisdiction of the GNWT Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment. Popular recreational destinations for residents and visitors to the city, the park includes amenities for swimming, camping, day use activities, and boating.

The Yellowknife River Park is a territorial day-use area as well as an important cultural and traditional site for the Yellowknives Dene First Nation (YKDFN). It is a popular recreation destination for residents as well as an important boat launch for power boats, canoes, kayaks and other types of watercraft. The park includes amenities for swimming, day-use activities (campfires and picnic tables) and boating. On the North side of the highway, the YKDFN have a traditional gathering site that is used today for cultural events.

The city has no jurisdiction over the park lands, but they are part of the larger recreation amenities for the City, and access to the Parks will be available through multiple forms of transportation, including walking, cycling, and private motor vehicle. Any future public transportation routes to the airport may include a stop at Fred Henne Park for residents and tourists in accordance with the Transportation Plan.

The city will work collaboratively with the GNWT Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment to promote tourism that uses Park facilities and its access to the natural environment and dark skies for winter tourism.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code	Policies
Living in YK	LYK - 4	Culturally significant areas identified by the Yellowknives Dene First Nation (YKDFN) shall be protected from incompatible development to ensure their long-term integrity. (adapted from 2-a)
Moving Around YK	MAYK - 4	Multi-modal transportation and transit networks connecting Fred Henne Territorial Park to other designated areas in the City of Yellowknife should be enhanced in accordance with the Transportation Plan. (adapted from 1-a)

5 HOUSING

5.1 YK Housing Context

Yellowknife’s housing landscape exhibits the longstanding presence of Indigenous communities and more recently, Canadian settlement patterns, as well as emerging pressures shaping the city’s housing challenges. **Sections 5.1** through **5.4** summarize trends in housing stock, tenure, market dynamics, rental conditions, affordability, and vacancy, based on the *City’s Housing Needs Assessment (2024)* and background study of *population and economic development projections (2025)*, providing a foundation for targeted policy interventions in this Plan found in **Section 5.5**.

Yellowknife’s housing stock reflects a mix of older and newer dwellings with varying levels of condition and livability. Single-detached dwellings remain the dominant form, accounting for 44% of units, followed by low-rise apartments (26%) and row housing (12%). Nearly 27% of the housing stock was constructed between 1961 and 1980, with a further 43% built between 1981 and 2000; only 4% predates 1960. Older housing is more likely to require significant repairs, with 10.6% of dwellings in need of major repairs - substantially higher than the national average of 6.1%. Between 2016 and 2021, approximately 455 new dwelling units were added, primarily in the form of apartments and row housing, indicating a gradual shift toward higher-intensity development. This trend continued between 2023 and 2025, with an additional 478 dwelling units delivered in the form of largely multi-unit housing. New single-detached dwelling construction has significantly declined due to the limited availability of land for serviced residential lots. The combined pressures of an aging housing stock and lack of land supply underscore the need to prioritize retrofits, intensification, and strategic land supply to meet future housing demand.

Table 4: Housing Supply between 2023 and 2025

Year	Multi-Unit	Single-Detached	Secondary Unit	Total
2023	91	12	1	104
2024	250	15	6	271
2025	112	2	10	124
Units Lost				(17)
Total				478

In terms of housing tenure, Yellowknife has a higher proportion of renters than the Canadian average, though ownership still dominates. As of 2021, 57% of households owned their homes while 43% rented, compared with national rental rates of around 33%. Among tenants, 21.5% reside in subsidized housing, 23.6% spend more than 30% of their income on shelter, and 18.2% experience core housing need, highlighting persistent affordability pressures and ongoing demand for rental housing.

Housing affordability remains a critical concern in both ownership and rental markets. The average value of owned private dwellings in Yellowknife has risen from \$302,750 in 2006 to \$494,000 in 2021, an increase of 63%, while larger single-family homes (+5 beds) in 2024 average \$ 717,991 and smaller units (0-1 bed) average \$270,925.

Table 5: Housing Affordability 2001-2023 (Source: (<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1110001201>))

Geography ⁶		Canada (map)					
Family income ³		All income groups ³			Median total income ^{3, 7}		
Family type ^{2, 8, 9, 10}	Age of older adult ⁴	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023
		Number			Dollars		
Couple families ⁸	Total all ages ⁴	8,980,830	9,210,400	9,510,660	107,020	110,850	114,560
	25 to 34 years ⁴	1,153,990	1,226,970	1,315,180	96,130	97,930	98,190
	45 to 54 years ⁴	1,655,390	1,683,390	1,721,210	140,290	147,220	152,130
One-parent families ⁹	Total all ages ⁴	1,510,180	1,525,510	1,554,440	56,750	58,850	61,960
	25 to 34 years ⁴	232,400	226,620	222,490	40,910	39,780	41,240
	45 to 54 years ⁴	384,750	392,820	403,430	65,230	68,240	71,010
Persons not in census families ¹⁰	Total all ages ⁴	6,915,290	7,189,610	7,528,160	34,820	35,670	37,210
	25 to 34 years ⁴	1,167,150	1,252,400	1,361,480	43,060	44,770	44,760
	45 to 54 years ⁴	710,980	714,640	725,220	46,990	50,090	51,890

Call out:

- 28% of families within Yellowknife have a before-tax annual income below \$60,000. For these families, renting a 1-bedroom unit for the median price is considered unaffordable.
- 45% of families have a before-tax annual income below \$100,000 per year. For these households, purchasing a house for the average sale price is considered unaffordable.

Pressure on the rental market is evident in the limited supply and low vacancy rates. Yellowknife’s rental vacancy rate has fallen sharply, dropping to 1.3% in late 2025 from 1.8% in late 2024 and 3.5% in late 2023. Growing tourism and increased short-term rental activity may further reduce the availability of long-term rental units, tightening the market even more.

These trends highlight several priority issues for policy considerations. Housing affordability is increasingly strained across both ownership and rental markets, with the greatest impacts on tenants and lower-income households. Much of Yellowknife’s housing stock is aging and requires substantial repair and maintenance, adding pressure to both affordability and long-term sustainability. The limited supply of smaller rental units is widening a mismatch between available housing and the growing number of one- and two-person households seeking high-quality, appropriately sized options. At the same time, demand for single-family homes remains strong, driven by restricted new land availability and a resulting shortage of new single-detached housing in recent years. While growth in multi-unit development is beginning to support intensity and dynamic community goals, continued monitoring on mix of housing types and targeted policy interventions are needed to ensure that future housing supply aligns with demographic changes, affordability challenges, and the city’s broader housing objectives.

5.2 Housing Continuum, Affordability and Supply

Call-Out: The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation (Housing NWT) remains the central territorial agency for planning, building, operating, and coordinating housing services across the continuum - from emergency shelter to enabling the transitional and supportive housing and income-based public housing (subsidized) with wraparound services. City of Yellowknife is not responsible for social housing programs, but creates supportive conditions through planning, zoning, land policies, incentives, and partnerships that allow both private and non-profit housing supply to grow. Intensification strategies, incentives, land supply and development supportive policies are direct tools by the City to assist housing supply across the continuum.

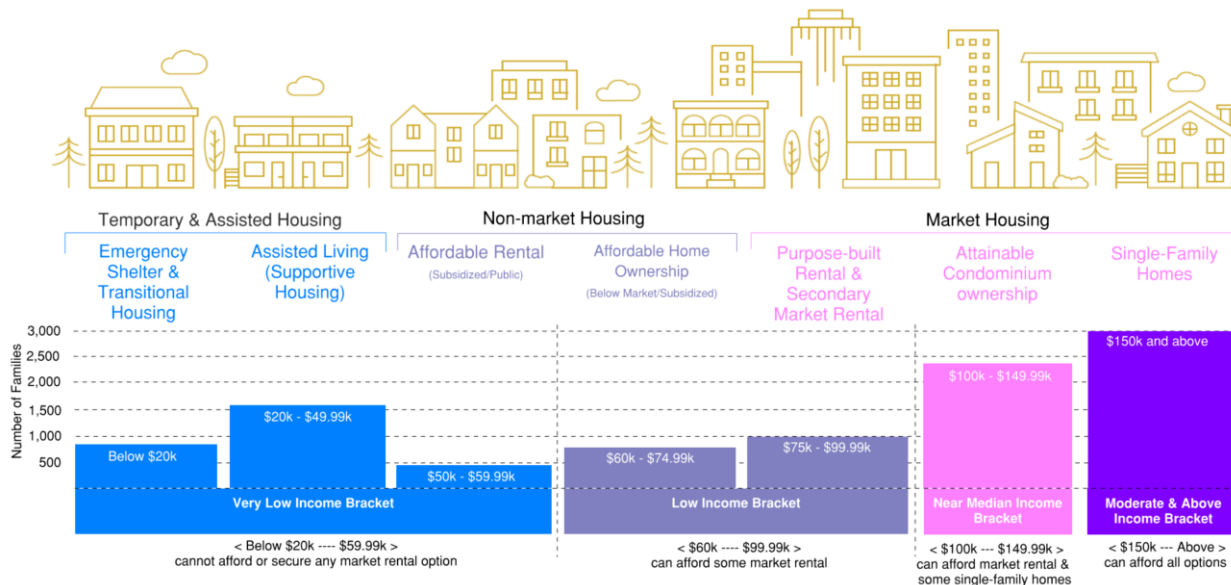


Figure 4: Housing Continuum in Yellowknife and Income Thresholds Across Tenure

A complete and well-functioning housing system provides a full range of housing options to meet the diverse needs, incomes, and life stages of residents. This range of options is referred to as the housing continuum, which typically includes emergency and supportive housing, social and subsidized housing, affordable rental housing, market rental housing, and homeownership opportunities. A balanced housing continuum supports housing stability, enables household mobility between housing types, and promotes the social and economic well-being of the community.

In Yellowknife, housing is shaped by a unique northern context characterized by high construction and operating costs, limited serviced land availability, a constrained development market, and an aging housing stock. These conditions reduce housing supply, limit choice, and create structural pressures across the housing system. As a result, challenges in one segment of the housing continuum affect overall housing availability, affordability, and stability.

Housing need in Yellowknife exists across the entire continuum, including demand for supportive and subsidized housing, limited rental supply, barriers to homeownership, and reduced mobility between housing tenures. When housing supply is insufficient, households are unable to transition to housing that meets their needs, resulting in increased competition for available units, rising costs, overcrowding, and increased core housing need.

While affordability is a key indicator of sustainable housing infrastructure, without enough housing supply, the housing continuum fails. Yellowknife's housing continuum is a funnel where the middle households occupy subsidized and affordable units and cannot move to the market housing due to a lack of supply and overpriced housing, currently creating a bottleneck. Ensuring housing affordability and attainability requires both the provision of non-market housing and an adequate supply of housing across all tenure types and price levels. Increasing overall housing supply supports system mobility, improves housing choice, stabilizes costs, and enables efficient use of existing housing stock. A diverse range of housing forms and tenures is therefore essential to support community growth, labour force retention, and long-term resilience.

Accordingly, this Plan supports a complete housing continuum by enabling a variety of housing types, facilitating more land supply over the planning horizon, intensification and infill development, encouraging housing diversity and tenure choice, and supporting the delivery of both market and non-market housing to meet current and future needs.

5.3 Housing Targets

The housing targets in this Plan identify the number and mix of housing units required between 2026 and 2051, including market ownership housing, market rental housing, affordable ownership housing, affordable rental housing, and non-market and subsidized housing. City also encourages and supports other creative housing models, including tiny homes, community-based housing or co-op housing and rent-to-own models.

In a high-growth scenario, the City is projected to experience a population increase of approximately 4,871 residents over the next 25 years. Based on the current average household size of 2.7 persons per unit, this growth would require approximately 2,000 additional dwelling units, including those needed to address the existing housing deficiency across the housing continuum. As household sizes are expected to decline slightly over time, the total number of required units may increase further.

The *Housing Needs Assessment (2024)* indicates that demand for single-family housing is expected to decline relative to growth in multi-dwelling housing and missing-middle forms, including secondary dwelling units. However, a continued supply of single-family homes will remain necessary, as smaller households may transition into larger units over time and require additional space, outdoor amenities, and family-oriented housing options. Population projection modelling, therefore, suggests that an appropriate distribution of future housing supply would include approximately 30% single-family housing, 30% medium-intensity housing such as missing-middle forms, semi-detached and row housing, and 40% high-intensity housing. This distribution supports a balanced housing supply across the housing continuum. Based on the findings of the Housing Needs Assessment and household projections, the City has identified a high-level estimate of the number, form, tenure, and affordability of housing required at different points along the housing continuum.

Considering all household types, the proportion of households experiencing core housing need is expected to remain at approximately 10% over time. This proportion provides an estimate of the level of non-market housing required to meet the needs of lower-income households. These non-market housing needs are in addition to the existing 22% of subsidized housing currently available in the city. Beyond meeting core housing need, additional affordable housing supply is required in the form of purpose-built rental, missing-middle housing, and entry-level ownership options. Expanding these housing options supports mobility from subsidized housing to market housing and helps reduce overall price pressures within the housing system.

The ultimate objective of the City’s housing targets is to ensure that all residents have access to appropriate, secure, affordable, and attainable housing. Providing a diverse range of housing types, tenures, and price points will support greater housing choice, improve affordability, and contribute to a more balanced and resilient housing system. Access to a diverse range of potential housing developments will also support both housing agencies and private developers in meeting the community’s varied needs.

Table 6: City of Yellowknife Housing Targets, 2026-2051

Housing Type	Income Bracket (Household)					Affordable Units	Total Units	(%)
	Very Low	Low	Median	Moderate	Above Moderate			
Affordable & Non-Market (apartment & Mixed-use)	100	100				200 (100%)	200	40%
Market Rental (apartment & Mixed-use)		100	100	100		45 (15%)	300	
Market Condominium (apartment & Mixed-use)		100	100	100		30 (10%)	300	
Missing Middle (Row House, Duplex, Triplex, Fourplex, Sixplex, Secondary dwelling Units etc.)		200	200	200		60 (10%)	600	30%
Single-Family (including modular homes and tiny homes)		100	200	200	100		600	30%
Minimum Total Housing Targets	100	600	600	600	100	335 (17%)	2000	100%

The housing targets are intended to guide the planning and release of serviced lands, support a balanced mix of housing types and tenures, inform infrastructure and capital planning decisions, monitor housing supply, affordability and market conditions over time, and provide accountability in achieving housing outcomes. Meeting these targets will help ensure that Yellowknife’s housing system remains responsive, inclusive, and resilient, supporting long-term community well-being and economic stability.

5.4 Housing Implementation

The City is advancing a coordinated two-track implementation strategy: prioritizing intensification within the existing built-up area while enabling carefully phased urban expansion through new serviced land supply to meet long-term needs. To guide this growth responsibly and prevent dispersed, infrastructure-intensive development, the City has established a Planned Built-Area (Urban Containment) for the next 25 years (**Map 26**). This deliberate growth management framework aligns housing delivery with incremental infrastructure investment and service upgrades, ensuring that supply expands in a fiscally responsible, sustainable, and orderly manner.

5.4.1 Land Supply

Based on population and household projections, background study, the city has identified the need for approximately 65 hectares of additional residential land supply to accommodate anticipated growth over the 25-year planning horizon. To meet this need, the city has designated the Frame Lake (Map 8) area as a strategic expansion area capable of supporting neighbourhood-scale development, including a range of residential housing forms. A future Frame Lake Area Development Plan will establish detailed phasing for this area, including the distribution of housing types across the housing continuum, the provision of parks and community services, supporting land uses, and the extension of required municipal infrastructure. Development within this area will be implemented incrementally to align with infrastructure capacity and long-term demand.

In parallel, City has also identified several vacant and underutilized parcels, both municipally owned and privately held, within existing residential and mixed-use areas that present opportunities for medium to high-intensity infill and redevelopment. These sites will be encouraged and supported through appropriate planning tools and incentives to advance the City's intensification objectives. This approach is further supported by the transportation policies and Transportation Plan, which identify key corridors suitable for transit-supportive development and future intensification, ensuring that land use, housing supply, and mobility investments work together to achieve the City's long-term growth targets.

5.4.2 Intensification and Greenfield Development Targets:

While the City has adopted an "Intensification First" approach as a central land use strategy, opportunities for redevelopment within existing neighbourhoods remain limited. Much of the vacant or underutilized land within the built-up area is scarce, fragmented, or constrained by parcel size, servicing limitations, and site-specific conditions, which collectively restrict the feasibility and scale of infill development. Consequently, while policy direction strongly supports intensification, these physical and market constraints moderate the pace at which redevelopment can occur. Recognizing these realities, City has adopted a hybrid growth management approach that balances intensification with strategic land supply. This approach establishes quantitative growth targets through three complementary mechanisms: intensification linked to land use designations, transit-supportive development corridor, and phased greenfield expansion. Table 7 and **Map 26** illustrates the spatial distribution of these growth targets within Yellowknife's Planned Built-Area (Urban Containment), guiding housing supply and development over the 25-year planning horizon.

- i. **Intensification Target:** The City’s intensification target is primarily focused within the Downtown and Central Residential areas, with moderate, context-sensitive intensification encouraged in other established low-intensity neighbourhoods through infill and redevelopment. Intensification is anticipated to occur through the development of vacant or underutilized parcels and parking lots, the redevelopment or rehabilitation of aging housing stock, and the introduction of a broader range of housing forms. This includes mixed-use residential development, missing-middle housing such as duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes, as well as the addition of both attached and detached secondary dwelling units. Over the life of this Plan, a minimum of **30 percent** of all new residential dwelling units shall be accommodated within Downtown and 10% within existing residential neighbourhoods, as identified in **Table 7**.

Call Out: For the purposes of this Plan, “Intensification” refers to the development of additional residential units within the existing neighbourhoods of Yellowknife, including infill, redevelopment, and addition of new housing units including secondary suites, aimed at increasing housing supply, diversity, and compactness while making efficient use of existing infrastructure and services. Intensification is a key tool to support the City’s “Intensification First” strategy and to meet long-term housing and growth targets.

To guide planning and implementation, the City defines intensification in three categories based on residential intensity measured in units per hectare (UPH):

- i) **Low-Intensity Housing:** Less than 25 UPH. Typically includes single-detached or duplex dwellings compatible with existing low-intensity neighbourhoods.
- ii) **Medium-Intensity Housing:** 25 to 65 UPH. Typically includes duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, six-plexes, townhouses, low-rise apartments, that increase intensity while maintaining neighbourhood form. For the purposes of this Plan, medium-intensity housing is also referred to as “missing-middle” housing.
- iii) **High-Intensity Housing:** Above 65 UPH. Typically includes mid- to high-rise apartment buildings, mixed-use towers, and other forms of concentrated residential development along transit and service corridors.

This categorization provides a consistent framework for zoning, land-use planning, infrastructure allocation, and monitoring of housing delivery across the City.

- ii. **Priority Development Corridor:** The city has identified a Priority Development Corridor along Old Airport Road (see **Map 26** and **Section 8.4**), connecting to Frame Lake lands, where existing and proposed transportation routes, transit services, and municipal infrastructure will support higher intensity development. This corridor is intended to accommodate a portion of City’s future mixed-use and higher-intensity housing growth. To facilitate this objective, the City will consider proactive rezoning and regulatory adjustments within the corridor to align zoning with the intensification objectives of this Plan. Development along the corridor is encouraged to incorporate vertical mixed-use forms, with commercial, service commercial and restaurant use at grade and residential units above.

The corridor will also support a range of housing and accommodation types, including live-work units, assisted housing, special care housing, and student-oriented housing, particularly in proximity to major employment and service destinations such as commercial centres, the hospital, clinics, and educational facilities. Where transit access and walkability are present, reduced parking requirements shall be considered to support compact development. Over the life of this Plan, a minimum of **10 percent** of all new residential dwelling units shall be accommodated within and adjacent to the Priority Development Corridor identified in **Table 7** and **Map 26**

- iii. **Greenfield Development Target:** The Greenfield lands identified in **Map 26**, designated as Frame Lake, shall be developed in a phased and coordinated manner to ensure fiscal sustainability and alignment with planned infrastructure servicing capacity and conveyance. Development sequencing shall correspond with planned extensions of water, wastewater, transportation, and community services. New Greenfield neighbourhoods shall provide a diverse mix of housing types across the housing continuum. They shall include parks and open spaces linked to existing and planned trail and active transportation networks and be designed to accommodate future transit routes. Neighbourhood plans for the Frame Lake area shall also identify opportunities for small-scale neighbourhood commercial and mixed-use area to enhance walkability and reduce automobile dependency. Over the life of this Plan, Greenfield development shall be a minimum of **50 percent** of total residential growth, unless the City demonstrates that established intensification targets cannot reasonably be achieved.

All in-fill and greenfield redevelopment within the Planned Built-Area (Urban Containment) shall achieve or exceed minimum intensity targets unless site and housing-market constraints justify alternative performance.

Table 7: Housing Target by location and types of development

Housing Target Area	Types of Development	Planning Horizon	Housing Target
Downtown	Intensification	25 Years	30% (minimum)
Existing Residential Neighbourhood	Intensification		10% (minimum)
Development Corridor	Intensification		10% (minimum)
Frame Lake Area	Greenfield Development		50% (minimum)
Total			100% (minimum)

5.4.3 Affordable Housing

Yellowknife recognizes that housing affordability is fundamental to economic resilience, workforce stability, social wellbeing, and reconciliation. In a northern context characterized by high construction costs, limited serviced land, and a short building season, market forces alone cannot deliver the full range of housing required to meet community needs. The City will therefore support housing across the full continuum, including non-market rental, affordable market rental, attainable homeownership, supportive housing, and Indigenous-led housing initiatives. The Frame Lake Area Development Plan shall allocate lands to accommodate this full spectrum of housing types and tenures. The City will aim to achieve a minimum of **17 percent** of all new residential units citywide as affordable housing, consistent with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) definitions and informed by local income data and core housing need indicators. The City will monitor and report on progress toward this target annually and may refine the target over time based on updated housing needs assessments.

