

Let's Talk Site C

Taking a proactive approach to protecting and promoting the best interests of our community



Energetic City Residents, Entrepreneurs, & Volunteers,

Through the many opportunities for consultation with the community over the past several years, you told us to focus on creating a community "where nature lives, families flourish and businesses prosper." That has become our compass bearing for the future of the Energetic City throughout several strategic documents, including our Official Community Plan.

Moving forward, we find in our path the potential Site C dam. It is clear that with a project of this magnitude only 7 km from our downtown that we will be the community most impacted should it be approved. I must ask you again to join in the dialogue to discuss how this project will impact our community and how we should prepare.

This document lays out some thoughts as the basis for discussion moving forward. Council will initiate and host these discussions in a desire to be proactive, to ensure that we protect our community from negative impacts, and to set high standards for the project proponents.

Over the next few months we will ask you to reflect on the project and how it could impact your quality of life, your work, your business, the services within the community and the community as a whole.

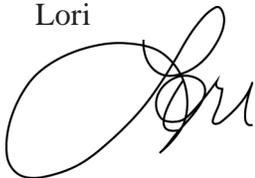
Lastly, we will ask you what you would see as a benefit to the community and region from this project. Even though it is referred to as a "project", it will impact the "life of our community."

Together we can bring forward a comprehensive document that will ensure our community remains strong and resilient if the Site C dam is approved.

I encourage you to become part of the dialogue. Stay tuned to our website, Facebook page and Twitter feed for more information.

Warmest regards,

Lori



Lori Ackerman
Mayor



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Taking a Proactive Approach



Photo: City of Fort St. John

The proposed Site C Clean Energy Project has been top of mind in our community for many years. For quite some time now, City Council and Staff have been **learning** about the proposed project. We have been **meeting** with BC Hydro, **reviewing** numerous studies and reports, and conducting our own research. We have been **talking** with community members who represent a **diversity of perspectives**. We have also been discussing the issues with other municipalities. Our goal has been to understand and assess the potential impacts the Site C project would have on our community.

Mayor and Council believe it is time now to take a **coordinated** and **proactive approach** to representing our community's interests and assist BC Hydro and the Provincial and Federal Governments in their assessment and decision-making process. This fall, Mayor and Council intend to present a **position paper** to BC Hydro and the Provincial and Federal Governments outlining the City's interests and objectives that we believe will be critical to protect if the Site C project is approved. We believe the document will be an important tool in helping the decision-makers to identify and address key areas of concern for our community. Mayor and Council will be looking for **community input** to help develop the position paper.

Protecting and promoting our community's interests if the project is approved

The decision to approve Site C resides with the Provincial and Federal Governments, not with local municipalities.

In fact, the City of Fort St. John neither supports nor opposes the proposed Site C project.

As the municipality that would be most impacted, the City carries a special responsibility to take a proactive role in ensuring community interests are protected. Council also does not believe that BC Hydro is fully considering the City's comments and concerns or giving appropriate weight to them in designing the project.

As Mayor and Council, we intend to represent the community's interests and use all of our influence and jurisdiction to ensure they are protected.



Photo: City of Fort St. John



Photos: City of Fort St. John

Consulting With the Community

Council recognizes that the City has already engaged the public in significant consultation on matters of community direction, goals and objectives. We are using the City's Vision 20/20, Official Community Plan and Strategic Plan as a guide for **evaluating** the community's needs and interests when it comes to Site C. We have also been doing a lot of **listening** to community members and plan to do more. Mayor and Council are committed to consulting with the com-

munity during the process of developing the interests and objectives to ensure they truly represent the needs of the community as a whole. We will also be considering the needs of our **neighbours** and others potentially impacted by this project. We know it may not be possible to incorporate all views into our stated objectives, but we are **committed** to focusing on what is best, overall, for the City of Fort St. John in the short- and long-term.

Through our work on Site C and in talking with many

community members, Council has already identified a number of interests and objectives that we believe will be critical to **promote and protect**. They are presented here in draft format to encourage **dialogue** within our community. We hope you will carefully consider these interests and objectives and then add **your voice** to the discussion. We're looking for your help to ensure that the position paper we present to BC Hydro and the Province accurately reflects what's best for our community.

As the municipality that would be most impacted by Site C, Fort St. John's views and interests should be given appropriate weight

If approved, Site C will be the third dam and hydroelectric generating station on the Peace River. It will have short-term consequences for our community during construction and will **forever alter future life** in Fort St. John. While Site C will impact the region as a whole, the City and the rural areas immediately adjacent to it will be impacted the most. For that reason, we believe the City's views, concerns and positions of the City and its residents should be given the **utmost attention** and weight they deserve by the decision-makers.

