

Property Information

Location Description	Portions of Lot 15 Block 78 Plan 4059; portions of Lot 13 Block 81 Plan 4623; portions of Block 77A Plan 512; portions of Lot ROAD Plan 2396; and Lot 2 Block 201 Plan 2396
City of Yellowknife Community Plan No. 5007	Glossary of Terms Section 3.1.2 General Development Goals Section 4.1.2 Downtown – Central Residential Section 4.2 Old Town Section 5.1 Environment and Climate Change Section 5.2 Transportation Section 5.3 Municipal Infrastructure Section 5.4.3 Subdivision and Land Development Sequencing
City of Yellowknife Zoning By-law No. 5045, as amended	Definitions Section 5.2. By-law Amendment Section 10.5 RI – Residential Intensification
Civic Address:	N/A
Access:	School Draw Avenue and Lundquist Road
Municipal Services	Piped service exists along School Draw Ave.

**Recommendation:**

That Council approves the proposed amendments to Zoning By-law No. 5045, as amended, by changing the zoning of the subject lands from PR – Parks and Recreation and NP – Nature Preservation to RI-1 – Residential Intensification and NP – Nature Preservation to support the creation of new lots for future multi-unit, townhouse, and/or duplex residential developments and further extend the Nature Preservation zone.

**Proposal:**

As part of the City’s intensification strategy to help address the local housing crisis, the City has launched the Intensification First initiative to develop underutilized, developable, and surplus City-owned lands. In line with this initiative, and following Council Motion 00013-23 (January 23, 2023), which directed Administration to prepare the necessary planning applications to support infill development, the City is now moving forward with one of the identified infill sites. The subject site, known as the School Draw location, encompasses two blocks of land. The western block consists of lands legally described as a portion of Lot 13, Block 81, Plan 4623; a portion of Lot 15, Block 78, Plan 4059; and a portion of ROADS (School Draw Avenue). The eastern block consists of a portion of Block 77A, Plan 512; a portion of Lot 2, Block 201, Plan 2396; and a portion of ROADS (Lundquist Road). These lands have been identified as suitable for softer intensification through the development of multi-unit residential uses. This supports the City’s strategic priority of housing for all, creating the context for diverse housing options.

The overarching objective of this initiative is to prepare the subject lands for development and subsequently dispose of them in a development-ready state, in accordance with Land Administration By-law No. 5078, as amended. This process involves securing the required zoning amendments and subdivision approvals to enable future development.

To facilitate the public disposal of these lands, the City is proposing the creation of a multi-lot subdivision zoned for multi-unit and duplex residential development. However, the existing zoning—Parks and Recreation (PR) and Nature Preservation (NP)—does not permit such uses. As a result, the City has initiated Zoning By-law amendments to By-law No. 5045 to rezone the lands accordingly. The proposed amendments include:

- Re-zoning a portion of Lot 13 Block 81 Plan 4623, a portion of Lot 15 Block 78 Plan 4059, and a portion of ROADS (School Draw Avenue) from **PR - Parks and Recreation** to **RI-1 - Residential Intensification and NP - Nature Preservation** to allow for the development of multi-unit, townhouse, and/or duplex housing.
- Re-zoning a portion of Block 77A Plan 512, a portion of Lot 2 Block 201 Plan 2396 and a portion of ROADS (Lundquist Road) and **NP - Nature Preservation** to **RI-1 - Residential Intensification and NP - Nature Preservation** to allow for the development of multi-unit, townhouse, and/or duplex housing.

These amendments support the City's broader goal of fostering a safe, accessible, and inclusive community through the provision of diverse housing and accommodation options.

#### **Revised Proposal Note:**

Following the public notice circulation of the original proposal on June 13, 2025, the proposed plan has been revised to reflect both public feedback and the existing location of drainage infrastructure. Specifically, a portion of the previously proposed RI-1 (Residential Infill) area has been removed, and the amount of land designated as NP (Natural Preservation) has been further increased. This revision responds to public comments raised regarding natural area preservation and infrastructure constraints. The updated boundaries are shown in Figure 2: Proposed Zoning Map and form the basis for the revised planning analysis in this report.

#### **Background:**

##### **LOCATION**

The subject lands, identified in location Map (Figure 1), are located along School Draw Avenue between Downtown and Old Town. The subject lands consist of lands situated on opposite sides of School Draw Avenue.

The subject land abuts the multi-unit residential development - *The View* and Lundquist Road to the north, Great Slave Lake and Rotary Centennial Park to the east and south, and a city-owned open space to the west. This location places the site within a unique transitional zone between Old Town and the Downtown core.

The subject lands are predominantly undeveloped and exhibit a significant change in elevation, particularly on the western block adjacent to School Draw Avenue. Municipal infrastructure, including a water main and sanitary sewer, are located under School Draw Avenue. Additionally, a storm sewer extends from the intersection of School Draw Avenue and Lindquist Road onto Lot 2. The eastern portion of Block 77A contains a portion of the Rotary Park boardwalk, while the corner of School Draw Ave. and Lundquist Rd. currently includes an unpermitted skateboarding ramp.

#### CURRENT LAND USE DESIGNATION AND ZONING

The subject lands are currently designated under two distinct land use categories in the City's Community Plan. The eastern parcel is designated as "Old Town," while the western parcel is designated as "Downtown – Central Residential," as shown in Appendix B. Located at the intersection of these two neighbourhoods, the lands are well-positioned to support a transition through appropriate intensification to medium-density and multi-unit residential development. Such intensification may include the development of vacant parcels or the redevelopment of underutilized sites, not only in a way that complement the surrounding built environment but also to ensure natural preservation areas are protected.

At present, the subject lands are zoned PR – Parks and Recreation and NP – Nature Preservation, as indicated in Appendix C. The PR zone permits uses such as public parks, recreation facilities, urban agriculture, and related accessory structures, while the NP zone is more restrictive, allowing only public parks, utility structures, and temporary uses that support natural preservation objectives.

#### PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL INTENSIFICATION ZONE

Given the subject lands' strategic location between the downtown core and Old Town, they present a ideal opportunity for moderate residential intensification to help meet Yellowknife's growing housing needs. On October 28, 2024, City Council adopted a new zoning category RI-1— Residential Intensification through By-law No. 5095. This zoning framework was designed to support targeted infill by enabling moderate intensification within lot sizes that are compatible with the existing neighbourhood fabric while preserving the overall character of adjacent areas.