To advance implementation, the City will prioritize surplus and strategically located municipal lands for affordable and non-market housing, including through long-term land leases where appropriate. Expedited development approvals shall be provided for projects that secure affordable housing components, and development incentive programs shall be modernized to maximize financial tools, including grants, fee reductions, and other incentives. City may consider reduced parking requirements and flexible development standards where appropriate to improve project feasibility. Where infrastructure capacity presents a barrier to delivery, City may explore contribution agreements or partnership models to support necessary upgrades. The redevelopment of existing purpose-built rental housing should avoid a net loss of affordable units without replacement, ensuring that overall housing supply and affordability are strengthened over time.

5.4.4 Shelters & Supportive Housing

Recognizing the distinct and complex housing needs of individuals experiencing homelessness, housing instability, mental health challenges, addictions, and other vulnerabilities, the City supports a Housing First and culturally responsive approach as a foundational principle of the housing continuum. Emergency shelters, transitional housing, and other subsidized housing are essential components of a balanced housing system and contribute to overall community stability and wellbeing.

Supportive housing and shelters shall be permitted in Downtown and mixed-use designations, and along transit corridors, subject to land use compatibility, scale, and urban design considerations. The City shall encourage the development of community-based, non-profit, co-operative, and Indigenous-led housing models and may support such initiatives through strategic land allocation and expedited development approvals. The City will support territorial agencies, health authority, and other service providers to align with their housing delivery and case management services. New shelter and supportive housing developments shall be designed to integrate within surrounding neighbourhoods, incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles, and promote safety, dignity, and long-term housing stability. The City should also seek to avoid overconcentration of supportive housing in any one area and monitor outcomes to ensure equitable distribution and effectiveness over time.

5.4.5 Collaboration & Partnership

The provision, funding, delivery, and ongoing operation of emergency shelters, supportive housing, non-market housing, and associated health and social support services shall continue to be the responsibility of the Government of Canada and the Northwest Territories, Indigenous governments and organizations, and qualified non-profit and service delivery agencies. These entities are expected to ensure that housing initiatives are supported by secure, long-term funding, clearly defined service delivery models, and integrated health and social support necessary to maintain housing stability. Proponents shall demonstrate organizational capacity, confirmed funding sources, and implementation plans to ensure projects are viable, coordinated, and delivered in a timely manner.

Territorial agencies, Indigenous governments and organizations, and non-profit providers shall coordinate closely with one another and engage early with the City to align housing delivery with community priorities, infrastructure capacity, and land-use considerations. They should pursue partnerships, including with the private sector, to leverage resources, expand housing supply, and advance mixed-income and mixed-tenure developments. Indigenous governments and organizations will lead the planning, delivery, and operation of Indigenous housing and related support services, ensuring that housing solutions are culturally appropriate and reflective of community values and self-determination.

The City will maintain its primary role as the authority having jurisdiction in land use planning by providing a clear and predictable land-use framework, efficient development approvals, and planning tools that support a full spectrum of housing forms. While not responsible for service delivery, the City will facilitate housing outcomes through enabling policies, coordination on infrastructure and land, provide development incentives where available and continue ongoing collaboration with partners. The City will also support information sharing and encourage accountability by promoting monitoring and reporting on housing outcomes to inform future planning and decision-making.

5.4.6 Housing Monitoring:

The City will monitor and report annually on the achievement of housing targets, including the proportion of new units delivered in alignment with Intensification and Greenfield Development targets. Reporting will also track housing composition by type (as identified in **Table 6**), including affordable units, universally designed units, condominiums, market and non-market rentals, assisted housing, transitional housing, emergency shelters, and homelessness supports.

Annual monitoring will provide the City with evidence to adjust development incentives, prioritize infrastructure investment, phase and release land strategically, and support funding applications and collaborative housing partnerships. This approach ensures that housing delivery remains responsive to evolving demand, aligns with the City's growth management objectives, and supports the full housing continuum across Yellowknife.

5.5 Policy Requirements

Housing is a core component of the City’s infrastructure and living system, closely connected to land use and intensification strategies, infrastructure capacity planning, climate resilience and energy efficiency objectives, transportation and active mobility planning, reconciliation, and cultural vitality. Housing policies in this plan establish clear requirements and guidance for land use and development that respond to these interconnected priorities. They prioritize access to appropriate, secure, affordable, and attainable housing, while supporting a broad range of housing types, tenures, and price points to ensure meaningful housing choice for all Yellowknifers.

Call-out: The Housing policies provide an integrated framework for housing by enabling sufficient housing supply and diversity (Growing), ensuring affordability and inclusion (Living), aligning housing with employment and economic growth (Working), enhancing residential quality, climate readiness and environmental sustainability (Natural) and improving accessibility and supporting complete communities (Moving Around).

Thematic Goal	Objective Code (identifying Image)	Policies
Growing YK	GYK-2	<p>5 (i) New residential development, particularly multi-unit dwelling, must provide appropriate transitions in height, scale, and massing when located adjacent to lower-intensity residential areas, to maintain compatibility and cohesive built form.</p> <p>Residential intensification and redevelopment must be designed to enhance the existing physical form, streetscape, and identity of surrounding neighbourhoods.</p>
	GYK-3	<p>5 (ii) Residential development, as a sensitive land use, shall be located on lands that are compatible with surrounding uses and free from identified risks to human health and the environment.</p> <p>Residential development shall not be permitted on or adjacent to potentially contaminated sites or non-compatible uses unless the proposal demonstrates, to the satisfaction of the City, that all potential risks have been appropriately assessed and mitigated in accordance with Environmental Site Assessment (ESA), if warranted, and appropriate buffer areas.</p>
	GYK-4	<p>5 (iii) All new residential development must connect to municipal piped water and sewer services where such infrastructure is available or can be reasonably extended. This requirement supports efficient use of public infrastructure, reduces long-term servicing costs, improves public health outcomes, and promotes compact urban growth.</p> <p>Trucked water and sewer services, or private on-site systems, may only be permitted where accommodation facilities are essential to function certain businesses and industries.</p>

Thematic Goal	Objective Code (identifying Image)	Policies
	GKY-4	5 (iv) Missing-middle housing must be prioritized for new development or redevelopment of underutilized lands within residential and mixed-use areas to expand housing choice, support families and seniors, enable residents to stay in the community, and increase housing supply through incremental intensification.
	GKY-5	5 (v) When funding is allocated, development incentive programs must be implemented to help offset the costs associated with delivering affordable and missing-middle housing. Approval authorities must prioritize and expedite applications for qualifying affordable housing projects. The use of standardized and pre-approved housing designs will be encouraged to improve efficiency, reduce construction costs, and accelerate housing delivery.
	GKY-5	5 (vii) Residential development must contribute to inclusive and accessible neighbourhoods by incorporating universal design principles, ensuring convenient access to services and amenities, and providing a range of housing options that meet the diverse needs of all residents
	GKY-6	5 (viii) New residential development in areas adjacent to forested lands or high-wildfire risk areas must incorporate wildfire-resilient site design and Fire Smart best practices.
	GKY-6	5 (ix) New residential development in areas adjacent to forested lands or high wildfire risk areas must provide defensible space around buildings through vegetation management, separation distances, and landscaping design that reduces wildfire fuel.
	GKY-7	5 (xi) New residential development should prioritize energy efficiency, reduced emissions, and building performance suitable for northern climates.
	GKY-7	5 (xii) New residential development should be designed to respond to local environmental conditions, including permafrost, drainage, snow management, and extreme weather.
	GKY-7	5 (xiii) Developers should incorporate measures to improve and retrofit existing housing, to enhance climate resilience and reduce environmental impacts. Development proposals should prioritize energy efficiency improvements and sustainable building practices

Thematic Goal	Objective Code (identifying Image)	Policies
Living in YK	LYK-1	5 (xiv) Developers of residential subdivisions are to provide a full range of housing options across the housing continuum. Development proposals must incorporate diverse housing forms, such as single-detached dwellings, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, six-plexes, row housing, secondary dwellings, mixed-use developments, and multi-unit dwelling buildings, ensuring compatibility with surrounding neighbourhoods and respect for the existing built environment. Innovative and alternative housing forms, including tiny homes, workforce accommodation and student housing, shall be considered where they respond effectively to evolving community needs.
	LYK-1	5 (xv) New developments should advance a family-friendly city, support larger households that want to stay in the city and seek to meet the evolving needs of families with children at home.
	LYK-1	5 (xvi) Redevelopment of buildings must not support downzoning or reduction of the total number of residential units and committed affordable units, unless otherwise non-conforming or non-complying.
	LYK-1	<p>5 (xvii) All new residential developments of 20 or more units should provide a minimum of 10% of units as affordable housing, secured through a legal agreement for a minimum period of 10 years, where supported through municipal development incentives, grants, or other offsetting mechanisms to mitigate associated costs.</p> <p>Multi-unit dwelling developments of 20 or more units should include a mix of market units that reflect community needs, including family-sized and accessible units. A minimum of 10% of units in such developments should be designed to be universally accessible.</p> <p>Multi-unit developments must provide bicycle parking spaces appropriately splitting between temporary (visitor) and permanent (Resident) use.</p> <p>Secondary dwelling units will have no minimum parking requirement.</p>
	LYK-1	5 (xviii) Developers must locate non-market housing, including assisted living, supportive housing, and temporary shelters, in close proximity to amenities such as retail, grocery, and dining options, and ensure strong connections to public transit and trail networks.
	LYK-1	5 (xix) The Government of the Northwest Territories, Indigenous governments and organizations, and qualified non-profit housing providers should prioritize the use of lands when made available for non-market housing and plan projects incrementally to align with established housing targets, ensuring that delivery meets community needs and leverages available public and non-profit resources.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code (identifying Image)	Policies
	LYK - 3	5 (xxii) In large-scale mixed-use developments or housing complexes, public spaces, and amenities should be designed to reflect Indigenous design principles, knowledge, and cultural expression whenever there is an established cultural importance or recognized community need. This includes integrating elements or art-works that honor Indigenous heritage, storytelling, and cultural practices, ensuring that shared spaces are inclusive, meaningful, and responsive to Indigenous communities.
Working in YK	WYK -5	<p>Developers and proponents should recognize housing as essential infrastructure that supports economic stability and labour retention by prioritizing the delivery of mixed-use developments in the City Core, Old Airport Road, and Frame Lake designated areas, particularly along major roads and transit routes.</p> <p>New developments should incorporate live-work housing opportunities along major roads in the Old Airport Road and Frame Lake Residential areas, ensuring that residential and commercial uses are integrated to support local employment and community vitality.</p>
	WYK - 1	New developments located close to transit routes must provide low- to mid-market rental housing.
	WYK - 2	New developments in the Kam Lake and Kam Lake South areas may provide Workforce Accommodations in locations proximate to businesses and light-industrial uses, ensuring both compatibility and alignment with local employment needs.
		<p>New mixed-use projects must consider accessible and affordable daycare programs, including preschool, out-of-school care, and senior daycare spaces, by integrating these facilities on-site or coordinating with nearby service providers to meet community needs.</p> <p>New mixed-use or multi-unit dwelling developments with more than 100 units should include spaces for day care facility as part of the development.</p> <p>Day care facilities shall be permitted in all residential, commercial, and mixed-use zones.</p>
Natural YK	NYK -2	Large scale housing projects including mix-use developments must provide access to amenities and community services within walking distance.
	NYK -3	New residential developments should consider protection of natural heritage features and ecological systems to minimize environmental disturbance.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code (identifying Image)	Policies
	NYK -4	<p>City supports high-quality public realm and shared amenity space within housing development.</p> <p>New mixed-use or multi-unit dwelling developments with more than 100 units should include a shared amenity space for the residents.</p> <p>Developers may incorporate Privately Owned Public Space (POPS) within mixed-use or large-scale housing developments to promote public access to important community areas, including waterfronts. Where POPS is provided, developers may be eligible to request development incentives, fee waivers, and intensity bonuses, as appropriate, to support the delivery of publicly accessible spaces.</p>
	NYK -4	<p>Multi-unit dwelling developments should promote social interaction, safety and community cohesion by providing shared indoor and outdoor spaces, amenities, universal design and Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) standards.</p>
	NYK -4	<p>New residential developments, particularly multi-unit dwelling developments, should consider health-based housing design to ensure enough daylight, indoor air quality, and proximity to nature and community wellbeing.</p> <p>New multi-unit dwelling developments, except for retrofitting projects, with more than one storey should provide meaningful outdoor amenity space, either directly accessible from individual units or as a shared common area.</p>
Moving Around YK	MAYK - 2	<p>New housing developments must be designed as integral components of complete communities, ensuring residents have access to services, employment, recreation, and natural areas.</p>
	MAYK - 2	<p>New housing developments must be prioritized in walkable areas with access to transit and active transportation.</p>
	MAYK – 3, 4	<p>Multi-unit dwelling developments should provide active transportation infrastructure such as sidewalk, ramp, tactile warning surface, bicycle parking, where warranted, to address network gaps and support connectivity to the City’s active transportation system in accordance with the Transportation Plan. The City may support required infrastructure improvements through contribution agreements, subject to available funding.</p>

6 WORKFORCE ACCOMMODATION

6.1 YK Context

Workforce Accommodation plays an important role in supporting economic development in northern locations and where increased economic development activity is forecast. As the administrative and service hub of the Northwest Territories, Yellowknife supports regional mining, mineral exploration, infrastructure development, building construction, mine remediation, defence and northern logistics. These sectors periodically generate surges in labour demand that can exceed the capacity of the local housing market. The provision of appropriate accommodation for project-related workers has been further constrained by the absence of a clear municipal policy framework for Workforce Accommodation; this gap is addressed through the policies in this Plan.

Purpose-built Workforce Accommodation provides a mechanism to house project-related workers while minimizing pressure on local rental housing and hotel markets. YK 2050 identifies the importance of establishing a clear policy framework to guide the siting, approval, and operation of Workforce Accommodation in order to reduce land-use conflicts and provide certainty for industry and residents.

The policies in this section aim to:

- Support economic development and major projects;
- Protect mainstream housing supply for residents;
- Ensure compatibility with surrounding land uses;
- Minimize negative environmental and community impacts; and,
- Provide predictable approval processes for industry.

Workforce Accommodation include temporary and long-term facilities constructed to provide housing for workers in the form of complete dwelling units, typically for related business for an appropriate project, term or seasonal purpose. Workforce Accommodation may include modular, relocatable, or other structures containing sleeping, dining, and separate sanitary facilities. Workforce Accommodation may also include recreational, administrative, and service facilities.

6.2 Types of Workforce Accommodation

Workforce Accommodation may take one of the following forms:

- i. **Temporary Workforce Accommodation:** Accommodation established for a maximum of three years duration of a specific construction, commercial, industrial or resource operation projects and intended to be removed, reused, or relocated after project completion.
- ii. **Long-term Workforce Accommodation:** Long-term accommodation designed to support ongoing industrial, commercial or resource operations where workers rotate through short-term shifts and is not tied to one specific project.

6.3 Land Use

The City shall guide Workforce Accommodation to locations that minimize conflicts with residential neighbourhoods, sensitive land uses and the Engle Industrial Business Park. Generally, both temporary and long-term Workforce Accommodations shall be located within the Kam Lake and Kam Lake South area (**Map 27**). Temporary Workforce Accommodation may be located within the large construction, major infrastructure and logistics sites, outside of the permitted areas, for up to three years. A term longer than three years will be subject to Council’s approval and the proponents planning justification. Off-site Workforce Accommodations shall be close to established transport routes or shall demonstrate a transport connection to the City services and amenities.

Workforce Accommodation shall not be located within established residential neighbourhoods, downtown commercial areas, parks and recreation areas, or environmentally sensitive lands. **Map 27** shows preferred areas for Workforce Accommodation to increase predictability for industry and reduce ad-hoc siting conflicts.

6.4 Implementation Tools

The City shall implement Workforce Accommodation policies through zoning by-law provisions, development permit guidelines, and development agreements containing appropriate servicing methods and securities.

- i. Development shall comply with zoning regulations or obtain rezoning approval where required;
- ii. All Workforce Accommodation developments shall require a development permit that addresses site design, land use compatibility, access and transportation, amenities, and infrastructure servicing;
- iii. All buildings shall comply with applicable building, fire and fuel codes; and,
- iv. Food service, sanitation, and water systems shall comply with, and receive permits under, applicable territorial health regulations (Public Health Act) where required.

6.5 Policy Directions

Call-out: The Workforce Accommodation policies under the five thematic goals provide a framework to ensure that such developments support Yellowknife’s sustainable growth. Growing YK (GYK) emphasizes responsible land use and environmental stewardship; Living in YK (LYK) focuses on health, safety, and community well-being; Working in YK (WYK) supports operational efficiency and economic benefit; Natural YK (NYK) protects environmental and natural heritage values and Moving Around YK (MYK) promotes connectivity and accessibility. Overall, these policies collectively ensure that Workforce Accommodation in Yellowknife is strategically located, environmentally responsible, operationally effective, socially inclusive, and well-integrated into the community - balancing the needs of economic development with the health, safety, and well-being of residents and the natural environment.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code (identifying Image)	Policies
Growing YK	GYK-2 & GYK-3	<p>Workforce Accommodation must avoid proximity to sensitive land uses such as hospitals, schools, and residential neighbourhoods and shall minimize environmental impacts.</p> <p>Workforce Accommodation developments proposed adjacent to the West Residential and Grace Lake areas must incorporate appropriate buffering and screening measures, and ensure that all site lighting is contained within the property boundaries.</p>
	GYK-3	<p>Workforce Accommodation must provide adequate setbacks and buffers from adjacent land uses and incorporate landscaping and screening where appropriate. Workforce Accommodation shall be considered a potentially sensitive land use when located within a commercial and light industrial zone. Appropriate buffering, noise attenuation, and other mitigation measures shall be required in accordance with the zoning by-law. Workforce Accommodation shall not be located in Engle Industrial Business District.</p>
	GYK-6	<p>Temporary Workforce Accommodation developments must include a decommissioning plan outlining removal of temporary structures, restoration of the site, and where applicable the remediation of environmental impacts to the site.</p>
Living in YK	LYK-4	<p>Where feasible, Workforce Accommodation developments should support local and Indigenous participation through employment opportunities, service contracts, or partnerships related to camp operations and services.</p>
	LYK-5	<p>Workforce Accommodation developments shall demonstrate adequate provision of potable water supply, wastewater management, solid waste management, fire suppression, and stormwater management. Workforce Accommodation must connect with municipal piped services where available. Where piped servicing is unavailable or an extension of piped service is not feasible, the proponent shall provide approved trucked or private servicing systems to the satisfaction of the City.</p>
Working in YK	WYK-2	<p>Developments with more than 20 units will be required to submit an Operations and Emergency Management Plan that outlines site management and security measures, worker transportation arrangements, emergency response procedures, and noise and nuisance mitigation (particularly where the site is near potential noise and health hazard sources).</p>

Thematic Goal	Objective Code (identifying Image)	Policies
	WYK-5	Workforce Accommodation developments should be appropriately scaled to the operational needs of the project they are intended to serve. Proposals must consider the cumulative impacts of multiple Workforce Accommodation facilities within the surrounding area, including potential effects on infrastructure, services, and the local community. Where feasible, proponents of multiple or concurrent projects are encouraged to pursue coordinated or shared Workforce Accommodation solutions to minimize dispersed development.
	WYK-5	Workforce Accommodation developments should encourage local procurement and services, support local employment opportunities, and contribute to municipal infrastructure where feasible.
Natural YK	NYK-2	Workforce Accommodation should not be permitted within any Natural Heritage Features including woodlands identified in this plan and must be set back at least 15 metres from any wetlands or shoreline.
	NYK -3	Workforce Accommodation proposed adjacent to woodlands or wetlands must demonstrate that the development will not negatively impact natural heritage features and that appropriate mitigation measures are implemented to the satisfaction of the City.
Moving Around YK	MAYK-1 & MAYK-2	Workforce Accommodation should be located near existing or privately arranged transport routes and connected to City amenities and shopping areas.
	MAYK-1, MAYK-2, MAYK-3 & MAYK-4	Developments with more than 20 units must include a transportation plan outlining how residents will access local amenities, retail areas, trails, parks, open spaces, and on-site facilities.

7 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE

7.1 Environment

Healthy natural and built environments are integral aspects to the liveability and sustainability of the City of Yellowknife. This Section of YK 2050 establishes policy direction for the protection, management, and enhancement of environmental quality through the preservation of the City's Natural Heritage System - an interconnected network of natural features and ecological functions that includes woodlands, wetlands, lakes, wildlife habitats, and supporting ecological processes.

Call-out: “The Natural Heritage System is essential to maintaining biodiversity, supporting ecosystem services, and strengthening the City's capacity to respond to and adapt to climate change. Protecting and enhancing this system is a foundational component of building a resilient community, ensuring that ecological integrity is sustained alongside urban development.”

The City of Yellowknife's Natural Heritage System provides critical ecological, social, and economic benefits. It supports wildlife and plant habitats, protects water resources vital to human and environmental health, and contributes to recreational, cultural, educational, and tourism opportunities. These interrelated features and functions operate collectively as a dynamic system, where individual natural heritage features are connected through landforms, hydrological systems, and ecological linkages that sustain overall environmental health.

The City must manage growth and land use in a manner that protects, restores, and enhances the Natural Heritage System, ensuring it functions as a healthy, self-sustaining ecosystem capable of supporting present and future generations.

