Introduction

Our community is growing! The City of Fort St. John is considering an application to the Provincial Government to extend its boundary to incorporate an additional 600 hectares of lands to the west and southwest of the current boundary. A map can be found in Section 11. Inclusion of these lands into the City’s boundaries is consistent with the City’s desire to manage growth and the regional plans previously developed with the PRRD and various stakeholders:

- The Fort St. John and Area Comprehensive Development Plan developed in 2005—a joint strategy produced by the Peace River Regional District, the Agricultural Land Commission and the City of Fort St. John. This Plan identifies the proposed lands as being incorporated into the City’s boundary in the future. A map can be found in Section 12 and details of the Plan can be obtained from the Peace River Regional District, who can be contacted at 1-800-670-7773.

- The North Peace Fringe Area Official Community Plan developed in 2009—produced by the Peace River Regional District. This is the planning document to guide the region moving forward to manage long term growth. A map can be found in Section 13 and the full Plan can be viewed here: http://prrd.bc.ca/services/development/planning/official_community/documents/BL_1870.NPFA_OCP.pdf

Expanding the City's boundaries may provide opportunities for land owners to access and benefit from City services like sewer, water, enhanced fire protection, garbage collection and application of nuisance bylaws (such as for barking dogs). Many of the properties being considered for inclusion in the boundary extension have not yet been fully developed. Adding these properties into City boundaries prior to development will ensure that they are developed to the City's standards which will avoid costly retrofitting of services.

This document serves to provide answers to all of the questions related to the City of Fort St. John’s proposed 2013 boundary extension that were:

- asked at the June 26th, 2013 meeting at the Lido Theatre;
- submitted on comment sheets on or after the June 26th, 2013 meeting; and
- submitted on the questionnaire that was previously distributed.

This document reflects all of the questions that have been received by the City up to Tuesday, August 27th, 2013. In some instances it appeared that there were duplications of questions/question themes. To avoid repetitive responses, the questions have been grouped together in themes with the original wording of the questions maintained so that readers will be able to recognize the question(s) they submitted. The responses provided are based on interpreting the questions at their face value, and responding accordingly. If you feel that we have not interpreted your questions correctly, and therefore have not answered your question correctly, please contact Janet Prestley, Director of Legislative and Administrative Services at the City of Fort St. John at (250) 787-8153 or by email at jprestley@fortstjohn.ca.
Section 1 – About the Boundary Extension

1. What is the rationale of the proposed boundaries?
2. What is the reason for the boundary extension?
3. Why not square up the boundary by just taking the small piece that goes into the City and leave everyone else alone?

The City has a number of key reasons for considering the proposed boundary extension. These include addressing the following challenges currently being faced by the City:

   a. Fringe area development (within the Peace River Regional District and adjacent to City boundaries) is placing additional pressures on City services;
   b. B.C. Hydro has purchased over 96 hectares (237 acres) adjacent to the City boundaries on 85th Avenue for the purpose of providing fill for the proposed Site C project. Adjacent property owners have expressed concern about the impact of this activity on their properties. The City can only guide the development of these lands if they are in the City;
   c. Growth in the fringe area is developed to rural standards. The City of Fort St. John has the regulatory tools to ensure that development is established to an urban standard; and
   d. Some property owners have petitioned the City to be included within City boundaries.

The City is considering a boundary extension to:

   • Manage development, particularly with the development of the 85th Avenue lands immediately south of the City’s current boundary; and
   • Address the need for land, as the City will be out of available industrial and residential land within the next few years.

Infill has been identified as one of the solutions to address the need for land. A significant challenge with respect to infill is that there are property owners who desire to retain their vacant property rather than sell it to be developed. The City cannot force a landowner to sell or develop their property.

In 2005, the Fort St. John and Area Comprehensive Development Plan was finalized. This joint planning process involved the Peace River Regional District, City of Fort St. John and the Agricultural Land Commission. The purpose of this project was to identify lands outside of current City boundaries that the Agricultural Land Commission would consider releasing from the Agricultural Land Reserve that would be incorporated into the City of Fort St. John in the future. The Fort St. John and Area Comprehensive Development Plan was also used by the Peace River Regional District as a foundation for the North Peace Fringe Area Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 1870, 2009, particularly for determining the zoning for the land. These PRRD bylaws indicate what the zoning is for each property and the City is just confirming it. If your zoning has changed, it was changed by the Regional District.

4. What was the outcome of the last Boundary Extension attempt and how was it resourced?
5. What did the last boundary extension cost the City?