As a community, we've worked hard to set a direction and work toward goals that we believe will help Fort St. John move forward – to be a better place tomorrow than it is today. If the Site C project is approved, we will expect to see **tangible benefits** that align with our community's goals to:

- Create a vibrant and diversified economy
- Facilitate and maintain a safe and healthy community
- Implement planned and sustainable practices



Let's Talk Site C



The City of Fort St. John will be a catalyst to address regional impacts

While the City will look to represent Fort St. John's objectives in evaluating Site C, we are interested in meeting and **collaborating** with other impacted local governments and First Nations.

We believe that identifying areas of mutual concerns and opportunities will strengthen our ability to advocate for regional interests.

Council will not presume to represent the interests of other communities, but we want to work together to ensure unified positions in situations where we have common goals and interests.



Council intends to communicate Fort St. John's objectives on Site C to ensure they are adequately considered in the design of the proposed project

Council understands that BC Hydro is still in the early stages of designing the project and undertaking the assessments proposed in Stage 3 of the process (Environmental and Regulatory Review). We want to make sure that BC Hydro and the Province of BC fully **understand the issues** that are most important to our community and region. The City will not make a decision on whether to support the project or not until we receive the final design of Site C and a comprehensive description of how impacts to the City and region will be addressed and the nature and value of the benefits the project will deliver.

Council will follow internationally accepted protocols for assessing hydro dam impacts

Council is not confident that the current assessment process BC Hydro is using to evaluate the project adequately considers the objectives and interests of impacted communities. That's why the City intends to evaluate Site C on the basis of **international best practices** developed by the United Nation's World Commission on Dams (WCD) and the International Hydropower Association (IHA) in its Hydropower Sustainability Assessment Protocol.

The work of the WCD and the IHA suggest that large dams have not generally provided the benefits predicted, while the negative impacts have been greater than expected. Based on the work of the WCD and the IHA, an **evaluation framework** and protocol were developed that more fairly balances the interests of the project proponents with the interests of those likely to experience impacts. The protocol encourages a more **collaborative** approach to designing hydroelectric projects and recommends benefits be shared in a more **equitable** way. It also proposes a greater emphasis on the long-term **sustainability** of the project and the communities impacted.

The City believes that BC Hydro should adopt the approach of the WCD and IHA to ensure that its evaluation reflects international best practices and results in fairly evaluating, and more equitably sharing, the benefits if Site C proceeds.



Photos: City of Fort St. John

The City's over arching objective is that Site C must contribute to the **long-term, sustainability** of the community. Site C should not only create short-term benefits by meeting the short-term energy needs of the Province, it must also contribute to achieving the City's long-term objectives to develop in a sustainable manner. Simply put, Council will need confirmation that our **community will be better off** in the long-term as a result of the project than without it.

What follows are the objectives Council is currently **considering requiring** BC Hydro to meet if the proposed Site C project is approved.



Photos: City of Fort St. John

SITE C SUGGESTED REQUIREMENTS



1

Optimize economic opportunities for the community



2

House the construction workforce in communities

3

Fully service staging areas to benefit economic use after completion of Site C construction



4

Include all staging areas, camp facilities and the dam itself in City boundaries



Photo: City of Fort St. John

1. Optimize economic opportunities for the community

As a City, we want to establish a vibrant, diversified and sustainable economy. Site C may contribute to achieving this goal if it is designed and operated in a way that respects the City's broader plans and policies. The City believes that BC Hydro must establish policies and take actions that enhance the economic benefits to the community during both the construction and operations phases of the project by:

Hiring locally

We believe BC Hydro and its contractors should implement a local hire policy that will maximize the number of local hires during the construction phase of Site C and assist the community to develop a highly trained workforce. This will require BC Hydro to work with Northern Lights College and other vocational and technical institutions to establish trades training programs in advance of construction. We believe this would not only benefit the City, but the region as a whole.

Continuing to develop City as BC's Energy Capital

An important objective for our community is continuing to develop as BC's Energy Capital. In addition to being the premier service and training centre to BC's oil and gas industry, the City would look to expand its role as a centre for training, innovation and research in the energy field. If approved, Site C could offer numerous opportunities to contribute to achieving this objective. It would require partnerships between Northern Lights College, the University of Northern BC, BC Hydro, senior levels of government and the private sector. Council would also work with BC Hydro to identify other opportunities of mutual benefit.

Purchasing local goods & services

The City also believes BC Hydro and its contractors should develop and implement a local procurement policy to ensure goods and services are purchased locally to the greatest extent possible. In advance of construction, BC Hydro would need to ensure the local business community understands its purchasing policies and need for goods and services during the construction phase. BC Hydro would be required to establish a local procurement office.

Establishing a Peace Trust

We believe it is in the best interest of the City of Fort St. John, the residents of the Peace River Basin, and the Peace River Regional District to create a Peace Trust. Funding would be made available through the trust for an investment program that will provide a legacy to the people in the Peace Region. Similar to the Columbia Basin Trust, the Peace Trust would deliver programs and initiatives to support the long-term economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the City and region impacted by the existing W.A.C. Bennett and Peace Canyon dams, and the proposed Site C dam.