There are a number of environmental challenges that the City continues to work with Federal Government, Government of Northwest Territories and other organizations within the municipal boundary. These challenges include:

- Remediation of the Giant Mine;
- Degraded ground and water quality in the Frame Lake area, associated with past land uses;
- Climate Change impacts;
- Use of aggregate resources;
- Waste management;
- Loss of natural heritage due to land development;
- Air pollution and seasonal wildfire smoke;
- Light pollution; and,
- Noise pollution

The City will work to protect the natural environment and improve the built environment in an effort to be good environmental stewards and ensure that future generations are able to enjoy and thrive in the City and its surroundings. In response to the environmental challenges identified above, the City has organized its environmental policy framework into five key categories. Each category establishes clear policy direction and development requirements that shall guide land use planning, design, and decision-making, and to which all future development within Yellowknife must conform:

1. Protection of Natural Heritage Features;
2. Land Use Compatibility adjacent to Industrial Use;
3. Land Use Compatibility adjacent to Contaminant Site;
4. Fuel Break and Fire Smart Policies; and,
5. Dark Sky Policies.

7.1.1 Protection of Natural Heritage Features

For the purpose of this Plan, Natural Heritage Features shall be interpreted in a comprehensive manner that includes:

- i. **Woodlands** and treed areas of ecological significance greater than one hectare in areas as identified in **Map 28a**. The City recognizes that woodlands provide essential ecological functions including wildlife habitat, soil stabilization, carbon storage, water regulation, and recreational and aesthetic value. Development adjacent to these woodlands shall be managed to maintain their ecological integrity and connectivity.
- ii. **Wetland** areas including marshes, fens, bogs, and swamps as identified in **Map 28a**. Yellowknife and its surrounding region in the Northwest Territories include all four wetland types: marshes, fens, bogs, and swamps, though their distribution reflects the boreal and subarctic landscape. New development shall be carefully managed to protect wetlands and their ecological functions, including any development on or adjacent to wetlands identified on **Map 28a**.
- iii. **Wildlife Habitat** – This includes general wildlife habitat as well as habitat supporting species at risk that are classified as endangered, threatened, or of special concern. Critical habitat, once identified under the federal Species at Risk Act (SARA), must be protected from destruction; development activities that would destroy critical habitat are not permitted.

General wildlife habitat, as defined under the Northwest Territories Wildlife Act and associated guidelines, extends beyond species-at-risk areas to include habitat essential for the survival, movement, breeding, feeding, and seasonal needs of all wildlife populations. Protection of these areas is generally achieved through environmental review processes, development approval conditions, and adherence to industry standards.

The City shall require an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) for development proposals that may affect wildlife habitat, particularly those that intersect with critical habitat or other sensitive areas. The EIS assess potential impacts and identify mitigation measures to ensure the continued function and connectivity of wildlife habitat within the City.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code (identifying Image)	Policies
Natural YK	NYK-1	Development proposals should avoid the removal or fragmentation of woodland areas identified on Map 28a . The presence, extent, and boundaries of woodlands, as well as the proximity of proposed development, shall be verified by the proponent through appropriate field surveys and/or updated aerial or satellite imagery to the satisfaction of the City.
	NYK-4	Where avoidance is not possible, development must minimize impacts on woodland structure, composition, and ecological function.
	NYK-1	Public Infrastructure, utilities services and recreational uses shall be permitted within woodlands. City should minimize and mitigate any negative impact on woodland structure, composition, and ecological function.
	NYK-1, NYK-4	A minimum buffer zone must be maintained between development and the edge of woodlands. Buffer widths shall be determined based on woodland size, slope, soil stability, wildlife habitat needs, and potential permafrost disturbance.
	NYK-1, NYK-4	Development adjacent to woodlands within 15 metres may require an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify woodland boundaries and assess ecological functions; • Evaluate potential impacts on wildlife habitat, hydrology, and connectivity; and, • Recommend mitigation measures, including tree retention, replanting, or alternative site design.
	NYK-1,	Woodland buffers should continue to support species movement and habitat connectivity, particularly for species at risk or migratory wildlife.
	NYK-4	Development adjacent to woodlands must manage runoff, erosion, and ground disturbance to prevent damage to woodland health.
	NYK-4	Permafrost-sensitive areas must incorporate engineering or design solutions to avoid long-term woodland degradation.
	NYK-4	All developments, adjacent to woodlands, will require a development permit. The city may require a development agreement and post-development monitoring to ensure woodland buffers remain effective and ecological function is maintained.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code (identifying Image)	Policies
	NYK-4	Development should avoid negative impacts on wetlands and their ecological functions as identified in Map 28a . The presence, extent, and boundaries of woodlands, as well as the proximity of proposed development, is to be verified by the proponent through appropriate field surveys and/or updated aerial or satellite imagery to the satisfaction of the City.
	NYK-1 NYK-4	Development and site alteration should not be permitted within wetlands if identified during the approval process unless it has been demonstrated that no negative impacts will occur.
	NYK-4	Development proposed on lands adjacent to identified wetlands should be evaluated within an area of influence, the extent of which shall be determined based on site-specific conditions, including hydrology, topography, soil conditions, and ecological sensitivity.
	NYK-4	<p>A minimum buffer must be established and maintained between development and the wetland boundary. Buffer widths should be determined through an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) and shall be sufficient to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine/verify the boundary of the wetland; • Protect wetland hydrological functions; • Maintain wildlife habitat and movement; and, • Prevent erosion, sedimentation, and contamination.
	NYK-4	<p>An EIS should be required for all development proposed within 15 metres to wetlands.</p> <p>The EIS shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm wetland boundaries and classification (e.g., bog, fen, marsh, swamp); • Assess hydrological functions, including groundwater and surface water interactions; • Evaluate potential impacts on ecological functions and wildlife habitat; • Recommend mitigation measures, buffers, and development limits; and, • Demonstrate that development will have no negative impact on the wetland or its ecological functions.
	NYK-1	Development should maintain natural drainage patterns and water balance to sustain wetland function.
	NYK-4	In areas of permafrost or peatland sensitivity, development must design measures to prevent thaw, subsidence, or long-term degradation of the wetland system.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code (identifying Image)	Policies
	NYK-1	<p>Stormwater should be managed to mimic natural conditions, ensuring that runoff quantity and quality do not adversely affect wetlands.</p> <p>Direct discharge of untreated stormwater into wetlands should not be permitted, except where the system is designed to receive in a constructed wetland environment (ex. Niven Lake).</p>
	NYK-1	<p>Development should maintain or enhance ecological linkages between wetlands and other natural features to support wildlife movement and biodiversity.</p>
	NYK-1 NYK-4	<p>All developments, adjacent to identified wetlands, should require a development permit. The city may require a development agreement and post-development monitoring to ensure wetlands buffers remain effective and ecological function is maintained.</p>
	NYK-1 NYK-4	<p>Development and site alteration shall not be permitted within critical habitat identified under the Species at Risk Act (SARA), except in accordance with applicable federal approvals.</p>
	NYK-4	<p>Where critical habitat has been identified or is reasonably expected to occur, development proponents shall demonstrate that no destruction or adverse modification of such habitat will occur.</p>
	NYK-4	<p>Development shall avoid negative impacts on habitat supporting species classified as endangered, threatened, or of special concern under federal or territorial legislation.</p>
	NYK-1 NYK-4	<p>Development should protect and maintain general wildlife habitat, including areas required for feeding, breeding, movement, and seasonal use by wildlife populations.</p>
	NYK-1 NYK-4	<p>Habitat fragmentation should be minimized, and development shall be designed to maintain ecological connectivity between natural areas.</p>
	NYK-1 NYK-4	<p>Development proposed within or adjacent to wildlife habitat should be evaluated within an area of influence, determined through site-specific analysis. The extent of the area of influence should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Species sensitivity and habitat function; • Movement corridors and seasonal ranges; and, • Hydrological and ecological linkages
	NYK-1 NYK-4	<p>New Development shall provide an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) for development proposals that may affect wildlife habitat or species at risk. The EIS shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify wildlife habitat types and confirm presence or potential presence of species at risk;

Thematic Goal	Objective Code (identifying Image)	Policies
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts; • Evaluate habitat connectivity and ecological functions; • Recommend avoidance, mitigation, and where appropriate, offsetting measures; and, • Demonstrate no negative impact on critical habitat and ecological functions.
	NYK-4	Design and construction should incorporate measures to avoid permafrost disturbance, which may result in long-term habitat degradation.
	NYK-4	Development must protect fish habitat and riparian areas, in accordance with applicable federal legislation. Alterations to water bodies, shorelines, or drainage patterns must demonstrate no negative impacts to aquatic ecosystems.
	NYK-1 NYK-4	<p>Buffer widths and mitigation measures are to be determined through the EIS. Development adjacent to wildlife habitat may incorporate buffers, setbacks, and design measures sufficient to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce disturbance to wildlife; • Maintain habitat function and quality; and, • Protect movement corridors.
	NYK-4	Development adjacent to identified Critical Habitat, Habitat of Species at Risk and known breeding ground of general habitats shall require a development permit. The city may require a development agreement and post-development monitoring to assess impacts on wildlife habitat and species at risk.

7.1.2 Land Use Compatibility adjacent to Industrial Use

The City of Yellowknife shall ensure that land uses adjacent to industrial areas are planned and developed in a manner that prevents or minimizes adverse effects such as noise, vibration, odour, dust, traffic, and risk to human health and the environment, consistent with best practices in land use compatibility planning. The City shall separate incompatible land uses, particularly industrial uses and sensitive land uses (e.g., residential, institutional, and recreational uses), to prevent adverse effects. Land use planning decisions shall have regard for potential and actual impacts from industrial operations, including emissions, noise, and traffic.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code (identifying Image)	Policies
Growing YK	GYK-1 GYK-1	<p>Industrial uses shall be categorized based on scale and impact. The classification shall inform required separation distances, buffers, and study requirements. For land use compatibility requirements, the follow three categories shall be used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class I (Light Industrial) – small-scale, minimal impacts • Class II (Medium Industrial) – moderate emissions and activity • Class III (Heavy Industrial) – large-scale, significant impacts <p>The Zoning By-law establishes and defines the classifications of industries and required buffer between any sensitive land use and an Industrial use.</p>
	GYK-1 GYK-1	<p>New sensitive land uses shall not be permitted within the influence area of a class III industrial use unless it is demonstrated that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be no adverse effects; or, • Impacts can be appropriately mitigated through design, buffering, or other measures.
	GYK-1 GYK-1	<p>The City shall require a Land Use Compatibility Study where new sensitive development is proposed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within a Class III industrial influence area; and/or, • Where a Class III industrial use is proposed within 1 km of any existing sensitive land use. <p>The study shall at minimum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess noise, air quality, lighting, odour, vibration, and safety risks. • Evaluate cumulative and long-term impacts. <p>Recommend mitigation measures (buffers, building design, orientation, etc.).</p>

Thematic Goal	Objective Code (identifying Image)	Policies
Natural YK	NYK-1	Distance should be the preferred mitigation tool, supplemented by design measures where required. Development adjacent to industrial uses shall incorporate appropriate mitigation measures, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetated buffers and berms; • Increased setbacks; • Building orientation and site design; and, • Noise attenuation and air quality controls.
	NYK-4	Residential use including accessory residential dwelling units and Workforce Accommodation may be permitted in proximity to Class I industrial uses within the Kam Lake and Kam Lake South areas, subject to demonstrated land use compatibility to the satisfaction of the City.

7.1.3 Land Use Compatibility adjacent to Contaminant Site

The City of Yellowknife shall ensure that development in proximity to known or suspected contaminated sites is planned and managed to protect human health, environmental quality, and long-term land usability, consistent with territorial and federal risk-based management approaches.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code (identifying Image)	Policies
Living in YK	LYK-6	New Developments should be subject to screening through maintaining an inventory of contaminated and potentially contaminated sites, based on territorial databases and available mapping.
	LYK-6	Development should be directed away from high-risk contaminated sites unless risks can be appropriately managed. Land use decisions shall be based on a risk assessment approach, considering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human health and safety; • Environmental impacts; and, • Exposure pathways and receptors.
	LYK-6	Development shall not be permitted on contaminated sites unless: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site has been remediated to applicable standards; or, • A risk management plan demonstrates that the proposed use is safe. Sensitive land uses (e.g., residential, schools, childcare, parks) shall not be permitted on contaminated sites without full reclamation to standards appropriate for that use.
	LYK-6	Development proposed on lands adjacent to contaminated sites shall be evaluated within an area of potential influence, considering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil and groundwater contamination migration. • Surface water pathways. • Air borne contaminants (e.g., dust). The extent of the influence area shall be determined through site-specific study. At minimum a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) will be required.
	LYK-6	Where contamination is confirmed, development shall require: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Remedial Action Plan (RAP) and/or Risk Management Plan. Remediation shall follow GNWT guidelines.
	LYK-6	The development proponents shall coordinate with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Yellowknife; • Government of the Northwest Territories; • Federal departments responsible for contaminated sites; and/or, • Indigenous governments and co-management boards. Development shall comply with all applicable territorial and federal requirements for contaminated site management.

7.1.4 Fuel Break and Fire Smart Policies

The City of Yellowknife recognizes wildfire as a significant natural hazard and a key Climate Change risk. The city shall apply Fire Smart principles to land use planning, development, and vegetation management to reduce wildfire risk, protect life and property, and enhance community resilience between the woodlands and urban interfaces, and within the city.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code (identifying Image)	Policies
Growing YK	GYK-9	Hazardous forest types and wildfire hazards are recognized as a development constraint in all land use planning and development approvals.
	GYK-9	Development proposals in areas of moderate to high wildfire risk must incorporate Fire Smart planning and design measures.
	GYK-9	The City risk will plan, establish, and maintain fuel breaks (fireguards) on municipal, territorial, and federal lands to reduce wildfire intensity and spread toward developed areas in accordance with City’s Community Wildfire Protection Plan.
	GYK-9	Fuel breaks planning and development is a continuous process and risk should Community edges exposed to prevailing wildfire risk, Areas with high wildfire behavior potential and Locations protecting vulnerable populations and infrastructure.
	GYK-9	Development adjacent to designated fuel breaks risk must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the function and accessibility of fuel breaks; and, • Not introduce vegetation, structures, or uses that compromise fire protection effectiveness. The City may require setbacks or easements to ensure long-term fuel-break integrity and maintenance access.
	GYK-9	Fuel Break areas as identified in Map 28c function as protective buffers for the built environment. These areas may be used for recreational purposes, including trails, active transportation, gathering spaces, and passive recreation, provided that such uses do not increase wildfire risk or compromise the effectiveness of the fuel break.
	GYK-9	All new development must incorporate Fire Smart vegetation management consistent with the Home Ignition Zone approach: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Immediate Zone (0–1.5 m), Shall: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consist of non-combustible materials surrounding structures. b) Intermediate Zone (1.5–10 m), Shall: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove flammable vegetation and materials. • Limit coniferous trees and combustible landscaping. • Maintain low, well-irrigated vegetation.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code (identifying Image)	Policies
		<p>c) Extended Zone (10–30 m+), Shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce fuel loads through thinning and pruning. • Remove dead and down woody material. • Maintain spacing between trees to reduce fire spread. <p>These measures shall be secured through development permits, subdivision approvals, and landscaping requirements.</p>
	GYK-9	<p>New developments and subdivisions may require a Wildfire Risk Assessment and Mitigation Plan located in or adjacent to wildfire hazard areas.</p> <p>The assessment shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify wildfire hazard and exposure. • Evaluate fuel types and topography. • Recommend mitigation measures, including fuel management and building design.
	GYK-9	<p>Infrastructure must be designed to support wildfire response and evacuation. Development must ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe and adequate emergency access, including looped roads or turnaround areas; and, • Adequate water supply for fire suppression, including hydrants or alternative systems. <p>In trucked areas the developer shall be responsible for water for fire suppression</p>
	GYK-9	<p>Development should be encouraged and required to maintain Fire Smart conditions over time. The City may require maintenance agreements or conditions of approval for new developments.</p> <p>Fuel breaks and Fire Smart areas should be regularly inspected and maintained, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of regrowth and dead vegetation. • Ongoing fuel reduction treatments.
	GYK-9	<p>Landscaping, buffering, and natural area policies must not conflict with Fire Smart requirements. Fire Smart principles must be integrated into:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zoning By-law provisions. • Subdivision design standards.

7.1.5 Dark Sky Policies

The City of Yellowknife recognizes the importance of preserving dark skies as a valued environmental, cultural, and tourism resource, while reducing energy consumption and minimizing impacts on wildlife and human health. The city shall regulate outdoor lighting to limit light pollution, glare, and skyglow, particularly in areas adjacent to natural environments.

Dark Sky Policy is applicable to any private or public residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, parks and recreational and public infrastructure use. Any existing development, both private and public, will not be applicable to the Dark Sky policies unless redeveloped after the regulatory approval of this Community Plan By-law.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code (identifying Image)	Policies
Growing YK	GYK-10	All outdoor lighting must be designed to minimize light pollution, including glare, light trespass, and skyglow. Lighting shall be only as bright as necessary and directed downward to serve its intended purpose.
	GYK-10	New development must use full cut-off (fully shielded) lighting fixtures that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct light downward; • Prevent light emission above the horizontal plane; and, • Unshielded or upward-facing lighting shall not be permitted.
	GYK-10	Development must be designed to ensure that lighting does not: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spill onto adjacent properties; and, • Impact natural areas, wildlife habitat, or water bodies. Buffer areas and setbacks must incorporate lighting controls to protect sensitive uses.
	GYK-10	Commercial and industrial developments should implement after-hours lighting reduction strategies.
	GYK-10	New developments must prioritize dark sky preservation in environmentally sensitive areas. Lighting near wetlands, woodlands, and wildlife habitat must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be minimized or avoided; and/or, • Use low-intensity, warm-spectrum lighting where required.
	GYK-10	New Developments must submit a Lighting Plan as part of development applications for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-unit dwelling developments; • Commercial and industrial uses; • Workforce Accommodations; and, • Subdivisions and institutional developments.

7.2 Climate Action

The impacts of Climate Change in Yellowknife are pervasive, including community-wide wildfire evacuations and significant infrastructure damage from permafrost degradation. These are outlined in **Section 2.3.6**. To address these risks, the city follows the 2026-2036 Climate Action Plan (CAP), which directs a dual approach of mitigation and adaptation:

1. **Mitigation:** Actions that reduce the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions causing climate change. The City is committed to reaching net-zero emissions by 2050.
2. **Adaptation:** Adjusting decisions and behaviors to prepare for current and future climate impacts, such as extreme weather and shifting environmental conditions.

YK 2050 serves as a primary tool for climate adaptation and mitigation. Community greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are largely driven by transportation and the energy required for buildings. By prioritizing intensification within the existing built footprint, the city maximizes the efficiency of existing infrastructure and avoids the energy costs associated with expanding road and water networks. Policies that encourage high-intensity, compact, and mixed-use development further reduce emissions by decreasing the energy intensity of the built environment. Focusing growth along active and public transportation corridors (see **Section 8: Transportation**) shortens travel distances, reduces reliance on fossil-fuel-powered vehicles, and supports a shift toward walking, cycling, and transit. These shifts are essential for reaching net-zero emissions by 2050. Furthermore, YK 2050 recognizes that municipal infrastructure remains highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

To address these vulnerabilities, YK 2050 establishes policies to:

- Integrate a "climate lens" into all land-use planning and infrastructure projects where the city is the decision-making authority;
- Protect natural heritage and greenspaces for their value in carbon sequestration and community resilience; and,
- Ensure the built environment is designed to withstand future climate scenarios through Climate-Adjusted Design Criteria.