Staff recommend that the subject lands be rezoned from PR – Parks and Recreation to RI-1 – Residential Intensification and NP – Nature Preservation. The RI-1 zone permits a variety of housing types, including duplexes, townhouses, multi-unit residential buildings, and detached dwellings with either attached or in-home secondary suites. Proposed lot dimensions will range from a minimum of 20 metres in width by 32 metres in depth. These dimensions provide sufficient space to accommodate development while also ensuring that new construction remains appropriate and consistent with the established character of the surrounding neighbourhood. The proposed RI-1 lands east of School Draw are retained as a single block to be planned in the future with specific zoning requirements aimed at ensuring compatibility with adjacent Nature Preservation lands and minimizing potential impacts.

Figure 1: Current Zoning



Figure 2: Proposed Zoning



## HOUSING NEEDS AND BENEFITS OF THIS DEVELOPMENT

Yellowknife continues to face a housing shortage, with approximately 10% of households classified as being in core housing need<sup>1</sup>—meaning they either spend more than 30% of their income on housing, live in units requiring major repairs, or reside in overcrowded conditions. Approximately 24% of households in Yellowknife are in subsidized rental housing, and 75% of the purpose-built rental stock was constructed before 2000<sup>2</sup>. According to the most recent CMHC data, the vacancy rate in the primary rental market (apartments and townhomes) was 1.9% as of October 2024<sup>3</sup>. There is also a significant increase of senior population – 14.6% since 2011<sup>4</sup>. The City has only 1% (approximately) lands readily available for future developments which presents a significant barrier to addressing these housing challenges.

The proposed zoning change to Residential Intensification (RI-1) is expected to help address Yellowknife’s housing challenges by increasing the supply of residential units and expanding affordable or attainable market housing options. This City-led zoning initiative, along with the creation of new lots for land supply to the market, aligns with Council’s strategic priority of fostering an inclusive community with diverse housing and accommodation choices.

### **Assessment of the Proposal:**

#### LEGISLATION

- *Cities, Towns and Villages Act, SNWT 2003, c.22*

Sections 73 – 76 and 129 of the *Act* state that Council may, by bylaw, amend a bylaw and state the required procedures to adopt bylaws. A bylaw must have three readings and a public hearing to be effective.

- *Community Planning and Development Act, S.N.W.T. 2011, c.22*

Section 12 states that the purpose of a zoning bylaw is to regulate and control the use and development of land and buildings in a municipality in a manner that conforms to a community plan, and if applicable, to prohibit the use or development of land or buildings in particular areas of a municipality.

- Community Plan By-law No. 5007

The Community Plan creates a policy framework that sets out a vision for the future growth and development of the City, by guiding the Zoning By-law in respect of the use and development of land and buildings in the municipality. This Community Plan provides high-level policies that

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<sup>1</sup> [Housing Needs Assessment, 2024](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Housing Needs Assessment, 2024](#)

<sup>3</sup> [CMHC Housing Market Portal](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Housing Needs Assessment, 2024](#)

guide all Zoning By-law provisions and amendments. Any Zoning By-law amendment shall conform to the Community Plan.

- Zoning By-law No. 5045, as amended

The Zoning By-law regulates the use and development of lands and buildings within the City of Yellowknife in a balanced and responsible manner. An amendment to the Zoning By-law shall be consistent with any existing Community Plan, Area Development Plan (if applicable), and any Council approved plans or policies.

Section 5.2. regulates the application and review process of a by-law amendment proposal. Section 10.5. regulates land uses and zoning requirements specifically in the Residential Intensification (RI-1) Zone.

## PLANNING ANALYSIS

- Community Plan By-law No. 5007

The vision of the Community Plan is to manage land use in an economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable manner. The following general development plan goals (section 3.1.2) of the Community Plan are applicable to this proposal:

- Increase housing affordability through increased land use flexibility for residential development.
- Encourage and facilitate more land use flexibility in core areas of City to support revitalization plans and initiatives.
- Improve energy efficiency of land development through intensification of existing developed areas and encouraging mixing of uses.
- Develop land in a fiscally responsible and sustainable manner.

The subject lands are located across two distinct land use designations under the City of Yellowknife Community Plan: **Downtown – Central Residential** to the west and **Old Town** to the east, as shown in Appendix B. The proposed rezoning reflects a neighbourhood appropriate response incorporating both policy areas, enabling moderate intensification while maintaining compatibility with the surrounding built and natural environments.

### Section 4.1.2 Downtown – Central Residential

The subject lands in the western block are designated as Downtown – Central Residential, a transitional area that links the city core with surrounding neighbourhoods such as Old Town, the Recreation Hub, and Old Airport Road Commercial. This designation supports compact urban development and encourages gradual intensification through a range of low- to mid-rise housing forms.

The proposed rezoning aligns with this direction by enabling the introduction of a broader mix of residential options within a walkable, connected street grid. The intent is to support development that steps down in scale from the urban core while maintaining livability through the inclusion of outdoor amenity spaces, off-street parking, and pedestrian-oriented design features.

The following Planning and Development Objectives and Policies of the Downtown – Central Residential land use designation are applicable:

- Objective 3: To intensify land use through higher density development, starting in the areas that are adjacent to the city core and moving outwards. High density development adjacent to City core stepping down to medium density.
  - Policy 3-a: Zoning will be revised to allow for higher density re-development close to the City core stepping down to medium density zoning further from the City core.
- Objective 4: To encourage higher density residential development.
- Objective 5: To encourage a variety of housing options.
  - Policy 5-a: Alternative dwelling types that support higher density may occur in the area, but development must have enough space to accommodate living area, parking setbacks and outdoor amenity space.

The objectives and policies of the Central Residential land use designation support residential intensification and a variety of housing options, which is consistent with the purpose of the RI-1 Zone. Development aligns with the Community Plan’s emphasis on infill, efficient land use, and transportation integration. It supports objectives related to housing diversity, walkability, and access to natural areas, while respecting the existing street pattern and community character. The built form will be appropriately scaled, promoting a cohesive transition between different development and neighbourhood forms.

#### Section 4.2 Old Town

The subject lands in the eastern block fall within the Old Town designation, a historically and culturally significant area known for its eclectic built form, natural landscapes, and small-scale residential character. This designation prioritizes thoughtful development that respects and enhances the area's unique character.

The following Planning and Development Objectives and Policies are applicable:

- Objective 1: To limit development of residential and commercial buildings to forms that are compatible with the wetland, shoreline and exposed rock settings.
  - Policy 1-a: New development will not adversely impact natural geographic features and environment.
- Objective 3: To encourage compact urban form

- Objective 4: To encourage street-oriented residential, retail and commercial development.
- Objective 13: To maintain the existing character of the built form.
  - Policy 13-a: New development will consider existing context of immediate surrounding area.
- Objective 14: To encourage a mix of residential options including larger homes, duplexes, rowhouses, groups of tiny homes, and mixed residential and commercial spaces.
  - Policy 14-a: A variety of residential development including multi-unit and mixed residential/commercial development will continue to be permitted.
- Objective 15: To encourage a mix of uses that enhance the organic nature and built form of the development of Old Town.
  - Policy 15-a: Zoning will be made flexible to allow for mixed uses where they are deemed appropriate.