The previous boundary extension application to the Provincial Government was formally withdrawn by the City in February, 2012. The City wanted to re-evaluate its approach to boundary extensions and ensure that any application submitted to the Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development was strategic in its approach, met the City’s long-term objectives, and provided the greatest long-term benefits to affected property owners and City residents.
With respect to how the last boundary extension application was resourced, the City has interpreted this to mean “what did the last boundary extension cost the City?” The City has undertaken two boundary extension applications since 2000:

- **The 2007 boundary extension, which was withdrawn by the City, cost the City $5,971.92; and**
- **In 2001, the City undertook a boundary extension application to incorporate the Peace Valley OSB Plant. As part of this process, Council requested a referendum be held to gauge public support for this project. The referendum and subsequent application were successful. The cost for that boundary extension, including the referendum, was $46,307.23**

If we have incorrectly interpreted the term ‘resourced’, please contact Janet Prestley, Director of Legislative and Administrative Services at the City of Fort St. John at (250) 787-8153 or by email at jprestley@fortstjohn.ca.

6. **What are the options to the amount of land to be included?**

The options to the amount of land to be included can vary. It is imperative that the lands meet the City’s guiding principles for boundary extension within the criteria established by the Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development.

Given the City’s current irregular boundaries, the Ministry suggested that the City start “squaring them up” to create clear straight lines. The Ministry’s “Municipal Boundary Extension Process Guide” contains a variety of technical criteria that all boundary extension applications must meet. These criteria include:

- **Boundary composition of the proposed boundary extension area should consist of complete legal parcels to avoid split local government jurisdiction over legal parcels, and proposals that include a logical block of parcels rather than multiple requests to include single parcels are encouraged;**
- **Properties within the new boundary generally should be continuously adjacent, or contiguous to the existing municipal boundary, and should not result in any “doughnut-holes” within the municipality;**
- **Following the boundary extension, any roads not designated as arterial or Provincial are transferred from the Province to the municipality, which then assumes responsibility for maintenance and future upgrades.**

More information on the boundary extensions can be found here: [http://www.cscd.gov.bc.ca/lgd/boundaries/municipal_restructure.htm](http://www.cscd.gov.bc.ca/lgd/boundaries/municipal_restructure.htm)


In addition to the guiding principles of the City, the Ministry’s guidelines and the City’s desire to manage growth, the amount of land to be included in the proposed 2013 boundary extension is also guided by the Fort St. John and Area Comprehensive Development Plan and the North Peace Fringe Area Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 1870, 2009.
7. If (the) City just wanted to clean up the boundaries then why not include other areas?

The City has developed a series of guiding principles associated with boundary extensions. These principles are as follows:

a. Undeveloped land is preferable to developed property due to servicing logistics;
b. Cost and ability to service parcels are paramount – the City does not wish to take on parcels that are difficult or very costly to service;
c. Lands proposed for boundary extension must be located contiguous to the City’s existing boundary;
d. Lands proposed for boundary extension must be able to accommodate future growth as well as foster a good growth pattern;
e. The lands must protect the strategic interests of the City in terms of future growth and development; and
f. The 2013 boundary extension proposal must manage the impacts of Site C.

To ensure that these principles are met, the City chose to take a strategic look at lands adjacent to the City boundaries with these principles in mind to address some of the challenges that the City is facing as indicated in the response to question #1 above.

The specific areas proposed for inclusion were discussed extensively by Council, and evaluated using both the Fort St. John and Area Comprehensive Development Plan and the North Peace Fringe Area Official Community Plan, Bylaw No. 1870, 2009. In addition, the City also needed to be able to balance fiscal responsibility in terms of its ability to provide services. All of these factors were considered and this led to the proposed 2013 boundary extension area.

It has been recognized that this region is the economic driver for the Province and there are a number of mega projects proposed in the next 10 years that will increase growth. The growth that is anticipated to come with these projects is exciting. It must be planned and managed in a responsible way to make sure that our children and grandchildren have a solid community that is financially sustainable in the future.

8. What is the number of properties involved?

There are a total of 181 properties involved in the proposed 2013 boundary extension.

9. What is the number of owners involved?

There are a total of 92 property owners involved in the proposed 2013 boundary extension.

10. Confused as to why the City says 2007 was the last boundary extension when it started in 2005.

While work on the last boundary extension may have started in 2005, the City’s application to the Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development was submitted in 2007.

11. Why doesn’t the extension go further south?

The City developed a proposed boundary extension area that met a variety of criteria, including those set out in the response to question #6 above. In addition to this, the City wanted to ensure that lands within the proposed boundary extension area had been previously identified for release from the Agricultural Land Reserve, as shown in the Fort St. John and Area Comprehensive Development Plan (see the map in Section 12). The Fort St. John and Area Comprehensive Development Plan also identified a proposed sequence for
the release of identified lands from the Agricultural Land Reserve. One of the reasons that the proposed extension area does not go further south is that the properties further south have not been identified in the development plan for release from the Agricultural Land Reserve.

In addition to the Fort St. John and Area Comprehensive Development Plan, the Peace River Regional District’s North Peace Fringe Area Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 1870, 2009 also guides the size of the extension as a result of the land use designations applied to lands (see the map in Section 13).

12. It says Phase 1, does that mean there will be Phase 2 and how far does the City plan to go with it?

Numerous land owners have expressed interest for incorporation all around the City’s boundaries. The reference to Phase 1 is only to identify the proposed 2013 boundary extension area that the City has decided to consider at this time.