Call-out: The primary purpose of this section is to provide a unified framework for climate action by integrating mitigation and adaptation strategies into the city’s long-term growth and development. By aligning land-use planning with the 2026-2036 Climate Action Plan, this section supports progress toward net-zero emissions by 2050. Simultaneously, it establishes requirements to build community-wide resilience against high-vulnerability hazards, including permafrost degradation, extreme heat, and wildfires. Key objectives include greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction, community and infrastructure resilience, the protection of the natural heritage system, and public safety.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code	Policies
Growing YK	GYK-4	Development should be prioritized within the existing built footprint. Any proposed greenfield expansion must occur in a sustainable and responsible manner, requiring a formal evaluation that factors in the value of maintaining existing greenspace for community resilience, carbon sequestration, and the maintenance of the natural heritage system. (adapted from 3-a)
	GYK-4	Compatible mixed land uses should be integrated into urban areas to support compact development and reduce travel distances. (adapted from 3b)
	GYK-4	Higher intensity development should be located near employment centres and major activity nodes. (adapted from 3c)

Thematic Goal	Objective Code	Policies
	GYK-4	To prioritize active transportation and transit-oriented growth, development within designated intensification corridors shall be exempt from, or subject to significantly reduced, off-street vehicle parking minimums. In place of traditional vehicle parking, the city will require minimum standards for secure and accessible bicycle parking and associated end-of-trip facilities to support a permanent shift toward low-carbon transportation.
	GYK-6	Development and rezoning applications should demonstrate alignment with the city’s Climate Action Plan and established corporate energy targets. Proponents are encouraged to show how their proposal supports these goals; where a proposal deviates from these targets, the applicant should provide a rationale demonstrating that the alternative solution creates no significant negative impacts on the City’s long-term climate mitigation or adaptation efforts.
	GYK-6	Land-use designations, Area Development Plans, and development viability should be determined based on ground suitability data, including frost heave, thaw settlement, and the presence of discontinuous permafrost. (adapted from 1a)
	GYK-6	Infrastructure situated on discontinuous permafrost may be subject to climate adaptation and stabilization standards. (adapted from 1b)
	GYK-6	Road alignments and surface covers may be designed using Climate-Adjusted Design Criteria to minimize thermal impacts on permafrost and ensure infrastructure resilience in thawing areas. (adapted from 1c)
	GYK-6	Development in areas of high surface displacement should utilize building practices that mitigate structural movement. (adapted from 1d)
	GYK-7	The city should prioritize the use of renewable and district energy sources for all municipal infrastructure and facilities. New construction and major retrofits of City-owned assets will aim to increase the proportion of energy derived from these sources to support corporate emission targets. (formerly 1a)
	GYK-7	Municipal operations should maximize energy efficiency and conservation across all sectors. (formerly 1b)

Thematic Goal	Objective Code	Policies
	GYK-7	New road construction and major upgrades may incorporate green infrastructure and Climate-Adjusted Design Criteria. Where technically feasible, designs should include features such as green boulevards, street trees, and permeable paving to manage stormwater, reduce heat, and enhance the natural heritage system in accordance with the Transportation Plan.
	GYK-7	Community energy consumption should derive at least 30% of its total share from alternative and/or renewable sources. (formerly 2a)
	GYK-7	Land designated for agricultural use must be protected for the sole purpose of food production to enhance community resilience and food security, including but not limited to zoning with buffer.
	GYK-7	Green infrastructure and renewable energy systems should be prioritized in all new large-scale developments.
	GYK-7	District energy infrastructure must be designed and constructed in accordance with the District Energy Policy Framework technical standards.
	GYK-6	Development in areas of high surface displacement should utilize building practices that mitigate structural movement. (adapted from 1d)
	GYK-7	Private or community-owned heat and energy systems should be integrated into district energy priority areas.
Moving Around YK	MAYK-1	Internal and external access for new developments should be engineered and maintained to ensure climate-resilient mobility and safety under variable weather and ground conditions.
	MAYK-3	Transportation planning and infrastructure should prioritize active and public transportation, mixed-use development, and intensification along transit corridors in accordance with the Transportation Plan.
	MAYK-3 MAYK-4	Active transportation infrastructure and trail development should be prioritized within school zones and along primary school commuter routes in accordance with the Transportation Plan.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code	Policies
	MAYK-5	
	MAYK-2 MAYK-3	Sustainable modes of transportation, including active transportation, and public transit, should be prioritized within the transportation network in accordance with the Transportation Plan (adapted from 2b)
Living in YK	LYK-5	The municipal water supply, distribution networks, and system extensions should be engineered using Climate-Adjusted Design Criteria, redundant systems, and source-water protections to ensure resilience against climate and geological hazards.

8 TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is a key component of land use planning and development decisions. Objectives for transportation planning should be implemented and complement the land use policy. Due to the close relationship between land use planning and transportation planning, this section outlines key objectives and policies that support and align with the overall YK 2050. To implement these policies the city created a Transportation Plan, based on guidance from the City’s existing policy documents, best practices and emerging trends from communities across Canada and internationally, as well as feedback from the community.

The City is committed to a transportation system that supports independent movement for all modes of travel. The expansion of the City’s transportation system will be carried out in a systematic, logical, and timely fashion to maximize the use of existing and new infrastructure while facilities minimize associated costs and disruption. By prioritizing compact urban growth and encouraging mixed-use development, the City aims to support shifting trips from private motor vehicles to more sustainable and more space-efficient modes of transportation such as walking, cycling, and public transit.

Urban development growth and intensification will be focused along roadways already served by public transit. The city will prioritize improved connectivity and access enhancements in the active transportation network to ensure a safe, integrated system for all users. Transit-supportive land use planning emphasizes network connectivity, walkable streets and higher intensity mixed-use developments. Improving connections between active transportation and transit will be required through the implementation of the Transportation Plan, through:

- Improved pedestrian amenities;
- Connected multi-modal routes;
- Bicycle storage (private and public);
- Improved transit routing and amenities; and,
- Site plan control matters.

Important interconnections between the networks of roads, transit routes, multi-use paths and trails to be designed at the time of development through the Area Development Plan and Subdivision processes. The challenge for the City of Yellowknife over the next 25 years is to accelerate the transition from a primarily vehicle-dependent community to one where walking, cycling, transit, and carpooling are seen as increasingly viable and attractive alternatives. To support this transition, and better use land resources within the city, new subdivision development is strongly discouraged from designs which establish new cul-de-sacs; in limited space land development crescents should be prioritized.

Yellowknife’s population and employment is expected to grow significantly by 2050 resulting in an increase in daily auto use if current trip-making patterns were to continue. To address these trends and shift travel behaviour from vehicle-oriented transportation to more sustainable and active travel choices, the City of Yellowknife Transportation Plan, supporting the Community Plan policies, provides for:

- Selective road capacity enhancements;
- Increased and enhanced transit services;
- Transit-supportive development;
- Transportation demand management; and,
- Active transportation.

City of Yellowknife transportation infrastructure should also be seen as a key element in community building. Our transportation network and systems have an important and defining placemaking function. Urban streets are purposeful places, recognizing that great streets make great communities. This Plan utilizes the “complete streets” philosophy, to be applied to future development and municipal road network to balance mobility between modes, increase safety for all users, and position streets as places with connection between Yellowknife’s neighbourhoods.

8.1 Roads Classification

Public roads, handle the majority of the City’s transportation trips. A variety of vehicles rely on the road network such as commercial vehicles, public transit vehicles, emergency service vehicles, City operations and maintenance vehicles, taxis, and private motor vehicles. Many roads also include sidewalks or multiuse paths for pedestrians as well as marked and unmarked pedestrian crossings. The road network is classified as follows:

- **Arterial** – High to medium-capacity thoroughfares designed to move significant volumes of traffic between major activity centers and connect collector roads to the broader network;
- **Collector** – A low to moderate capacity roadway that gathers traffic from local streets and directs it towards arterial roads;
- **Industrial** – A road designed to carry heavier industrial truck traffic connecting highways or arterial roads to industrial areas;
- **Local** – A street typically in a residential or commercial area designed primarily to provide access to adjacent properties rather than facilitate through traffic;
- **Narrow Local** – A local street narrower in width than a standard local street sometimes only with one-way traffic; and,
- **Highway** (not municipal) – Designed for long-distance, high-speed travel between communities with limited access, and under the Government of the Northwest Territories ownership.

The road network will continue to link the City together in a safe and efficient manner. Improvements in road safety for all users will be a development consideration. While the City of Yellowknife coordinates its local transportation network, it is important to note that territorial highways are under the ownership and jurisdiction of the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT).

Local Roads may be closed temporarily or seasonally, with the approval of Council, to support use by the public or local businesses. The closure may support seasonal use by businesses for outdoor activities, festivals, or other revitalization activities in the Downtown or other designations where appropriate.

8.2 Active Transportation Infrastructure

The City has an extensive and varied network of interconnected active transportation routes as detailed in the Transportation Plan. These routes include recreational walking, biking, dog mushing trails, snowmobile, and hiking trails. It also includes infrastructure for commuting and other daily activities. This infrastructure includes sidewalks, multi-use paths, painted on-street bike lanes, and separate and raised on-street bike lanes.

Active transportation infrastructure is well used in Yellowknife. Approximately 20% of workers in Yellowknife walk or cycle to work. This is one of the highest rates of active transportation in Canadian cities (*Statistics Canada 2021 Census*).

While Yellowknife already sees a higher-than-average number of residents walking and cycling to work compared to the rest of Canada, the City remains committed to enhancing the active transportation network. By strengthening existing connections and improving overall accessibility, through the implementation of the Transportation Plan (2026).

Expanding the network of safe and efficient walking and cycling infrastructure remains an important objective for the City particularly for ensuring independent movement throughout the city for all ages and abilities. To achieve this, the City will look to integrate new multi-use trails, sidewalk enhancements, and improved connectivity as outlined in the Transportation Plan. Rather than standalone projects, these advancements will be realized through new development and redevelopment opportunities, ensuring that as Yellowknife grows, active transportation remains a cohesive component of the urban fabric.

Various parts of the City feature trails used for snowmobiling, off-highway vehicles (ATVs), and dog mushing, with significant mushing activity concentrated on Kam Lake and Grace Lake. While the City does not actively maintain these trails, it will continue to protect dog mushing routes and permit motorized use in accordance with applicable bylaws and legislation. To ensure these networks remain a vibrant part of the community, the City will collaborate with local organizations and clubs to promote their safe use, enjoyment, and long-term preservation.

There are also multi-use trails in various parts of the City that are used for snowmobiling and off-highway vehicles such as ATVs. Although the City does not actively maintain these trails, their use by motorized vehicles will continue to be permitted within the municipal bylaws and territorial and federal laws that govern their operation. The City will also work with local organizations and clubs to promote the safe use and enjoyment of these trails.

8.3 Active Transportation Policies

Thematic Goal	Objective Code	Policies
Moving Around YK	MAYK-2	New development and redevelopment at mixed use nodes must incorporate dedicated multi-use links to transit stops to facilitate inter-modal travel.
	MAYK-3	New development must participate in active transportation infrastructure upgrades in front of or abutting their development, aligned with the Transportation Plan and/or the Development and Design Standards.
	MAYK-3	Sidewalks and trail networks should be maintained to connect active transportation infrastructure to all areas of the City. (adapted from 1-a)
	MAYK-3	Construction and reconstruction projects should enhance roadways, sidewalks, safety barriers, and transit facilities aligned with the Transportation Plan and/or the Development and Design Standards.
	MAYK-3	Traffic calming measures should be implemented in accordance with the Transportation Plan and/or the Development and Design Standards.
	MAYK-3 MAYK-4	Bicycle lanes should be implemented in accordance with the Transportation Plan and/or the Development and Design Standards.
	MAYK-4	Bicycle and pedestrian route systems should be continuous, well-signed, and clearly defined in accordance with the Transportation Plan and/or the Development and Design Standards.
	MAYK-4	The City will collaborate with the GNWT to coordinate safety standards where municipal active transportation networks meet territorial highway rights-of-way.
	MAYK-3	New roads and the reconstruction of existing roads should include safe, convenient, and accessible pedestrian facilities of universal design as implemented through the Transportation Plan and/or the Development and Design Standards
	MAYK-4	Access points to any off-street pathway system should be well-marked and clearly visible.
	MAYK-4	Dog mushing routes must be protected from encroachment by new development to preserve their long-term community use.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code	Policies
	MAYK-4	Cycling facilities and Multi-Use Paths must be designed to accommodate emergency access and essential maintenance functions in accordance with the Transportation Plan and/or the Development and Design Standards.
	MAYK-4	New developments must incorporate trail design and connectivity to the municipal trail network at the planning stage.
	MAYK-5	Walking and cycling infrastructure should be constructed to be safe and direct for all ages and abilities to support independent movement in the city. (adapted from 2-a)
	MAYK-5	The transportation system must be designed to minimize conflicts between vehicular and active transportation facilities.
	MAYK-5	New roads and infrastructure upgrades should prioritize the safety of all road users through the use of traffic calming and separated active transportation facilities, in accordance with the Transportation Plan and/or the Development and Design Standards.
	MAYK-3	Connections between schools, recreational facilities, shopping areas, and Employment Areas should be enhanced to support active transportation.
	MAYK-3 MAYK-4	Bicycle lanes may be included in the design of arterial and collector roads, in accordance with the Transportation Plan and/or the Development and Design Standards.

8.4 Public Transit

The City’s public transportation system, as identified and updated on the city Transit Riders Guide. The transit system consists of a bus network with regular routes and some alternative transportation options. As the City’s built form changes through growth by infill and new neighbourhood development, the public transit system will accommodate travel demands and support the reduction of private motorized vehicle use.

8.5 Public Transit Policies

Thematic Goal	Objective Code	Policies
Moving Around YK	MAYK-2	Public transit service should be extended to areas of infill and growth in a phased manner, aligned with the City’s long-range transit implementation planning.

MAYK-2	Transit-supportive development in new mixed-use neighbourhoods and intensification areas must be provided at higher intensities in areas served by transit.
MAYK-2	Transit corridors should be served by higher frequency transit, and the movement of transit vehicles may be prioritized within these corridors or by time of day.
MAYK-2	Sidewalks, multi-use pathways, and active transportation pathways should be designed to provide direct access from the interior of neighbourhoods to transit locations and to connect commercial properties in accordance with the Transportation Plan and/or the Development and Design Standards.
MAYK-2	Movement of public transit vehicles may be prioritized in transit corridors or by time of day.
MAYK-2	Development that interferes with transit infrastructure specified in this Plan will be prohibited.
MAYK-2	Public transit service to Yellowknife Airport should be implemented in accordance with the Transportation Plan.
MAYK-2	The transportation system should be integrated to support urban growth through improved network connectivity, mid-block links along arterial roads, and convenient inter-modal transfer points.

8.6 Mixed Use Nodes and Transit Corridors

There are two transit corridors identified on **Map 29**:

1. 50th Avenue - This transit corridor runs from Old Town to the intersection with Old Airport Road; and,

Old Airport Road – This transit corridor is for the entirety of Old Airport Road.

A transit corridor is a corridor of higher intensity development served by frequent transit and anchored by several mixed-use nodes. There are three mixed use nodes identified in the Franklin Avenue Corridor:

1. Old Town at the corner of 50th Avenue and School Draw Avenue;
2. Downtown at 50th Avenue and 48 Street; and,
3. Intersection of 50th Avenue and Old Airport Road.

There are two planned activity mixed use nodes in the Old Airport Road Transit Corridor:

1. Intersection of Old Airport Road and the future connection to Frame Lake as identified in **Map 29**; and,

2. Intersection of Highway 3 and Old Airport Road.

Call-out: Mixed use nodes will be focused around connections between public transit and active transportation infrastructure, while incorporating local landmarks and wayfinding signage. Development in the mixed-use nodes will be higher intensity mixed-use development, where appropriate, with a mix of residential, commercial, and institutional uses.

Development in the transit corridors will incorporate improved active transportation infrastructure and link to existing active transportation networks.

8.7 Activity Nodes and Transit Corridors Policies

Thematic Goal	Objective Code	Policies
Growing YK	GYK-3	Development within identified activity nodes must incorporate a mix of residential, commercial, and institutional uses.
	GYK-4	High-intensity residential and commercial development should be prioritized within the 50 th Avenue and Old Airport Road transit corridors.
Moving Around YK	MAYK-2	Multi-unit and mixed-use developments on transit corridors exceeding 100 units must contribute to or implement transit infrastructure and identified in the Transportation Plan. This may include bus stops and active transport infrastructure, and support barrier-free access to transit corridors.
		City may provide intensity bonus where applicable to support transit nodes and its functions through development incentives By-law.
	MAYK-3	Development within "Complete Street Districts" (Map 29) should provide a minimum clear sidewalk and physical buffers between active modes and motorized traffic in accordance with the Transportation Plan and/or the Development and Design Standards.
	MAYK-3	New development within transit corridors should provide active transportation infrastructure that connects to existing municipal networks in accordance with the Transportation Plan and/or the Development and Design Standards.
	MAYK-3	New development within transit corridors should provide facilities and services that prioritize walking, cycling, and transit in accordance with the Transportation Plan and/or the Development and Design Standards.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code	Policies
Proudly YK	PYK-3	New developments located at activity nodes should incorporate wayfinding and landmark elements to enhance the public realm. Wayfinding should be supported and consistent with the City’s Wayfinding Strategy.

9 MUNICIPAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The City owns and operates a variety of facilities and key infrastructure that is necessary for delivering public services and programs. These facilities are identified on the *Public Amenities Map (Map 30)*. Facilities and infrastructure include water supply and treatment facilities, water and sewer infrastructure, solid waste disposal and lagoon, and recreational facilities. These facilities and services contribute to residents' health and well-being. They are significant factors that influence the quality of life for residents and visitors. It is essential that they are operated and managed sustainably and that they have sufficient capacity to meet the needs of residents now and in the future.

9.1 Water and Wastewater Supply and Treatment Services

The Yellowknife River supplies the City with its drinking water and water for other uses. The water is piped 9 km from the Yellowknife River to the Water Treatment Plant on Yellowknife Bay. The Water Treatment Plant was constructed in 2015 and is designed to satisfy the City's water needs for the next 50 years. The Wastewater Treatment Facility consists of a sewage lagoon (Fiddlers Lake) and a wetland filtration area. Once per year, the lagoon is drained and filtered through 13 km of wetland area before reaching Great Slave Lake.

Piped water and wastewater services are a significant capital cost. To keep costs low for users, higher utilization of the existing systems is required. Infill development will support better utilization of existing infrastructure. Future expansion of the piped infrastructure will have to consider the potential utilization and cost effectiveness in relation to the existing systems. Any consideration for extending piped services will consider the recommendations of the *Water and Sewer Expansion Study*.

It is extremely important that the water capacity and quality of the Yellowknife River is maintained to ensure that the City's water needs are met. Although the watershed of the river is outside of the municipal boundary, the area is protected under the *Area Development Act – Yellowknife Watershed Development Area Regulations (R-019-2003)*. The City will continue to work with other stakeholders to prevent land use activities that could diminish the quantity or quality of water.

Call-out: To ensure the long-term health and safety of the community through the responsible management of water resources, wastewater management and infrastructure. This section establishes the framework for protecting the Yellowknife River watershed as the primary potable water source, while ensuring that wastewater systems, including lagoons and natural wetland treatments, operate effectively and in compliance with environmental standards. By prioritizing development within serviced areas and aligning municipal growth with infrastructure capacity, these policies safeguard public health, promote fiscal responsibility, and protect the environmental integrity of the surrounding water bodies.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code	Policies
Growing YK	GYK -1	Land use activities within the Yellowknife River watershed must be managed to prevent negative impacts on water quality. (adapted from 1a)
	GYK-3	Land uses adjacent to the wastewater lagoon must be compatible with the facility’s ongoing operation and maintenance. (adapted from 5a)
	GYK-3	Land uses adjacent to the wetland treatment system must be compatible with the system’s function and environmental integrity. (adapted from 5b)
	GYK-4	If the City extends a main line to an area currently on trucked services, the City may offer a "Standard Connection Credit" to incentivize early adoption by offsetting a portion of the connection fee.
	GYK-4	New Commercial and residential development must only be located in areas with existing and planned piped water and sewer infrastructure. (adapted from 3a). New developments shall not receive final approval from the City until the piped water and sewer connections are planned and meet the city development and design standard.
	GYK-4	Trucked and private water and wastewater services shall only be permitted for new developments located outside the City’s existing and planned service areas, where such developments support worker accommodation, industrial and light industrial uses, commercial operations, or critical services and infrastructure.
	GYK-6	New developments and redevelopments shall design truck service areas to meet National Fire Code and fire-fighting capacity requirements. (new policy)
	GYK-4	New residential development should be restricted in areas reliant on trucked water and sewer services. (adapted from 4a)
	GYK-4	Where a municipal water or sewer main is located within an applicable distance of the property line, for a new development, connection is mandatory regardless of existing private systems.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code	Policies
	GYK-5	The city may enter into cost-sharing agreements to fund "oversizing" for long-term capacity, establish connection fee recovery mechanisms, or initiate Local Improvement Charges (LIC) for piped service projects in established areas.
	GYK-5	Cost-sharing projects for infrastructure must align with the City's 10-year Capital Requirements or the Municipal Development Plan. To qualify, projects must be designed to serve at least two additional parcels beyond the initial development. Costs shall be calculated fairly based on frontage, land area, or capacity flow rate.
	GYK-5	Cost-sharing arrangements shall be formalized in legally binding Development Agreements, after which the City assumes 100% of maintenance costs post-warranty. Latecomer recovery rights typically expire after 10 to 15 years.
	GYK-5	The developer shall be responsible for 100% of the design, permitting, and installation of piped water and sewer extensions required to service a new development.
	GYK-5	All installations shall meet municipal engineering specifications and be turned over to the City upon completion (unless otherwise specified in a Development Agreement).
	GYK-5	Wastewater treatment and effluent discharge into public water bodies shall meet all applicable federal and territorial regulatory standards. (adapted from 6a)
	GYK-5	Expansion of the piped water and sewer network should be based on a comprehensive evaluation of economic, environmental, and social impacts. (adapted from 3b)
	GYK-5	Municipal boundary adjustments should be compatible with the long-term operational requirements and capacity of the wastewater treatment system. (adapted from 5c)

9.1.1 Stormwater Management

Yellowknife's stormwater infrastructure is a specialized network designed to navigate the unique challenges of a sub-arctic environment characterized by discontinuous permafrost and Precambrian rock. The city's network is a hybrid of curb-and-gutter piping, open drainage ditches, and natural wetlands that work together to divert snowmelt and rainfall away from the built environment. This system plays a critical role in protecting the community from localized flooding. Using natural topography and chain of inland lakes the infrastructure manages the flow of surface water toward the receiving bodies of water. Modern management of this network increasingly focuses on environmental stewardship ensuring that runoff is managed to protect the water quality while maintaining the structural integrity of the city's roads and building foundations.

The City Yellowknife relies heavily on natural lakes and wetlands. There are 6 waterbodies used as primary "ponds" to collect, hold, and naturally treat urban runoff before it eventually reaches Great Slave Lake, including:

- **Frame Lake:** Located in the heart of the city, it collects a significant portion of downtown and residential runoff. Its large surface area helps settle sediments.
- **Niven Lake:** Originally used for sewage in the city's early days, it has been reclaimed as a vital stormwater retention and natural treatment constructed wetland for the Niven Lake subdivision.
- **Rat Lake:** Acts as a collection point for the drainage area between the downtown core and the Con Mine site.
- **Range Lake:** Serves as the primary receiving body for the newer residential and commercial "uptown" expansions.
- **Kam Lake:** A major light industrial, commercial and residential drainage basin. It is one of the last stops for much of the city's western runoff before it enters the larger lake systems.
- **Grace Lake:** Primarily services the newer light industrial, commercial and residential developments on the city's southern edge.