The proposed rezoning and subdivision support several key objectives and policies of the Old Town designation, particularly those related to natural preservation and the strategic use of serviced urban land.

The proposal directly supports Objective 1, which calls for the protection and enhancement of Old Town’s natural setting and shoreline character. While the subject lands are located near the shoreline, no development is proposed directly along the waterfront. Instead, the proposal includes the expansion of the existing Nature Preserve (NP) zone, which will maintain a naturalized buffer between the new residential area and the shoreline. This expanded NP area will help maintain the visual, ecological, and recreational value of the shoreline and contribute to the overall preservation of Old Town’s natural character.

Aligned with Policy 1, which encourages the protection of natural features and the thoughtful integration of development, the proposal emphasizes housing that is carefully integrated with the surrounding environment. Residential development will be located outside environmentally sensitive shoreline areas, and smaller lot sizes are proposed to accommodate duplex and low-rise multi-unit buildings. This minimizes the physical and visual footprint of development, reducing potential impacts on existing developments such as obstruction of lake views and ensuring compatibility with the surrounding natural setting.

The proposal also reflects Objective 3 and Policy 6, which promote a compact urban form and encourage infill development on already serviced lands. The subject site is City-owned (a portion is leased), fully serviced, and located adjacent to the downtown core, making it well-suited for moderate residential intensification. This approach enables the City to meet growing housing needs without expanding its urban footprint or placing new pressure on unserved areas.

By limiting building footprints, road access and servicing points, the development will help maintain the informal character of Old Town while introducing attainable housing options. This aligns with the broader goals of the Community Plan to support inclusive growth and a mix of housing forms, while respecting the unique identity and landscape features of established neighbourhoods.

It is important to note that the Old Town designation currently allows for other types of development, such as retail and commercial, which may not align with the surrounding natural setting. Allowing only small-scale residential intensification under this zoning amendment would be a more compatible and appropriate form of development. Overall, the proposal demonstrates clear alignment with the intent of the Old Town designation by balancing environmental stewardship with practical housing solution. It enhances protection of the shoreline, preserves the area's character, and provides needed housing in a way that is compatible with the surrounding area. The proposal meets the policy objectives of both land use designations - 'Downtown – Central Residential' and 'Old Town'.

### Section 5.1 Environment and Climate Change

The Community Plan supports climate change mitigation and the sustainable development of land. Key considerations, such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to a changing climate, should be incorporated into planning decisions.

The following Climate Change Mitigation Objectives and Policies are applicable:

- Objective 3: *To better utilize existing municipal infrastructure.*
  - Policy 3-a: *The City will prioritize development in the existing built footprint of the City before developing new greenfield areas.*
  - Policy 3-c: *Higher-density development will be encouraged near employment centers and major activity nodes.*

Residential intensification provides a more efficient utilization of existing infrastructure and services, reducing capital costs on a per capita basis. This directly supports Objective 3 and Policy 3-a by focusing development within the existing built footprint rather than extending into greenfield areas. Infill development also has a smaller carbon footprint and lower servicing cost compared to outward expansion.

The subject lands are located near major activity areas and employment centers, which align with Policy 3-c, encouraging higher-density development in these locations. Piped water and sanitary services currently run beneath School Draw Avenue, allowing for cost-effective servicing of the site without expanding municipal infrastructure. The proposed rezoning promotes a compact urban form, increases energy efficiency, walkability and limits urban sprawl. As such, it is consistent with the climate change mitigation objectives and policies of the Community Plan, specifically Objective 3, Policy 3-a, and Policy 3-c.

### Section 5.2 Transportation

Transportation is a key consideration in land use planning and development. The subject site is located within 300 metres of Franklin Avenue and is also within walking distance of transit stops along both Franklin Avenue and 52 Avenue. This close proximity supports the City's goals for compact, connected development and efficient use of existing infrastructure, as outlined in the Community Plan.

The site is also well-served by established active transportation routes that connect it to nearby neighbourhoods and community amenities. These trails and sidewalks align with Policy 5.2.2, which prioritizes improving safe and accessible infrastructure for all ages and abilities, filling network gaps, and promoting walking and cycling as viable alternatives to private vehicle use. In addition, the site's access to public transit supports Policy 5.2.3, which emphasizes enhancing transit service to meet existing demand, attract new users, and reduce reliance on private vehicles. The location's connectivity to transit corridors and active transportation infrastructure positions it well to contribute to broader Community Plan goals around sustainable mobility and healthy, livable neighbourhoods.

### Section 5.3 Municipal Infrastructure:

Piped water and wastewater services are a significant capital cost, for both maintenance and expansion. To keep costs low for taxpayers, higher utilization of the existing systems is essential. Moderate intensification such as the proposed development will support better utilization of existing infrastructure. Both water and wastewater services can be connected directly from School Draw to the proposed lots requiring minimum infrastructure cost for servicing.

The following Planning and Development Objectives and Policies are applicable:

- Objective 3: To concentrate commercial and residential development in areas serviced by piped water and sewer services.
  - Policy 3-a: Commercial and residential development will be prioritized in areas with piped water and sewer services.
- Objective 4: To limit residential development in areas serviced by trucked water and sewer services.
  - Policy 4-a: Residential development in areas with trucked water and sewer services will be discouraged.

Connection to municipal infrastructure is a critical factor for residential intensification. Overall, the new zones and associated changes to the Zoning By-law are consistent with the intent of the Community Plan's Objectives and Policies regarding Municipal Infrastructure.

### Section 5.4.3. Subdivision and Land Development Sequencing – Residential:

Pursuant to the *Community Planning and Development Act*, the Community Plan provides a framework for the sequence in which specified areas of land may be developed or redeveloped to accommodate future land use needs in the short-term, medium-term, and long-term.

The following Planning and Development Objectives and Policies are applicable:

- Objective 1: To utilize existing infrastructure for land development.
  - Policy 1-a: Vacant lots, both City owned and private, within the built area of the City will be prioritized before greenfield development.

With only 1% (117 ha) of City-owned land identified as potentially developable for residential use—and with much of it constrained or requiring further assessment—the subject lands represent one of the few readily available and appropriate sites for near-term development within the city. Given the scale of the proposed development and the readiness of municipal servicing, Planning Staff believe that an area development plan is not required before completing the subdivision process. The proposal aligns with existing land use designations and servicing capacity and does not introduce significant changes to the surrounding transportation or infrastructure network that would typically warrant broader planning through an area development plan.