13. What has changed to cause interest in including us now after being excluded 35 years ago?

It is difficult for current City Council and staff to answer what Council’s rationale was 35 years ago in declining a request for incorporation in 1978. To provide a response would be a speculative guess at best. Circumstances have changed, as reflected in the response to question #1. These circumstances are being evaluated and considered with respect to the proposed 2013 boundary extension.

14. Concerned if the City property boundaries expand to the east and how this is going to affect property taxes.

Please see Section 3 of this document, which deals with taxes.

15. Any consideration to include the section north of the proposed land boundary?

There are a number of reasons why the City is not considering the section north of the proposed 2013 boundary extension. These include:

- the City has not received any requests for incorporation of properties to the north of the proposed 2013 boundary extension area;
- as the land in question is located north of Fish Creek, the costs to service the land are felt to be too cost prohibitive due to the terrain;
- the land in question has not been identified in the Fort St. John and Area Comprehensive Development Plan for future development; and,
- the North Peace Fringe Area Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 1870, 2009 has this land identified as Agricultural.

At this time, the City’s proposed 2013 boundary extension area is the area identified on the map found in Section 11 of this document.

16. Has 80% infill of specific land use designations occurred? Or, what percentage of infill has occurred? Also, what is the proposed use and what is the vacancy rate for existing buildings?

The City’s Official Community Plan states that “any proposed extension may only occur if 80% infill of specific land use designated under the Land Use Map has occurred and it can be illustrated that there is a vacancy rate of less than 5% within existing builds for the proposed use”.

The City completed a vacant and underutilized land study in December 2012. The results showed that there is 25.4% of vacant light industrial land and 20.1% of vacant heavy industrial land available within the City.
Responses to Questions Received
Regarding the Proposed 2013 Boundary Extension

The majority of lands within the proposed boundary extension are zoned industrial.

The vacancy rate of existing buildings was not part of this study.

There is a challenge finding suitably sized existing industrial buildings with adequate land for companies wishing to locate in the City and many would rather build than try to retrofit an existing building.
Section 2 – Pros and Cons of Being a Part of the City of Fort St. John

1. What are the benefits to being included within the City?
   What benefits can rural property owners expect? Higher taxes which means no benefit.

   There are a number of benefits which could be received by property owners once their properties are included within City boundaries.

   With changes in regulations, the City must consider all of the services it currently provides, including water and sewer. This fact, along with strides the City is taking toward financial sustainability, means that the City has to be increasingly conscious of how and where it provides services.

   At the August 26, 2013 Council meeting, the following resolution was passed:
   “THAT, due to the increasing responsibility and liability implications for the City to accept and treat Wastewater at both the Federal and Provincial government levels Council directs staff to revise the hours of operation for the Wastewater Transfer Station to Monday to Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. excluding Statutory Holidays effective October 1, 2013,
   THAT, Council directs staff to send notification to the Peace River Regional District and all current users of the facility advising them of this change in operating hours,
   AND FURTHER THAT, Council directs staff to provide formal notice to the Peace River Regional District and all current users, that the City of Fort St. John will close and decommission the Wastewater Transfer Station on December 31, 2014.”

   This decision was made due to stricter provincial and federal regulations regarding wastewater treatment that will be implemented on January 1, 2015 and the liability that the City is incurring by accepting wastewater from outside the City’s boundaries.

   With respect to water and sewer, property owners within City boundaries have the ability to access water and sewer services as provided by the City. Policy adopted by Council states that water and sewer services will not be extended outside of City boundaries. Those who secure water and sewer services are likely to see increased property values, as well as enhanced development potential. For information on how these services are connected, see Section 5.

   Property owners who access City water services will also likely see benefits through reductions in their property insurance premiums. Currently, these premiums are based on whether a property is:

   - Within 300 m (1,000 feet) of a fire hydrant (referred to as ‘Protected’);
   - Within 13 km (8 miles) of a responding fire hall (referred to as ‘Semi-Protected’); and
   - Beyond 13 km (8 miles) of a responding fire hall (referred to as ‘Unprotected’).

   Some of the properties within the proposed 2013 boundary extension area presently fall within a ‘Semi-Protected’ fire protection area, while others fall within the present ‘Protected’ designation. Properties currently within the ‘Semi-Protected’ area who obtain community water services would have fire hydrants within the 300 m (1,000 foot) threshold, and therefore be able to enjoy the insurance premium benefits of full ‘Protected’ status.

   It is anticipated that the Provincial government is going to increase regulations relating to on-site sewer and water systems, including septic tanks / fields and groundwater wells. In the future these regulations may present challenges to individual property owners in developing and maintaining these on-site systems.

   Depending on your location within the proposed 2013 boundary extension area, fire protection services may currently be provided by the volunteer based Charlie Lake Fire Department with mutual aid provisions with
the Fort St. John Fire Department (full-time fire fighters). Upon inclusion within the City of Fort St. John, all properties within the boundary extension area would receive fire protection services from the Fort St. John Fire Department.