Call-out: The primary purpose of the City's stormwater management and facilities is to protect public safety, private property, and the environment from the impacts of surface runoff. The City's facilities, serve three core functions: flood mitigation, protecting water quality and protecting structural integrity of the City's transportation and infrastructure networks. By managing stormwater as a functional utility, the City ensures that urban growth remains compatible with the natural hydrology of the North.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code	Policies
Growing YK	GYK-1	Stormwater discharge into natural water bodies shall meet applicable environmental quality standards.
	GYK-6	New Infrastructure must be designed to minimize peak runoff rates to pre-development levels.
	GYK-6	Industrial and commercial land uses must implement spill containment and pre-treatment measures for stormwater runoff.
	GYK-6	Surface drainage patterns should be maintained or enhanced to prevent localized flooding on adjacent properties.
	GYK-7	Development should incorporate Low Impact Development features to promote on-site infiltration.
	GYK-7	Natural wetlands and vegetation may be utilized as part of a managed stormwater treatment train.
Living in YK	LYK-5	Multi-unit dwelling and large-scale commercial development should demonstrate that post-development runoff does not exceed the capacity of the municipal stormwater system.

9.2 Solid Waste Disposal

The city operates a Solid Waste Facility (SWF). This facility handles almost all of the waste generated in the city. The city is in the process of diverting organic waste from the landfill and processing it so that it can be used as cover at the landfill. Through its recycling programs and initiatives, the city is also working to divert other streams of waste out of the landfill to extend the life of the existing landfill cells.

The City shall maintain sufficient capacity at the Solid Waste Facility (SWF) to accommodate future growth. Following the 2025 land acquisition from the GNWT, the city will manage these expanded lands to ensure the long-term waste disposal needs of the community are met. The city will continue its efforts to divert waste from the landfill through increased composting and separating out recyclable materials.

Call-out: The Yellowknife Solid Waste Facility serves as the central hub for environmentally responsible waste processing and disposal for the city’s residents and commercial sectors. The facility’s primary mandate is to ensure the community has access to long-term, sustainable waste solutions while minimizing the environmental footprint of our waste.

Thematic Goal	Objective Code	Policies
Living in YK	(LYK-5)	Sufficient land must be preserved to accommodate long-term waste management and landfill requirements. (adapted from 1a)
	(LYK-5)	Landfill capacity must be maintained through the establishment of new cells prior to the exhaustion of existing cell volume. (adapted from 1b)
	(LYK-5)	Multi-unit dwelling buildings and businesses that generate organic waste should provide on-site compost collection.
	LYK-4 LYK-5	Collaborative partnerships with Indigenous Governments and Organizations should prioritize innovative waste diversion initiatives that reduce landfill impact and promote circular economy practices.

10 SUBDIVISION AND DEVELOPMENT SEQUENCING

Consistent with section 4.(1)(e) of the *Act*, this section provides a policy framework for the sequence in which specified areas of land may be developed or redeveloped to accommodate future land use needs in the short, medium, and long-term.

Land analysis and modeling was performed to inform YK 2050 to determine how much land would be required for different uses for the next 20 years (see **Section 2.3**). The city considered existing inventory and available land development opportunities within the built area of the city as well as greenfield areas. Based on these considerations, a set of policies were developed to guide decisions about subdivision and land development sequencing to meet the future land development needs of the city in an environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable way, as identified on the *Land Development Sequence Map (Map 30)*.

Area Development Plans are a tool that can be used to create more detailed land use plans for a specific area of land. The purpose of an Area Development Plan is to provide a framework for the subdivision or development of land within a municipality. Several area development plans are identified in the land development sequencing. The city may consider an Area Development Plan any time an undeveloped parcel of land that is being proposed for subdivision with 50 or more lots or is greater than five hectares. Policies for subdivision and land development sequencing are outlined in the table below:

Thematic Goal	Objective Code	Policies
Growing YK	GYK-1	A cost benefit analysis on the economic, environmental, and social aspects of new land subdivision should occur prior to greenfield development.
	GYK-4	Vacant lots, both City owned and private, within the built area of the City must be prioritized for development.
	GYK-4	Greenfield development must occur adjacent to developed areas in a phased approach to utilize existing infrastructure and minimize cost for extending infrastructure.
	GYK-4	Incentives for development of private vacant land may be considered.

10.1 Residential

The city currently has a variety of vacant lands available for potential residential development. There are vacant residential lots in Niven, West Residential, the City Core and the Central Residential areas. Some lots are currently for sale, and some lots are being prepared to sell. The city will prioritize the disposal of these lots for residential development.

In the near to medium term, the City will pursue a larger scale phased greenfield development near Frame Lake. Smaller scale infill development opportunities adjacent to existing developed areas will also

be developed in the near to medium term as identified in the Land Development Sequence Map (Map 30).

Table 8: Residential Land Development Sequence

Priority	Phasing Sequence
Dispose of existing parcels in inventory	Short-term
Focus on infill opportunities in the City Core	Short-term
Infill opportunities in or near developed areas	Short-term and Medium-term
Frame Lake phased greenfield development	Short-term, Medium-term, and Long-term (phasing and timeline to be refined when area development plan is completed)
Taylor Road infill/greenfeild development	Short-term, Medium-term, and Long-term

10.2 Commercial

Commercial development will take place primarily in the Downtown and Old Airport Road Commercial designations. Currently there is vacant and under-utilized land in both areas. The City will continue to work on implementing the recommendations from the *Downtown Retail Revitalization Strategy* or update with a new version, to better utilize vacant downtown commercial retail properties. The City will continue to work with private landowners of vacant and under-utilized commercial properties to incentivize commercial development.

As the Old Airport Road corridor continues to intensify, there may be new opportunities for retail commercial businesses as part of mixed-use developments.

There are opportunities for smaller scale commercial development on under-utilized sites in Old Town, Central Residential, and West Residential areas.

The development of the highway commercial designation will also allow for new auto-oriented commercial development opportunities that do not currently exist in the city.

Table 9: Commercial Land Development Sequence

Priority	Phasing Sequence
Incentivize commercial development on under-utilized sites, specifically commercial retail development, in the City Core based on recommendations in the <i>Downtown Retail Revitalization Strategy</i> .	Short-term
Collaborate with other levels of Government and developers to encourage sale and development of parcels in downtown	Short-term
Prepare an area development plan for Highway Commercial	Short-term

Priority	Phasing Sequence
Old Airport Road – Encourage higher intensity and mixed-use development along the corridor.	Medium-term
Prepare and service Highway Commercial lots for disposition	Medium-term

10.3 Industrial

Heavy industrial development will occur in the Engle Industrial Business District. Currently there are several vacant lots available for development in this area.

In the longer term, once the current supply of land in Engle Industrial Business District is exhausted, future lots will need to be identified.

Kam Lake will continue to be the primary area for light industrial land uses. As heavier industrial uses continue to re-locate to Engle Industrial Business District from Kam Lake and Old Airport Road, this will allow for expansion of light industrial uses in the area.

The Kam Lake Market Study projected that additional light industrial land will be needed as the City continues to grow. Land to the southwest of Enterprise Drive in Kam Lake has been identified for future light industrial development.

Table 10: Industrial Land Development Sequence

Priority	Phasing Sequence
Develop an Area Development Plan for the land in Kam Lake that is southwest of Enterprise Drive.	Short-term
Allow for new light industrial uses in Kam Lake as heavier industrial uses relocate to Engle Business District.	Short-term and Medium-term
Sell and develop existing parcels in Engle Business District that are already accessible and serviced for heavy industrial use.	Medium-term
Subdivide land in Kam Lake southwest of Enterprise Drive for light industrial use	Medium-term

10.4 Institutional and Recreational

Institutional land uses can be accommodated within the City's existing built area. As part of the City Council's goals and objectives for the revitalization of downtown, any future post-secondary education facility will be encouraged to locate in the downtown designation.

Any future indoor recreational facilities will be encouraged to be located in the recreation hub designation. There is currently enough land in this designation to accommodate the growth of existing facilities or the construction of new facilities.

11 IMPLEMENTATION

Following the adoption of the YK 2050, its vision and policies are realized through regulations and processes, including land development by private and public developers, and supporting studies, plans, or guidelines undertaken by the City over time. As the highest-level guiding policy document for land use, YK 2050 guides how growth will be managed and implemented through subordinate plans and by-laws.

This section of the Plan describes the specific statutory tools, processes, and procedures that the city uses to effectively implement YK 2050. All lower-level planning tools and development decisions—including Area Development Plans, Zoning By-law amendments, Plans of Subdivision, Variances and Development Permits—must strictly conform to the goals, objectives, and policies outlined in YK 2050.

Applications and processes outlined below are strongly encouraged to first complete pre-consultation with the city. Pre-consultation includes a meeting with administration, which may include multiple departments technical staff, where developers provide an outline of the proposal. City administration will provide information related to process, requirements and service availability related to the proposal.

11.1 Area Development Plans

An Area Development Plan (ADP) serves as a comprehensive framework to guide the orderly subdivision and development of specific land parcels within the city. In accordance with the *Community Planning and Development Act*, Council may adopt an ADP by bylaw following a public hearing. While the adoption of an ADP does not obligate the city to implementation, all subsequent land use, subdivision, and building development within the plan area must conform to its established guidelines. Once adopted, the ADP and its associated maps are integrated into the municipal regulatory framework.

11.1.1 Thresholds for Requirement

To ensure that planning resources are focused on complex developments while streamlining other projects, an Area Development Plan shall be required when a proposed subdivision or development meets any of the following criteria:

- **Scale of Subdivision:** The proposal involves the creation of **50 or more lots**.
- **Land Area:** The development encompasses a contiguous land area of **5 hectares or greater**.
- **Strategic Impact:** The proposal introduces a significant change to a **greenfield area** or requires the extension of major municipal infrastructure and services.

11.1.2 Mandatory Content

Area Development Plans shall include the requirements of Section 9 of the *Community Planning and Development Act*, and include:

- **Site Description:** A detailed description and map series of the affected area.
- **Land Use and Intensity:** Defined current and future land uses including projected population and unit counts.

- **Infrastructure and Utilities:** Locations of major transportation routes, public utilities, and lands reserved for municipal or public purposes.
- **Phasing and Sequencing:** A scheduled sequence for development or redevelopment (categorized into short, medium, or long-term horizons) and the strategy for providing necessary municipal infrastructure and services.
- **Acquisition Details:** Plans for the acquisition of any land required for public use.
- Redevelopment and Optional Provisions.

For areas designated for redevelopment, the ADP shall further detail the preservation, rehabilitation, or removal of existing structures and the relocation of utilities. At Council’s discretion, an ADP may also specify the exact manner of land subdivision and any other matters deemed necessary to ensure the development aligns with the city’s long-term strategic goals.

11.2 Zoning By-law

Zoning is the principal means for implementing the policies for YK 2050. The Zoning By-law regulates the use of land, erection and use of buildings and structures, yard requirements, parking and loading space requirements, design standards and similar matters. All new development must conform to the intent of YK 2050 and the Zoning By-law. Upon the adoption of YK 2050, Administration will bring forward amendments to Zoning By-law No. 5045, as amended, to conform to YK 2050.

In deciding on proposed amendments to the Zoning By-law, consideration shall be given to the following:

- Conformity with the general intent and purpose of YK 2050; and,
- Conformity with the *Community Planning and Development Act*.

A development proposal that does not comply with the Zoning By-law and cannot be considered by a “minor” variance to the Zoning By-law requires an amendment to the Zoning By-law.

11.3 Subdivision of Land

The subdivision process serves as the regulatory mechanism for the orderly division of land into smaller parcels for development. In accordance with the *Community Planning and Development Act*, the City may be the Subdivision Authority; to evaluate proposals against municipal standards and the long-term strategic goals of YK 2050. While draft approval establishes the framework for a project, final registration is only granted once the applicant demonstrates the capacity to service the land and adheres to all legal and technical requirements.

11.3.1 Approval Timelines and Validity

To maintain a consistent supply of shovel-ready land and prevent speculative holding, the following timeline constraints apply:

- **Draft Plan of Subdivision Approval:** All conditions of a draft plan approval must be satisfied within three years, after which the approval expires.

- **Extensions:** The city will not extend draft approvals beyond the three-year limit unless the subdivider demonstrates a reasonable effort to meet the established conditions.
- **Modification of Terms:** At the time of an extension request, the city may review and modify draft plan conditions to reflect current standards or municipal priorities.
- **Phasing:** Where an ADP outlines multiple phases, the timelines above may be adjusted to reflect the sequence approved in the ADP.

11.3.2 Subdivision Agreements and Servicing

Final approval or the recommendation for final approval is contingent upon the execution of a binding subdivision agreement. These agreements ensure that:

- **Infrastructure Completion:** All required services, and infrastructure must be installed within three years of the agreement's registration.
- **Performance Standards:** Development must adhere to city-adopted standards for design, servicing, roads, and financing.
- **Sale Restrictions:** A requirement will be included in all registered agreements prohibiting the sale of lots until the city provides explicit permission or the associated caveat is released.

11.3.3 Mandatory Submission Requirements

To facilitate a comprehensive review, applicants must provide technical documentation prepared by qualified professionals. Requirements include:

- **Planning Justification:** A report supporting the proposal, including an analysis of housing affordability, commercial or industrial market need and alignment with municipal intensification targets.
- **Technical Assessments** (where required): Detailed evaluations regarding grading, engineering, the hydrogeological setting, stormwater management, and the sustainability of proposed water supplies.
- **Site Context:** A description of natural features and land uses within 500 metres of the subject lands to evaluate environmental and community impacts.
- **Engagement and Mitigation:** A detailed public consultation strategy and a mitigation analysis for the proposed development's impact on the community and natural environment.

11.4 Reports and Studies

The city may require specific reports and studies, at no cost to the city, as part of a comprehensive planning application submission – referred to as a 'complete application'. Studies may include but are not limited to:

- Planning Justification Report;
- Traffic Impact Assessment;
- Environmental Site Assessment;
- Drainage Plan (site specific);
- Geotechnical Study;

- Municipal Servicing Study;
- Record of community engagement; and,
- Others specific to impact to noise or vibration, sun/shadow study, etc.

The reports and studies are intended to provide information pertaining to a subject site and the areas adjacent to it. This is to assist Council and its delegated approval authorities in the evaluation of an application to ensure that it is consistent with the *Act* and in conformity with the policies of this Plan.

11.5 Integrated Planning

At the time YK 2050 was prepared, the city in partnership with the Yellowknives Dene First Nation are in discussion with the territorial government for reviewing and amending the city's municipal boundary pursuant to the GNWT's Community Boundaries Policy (21.10) and in the context of land constraints and other factors (see **Section 3.1**). Should amendments be made to the boundary, a review of any new land that is incorporated will be completed, including an analysis of the current designations as part of the planning considerations and decision regarding potential amendment of YK 2050 and associated Zoning By-law.

YK 2050 is not independent of other city plans and strategies that Council adopts. As reflected in **Section 3: YK 2050 – Vision, Goals and Objectives**, YK 2050 was heavily informed by other city plans, reports, and studies to ensure a cohesive approach to the city's future. Specifically, the Plan considers and aligns with the goals and objectives of major strategic documents, including but not limited to:

- Smart Growth Development Plan (2010)
- Natural Area Preservation Strategy (2010)
- Strategic Waste Management Strategy (2018)
- Grow: Yellowknife Food and Agriculture Strategy - Implementation Plan (2021)
- Yellowknife Tourism Strategy (2025-2028)
- Community Emergency Plan (2025)
- City of Yellowknife Community Wildfire Protection Plan Review (CWPP) (2025)
- Climate Action Plan (2026)
- Transportation Plan (draft 2026)

New plans or strategies will inevitably be adopted as the city changes and adapts. While YK 2050 serves as the highest-level guiding policy document for land use, meaning all lower-level tools like Area Development Plans and Zoning By-laws must strictly conform to it, YK 2050 is a dynamic and living document. It should be reviewed and considered as part of all other municipal planning processes to ensure ongoing alignment. Administration will monitor YK 2050 on an ongoing basis for implementation progress and emerging trends; if required, Council may review and amend YK 2050 to ensure it remains in keeping with the spirit, intent, and objectives of new and evolving city strategies.

11.6 Reporting

YK 2050 sets out specific objectives and policies to achieve the community's vision and thematic goals established in Section 3: YK 2050 – Vision, Thematic Goals and Objectives. The city will provide an annual report from the Planning and Development Department detailing how these specific objectives and policies are being met or advanced. This reporting process links to future business planning cycles to focus development where it is most needed, while highlighting the overall effectiveness of the Plan. Ultimately, this ongoing monitoring and reporting process enhances internal and public accountability.

11.7 Public Engagement and Notice

It is important that the public is informed and consulted, as appropriate, on various planning and development proposals and be given the opportunity to review and provide comments on these matters within reasonable timelines. The city may use a variety of engagement techniques, including:

- Committee of City Council public meetings and through Council statutory public meetings;
- Non-statutory community information meetings for the purpose of informing the public and receiving their input;
- Open house style engagement events;
- Stakeholder workshops;
- Internet-based tools and social media;
- Land use change signage posted on-site;
- Verbal and written submissions;
- Standing Committees of Council and specific purpose committees that may be established;
- Direct consultation with various groups, Indigenous Partners, and individuals; and,
- Collaboration with other groups and agencies to reach out to engage citizens.

Provisions for public engagement will be appropriate for the intended audience and to the nature and scope of the matter being addressed, including physical meeting venues and the use of information technology.

After receiving a complete application for a planning and development project, the city will ensure Notice of a complete application is provided. For applications made under the *Act* requiring public notice, the city will provide a *Notice of Application* to the persons and public bodies prescribed under the *Act* and make the required information and material available to the public.

In the case of an amendment to YK 2050, or the adoption or amendment of an Area Development Plan or Zoning By-law, Notice of Public Meeting will be given a minimum of 14 days prior to the date of the public meeting. For the approval or revision of a plan of subdivision, or a vacant land or common elements condominium, Notice of Public Hearing will be given a minimum of 14 days prior to the date of the public meeting.

The city recognizes the necessity of respectful government-to-government relationships with Indigenous groups. The Yellowknives Dene First Nation (YKDFN) are a government and will therefore be engaged by the city as government-to-government. Furthermore, the city is committed to advancing reconciliation by actively collaborating and engaging with all Indigenous peoples represented in the city and region, including the North Slave Métis Alliance (NSMA), the Tłıchǫ Government, and the Deline Gó'ine Government.

11.7.1 Duty to Consult

The Government of the Northwest Territories has a legal and constitutional duty to consult Indigenous governments and organizations. The approval of the YK 2050, and any subsequent amendments under the *Act* will initiate the duty to consult. The city recognizes this is a responsibility of the Government Northwest Territories.

11.8 Adoptions and Amendments

YK 2050 is enacted through by-law and any changes to this Community Plan can only be done by amending the by-law in accordance with the *Act*. Recognizing the legislative environment is adapting to the changing climate and socio-political landscape, there may be other territorial or federal legislation that could impact future land use and development. This includes the Akaitcho Agreement negotiation processes. Changes to legislation that may affect the objectives, policies of YK 2050 should be considered, and amendments made accordingly.

12 GLOSSARY OF TERMS (DEFINITIONS)

Active Transportation – Travel using human power rather than a motor vehicle, such as walking, cycling, and other self-propelled or mobility-aid travel.

Adaptation – Adjusting decisions and behaviours to prepare for current and future climate impacts, such as extreme weather and shifting environmental conditions.

ADFN – Akaitcho Dene First Nations. The ADFN is made of the Deninu Kue First Nation, Lutsel K’e Dene First Nation, Smith’s Landing First Nation, Yellowknives Dene First Nation Dettah, and Yellowknives Dene First Nation Ndiłq.

Affordable Home Ownership – Housing where the purchase price (which for new units is inclusive of Government Sales Tax (GST) payable by the purchaser) is at or below an amount where the total monthly shelter cost (mortgage principal and interest – based on a 25-year amortization, 10 per cent down payment and the mortgage rate for a conventional 5- year mortgage as reported by the Bank of Canada in January of the applicable year, and a mortgage insurance premium – plus property taxes calculated on a monthly basis based on the purchase price, and standard condominium fees, if applicable) is affordable, based on paying no more than 30% of before-tax monthly income, to all households in the City of Yellowknife

Affordable Rental Housing – Housing where the total monthly shelter cost (gross monthly rent, inclusive of utilities for heat, hydro, hot water and water) is at or below 30% of the before-tax monthly income of renter households in the City of Yellowknife.

Area Development Plans – Detailed policies and frameworks for a lot division, road layouts, servicing & infrastructure, design guidelines and a phasing within a specific land-use designation. Arsenic Trioxide – A by-product of gold mining. Prolonged exposure to arsenic by humans is toxic and can result in many different types of health issues.

Barrier-free – Design and access features that remove physical obstacles, ensuring people with disabilities can fully participate in public spaces and services without barriers.

Commercial Land – Land used for commercial purposes like trade, retail, restaurants, accommodation, services and other commercial enterprises.

Commissioner’s Land – Land owned and controlled by the Government of the Northwest Territories under the Commissioner’s Land Act.

Complete Streets – A guiding philosophy for the City’s road network to balance mobility between modes

Fibrous Asbestos – A heat-resistant fibrous silicate mineral that can be woven into fabrics and is used in fire-resistant and insulating materials such as brake linings. Asbestos fibers are harmful to humans when inhaled and it is banned as a building material in Canada.

FireSmart – A nationally accepted set of principles for reducing wildfire risk and helping people and communities live with wildfire more safely.

GNWT – Government of the Northwest Territories

Greenfield Development – Refers to the development of land that was not previously developed for residential, commercial or industrial purposes.

High-Intensity Housing – Above 65 UPH. Typically includes mid- to high-rise apartment buildings, mixed-use towers, and other forms of concentrated residential development along transit and service corridors.