- City of Yellowknife Zoning By-law No. 5045, as amended

The Zoning By-law governs land use by regulating different zones, each with specified permitted and discretionary uses. Permitted uses are allowed by right, while discretionary uses require Council approval after careful consideration.

#### Current Zoning:

The subject lands are zoned as PR – Parks and Recreation and NP – Nature Preserve (See Figure 1). While the subject land does not contain any permanent recreation facilities, a portion of the property contains existing trails, and a small, non-permitted recreational skate ramp is currently located on Block 77A, Plan 512.

#### Proposed Zoning:

Approximately 9,030 square metres of land in the Western Block, currently zoned Parks and Recreation (PR), is proposed to be rezoned to Residential Infill (RI-1) to support new low to moderate intensity housing. In the Eastern Block, approximately 7,686 square metres of PR land is also proposed to be rezoned to RI-1. Additionally, approximately 3,090 square metres of PR

land in the Eastern Block will be rezoned to Natural Preservation (NP). The existing NP zone will not be rezoned but will be expanded into the current PR zone, resulting in a net gain of 3,090 square meters of protected Natural Preservation lands.

The RI-1 – Residential Intensification zone, is designed for moderate intensity housing, permitting duplexes, townhouses, and multi-unit residential developments. The lot sizes and building heights will remain comparable to existing single-detached lots, ensuring the new development aligns with the character of the surrounding neighborhood. Special Care residences, secondary dwellings, home-based businesses are also permitted and can be integrated into the development.

There are several benefits of intensification in core-residential areas close to downtown and Old Town which include:

- a. **Utilization of existing infrastructure:** Lower land development costs because municipal services such as water, sewer, and roads are already in place.
- b. **Mix of Housing Options:** Increases access to affordable and attainable housing and many other housing options in desirable, well-connected areas.
- c. **Availability of Public Transit:** Supports transit-oriented development, reducing barriers to mobility.
- d. **Community Cohesion:** Revitalizes neighborhoods, fostering stronger social connections and engagement.
- e. **Reduced Commuting Stress:** Locates housing closer to workplaces, reducing commute times and improving quality of life.
- f. **Revitalization of Underutilized Areas:** Attracts investments, transforming vacant or deteriorated properties into vibrant spaces.
- g. **Increased Property Values:** Enhances surrounding property values through upgrades to municipal infrastructure—such as sidewalks, street lighting, and utilities—and by improving the overall aesthetic appeal and vibrancy of the neighborhood.
- h. **Local Economic Boost:** Brings in more residents and businesses, increasing consumer spending and tax revenues.
- i. **Job Creation:** Stimulates construction and employment opportunities.
- j. **Lower Carbon Footprint:** Reduces emissions by shortening commutes and supporting alternative transportation.
- k. **Urban Sprawl Control:** Promotes compact development, reducing land and resource consumption.
- l. **Improved Energy Efficiency:** Encourages compact, energy-efficient building designs.
- m. **Sustainable Land Use:** Reclaims unused lands, optimizing it for current and future housing needs.

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

### Geotechnical Study:

The City of Yellowknife retained Tetra Tech Canada Inc. to undertake a geotechnical site evaluation to inform future development of City-owned lands located at the corner of School Draw Avenue and Lundquist Road. This study, titled *Geotechnical Site Evaluation for Vacant Lot Corner of School Draw and Lundquist* (Attachment 1), assessed subsurface conditions and engineering feasibility to guide land use planning and site design. While the study was focused on a portion of the subject lands (Block 77A Plan 512), the findings are highly relevant to the broader proposed subdivision area.

The geotechnical report concludes that the lands evaluated are generally suitable for development, provided appropriate engineering controls are implemented. These include subgrade preparation, removal of organic material, placement of engineered fill where needed, and the use of deep pile foundations or well-prepared grade-supported slabs. Furthermore, the presence of shallow groundwater and frost-susceptible soils can be effectively mitigated using standard design and construction practices. The proximity of existing piped water and sanitary services further supports the feasibility of cost-effective infill development in this area.

The key recommendations include preparing the ground by removing soft soil and organic material, then placing special engineered fill that drains well and stays stable when it thaws. Builders should use either deep piles or slabs supported by the ground, making sure the soil underneath is properly prepared and compacted. The report also says there is no permafrost expected on this site, so climate change should not affect the ground or the foundations in the future. All these points show that the site can be safely built on using normal engineering methods that work well in Yellowknife's northern climate.

The proposed amendments seek to enable compact, efficient, and climate-conscious development through residential intensification. The geotechnical findings provide technical justification for rezoning, confirming that the lands in question can be safely and economically developed in accordance with the policies of the Community Plan. The report also outlines clear specifications for engineered fill—including gradation, compaction, and placement requirements—which have been factored into the City's assessment of development readiness. With these considerations in place, the proposed subdivision and zoning amendments represent a sound approach to addressing Yellowknife's housing needs using underutilized City-owned lands.

### Traffic Impact Study:

The City of Yellowknife retained Creative Transportation Solutions Ltd. to undertake a traffic impact study (TIS) for the subject lands to evaluate the cumulative effects of the proposed development of up to 108 new residential units along School Draw Avenue (Attachment 2). The study concluded that traffic volumes generated by the proposed development are minimal,

with peak-hour vehicle movements averaging approximately one vehicle per minute. Intersection capacity analyses at all surrounding key intersections (including 44th Street, Lundquist Road, Brock Drive, and Franklin Avenue) showed that Levels of Service (LOS) will remain at A (Excellent) through the 2030 build-out and into the 2035 planning horizon, even when accounting for additional background development. Accordingly, no intersection or roadway upgrades are required to accommodate site traffic.

To support sustainable mobility and address existing gaps in pedestrian infrastructure, the TIS recommends the construction of a sidewalk along each development block, and a marked pedestrian crossing on School Draw at Lundquist Road. A review of the existing pedestrian network in the study area in June 2025 determined that it is otherwise complete, except for School Draw Avenue between Lundquist Road and Franklin Avenue, where the sidewalk was removed for electrical work in 2024. Currently, pedestrians must use the gravel shoulder on this section. NAKA will replace the sidewalk along this stretch. These improvements will enhance walkability, connect residents to nearby transit stops, and reduce reliance on private vehicle use, aligning well with City policy objectives for active transportation and community connectivity.

The City of Yellowknife's Natural Area Preservation Strategy (2010):

The City of Yellowknife's Natural Area Preservation Strategy (2010) was developed as part of the City's Smart Growth Plan to guide long-term land use decisions, balancing urban development with the preservation of natural areas. It identified Natural Area Sites within the urban boundary, recommending some sites with high protection allowing some sites—those already disturbed or strategically located—to accommodate some development under controlled conditions. The Strategy acknowledges the growing development pressure on urban land and outlines clear guidelines for how development should proceed where necessary. These less-restricted sites are seen as opportunities for exemplary, compact development that respects natural features while addressing housing and community growth needs.