In the proposed 2013 boundary extension area, garbage collection services are currently the responsibility of the property owner. For rural residential properties, costs associated with garbage collection include the cost of a dumpster and the disposal of refuse. An average dumpster can cost a residence approximately $57 per month. Upon inclusion within the City of Fort St. John, all residential properties within the boundary extension area would receive garbage collection services at a cost of $120 per year paid through a levy on the property tax bill. Additional fees may also apply if a property owner wishes to participate in the voluntary curbside recycling program within the City. Garbage collection fees for commercial properties are the responsibility of the property owner in both the rural area and the City of Fort St. John.

The City has a number of bylaws relating to nuisances which may be experienced by property owners currently located outside of its boundaries. These nuisances can include barking dogs and other forms of inappropriate noise. Extension of City boundaries would allow the application and enforcement of relevant bylaws.

2. Would bylaws apply retroactively (i.e. building standards)?

If the City’s proposed 2013 boundary extension were to proceed, the City’s bylaws would apply from the date of incorporation moving forward. Specifically as relating to building standards, the bylaws would only apply to new projects, not to projects already completed or underway. Some of the City’s other bylaws (such as the noise and nuisance bylaws) will apply immediately. Farms would continue to operate as farms. If you have a particular concern about Bylaws, please contact Janet Prestley, Director of Legislative and Administrative Services at 250-787-8153.

The City’s bylaws can be found at http://www.fortstjohn.ca/bylaws.

3. Spoke with B.C. Hydro and they said that there isn’t any difference if the land is within City limits or not, so therefore we wonder how it will pertain to Site C.

You are correct – Hydro has indicated that it doesn’t matter to them which local government jurisdiction they are in.

The Let’s Talk Site C public consultation process, which included Electoral Area C, saw tremendous support for having the B.C. Hydro 85th Avenue lands incorporated within the City of Fort St. John.

Having B.C. Hydro’s 85th Avenue lands, which are situated east of Old Fort Road and south of 85th Avenue, within City boundaries would result in a higher degree of compliance with City bylaws (i.e. Subdivision and Development Servicing, Noise, Unsightly Premises, etc.) than if they were outside of City boundaries. In addition, having the 85th Avenue lands within the City will provide the City with the ability to manage and guide development and ensure minimal impacts on neighbouring properties and the City as a whole, post construction. Updated information from BC Hydro received September 6, 2013: BC Hydro makes annual grants-in-lieu of tax payments and these are equivalent to general municipal, regional district and local improvement taxes, and are based on the assessed value of the land and improvements. BC Hydro will continue to make those payments to whatever jurisdiction its lands are within.
Section 3 – Taxes – Being in the City as Compared to the Peace River Regional District

1. Would like the figures to compare to regional taxes, water/sewer and the availability plan.
2. Does this mean more tax? Would like something in return for paying more taxes.

Property taxes are levied in order to acquire the revenues to pay for services received. The tax rate required to raise the necessary revenues depends on the assessment within a defined area applied to various classes of property (such as industrial, residential, etc.).

Each property owner will be receiving a package at the September 12, 2013 meeting being held at the Quality Inn Northern Grand at 7:00 p.m. Included within this package will be a sample tax notice specifically for each property that provides tax comparisons for the City versus Regional District. Council has not discussed nor decided if a phased-in tax approach will be considered as of yet.

With respect to water and sewer services, property owners within City boundaries have the ability to access these services. Policy adopted by Council states that water and sewer services will not be extended outside of City boundaries. Those who secure water and sewer services are likely to see increased property values, as well as enhanced development potential.

Property owners who access City water services will also likely see benefits through reductions in their property insurance premiums. Currently, these premiums are based on whether a property is:

- Within 300 m (1,000 feet) of a fire hydrant (referred to as ‘Protected’);
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Some of the properties within the proposed 2013 boundary extension area presently fall within a ‘Semi-Protected’ fire protection area, while others fall within the present ‘Protected’ designation. Properties currently within the ‘Semi-Protected’ area who obtain community water services would have fire hydrants within the 300 m (1,000 foot) threshold, and therefore be able to enjoy the insurance premium benefits of full ‘Protected’ status.

With changes in regulations, the City must consider all of the services it currently provides, including water and sewer. This fact, along with strides the City is taking toward financial sustainability, means that the City has to be increasingly conscious of how and where it provides services.

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This decision was made due to stricter provincial and federal regulations regarding wastewater treatment that will be implemented on January 1, 2015 and the liability that the City is incurring by accepting wastewater from outside the City’s boundaries.
Responses to Questions Received
Regarding the Proposed 2013
Boundary Extension

Water and sewer rates are shown in the response to question #6 below.

3. What is the impact on property taxes and the phasing-in?

Property taxes and tax rates will depend on the property class assigned to your particular property – not what a property is zoned for. The B.C. Assessment Authority determines property classes and the assessed value of your property. Your annual tax bill is calculated by this assessed value being multiplied by the tax rate applied to your property class.