Infill development – Redeveloping underdeveloped lots through internal unit creation, structural additions, demolition and reconstruction or new construction.

Intensification – The development of additional residential units within an existing neighbourhood of Yellowknife, including infill, redevelopment and addition of new housing units, aimed at increasing housing supply, diversity, and compactness

Land Use – the types of activities that occur on land. There are various land uses such as commercial, industrial, institutional, recreational, residential, and open space.

Land Use Designation – any area specified for defined types of land use activities, both current and planned, in different areas of the City.

Live work housing – In Canada refers to built environments where residential and work uses are combined in the same unit or building in a functional and intentional way, allowing occupants to both live and conduct work or business activities from the same space. This form of housing has grown in planning practice as cities seek to support flexible work arrangements, reduce commuting pressures, and enhance local economic vitality, especially in core areas, corridors, and mixed-use neighbourhoods.

Low-Intensity Housing – Less than 25 UPH. Typically includes single-detached or duplex dwellings compatible with existing low-density neighbourhoods.

Medium-Intensity Housing – 25 to 65 UPH. Typically includes duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, sixplexes, townhouses, low-rise apartments, that increase density while maintaining neighbourhood character. For the purposes of this Plan, medium-intensity housing is also referred to as “missing-middle” housing.

Missing Middle – Missing middle housing refers to low to medium-density, multi-unit residential forms such as duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, townhouses, secondary suites, and small apartment buildings that provide housing options between single-detached homes and high-rise apartments while remaining compatible with neighbourhood scale and character. Missing Middle provides incremental neighbourhood intensification, housing diversity and supply, and support compact urban growth.

Natural Heritage Features – An umbrella term that includes the sub-categories of Woodlands, Wetlands, and Wildlife Habitat, which are also individually defined in the environment section.

Mixed-use Development – Land with a variety of uses mixed together. Common mixed uses include mixes of residential and commercial uses.

NWT – The Northwest Territories.

Objective – Measurable goal or target.

Privately Owned Public Space – A shared amenity space that developers can incorporate into mixed-use projects in exchange for development incentives and intensity bonuses

Policy – Proposed decision or action.

Residential Land – Land used for the development of human dwellings. Encompasses a variety of dwellings such as single detached dwellings, attached dwellings, low-rise multi-unit dwellings, and high-rise multi-unit dwellings.

RCMP – Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Supportive housing – Long-term, stable housing that includes ongoing support services tailored to residents’ needs. These supports may address challenges such as health, disability, or social vulnerability, enabling residents to maintain housing stability and improve quality of life.

SWF – Solid Waste Facility. Used for the disposal or processing of solid waste. Common types of solid waste facilities include landfills, organic material processing facilities, recycling facilities, and incinerators.

Tiny Homes – Small dwellings smaller than 400 square feet (37 metres squared). In many cases tiny homes are mobile and not fixed to the ground.

Urban Containment – boundary established around the City to direct growth inward.

As amended by By-law No. 5102 May 12, 2025

Work Camp – definition deleted.

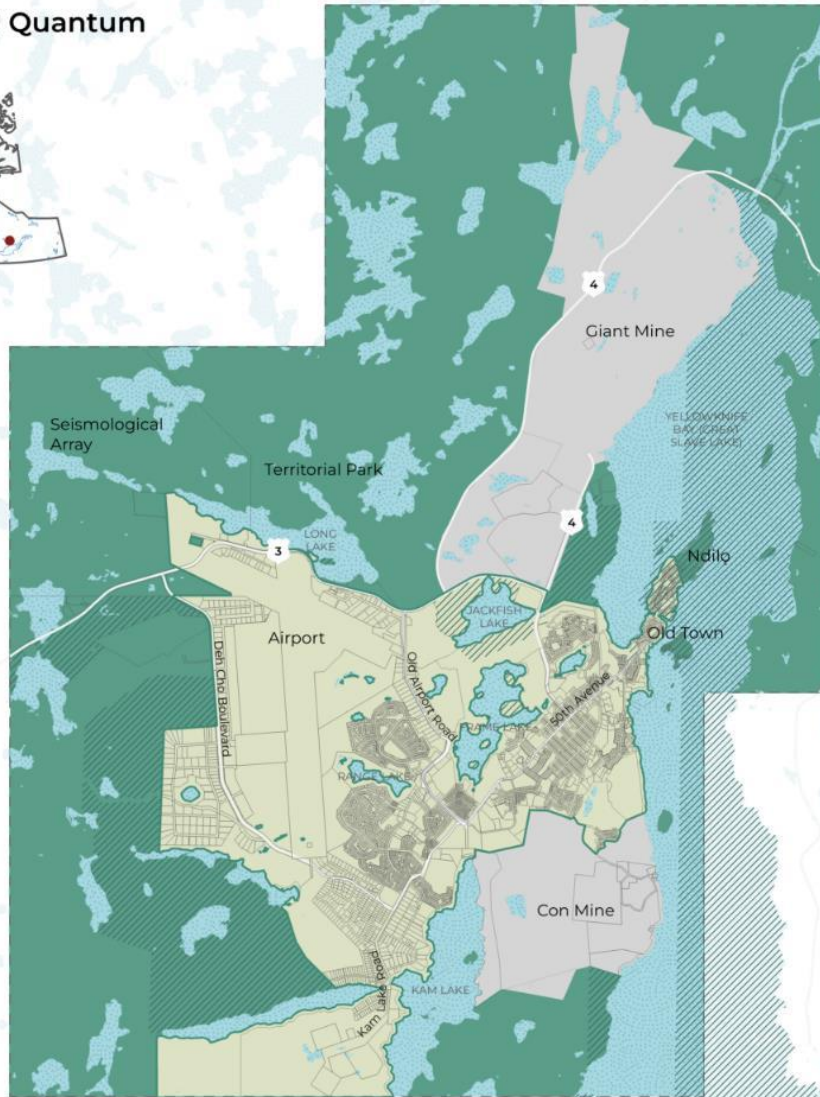
WTE – Waste to energy facility. These facilities convert various kinds of waste such as plastic, wood, or human waste into energy such as heat and/or electricity.

WTF – Wastewater Treatment Facility. A facility used to treat wastewater from homes, businesses, industry and other water users.

YKDFN – Yellowknives Dene First Nation.

Zoning By-law – Specifies the permitted uses and the required standards for each zone in a municipal area.

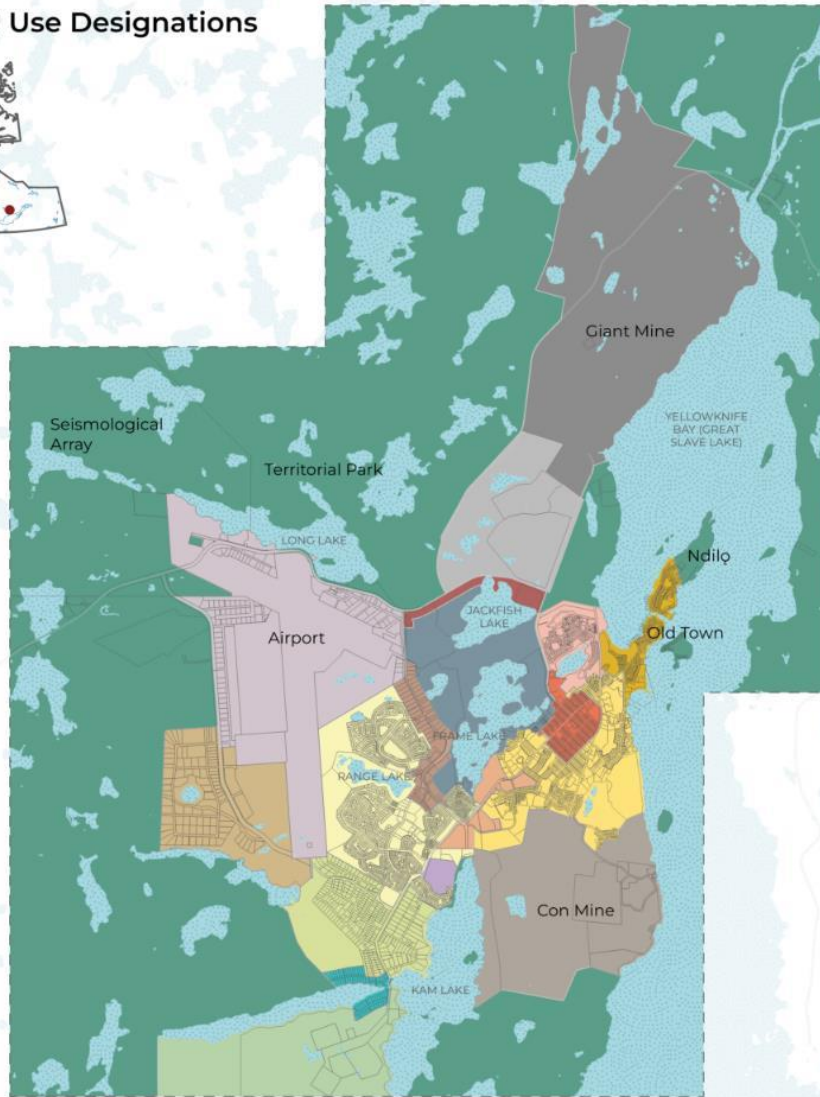
YK 2050 | MAP 1
Land Quantum



- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Planned Built Area | Property Parcel |
| Special Management Area | Municipal Boundary |
| Lands not for Development (approx) | Highway |
| Akaitcho (Interim Land Withdrawal) | Lakes |



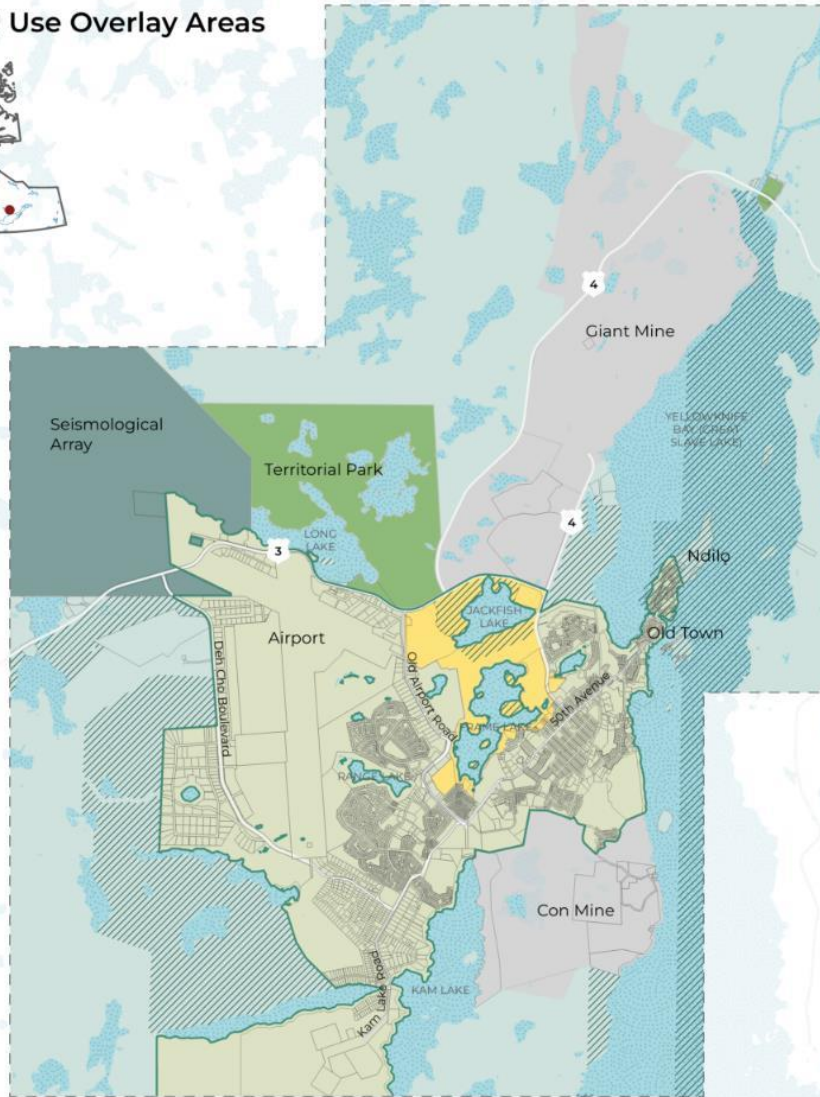
YK 2050 | MAP 2.a
Land Use Designations



- | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ■ Downtown - City Core | ■ Frame Lake | ■ Solid Waste Management | ■ Special Management Area |
| ■ Downtown - Central Residential | ■ Grace Lake Residential | ■ Recreation Hub | □ Property Parcel |
| ■ Old Town | ■ Highway Commercial | ■ Giant Mine | □ Municipal Boundary |
| ■ Old Airport Road (Mixed Use) | ■ Kam Lake | ■ Airport | |
| ■ Niven Residential | ■ Kam Lake South | ■ Mineral Extraction | |
| ■ West Residential | ■ Engle Industrial Business District | ■ North Slave Correctional Complex | |

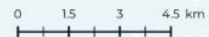


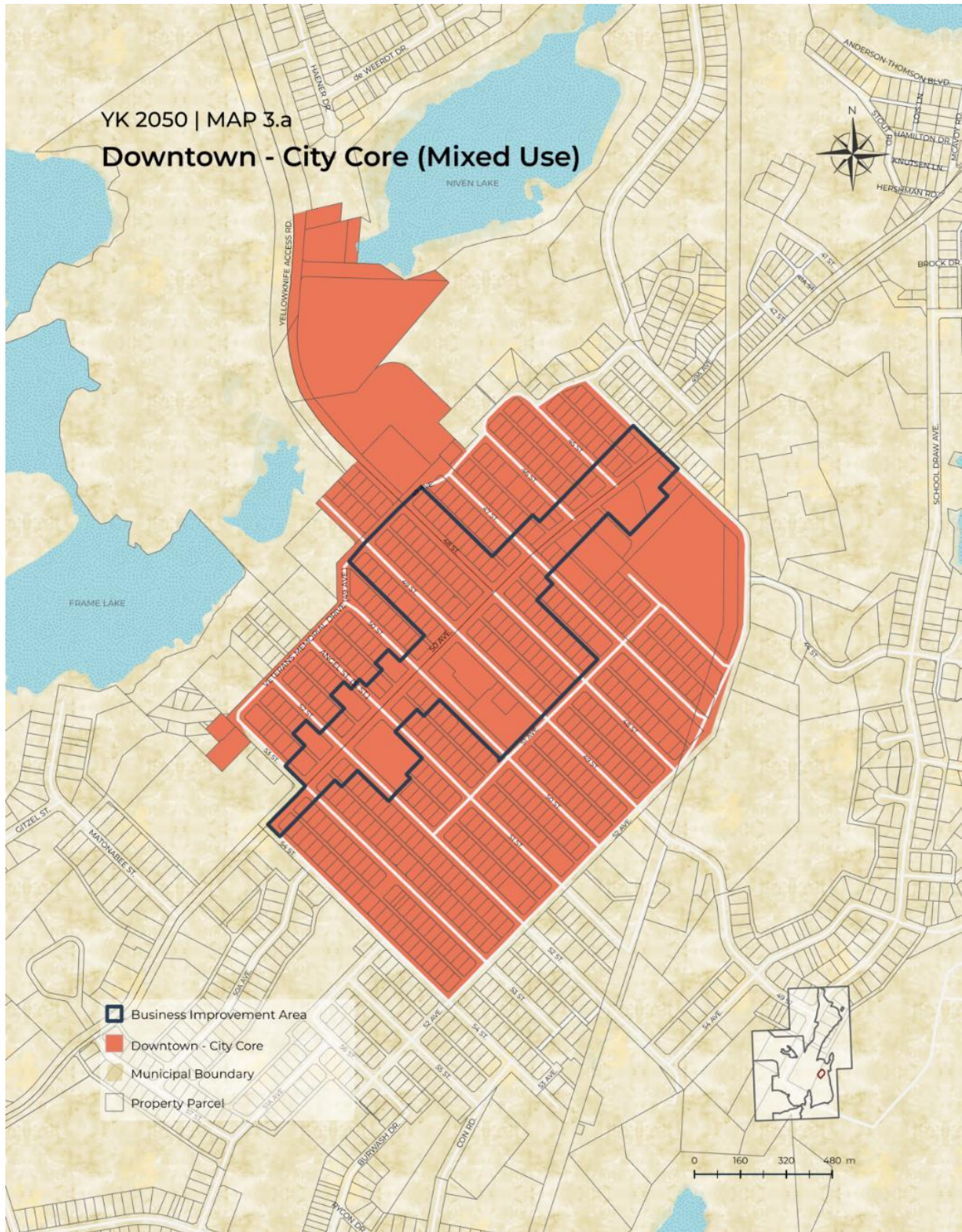
YK 2050 | MAP 2.b
Land Use Overlay Areas