In areas where development within a Natural Area Site is considered necessary, particularly sites that are already partially disturbed — the Strategy emphasizes that such development must undergo additional scrutiny and follow specific protection and design guidelines. These sites often lie adjacent to or overlap with lands zoned as Parks and Recreation, which are less restrictive and already support public amenities and recreational infrastructure. This spatial connection creates an opportunity to integrate new development with existing green space networks, promoting compact urban growth while preserving ecological integrity and public access to nature. The measures recommended to develop such sites include:

- low density development between 10-30 units per hectare (uph)
- Limited development to reduce the site disturbance required to install water and sewer services

- Surface parking be limited and vehicle parking be accommodated within the building footprint to the greatest extent possible
- Buffer provided to high protection area
- Only residential, commercial, institutional or mixed-use developments be considered
- Development should be directed to any previously disturbed parts of the site

The recommended zoning for the PR – Parks & Recreation portion of the easterly lands (Willow Flat) will incorporate the above guidelines to ensure the protection of natural features within the adjacent NP – Nature Preservation Zone.

Development Incentives:

Both the City and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) have introduced several initiatives to support increased housing supply and affordability. These efforts provide financial benefits to homeowners and residents while also simplifying the approval process. The proposed subdivision will be curated with specific considerations to ensure future owners can take full advantage of the incentives and support offered by the City and CMHC.

On December 9, 2024, the City of Yellowknife adopted Development Incentives By-law No. 5097, establishing a city-wide program that offers a range of tax abatements and housing grants. This initiative aims to support housing development, improve affordability and accessibility, and promote intensification. The table below outlines the available grants and abatements for the proposed standard 20m x 32m residential lots. It is noted that Development Incentives are determined based on specific requirements identified in the Development Incentives By-law No. 5097 and are available on a first come first served basis.

	Type of Grants & Abatements	Amount
1.	Residential Development Abatement (approximate for six-plex) based on declining 5-year abatement.	Based on value of the development
2.	Bike Racks & Storage (maximum)	Up to \$5000
3.	Universal Dwelling Grant (at least 2 units), maximum	Up to \$15000
4.	Missing-middle Price Grant; 25% of the Land Value (not less than 5 units)	Based on property value at the time of disposal (not less than 5 units)
5.	Ventilation System Grant (High efficiency filtration /cooling system)	Up to \$2000
6.	Development Fees	100% of Development Permit fees, from \$400 up to \$2,700
7.	Building Permit Fees	100% Building Permit fees Up to \$10,000

Table 1: Available grants and abatements for a multi-unit development in RI zone<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> [Development Incentives By-law 5097](#)

CMHC Design Catalogue:

CMHC recently introduced a design catalogue featuring standardized designs to make homebuilding easier, as part of Canada’s Housing Plan. Designs in the catalogue are based on common lot sizes, typical planning rules and zoning bylaws and are available to eligible developments throughout Yellowknife. The catalogue offers practical, adaptable designs for gentle density and infill development, prioritizing energy performance, accessibility, climate resilience and financial feasibility. The designs are specific to each region to align with building codes, climate zones and planning rules.

CMHC’s four-plex and six-plex design options are well-suited to the proposed lot configurations on the west side of School Draw Avenue. Future homeowners and developers can leverage these pre-approved designs to reduce upfront consulting costs and streamline the approval process.



Figure 1. Illustration of CMHC four-plex design compatible with surrounding residential character<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> [CMHC Housing Design Catalogue](#)

**Consultation:**

**City Departments / External Agency Consultation**

As directed in section 4.5.1 of Zoning By-law No. 5045, a request for comments was circulated to the select City Divisions and external agencies for their comment. Comments were reviewed and considered, and are summarized in the table below:

No.	City Department	Comments	Consideration
1.	Public Works & Engineering	<p>Engineering will review site grading plans and drainage plans when available to ensure they meet city standards.</p> <p>There is a drainage ditch in the area of the lots closest to Lundquist Road. This ditch will need to be taken into consideration by the developer to determine whether it can be moved, or whether it will need to remain as is. Determining if the drainage ditch can be moved is not an easy task as it requires detailed survey and discussions with regulators. Thus the ditch will need to remain in its current state and be noted to any prospective Developer that it will need to be taken into consideration in their design of the lot.</p> <p>All noted lots will need to be on piped water and sewer. Connection to the existing system will be determined by the Developer's engineer, in accordance with City By-Laws and Standards.</p>	Noted and included in the development design. Changes have been made to the proposed lot configuration.
3.	Lands and Building Services	No comments were received.	N/A

4.	Fire Division	We note that the location of fire hydrants adjacent to this location should be considered.	Fire hydrant requirements will be reviewed when development application(s) and building permit(s) are considered. Any improvement of the current fire hydrant or addition will be determined as per the National Building Code and Fire Code at that time.
	Naka Power	We have some infrastructure on Block 77A Plan: 512 that we will need an easement on, we don't have anything on the other lots as it stands. The lot in question has a riser pole recently installed to re-rout the overhead 34KVA power line to underground, I believe by request from the City. We would need enough of an easement to access the pole and underground feed.	Noted and will be shared with Lands staff. This can be incorporated into infrastructure design plans.
	GNWT Department of Environment and Climate Change	No comments were received.	N/A
	GNWT Department of Lands	No comments were received.	N/A

## PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Administration conducted our public consultation as part of the review process based on good planning practice. On June 13, 2025, a Notice of Application letter was circulated to the neighboring landowners and tenants within 60 metres of the subject land pursuant to section 14 (2) of the *Community Planning and Development Act*. Notice radius was increased from the legislated requirement of a minimum of 30 metres to 60 metres to provide sufficient opportunities for the public to be informed and provide feedback. The comment period was extended by an additional week to ensure all community voices are heard. The City received both supportive and opposing feedback on the proposed development. While some residents welcomed the initiative to provide more housing, many expressed concerns about the potential loss of green space and natural areas.

Staff clarified that the overall Nature Preservation Area will be strategically expanded, and that new development will only occur on land already disturbed. A buffer will also be required between the development and preserved areas. The updated preservation zone will restrict any future development, and the existing boardwalk will be protected and further enhanced as part of the preservation area along the shoreline.

Four Notices of Application were posted on the subject lands; however, staff identified that several public notice signs were misplaced or removed, which may have created confusion about the actual development location. Staff confirm that the boardwalk, Rotary Park, and the Willow Flats Nature Preservation Area will not be affected and will remain unchanged. Only the already disturbed land along School Draw, currently zoned Parks and Recreation, will be rezoned to Residential Intensification.