Regardless of whether you live in the rural area or within the City, taxes are collected on behalf of the following agencies:
- Ministry of Finance
- Ministry of Education
- Peace River Regional District
- Peace River Regional Hospital District
- BC Assessment Authority

The difference in the tax bill between the Province and the City comes from all of the additional services that the City provides such as recreation, RCMP and Fire Department.

Rural property owners are often responsible for additional costs for services such as water hauling, sewage disposal and garbage collection which are not on the rural property tax bill.

The City must undertake a cost-benefit analysis to determine the feasibility of a property tax phasing-in approach with respect to those properties proposed for incorporation, existing tax payers, and the City. At this time, the City has not yet determined if it will undertake a phasing-in approach.

4. Concerned for the amount taxes will be.
5. How much are the property taxes going to increase on industrial land and in comparison to what we are paying the Regional District?

Property taxes are raised in order to acquire the revenues to pay for services received. The tax rate required to raise the necessary revenues depends on the assessment within a defined area applied to various classes of property (such as industrial, residential, etc.).

The property tax revenue required to provide municipal services is determined through the annual budget process. Factoring in the tax rate ratios and the assessment within each class of property determines the tax rate to raise the required property taxes. City staff is working on the individualized property tax notices that will show a comparison between rural and urban taxes that will be distributed at the September 12 meeting.

6. What are the water and sewer costs?

In the rural area, the costs associated with hauling water and disposing sewage are the responsibility of each individual property owner and can vary. Previous studies have indicated that the cost of hauling water and disposing of sewage for the average rural residential property can range between $3,000 and $4,000 annually.

Within the City, the costs for water are as follows:
- A fixed monthly charge of $10.85 will be allocated to each water utility account
- A consumption charge of $1.12 per cubic metre
Within the City, the costs for sewer are as follows:
- A fixed monthly charge $10.20 will be allocated to each sewer utility account
- The user charges for each month or part thereof commencing upon the installation of a water meter is based upon 100% of the total quantity of water consumed as measured by the water meter to the premises situated on the real property will be $1.18 per cubic metre.

Other charges may apply, such as connection/equipment/installation charges, etc.

See Section 5 for information on the development and connection process and cost responsibilities.

7. Why choose them (future residential lands) as this is a low mill rate which means the taxes won’t even help the City?

The objective of exploring boundary extension is not to help the City from a tax revenue perspective.

The City does have a number of other objectives which led to this boundary extension process. They include:

- Fringe area development (within the Peace River Regional District and adjacent to City boundaries) is placing additional pressures on City services;
- B.C. Hydro has purchased over 96 hectares (237 acres) adjacent to the City boundaries on 85th Avenue for the purpose of providing fill for the proposed Site C project. Adjacent property owners have expressed concern about the impact of this activity on their properties. The City can only guide the development of these lands if they are in the City;
- Growth in the fringe area is developed to rural standards. The City of Fort St. John has the regulatory tools to ensure that development is established to an urban standard; and
- Some property owners have petitioned the City to be included within City boundaries.

The City is considering a boundary extension to:

- Manage development, particularly with the development of the 85th Avenue lands immediately south of the City’s current boundary; and
- Address the need for land, as the City will be out of available industrial and residential land within the next few years.

The Provincial Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development has set out a number of criteria regarding boundary extension applications that influence the extent of land chosen. These criteria include:

- Boundary composition of the proposed boundary extension area should consist of complete legal parcels to avoid split local government jurisdiction over legal parcels, and proposals that include a logical block of parcels rather than multiple requests to include single parcels are encouraged;
- Properties within the new boundary generally should be continuously adjacent, or contiguous to the existing municipal boundary, and should not result in any “doughnut-holes” within the municipality;
- Following the boundary extension, any roads not designated as arterial or Provincial are transferred from the Province to the municipality, which then assumes responsibility for maintenance and future upgrades.

More information on the boundary extensions can be found here: [http://www.cscd.gov.bc.ca/lgd/boundaries/municipal_restructure.htm](http://www.cscd.gov.bc.ca/lgd/boundaries/municipal_restructure.htm)
Responses to Questions Received
Regarding the Proposed 2013 Boundary Extension

More information on the Ministry’s Municipal Boundary Extension Policies Guide can be found here:

More information on the Ministry’s Municipal Boundary Extension Process Guide can be found here:

8. If implemented, the City should have a tiered system.

The City understands a “tiered tax rate system” to mean different tax rates for different levels of service. The City’s philosophy is to provide one consistent level of service, and therefore not have a tiered tax rate system.

The City understands a “phasing in” of tax rates to mean a gradual increase in tax rates to the same level as paid by current City taxpayers.

Should the proposed 2013 boundary extension proceed, all properties within the boundary extension area would receive the same level of service as the rest of the City. Thus, a tiered tax rate system would not be considered. The City will be determining the feasibility of implementing a phasing-in of tax rates in advance of making a decision on whether or not to proceed with the proposed 2013 boundary extension.