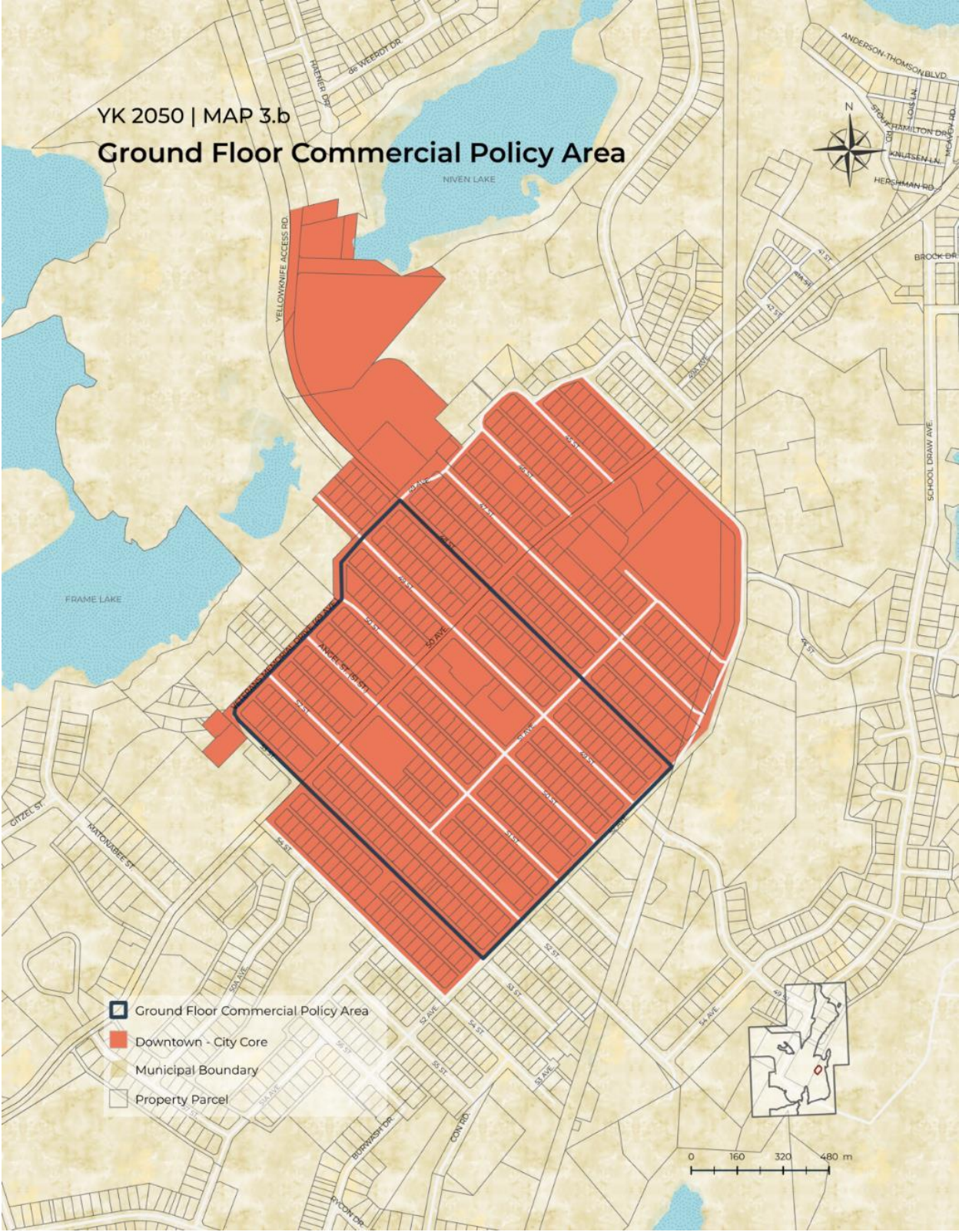


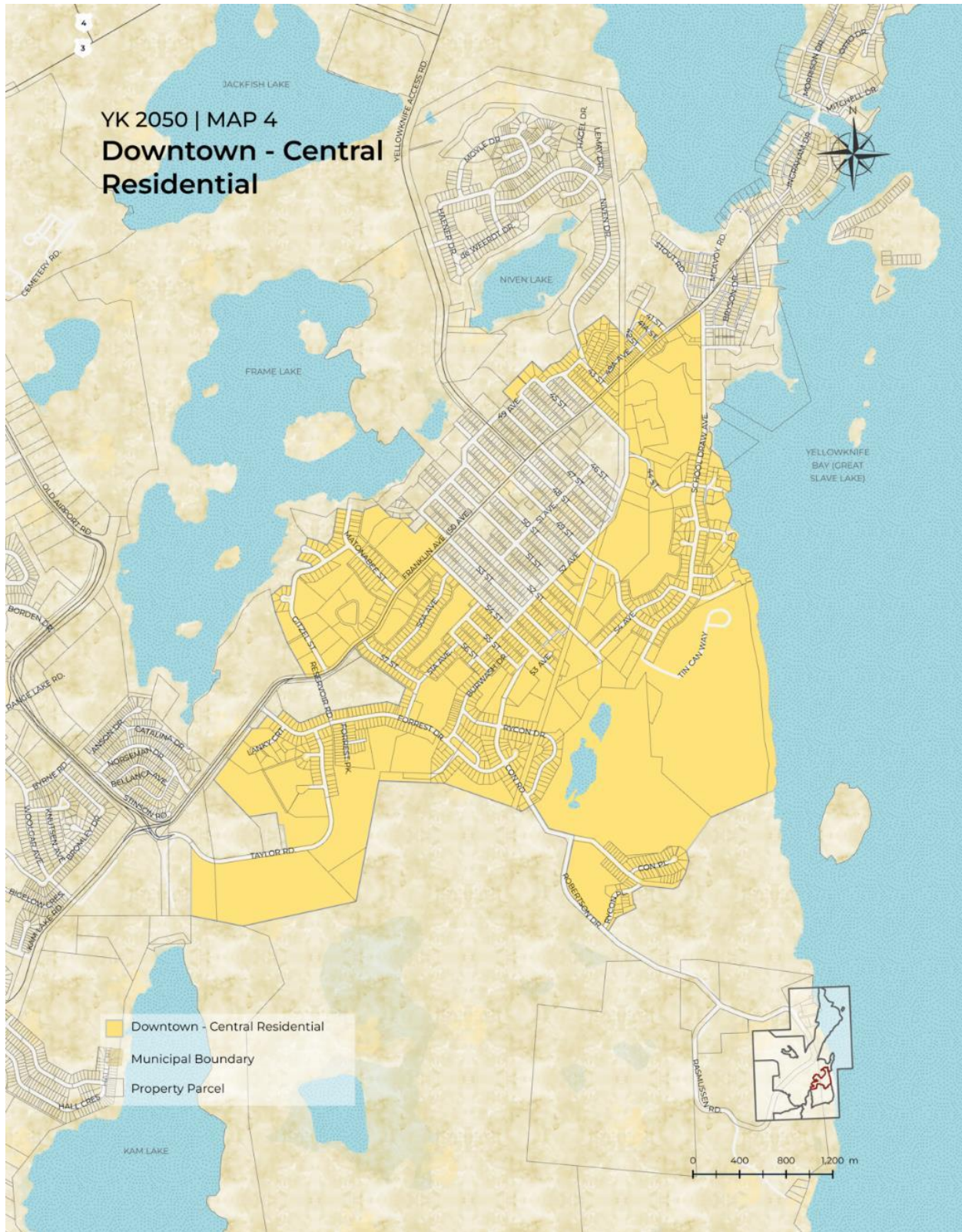
Overlays

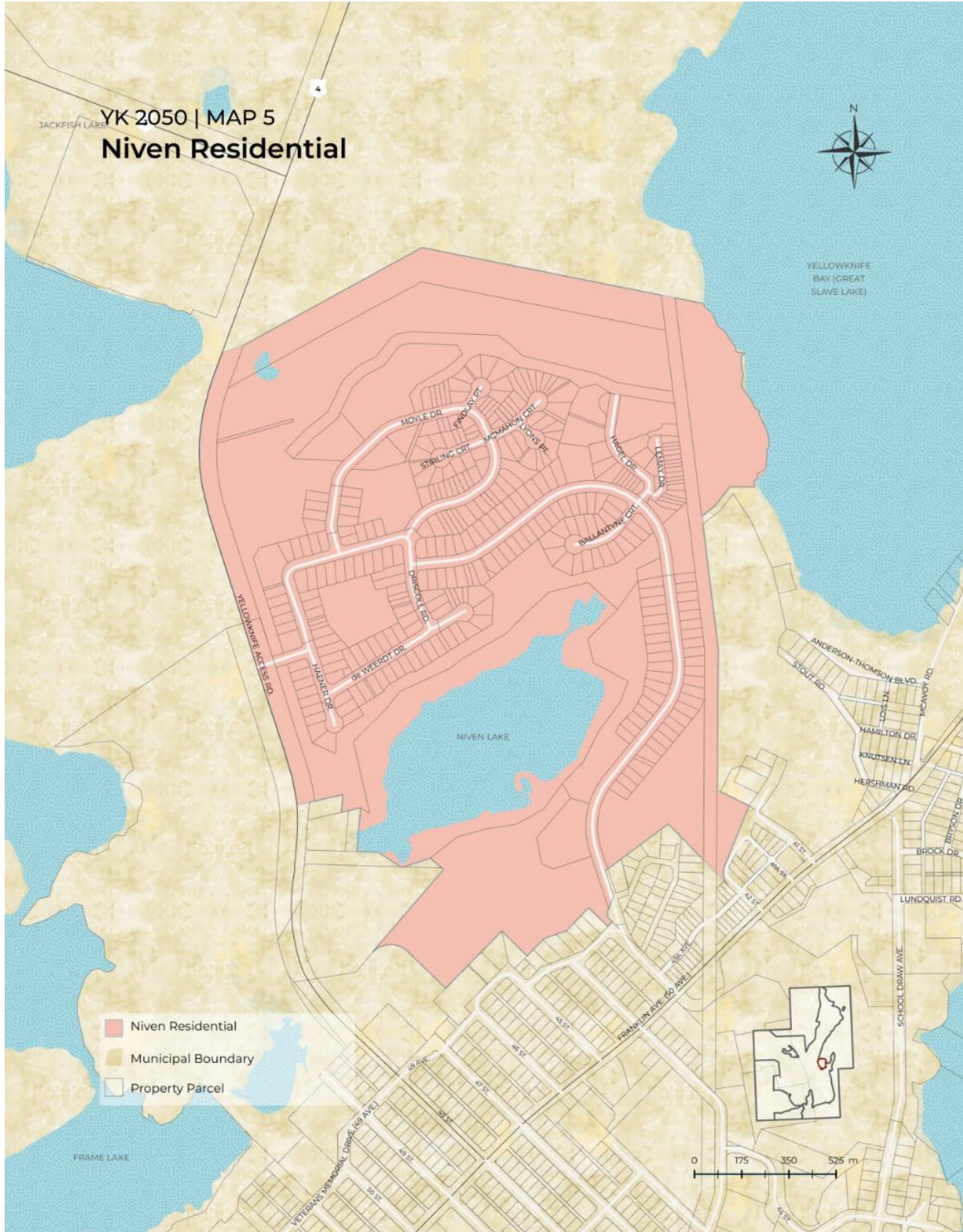
- Capital Area
- Fred Henne Park and Yellowknife River Park
- Seismological Array
- Akaitcho (Interim Land Withdrawal)
- Planned Built Area
- Special Management Area
- Lands not for Development (approx)
- Property Parcel
- Municipal Boundary