Please see Attachment 3 for full Public Comments.

-Statutory Public Hearing

The City will notify the public regarding a public hearing session after the proposed amendments receive first reading from Council, as per section 129 of the *Cities, Towns and Villages Act*. Council would then review public input from this meeting and by resolution, make a decision on the proposed zoning by-law amendments after all due procedures and consultations are complete.

### **Next Steps:**

#### DECISION

Council may approve the first reading of the Zoning By-law, after which a public hearing will be held. If Council approves the second and third readings, the Zoning By-law will be considered adopted. Following this, the administration will begin preparing a subdivision application for submission to the Government of Northwest Territories. Once the subdivision is approved and registered, the administration will proceed with selling the lots to the open market in accordance with Land Administration By-law No. 5078.

Alternatively,

Council has the authority to consider any changes to the recommendation and make a decision on the proposed amendments to the Zoning By-law. Should Council not approve this application, it cannot be re-considered within 12 months unless Council otherwise directs by resolution, according to section 5.2.3 of the Zoning By-law.

Conclusion:

In the Planner's opinion, the proposed zoning amendments is consistent with the Community Plan By-law No. 5007 and aligns with the provisions of the Zoning By-law No. 5045. The

proposed development will facilitate moderate intensification, supporting Council's strategic priority for an accessible and inclusive community with diverse housing and accommodation options. These zoning amendments will extend and reinforce the existing Nature Preservation area by introducing development restrictions and a designated buffer zone adjacent to the proposed RI-1 designation. To minimize impacts on the natural environment, vehicular access points, servicing connections, and building footprints will be carefully limited. The proposed development will preserve the overall character of the neighbourhood while supporting the delivery of attainable housing options, which represents good land use planning practices.

Written by:

Drafted By  
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August 22, 2025  
Date

Reviewed By



Mohammad Alam *BArch, MUD, MPL, RPP, MCIP*  
Manager, Planning and Environment

August 25, 2025

Date

Approved By

\_\_\_\_\_  
Charlsey White, *MCIP, RPP*  
Director of Planning and Development

August 25, 2025  
Date

**Appendix A** – Concept Plan

**Appendix B** – Community Plan No. 5007 Land Use Designations Map

**Appendix C** – Zoning By-law No. 5045 Map

**Appendix D** – Summary of Public Comments on Proposed Rezoning

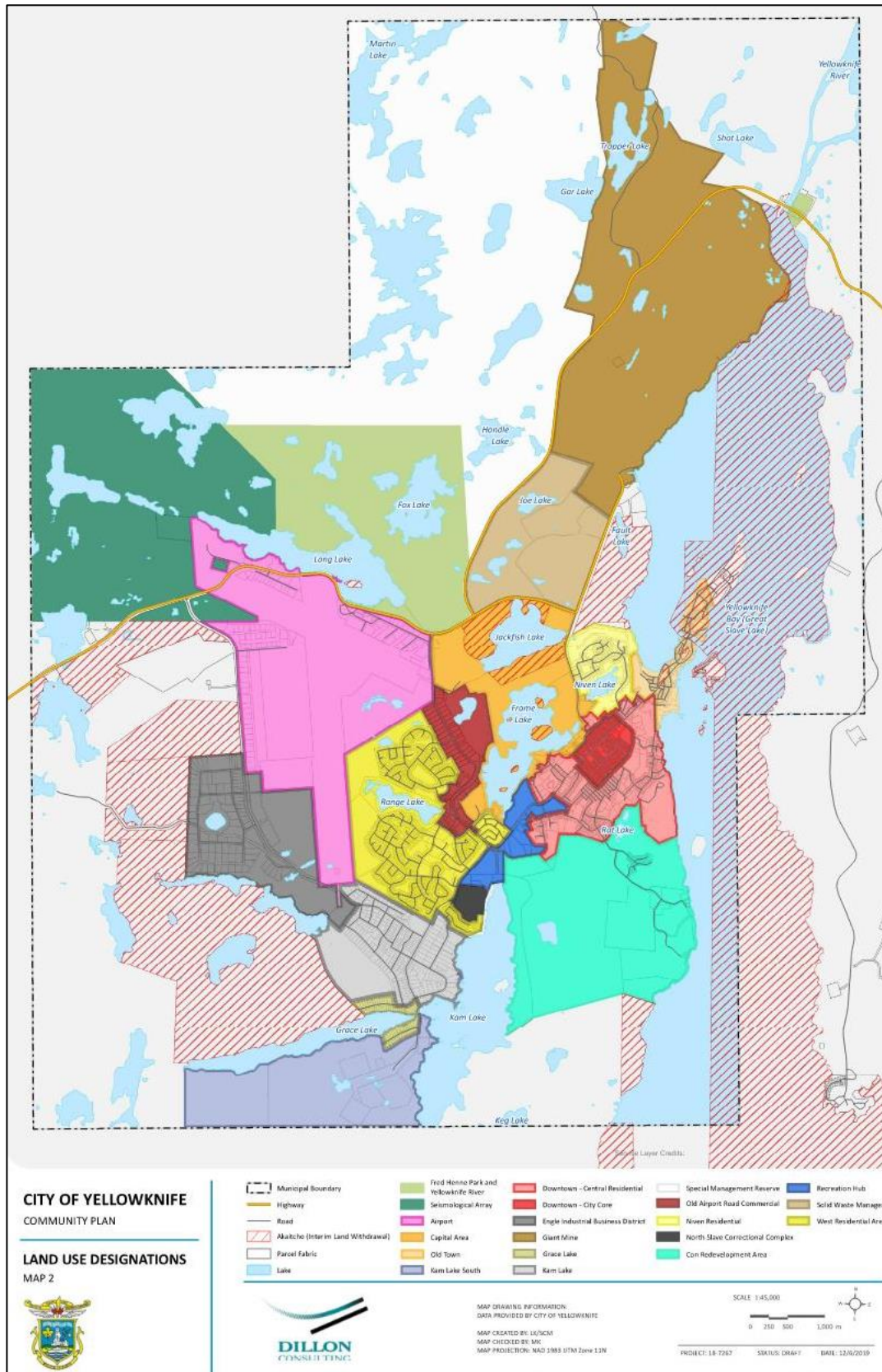
**Attachment 1** – Geotechnical Site Evaluation for Vacant Lot Corner of School Draw and Lundquist, Yellowknife, NT (DM# 789848 v1)