9. City is trying to acquire industrial land and feels like the residents will get stuck with the bill through taxes.

The majority of the lands that the City is proposing for incorporation are zoned Light /Service Industrial within Peace River Regional District.

Development of industrial land will be at the developer’s cost – not the City taxpayer – in accordance with the Subdivision Servicing and Development Cost Charges Bylaws. City Council is very aware that development costs should not be borne by its taxpayers and have implemented regulations to ensure that those who receive the benefit also pay for it.

The Subdivision Servicing and Development Cost Charges Bylaws can be found at http://www.fortstjohn.ca/bylaws.

Proposed inclusion of these lands into the City's boundaries are consistent with regional plans previously developed with the community and various stakeholders:

- The Fort St. John and Area Comprehensive Development Plan developed in 2005—a joint strategy produced by the Peace River Regional District, the Agricultural Land Commission and the City of Fort St. John. This Plan identifies the proposed lands as being incorporated into the City's boundary in the future. A map can be found in Section 12 and details of the Plan can be obtained from the Peace River Regional District who can be contacted at 1-800-670-7773.

- The North Peace Fringe Area Official Community Plan developed in 2009—produced by the Peace River Regional District. This is a planning document to guide the region moving forward to manage long term growth. A map can be found in Section 13 and the full Plan can be viewed here: http://prrd.bc.ca/services/development/planning/official_community/documents/BL_1870.NPFA_OCP.pdf
10. What will happen to the ALR land – concerned that the taxes will go up and the people with ALR/farmland won’t be able to afford the taxes which will then be turned into Industrial?

The City recently passed a Council Resolution to amend its Class 9 tax rate ratio. The Council Resolution reads:

"THAT, the Farm - Class 9 tax rate ratio be 0.3:1 ratio with the Class 1 tax rate that would be effective with the tax year beginning January 1, 2014."

This would result in owners of Class 9 (Farm) properties having a general tax rate portion of their property taxes remain very similar to the Regional District.

Whether or not a property is within the Agricultural Land Reserve does not have any bearing on the amount of property taxes levied. When and if the property owner wants to rezone their land from agricultural to industrial is when the industrial class tax rate would apply.

Additional information on how BC Assessment determines property classification can be found at: http://www.bcassessment.ca/public/Fact%20Sheets/Classification%20of%20Property.aspx
Section 4 – Planning (Land Use & Zoning)

1. Is there going to be any rezoning’s?
2. What are the proposed zonings?

   Rezoning of properties is initiated by the property owner(s) submitting an application and the City proceeding through a rezoning process that includes public meetings and input. The City plans to retain the zoning that currently exists or will match the Regional District’s as closely as possible. For example, if an area is zoned as Light/Service Industrial within the Regional District, it would be zoned Light Industrial within the City.

3. What is the plan with the land acquired?
4. What is known about the proposed developments for these lands being considered for boundary extension?

   None of the lands within the proposed 2013 boundary extension area are owned by the City. Future plans for the proposed 2013 boundary extension area are guided by the Fort St. John and Area Comprehensive Development Plan and the North Peace Fringe Area Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 1870, 2009.

   At this time, the City is only aware of the activity proposed for the 85th Avenue Lands, located east of the Old Fort Road and south of 85th Avenue. These two quarter sections are owned by B.C. Hydro and will be used for soil extraction for fill for the proposed Site C dam, should the project be approved by federal and provincial agencies.

5. There is no organization separating residential from industrial – will it be rezoned to residential?

   If any changes to the Official Community Plan land use or zoning are desired, they are at the initiative of the property owner, regardless of local government jurisdiction.

   At this time, if the proposed 2013 boundary extension proceeds, the City plans to retain the existing land uses as identified in the North Peace Fringe Area Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 1870, 2009 and the Peace River Regional District Zoning Bylaw No. 1343, 2012.

   The City will review the lands within the boundary extension area in the context of its Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaws. This would provide the opportunity to address any land use challenges that exist (i.e. no separation between residential and industrial uses) and plan for the future.

6. Will bylaws be put in place that certain industries can’t be put into residential zones?

   The City’s zoning bylaw would apply to all areas within the proposed 2013 boundary extension area. This would allow the uses permitted within different zones. Within the City’s current zoning bylaw, some home-based industrial businesses are permitted within some residential zones.

   The Peace River Regional District’s zoning bylaw has a list of permitted uses within each of their zones as well.
Section 5 – Infrastructure (Road, Water, Sewer & Storm)

1. How does the City propose to maintain existing infrastructure, and then to take on more responsibility?

Existing infrastructure is maintained using a planned approach implemented by the City each year through its operating budget. New development contributes to financing the maintenance for additional works and services through the City’s Development Cost Charge (DCC) program, and on-going user fees.