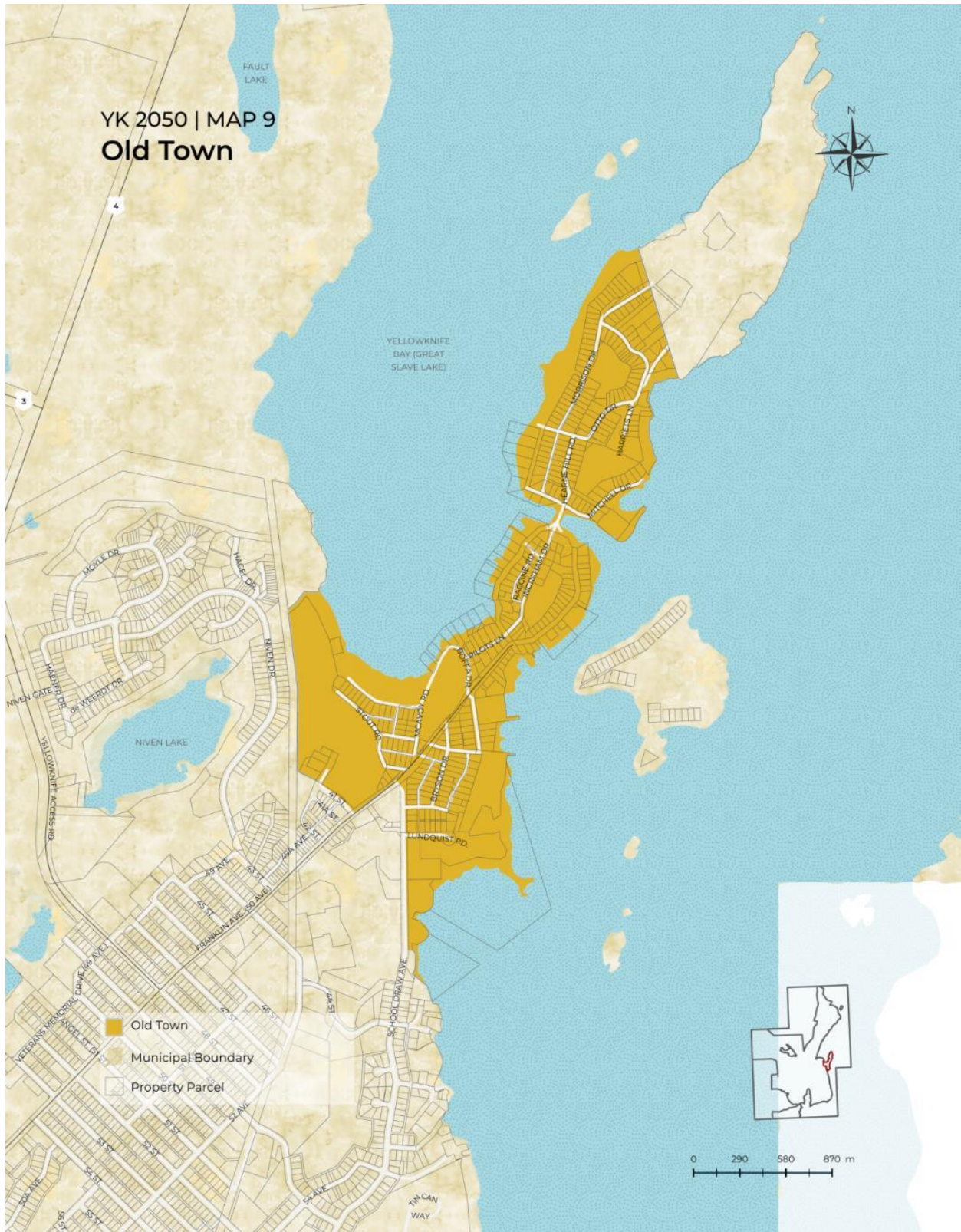






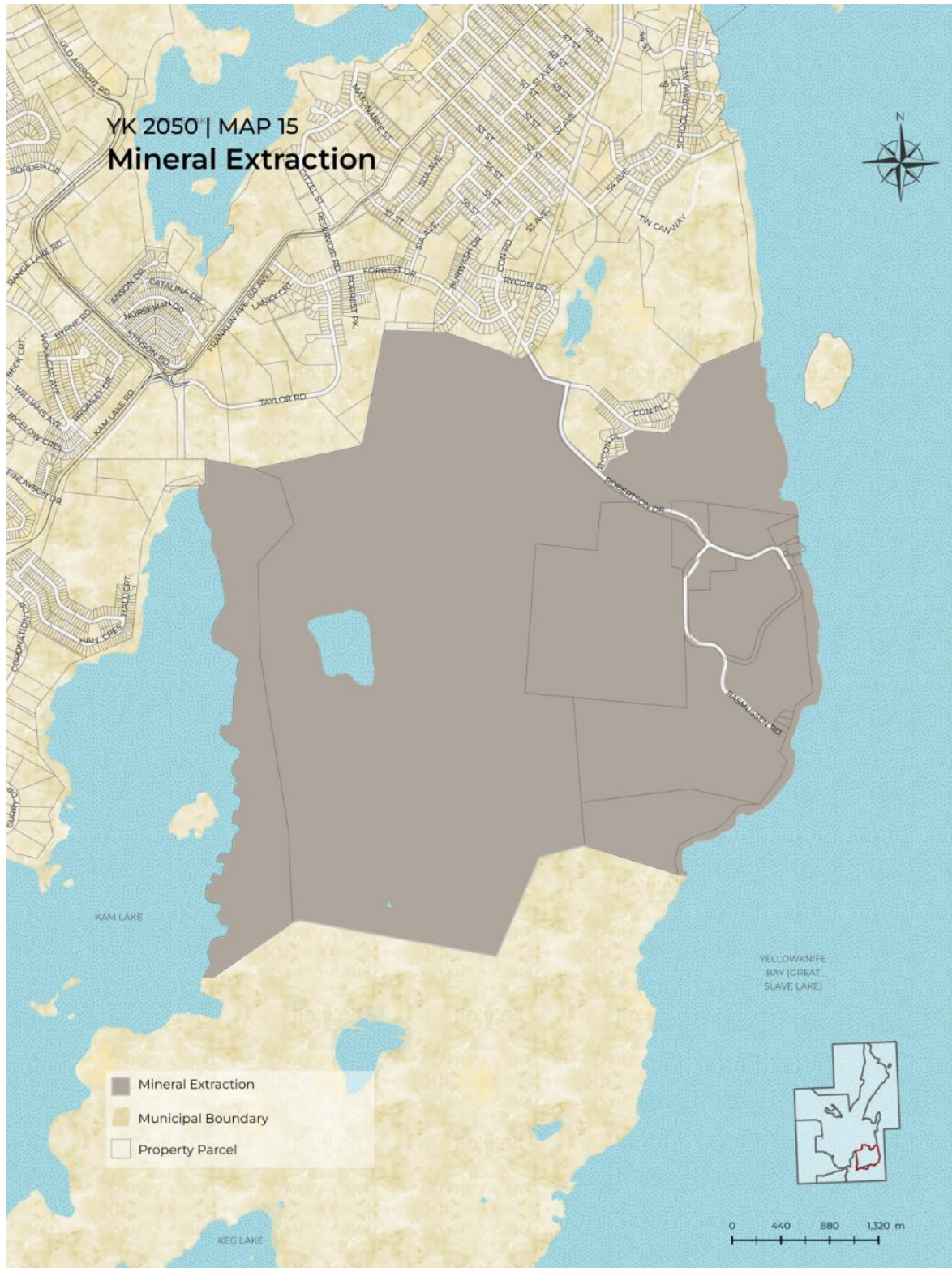






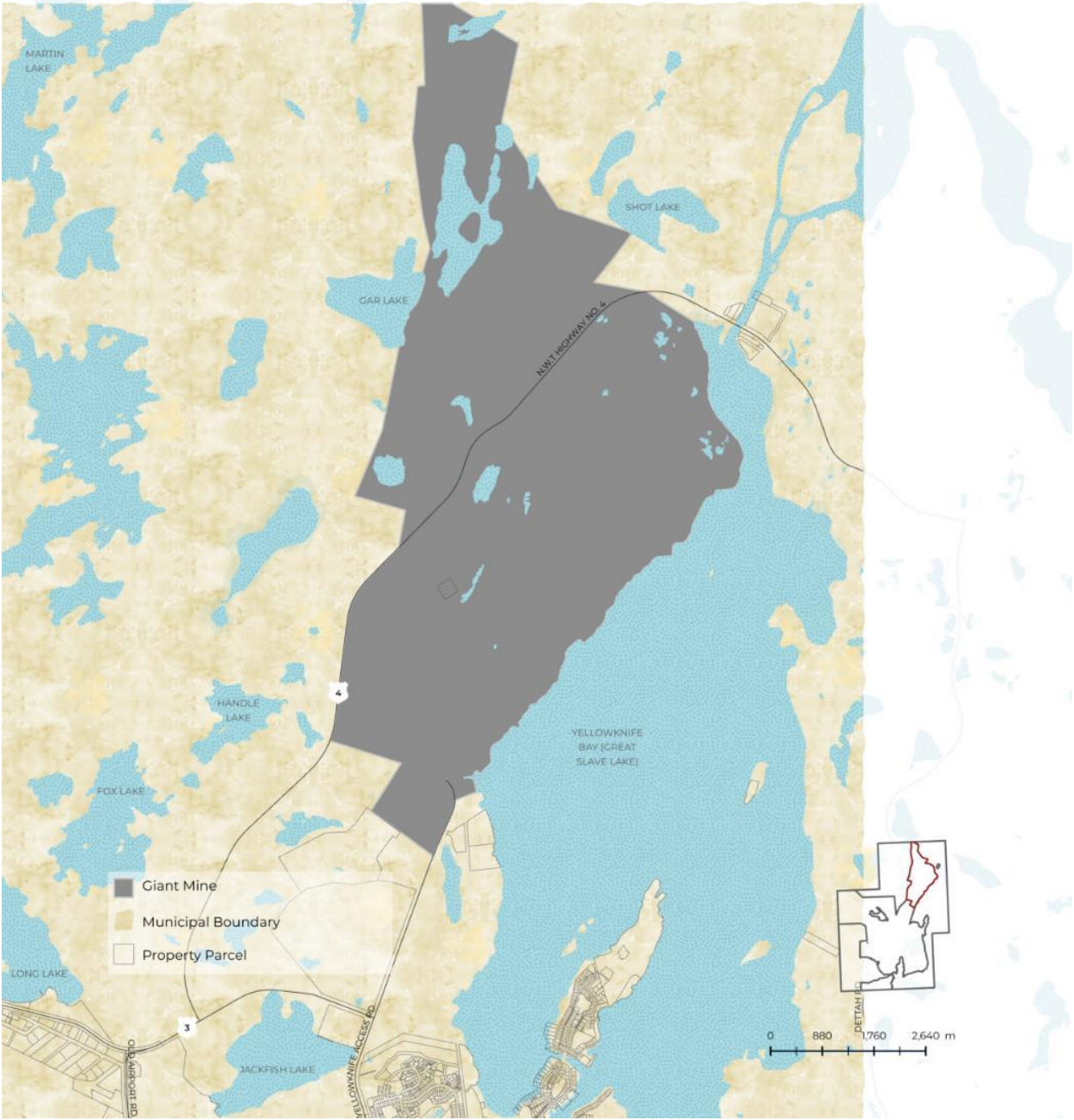


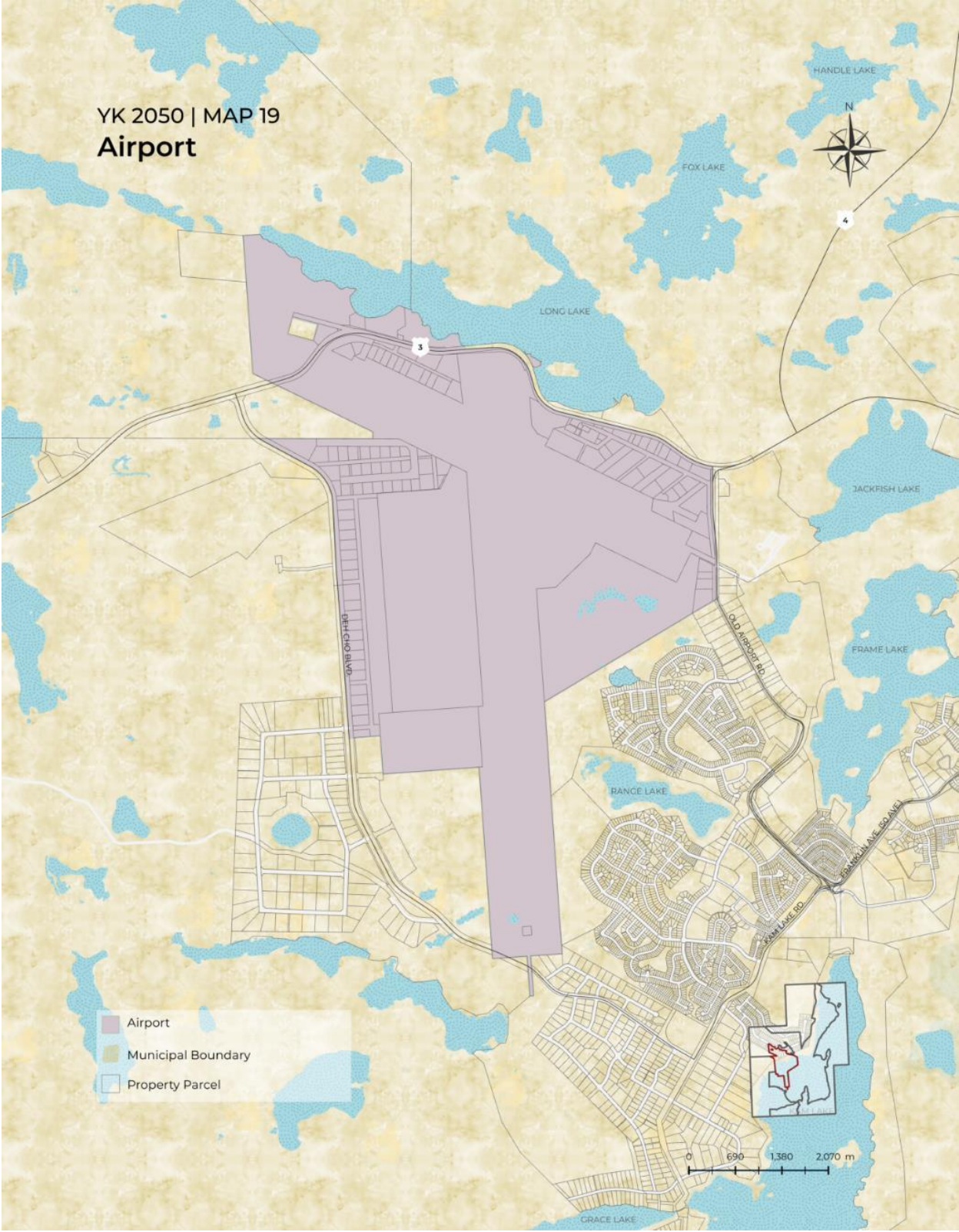






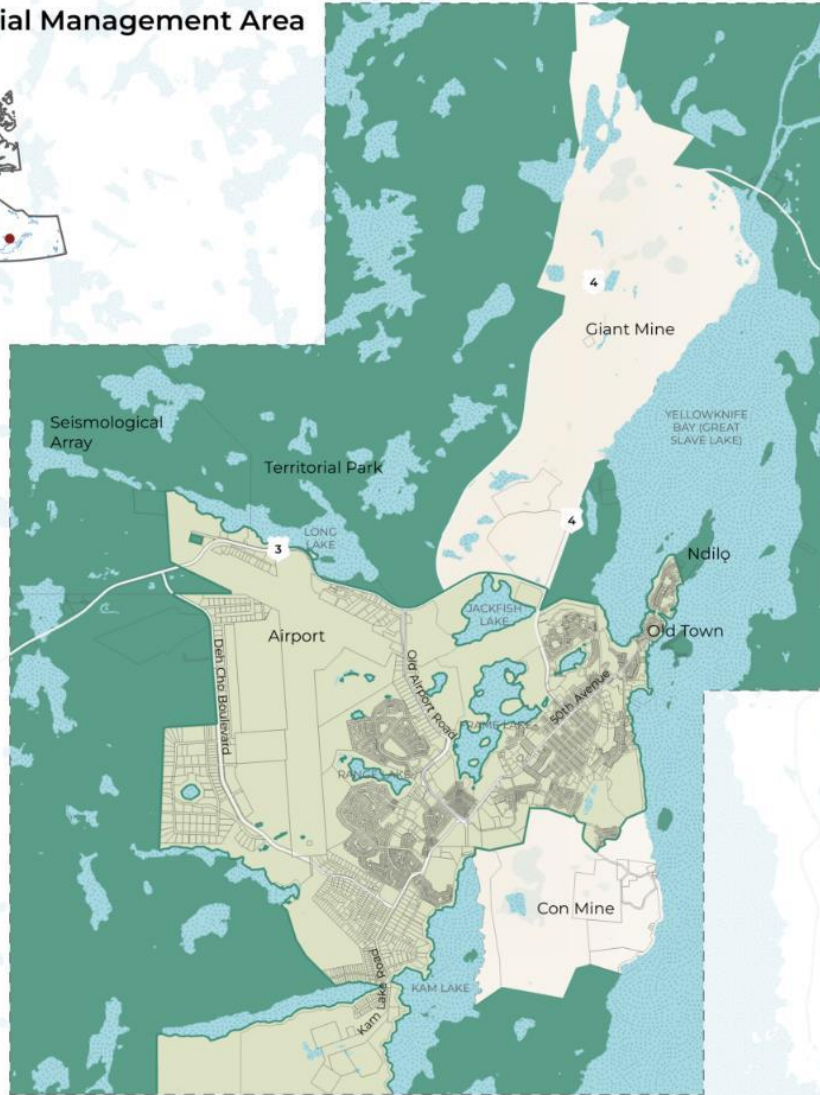
YK 2050 | MAP 18
Giant Mine



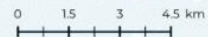


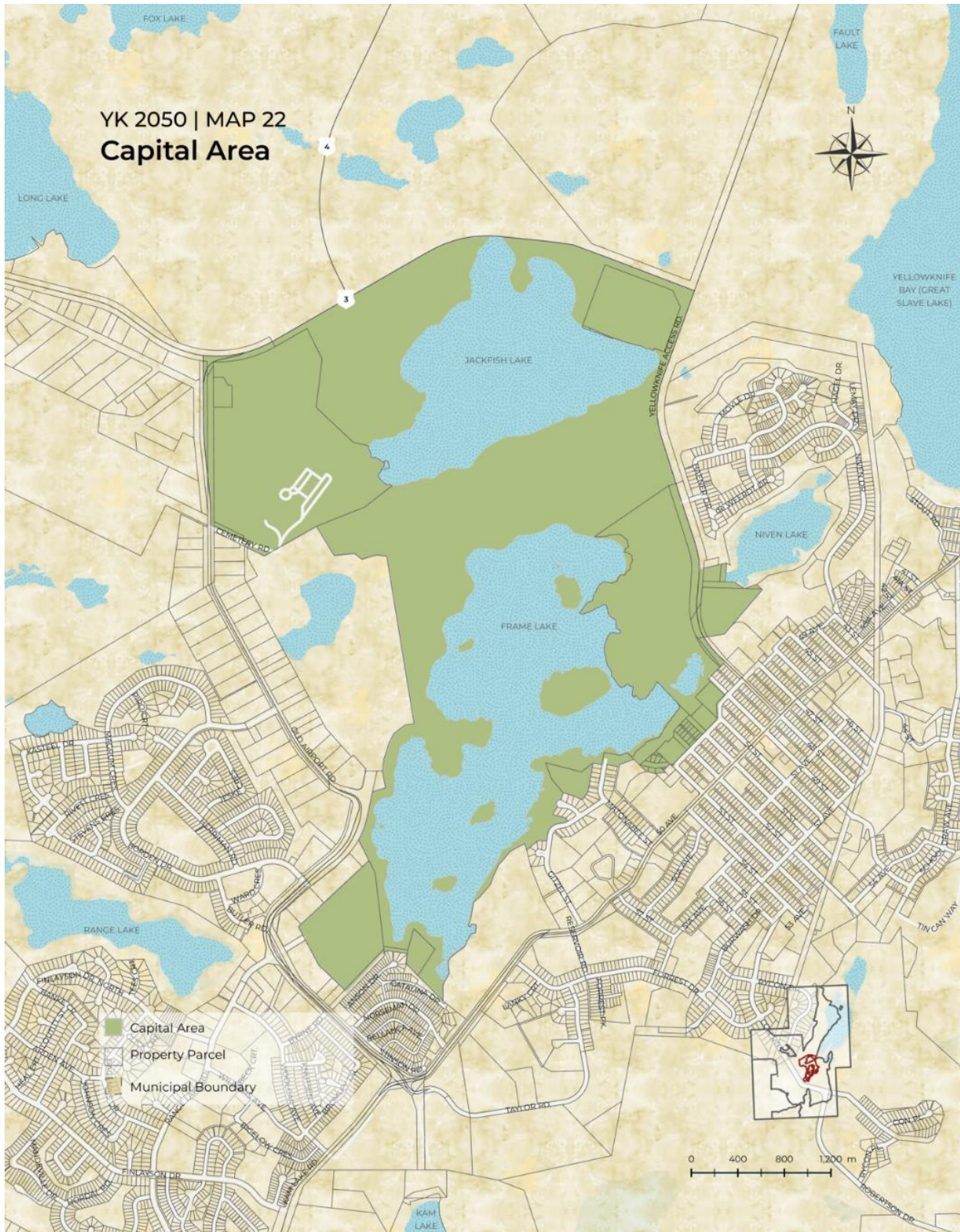


YK 2050 | MAP 21
Special Management Area

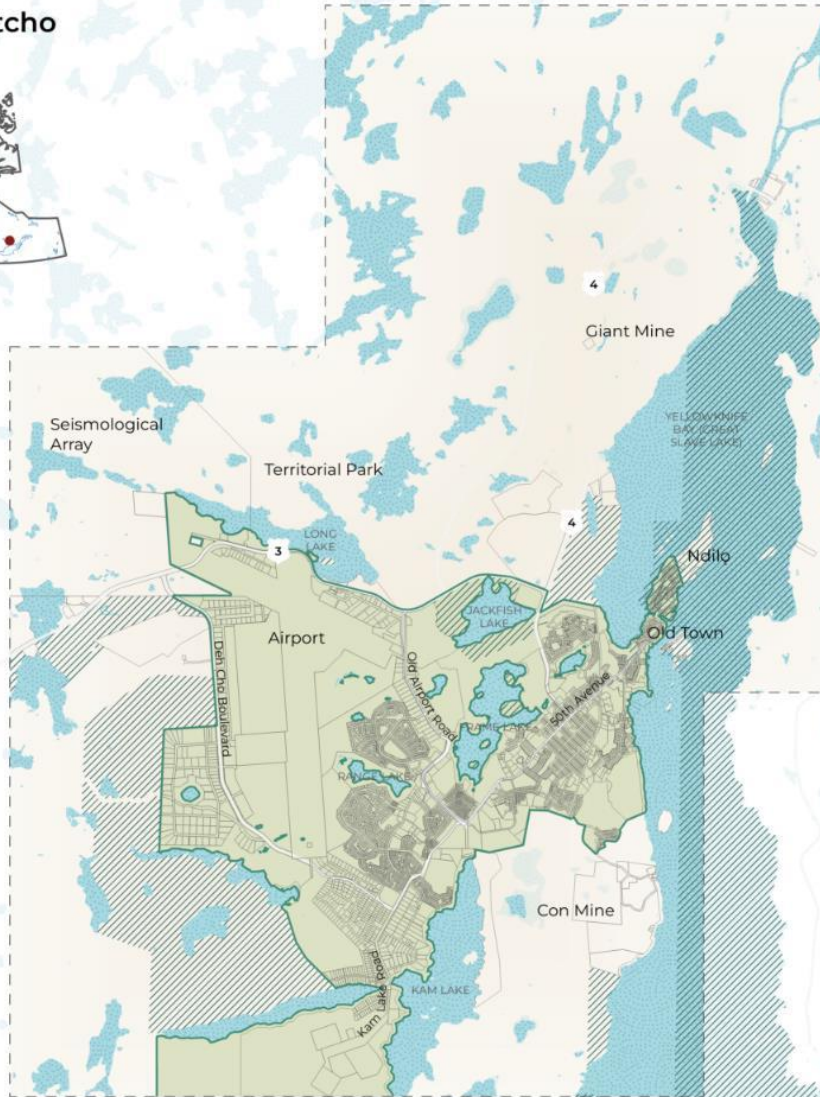


- Special Management Area
- Planned Built Boundary
- Property Parcel
- Municipal Boundary
- Highway
- Lakes





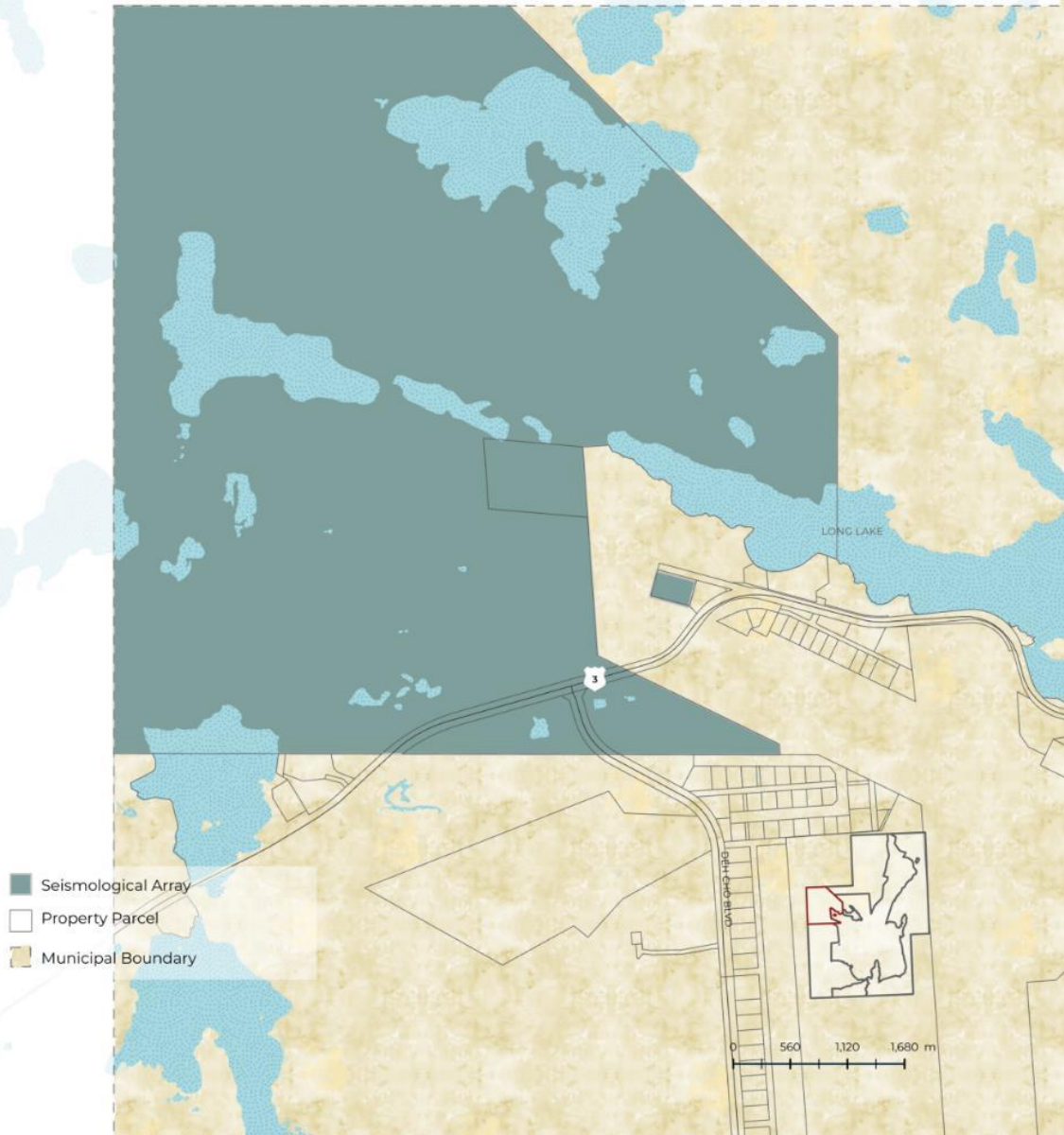
YK 2050 | MAP 23
Akaitcho



- Akaitcho (Interim Land Withdrawal)
- Planned Built Area
- Property Parcel
- Municipal Boundary
- Highway
- Lakes

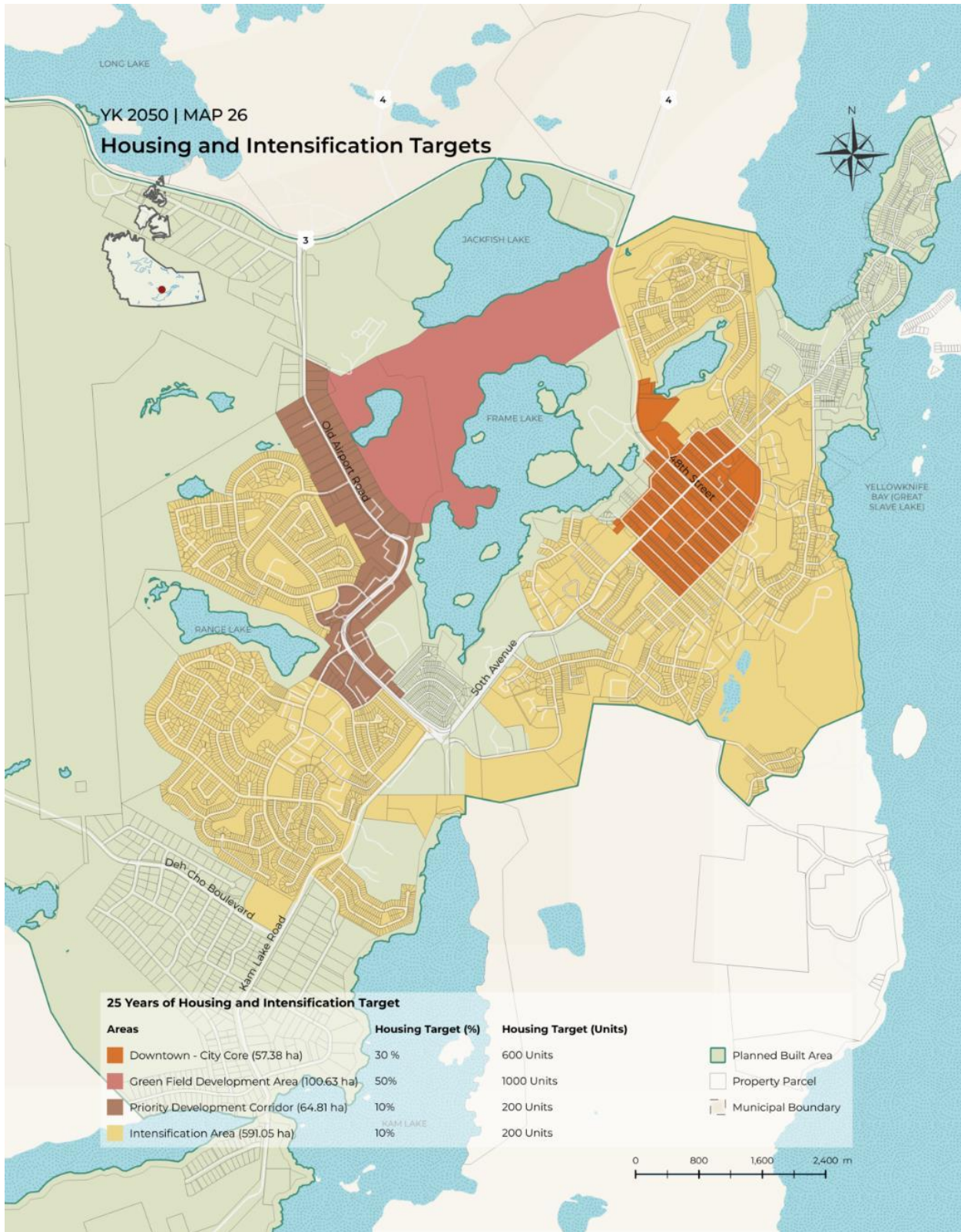


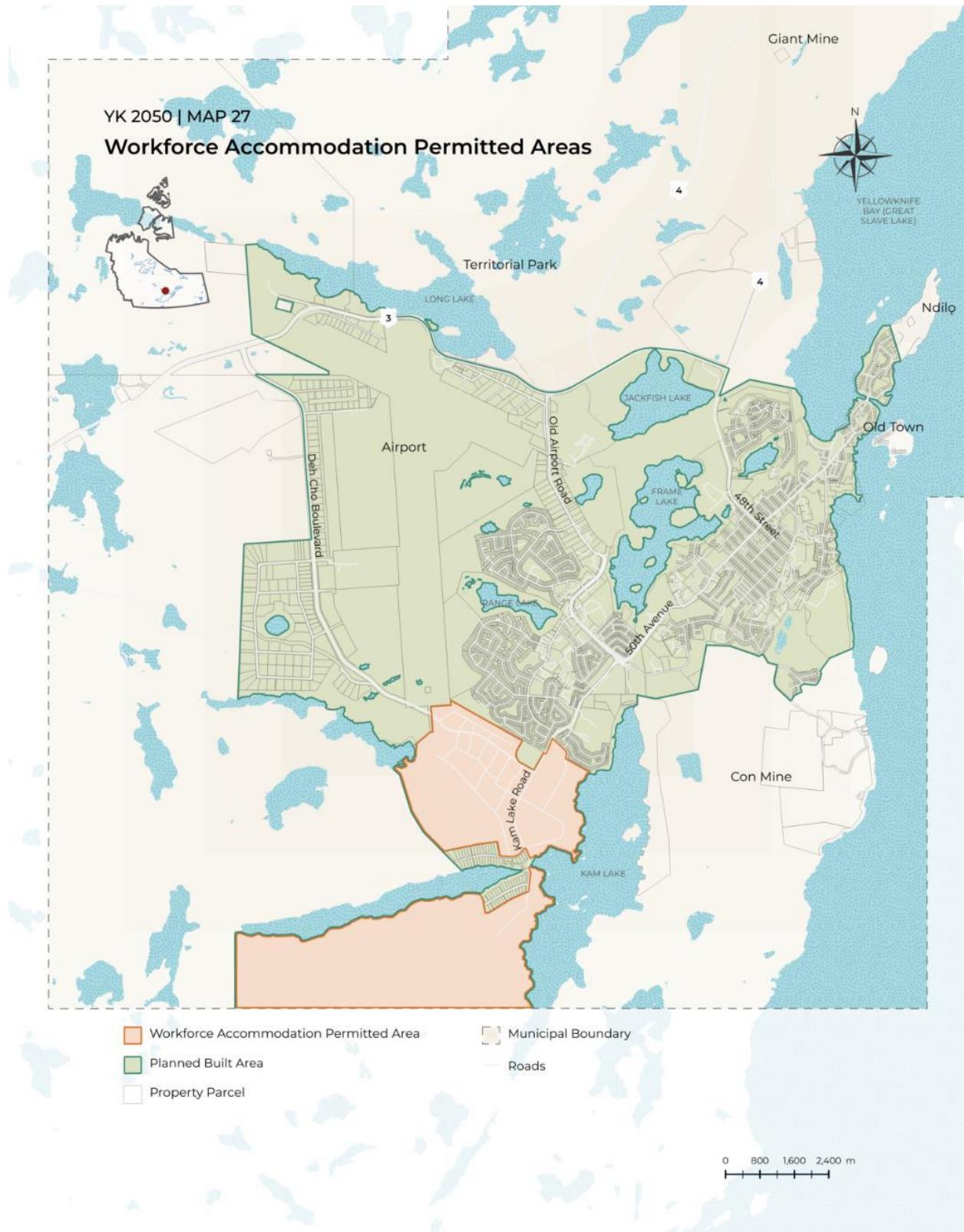
YK 2050 | MAP 24
Seismological Array



YK 2050 | MAP 25
**Fred Henne Park and
Yellowknife River Park**







YK 2050 | MAP 28
Natural Heritage Area



- Woodlands (>1 HA)
- Wetland
- Fuel Break
- Planned Built Boundary
- Municipal Boundary
- Lakes