**Attachment 2** – School Draw Subdivision Traffic Impact Study (DM#801911 v1)

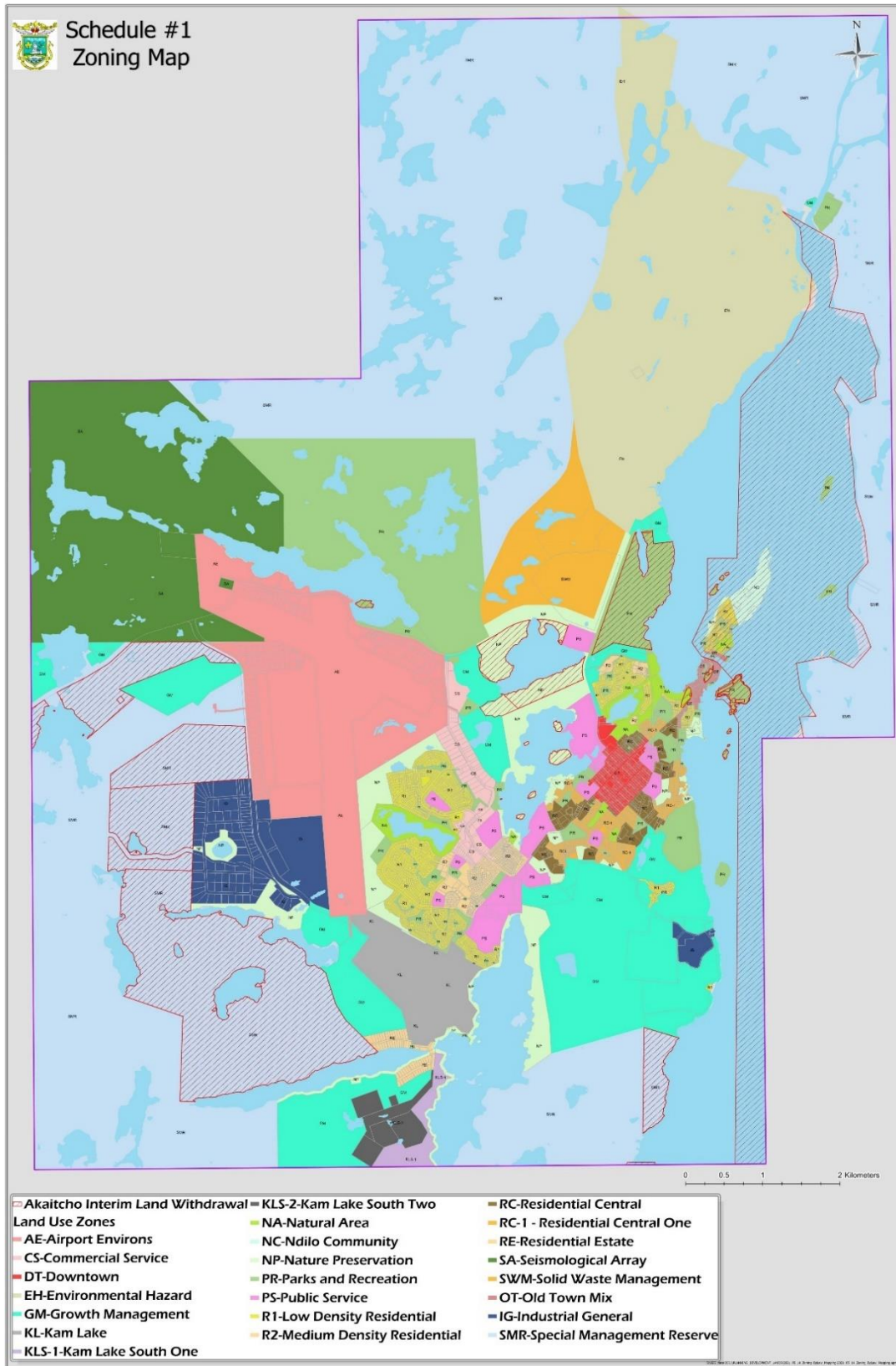
**Attachment 3** – Comments Received from the Public (DM#799116 v2)



**Appendix B - Community Plan No. 5007 Land Use Designations Map**



**Appendix C – Zoning By-law No. 5045 Map**



**Appendix D – Summary of Public Comments on Proposed Rezoning**

<b>Key Issue/Theme</b>	<b>Summary of Public Comments</b>	<b>City Response</b>
<p><b>Loss of Protected Green Space</b></p>	<p>This area is regarded as one of the last remaining accessible natural areas within Yellowknife. The proposed rezoning is viewed as a reversal of longstanding commitments to preserve this land under Parks and Recreation and Nature Preservation designations.</p>	<p>The proposed zoning amendments reflect a carefully balanced approach—one that preserves and even enhances environmental protection, while strategically addressing Yellowknife’s urgent housing needs through infill development.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>1. Green Space Preservation Is Maintained and Expanded</b></p> <p>While a portion of land is being rezoned from Parks and Recreation (PR) to Residential Intensification (RI-1), the revised plan (post-public feedback) also adds 1,385 m<sup>2</sup> of land to the NP – Nature Preservation zone, resulting in a net increase in protected natural area.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>2. The proposed RI-1 zone Is already Disturbed and Strategically Located</b></p> <p>The affected areas, while currently zoned as PR – Parks &amp; Recreation, are not pristine or untouched wilderness. Some lands are already disturbed (e.g., informal skate ramp, existing trails) and located adjacent to piped infrastructure.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>3. Housing and Climate Goals Require Infill</b></p> <p>Yellowknife faces a serious housing shortage, with a 1.9% rental</p>

		<p>vacancy rate and only 1% of land available for residential development. Infill development here supports compact urban form, reduces infrastructure costs, limits sprawl, and helps meet climate change mitigation goals under the Community Plan.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>4. The NP Zone Will Be Strengthened</b></p> <p>Development will be concentrated in areas away from the most sensitive lands, with clear limitations on building footprints, access points, and servicing near the NP zone. The proposed development recommends a net increase of Nature Preservation zone to 17,128 sq. m.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>5. Ongoing Public Input Is Being Incorporated</b></p> <p>Following the initial public circulation, the City revised the proposal, reducing the RI-1 footprint and further increased protected NP lands.</p> <p>This demonstrates a responsive planning process, where expressed community values were considered through policy adjustments.</p>
<p><b>Ecological and Biodiversity Impacts</b></p>	<p>This area supports over 160 bird species, including several species at risk. It is considered a critical habitat for migratory and nesting birds, and development is perceived as a direct threat to the ecological integrity of the site.</p>	<p>This proposal is not a reversal of preservation and protection commitments. Compliance with Federal regulation remains. The proposal integrates needed housing solutions into a carefully selected, partially cleared and</p>