New growth is part of the natural life cycle of a community, and with new growth comes increased responsibility on the part of the City in ensuring that infrastructure and services are provided, maintained and expanded. The provision of infrastructure and services to a growing community must be done in conjunction with managing new growth responsibly and ensuring that the high level of quality of life that we enjoy is maintained. This growth will generate new commercial opportunities as well.

2. Can’t fix what we have now, how are we going to help them?

The City is keeping up and maintaining its existing infrastructure through the use of Fair Share funding. This funding is used for upgrading roads, sidewalks, trails and underground utilities. The City is also expanding its infrastructure through new development, which contributes funding through the City’s Development Cost Charge (DCC) program.

There are maps included separately in this package that show the amount of capital projects completed by the City over the last 10 years.

3. Can’t keep up with infrastructure now, so how are you going to with extension.

The City is keeping up and maintaining its existing infrastructure through the use of Fair Share funding. This funding is used for upgrading roads, sidewalks, trails and underground utilities. The City is also expanding its infrastructure through new development, which contributes funding through the City’s Development Cost Charge (DCC) program.

4. What level of road maintenance is being considered?

Roads will be maintained to current City standards.

5. What would the timing be for services and do we have a choice to keep our old services?

The provision of services such as water and sewer depends on how development occurs and the desires of property owners, as services (i.e. paving a gravel road, sidewalks, water and sewer services, etc.) are provided based upon the requests received from property owners. The provision of services would occur either through new development, the implementation of Local Area Services (which are charged back to the property owner), a combination thereof, or paid for by other means, such as grants.

Local Area Service programs are used to install capital infrastructure for a specific area that is paid for by the property owners receiving the benefit. Examples of local area service programs are road upgrades from gravel to pavement. Two recent examples are the Peace River Regional District’s 2012 unsuccessful proposal to provide sewer services to Clairmont Subdivision or the City’s successful development of 74th Street.

Existing services can be retained by property owners within the proposed 2013 boundary extension area until such time as the new service is provided. For example, if your water is provided through a well, you may retain the use of that well until water services are provided in front of your property. At that time, your well would need to be decommissioned and you would be required to connect to the City’s water system.
6. **What about paving and sidewalks – who is going to pay for this to be done?**

   The cost of paving and providing sidewalks depends on whether the paving and sidewalks are new development or upgrades. If property owners wish to see their gravel road paved and sidewalks installed, the costs of those works are the responsibility of the property owners, generally through a Local Area Service Program, which is charged back to the properties. If an existing paved road and sidewalks require repaving, this is done by the City at the City’s cost.

7. **Does the City have a plan for sewer capacity?**

   The City’s community sewer utility includes treatment through a lagoon system. The south lagoon has the capacity to treat future sewage flows from the proposed boundary extension area, and from forecast population growth in the rest of the community.

8. **Would the (sewer) trunk line be operated by the City?**

   Any sewer trunk lines extended by the City into the proposed boundary extension area – or elsewhere within the existing boundaries – would be operated and maintained by the City.

9. **Is there a general plan of where new (sewer treatment) lagoons would be located?**

   There is no need for a new sewer treatment lagoon system for the foreseeable future. The current system is capable of accommodating the level of growth currently forecast by the City for lands within present City boundaries, as well as the proposed boundary extension area. Any future upgrades to handle forecast levels of growth would occur at the south lagoon site.
Section 6 – Schools

1. What about the school jurisdiction – child goes to our Charlie Lake School now, so does this mean that she will have to go to Fort St. John?

   School catchment areas are established by School District #60.

2. Will there be more schools going in?

   The Local Government Act requires the City of Fort St. John to consider schools in its planning. This consideration is set out in the City’s Official Community Plan. The planning and development of new schools is ultimately the responsibility of School District #60.
Section 7 – Snow Clearing

1. Why are the City trucks going through our neighborhood right now?

The City currently uses a few routes to access its facilities south of the highway. These routes include 100th Street (265 Road), 79th Avenue and 93rd Street. The City may also use 85th Avenue and Old Fort Road. These routes help ensure the efficient and safe movement of traffic.

2. Why is (delivery to) the snow dump going through (our) neighborhood; this causes damage to (our) area and the City doesn’t pay for it?

The City currently has one snow dump facility located near the South Lagoons. The City currently uses two routes to access that facility. The first route sees trucks travelling along 100th Street (265 Road) south of the Alaska Highway, and then turning left onto 79th Avenue. This route does see City staff and contractors travel past some rural properties before entering back into City boundaries and continuing on to the City’s snow dump. The second route sees City staff and contractors access the snow dump facility via 93rd Street, south of the Alaska Highway. This route is within the City’s current boundary.

While the City does use rural roads to access its snow dump facility, all residents of the Province of British Columbia, regardless of local government jurisdiction, contribute to the maintenance of Provincial roads through Provincial property taxation.
Section 8 – Mapping

1. Map is extremely unclear as there are no street names shown or the breakdown of streets.
2. Needs proper map.

   A new map has been prepared which contains many street names to aid in identifying areas. This map has been put on the Placespeak website at www.placespeak.com/fsjbounaryexpansion.