		<p>serviceable site. Areas identified as having ecological value will remain natural preservation while expanding the area overall. The rezoning balances Yellowknife’s dual priorities: protecting nature and ensuring all residents have access to safe, adequate housing.</p> <p>There is an additional 10 m no-development buffer proposed on RI-1 zone to further protect the transition to the Nature Preservation area.</p>
<p><b>Flood Risk and Unsuitability for Development</b></p>	<p>This area is a low-lying wetland prone to seasonal flooding. Concerns were raised regarding the long-term safety and feasibility of residential development in this area, particularly in the context of climate change.</p>	<p>The geotechnical study (see Attachment 1) confirms that the site is suitable for development with proper engineering controls. No permafrost is present, and drainage infrastructure exists to manage surface water. Climate change is not expected to adversely impact future foundations.</p> <p>Importantly, the piped water, sanitary sewer, and storm drainage infrastructure are already available, meaning that no new major infrastructure expansions are needed. Existing systems are capable of managing surface runoff and reducing flood risk, particularly with the design of development to minimize site disturbance and ensure proper grading and drainage away from structures. This aligns with the Community Plan’s objective to concentrate development in fully serviced areas</p>

		where infrastructure investment has already been made.
<b>Cultural and Historical Significance</b>	Willow Flats holds cultural importance for Indigenous communities and is part of Yellowknife’s historical landscape. Its preservation is seen as vital to maintaining the city’s identity and heritage.	<p>The planning approach for this site seeks to balance the City’s strategic priorities—such as housing inclusivity and environmental stewardship—with a respectful awareness of the area’s cultural and historical significance.</p> <p>The city has consulted with and is working toward development in support of indigenous communities.</p>
<b>Mental Health and Community Well-being</b>	This area is frequently used for walking, birdwatching, and recreation. Its preservation is considered essential for community mental health, especially for residents without access to private green space.	While the proposal includes moderate residential development, it also expands the existing Nature Preservation (NP) zone, ensuring continued access to shoreline trails, natural areas, and open space for public use. No development is proposed directly on the shoreline, and a naturalized buffer will be maintained to preserve the passive recreational and ecological value of the area. By concentrating on housing in already disturbed and serviceable portions of the site along School Draw Avenue, the City aims to support both community wellness and housing needs, ensuring that natural areas remain accessible, connected, and integrated into the evolving urban fabric.
<b>Public Access to Waterfront</b>	The area provides one of the few publicly accessible shoreline locations on Great Slave Lake. Development is expected to reduce or eliminate this access, which is highly valued by residents.	Public access to the waterfront is a key community priority, and the proposed development has been carefully designed to expand the Natural Preserve lands rather than diminish them. No buildings or private lots are proposed directly along the shoreline; instead, the

		<p>rezoning includes the expansion of the Nature Preservation (NP) zone, which will establish a protected, naturalized buffer between residential development and the lake. This approach ensures that public access to existing trails, boardwalks, and recreational areas along Great Slave Lake is maintained and safeguarded for future generations.</p>
<p><b>Contradiction of City Planning Policies</b></p>	<p>The proposed rezoning is seen as inconsistent with the City’s Natural Area Preservation Strategy and other planning documents that previously identified Willow Flats as a high-priority area for protection.</p>	<p>The proposed rezoning is consistent with the intent of the City’s Natural Area Preservation Strategy (2010), which acknowledges that some Natural Area Sites—particularly those already partially disturbed or strategically located within the urban footprint—may accommodate carefully planned development under specific conditions. Willow Flats was identified as a site of ecological and recreational value, but also as an area where limited, compact development could be considered, provided that it integrates protection measures such as natural buffers, minimized site disturbance, and low-impact design. The current proposal follows these guidelines by concentrating development on previously disturbed, serviceable portions of the site zoned as Park &amp; Recreation, while expanding the Nature Preservation (NP) zone to strengthen shoreline protection and ecological integrity. This approach reflects a balanced</p>

		<p>application of the Strategy’s principles, ensuring that natural assets are preserved while addressing urgent housing and land use needs within the existing urban boundary</p>
<p><b>Availability of Alternative Development Sites</b></p>	<p>Numerous submissions recommended prioritizing infill development on existing vacant or underutilized lots, including brownfields and areas affected by recent fires, rather than rezoning protected green space.</p>	<p>The City is pursuing multiple infill sites on lands which the City owns, including vacant sites such as Gitzel Street, Burwash Street, and School Draw Avenue. The proposed School Draw site is one of the few serviceable, city-owned sites ready for moderate intensification. Its proximity to the core supports climate, infrastructure, and housing goals. While the City is committed to maximizing development on brownfields and other underutilized lands, many of these sites require significant remediation, planning, or servicing before they can be brought to market. The site referred to are not owned by the City and it is the responsibility of the owners to address site development. In contrast, the School Draw site offers a unique opportunity to advance much-needed housing in a cost-effective and sustainable manner, with minimal infrastructure investment and alignment with the City's goals of compact growth, efficient land use, while preserving more environmentally sensitive areas adjacent to it.</p>

<p><b>Lack of Transparency and Public Trust</b></p>	<p>Concerns were raised about the transparency of the rezoning process and the extent to which public input has been considered. There is a strong desire for more meaningful consultation.</p>	<p>The City recognizes the importance of transparency and meaningful public engagement in the planning process and has taken proactive steps to ensure community input is heard and considered. Over 200 public comments were received early in the development process, demonstrating that the City’s notification efforts have been effective in raising awareness and encouraging participation.</p> <p>The City will issue another notification, including signage on-site, mail-outs to residents within a 60-metre radius, and broader outreach through public notices and social media on all applications brought to GPC and recommended to move to Council for consideration.</p> <p>These efforts are in addition to and exceed the legislative requirements. This provides another opportunity for the public to provide input before Council makes a decision.</p>
<p><b>Doubt Regarding Housing Affordability Outcomes</b></p>	<p>While the need for housing is acknowledged, many respondents questioned whether the proposed development would result in affordable housing or primarily benefit private developers.</p>	<p>The proposed development is specifically designed to support housing affordability by enabling a mix of unit types—including one-, two-, and three-bedroom homes—on modestly sized lots that reduce overall construction and land costs. To further encourage affordability, the City has introduced tailored development incentives such as tax abatements, housing grants, and fee reductions through its</p>

		<p>Development Incentives By-law. In addition, the availability of pre-approved CMHC design templates for four-plex, six-plex and townhouse streamlines the approval process and reduces design costs, making it easier for both non-profit and private developers to deliver attainable housing options. These measures collectively ensure that the development can provide a range of housing choices accessible to residents at varying income levels, rather than exclusively benefiting private developers.</p> <p>It is noted as well that for this proposal the city is working with indigenous communities to develop the land.</p>
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