   If you are unable to access this information, please contact Janet Prestley, Director of Legislative and Administrative Services at (250) 787-8153.

3. Should have a more interactive map on the Placespeak website – like a Google map.

   A Google map, where one can zoom in and move around, is on the Placespeak website at www.placespeak.com/fsjbounaryexpansion.

4. What is the current fire protection area?

   Section 14 of this document provides a map showing the current Fort St. John Rural Fire Protection area and the Charlie Lake Fire Protection area, in conjunction with the proposed 2013 boundary extension area and the current City boundary.
Section 9 – Communication

1. Unhappy with how the Mayor approached audience tonight as she didn’t introduce herself which we find is very unprofessional and feels that things are never done right the first time and if the City would just do things right the first time and use communication then people would probably be more happy about it.

   The City apologizes if the meeting was not what you anticipated. The City had indicated that the purpose of the meeting was to hear from property owners and collect the various questions and comments that people had.

2. Would like to discuss things further with someone.

   Please contact Janet Prestley, Director of Legislative and Administrative Services at the City at (250) 787-8153 or via email at jprestley@fortstjohn.ca to set up a day and time to discuss the City’s proposed boundary extension.

3. Format of the meeting was quite disappointing in that concerned people were not allowed to ask questions where everyone could hear the questions and the answers.

   The format of the June 26th, 2013 meeting was previously conveyed in the two letters sent out prior to the meeting. The June 26th, 2013 meeting was set up to encourage small group discussions with members of City Council and Senior Management. The purpose was to collect the questions and comments of property owners in an informal setting. The questions received that evening and throughout the summer months have been compiled into this document. The City also indicated that it is available to meet and discuss any additional or property specific questions that property owners may have.

   The following format will be used for the September 12, 2013 meeting:
   - PowerPoint presentation displaying a summary of the questions.
   - Distribution of a personalized handout which will include the enclosed question/answer pamphlet, a sample tax notice for your property (ies) and the formal response form regarding opposition or approval to the City’s proposed boundary extension application.
   - Discussion tables (world café) to allow residents the opportunity to obtain additional information regarding specific concerns with Public Works, Finance, Development, Engineering and Infrastructure staff.

4. Would like to be on the information list.

   If you have not already done so, please provide us with your name, telephone number, email address and property address. Please also provide us with your preferred method of communication and we will ensure that information is distributed to you. Also, please remember to regularly check the City’s website (www.fortstjohn.ca), Facebook page (www.facebook.com/fortstjohn), and Placespeak website (www.placespeak.com/fsjboundaryexpansion).
Section 10 - Unique Set of Questions

1. Does the City intend to factor in environmental and safety consideration into the equation?

   Yes. The City of Fort St. John factors in environmental and safety considerations into all its decisions and is provincially legislated to do so in many areas. If you have any specific concerns, please contact the City at (250) 787-8150.

2. How are you going to get the parcels out of the ALR, and why does the City feel it is okay to take it out of the ALR now, when last year people applied for it to be taken out and they were denied?

   The City of Fort St. John does not submit applications for exclusions of land from the Agricultural Land Reserve. Applications for exclusion are made by the property owner and are considered by the Agricultural Land Commission.

   In 2005, the City and the Peace River Regional District, in partnership with the Agricultural Land Commission, developed the Fort St. John and Area Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP). This document identified various lands surrounding the City of Fort St. John that were agreed to be taken out of the Agricultural Land Reserve as growth pressures and needs of the City indicated, in a logical, sequential manner, with the ultimate goal of these lands being incorporated into the City of Fort St. John.

   The lands identified in the 2013 proposed boundary extension are the same parcels that are identified through this prior planning. It is anticipated that since the Agricultural Land Commission has previously agreed to permit exclusion as dictated by need, that they would be receptive to releasing the lands when and if requested by the property owner.

3. There is industrial land that isn’t developed yet within the city and hasn’t sold, so why not develop what we have before we get more?

   The City appreciates that some industrial land within the City exists that has not yet been developed. One of the biggest challenges with the availability of industrial land is that because the scope of industrial developments that could occur varies so greatly, so too does the parcel sizes required. The City needs to ensure that a range of sizes of industrial land are available to accommodate the range in industrial uses. Due to the growth pressures currently being faced and predicted for the future, the City is trying to be proactive.
Responses to Questions Received
Regarding the Proposed 2013 Boundary Extension

Section 11 – Proposed 2013 Boundary Extension Map
Responses to Questions Received
Regarding the Proposed 2013 Boundary Extension

Section 12 – Fort St. John and Area Comprehensive Development Plan (2005) Map
Responses to Questions Received
Regarding the Proposed 2013 Boundary Extension

Section 13 – North Peace Fringe Area Bylaw No. 1870, 2009 Map
Responses to Questions Received
Regarding the Proposed 2013 Boundary Extension

Section 14 – Fire Protection Areas Map