2. House the construction workforce in communities to the greatest extent possible – without disrupting the local housing market

Adopt a “Workers Living Locally” strategy

The housing of the Site C construction workforce is perhaps the most important single issue facing BC Hydro and the City of Fort St. John. Council recognizes the need to have a camp during the construction phase for short-term workers. However, to the greatest extent possible, the City believes that BC Hydro should encourage the construction workforce – such as BC Hydro staff, trades employees and other employees – to reside in our communities rather than in camps. This would reduce the number of transient workers and foster a workforce that is committed to living in the Peace Region. BC Hydro has the ability to greatly influence where its construction workforce will be housed. We believe BC Hydro and its contractors should adopt and implement policies that maximize local hires, establish longer term contracts through “bundling” of contracts and provide housing incentives to longer-term workers.

The City also believes BC Hydro should develop innovative forms of in-community housing to accommodate the construction workforce and, eventually, the operations workforce. Housing developed should showcase energy efficiency and conservation as well as other green technologies and sustainable design principles. Avoiding surplus housing is an important objective of the City to guard against major disruptions to the local housing market during the construction phase of Site C. Following completion of the construction phase of the project, surplus housing would be made available to the public through a variety of means.



Photos: City of Fort St. John

Continued on next page

Build one camp, not two

We believe it is in the best interest of the community that BC Hydro creates one camp, rather than two camps. The single camp is best located on the north bank to enable the camp to be serviced by City services consistent with City standards. This will enable any extensions to the City's infrastructure to be developed for the long-term. City services would include extension of the City's water, sanitary and storm sewer systems and solid waste management. Other City services may require expansion and/or upgrading, including:

- Emergency services, including police and fire protection;
- Transportation services, including upgrading existing roads, developing new roads and increasing road maintenance; and
- Other city services, such as planning and engineering, culture and recreation, and environmental health.

How the camp would be managed and serviced is also of great concern to the City to reduce any potential negative impact of the construction workforce on City services and the community in general. We believe BC Hydro should provide, within the camp, facilities for entertainment, recreation and emergencies. The City would also request effective security measures to be taken, such as alcohol and drug testing and restrictions on use of private vehicles during work shifts. Once construction is complete, the City would require BC Hydro to provide the City with the right of first refusal for the lands containing the camp so the City can develop the site for uses that contribute to the community's long-term economic development.



Photo ©iStockphoto.com

3. Fully service staging areas to benefit economic use after completion of Site C construction

Staging areas (locations used to store equipment, resources and materials as well as mobilize personnel) will need to be serviced with water, sewer and solid waste management. The City believes the construction staging areas, including the 85th Avenue site, should be developed and serviced to City standards. Following construction, the City would ask that it receive the first right of refusal to assess the value of these sites to the City's future economic development. The City could then ultimately develop these sites for commercial or industrial uses that contribute to its long-term economic development.



Photos: City of Fort St. John

4. Include all staging areas, camp facilities and the dam itself within City boundaries

The City believes that it should require facilities that are close to the City (such as the staging areas, workforce camp and the dam itself) be included in the City's boundaries. This would ensure these developments can be effectively integrated into the City's infrastructure system (water, sewer, waste management and roads). It will require that BC Hydro make application to the City and the Provincial Government for these boundary extensions before the construction phase of Site C begins. This would enable the camp and staging areas to be developed and subsequently redeveloped consistent with City objectives, policies and standards.



Photo: City of Fort St. John

5

Offset the cost of addressing impacts through payment of a grant in lieu of taxes



6

Enhance the regional transportation system through investments by BC Hydro and the Province



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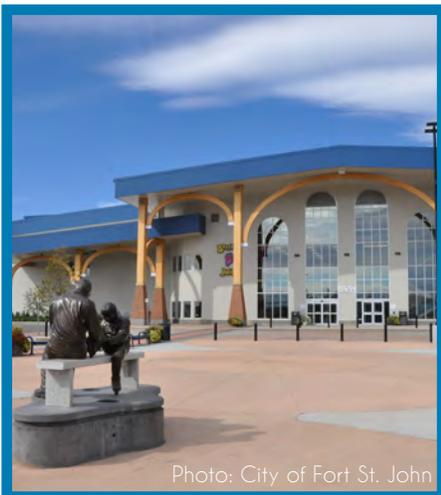
Conduct a basin-wide assessment for the Peace River basin



5. Offset the cost of addressing impacts during construction and operation phases through payment of a grant in lieu of taxes

The City of Fort St. John would be the municipality most impacted by the construction and ultimate operation of Site C if it moves forward. Council believes it should expect BC Hydro to provide the City with a mandatory annual grant in lieu of paying taxes to ensure it is sharing costs and contributing to the community it is impacting. The grant would help the City offset increased servicing costs associated with accommodating the construction and operations workforce as well as other impacts.

It would also enable the City to make the required investments to ensure sustainable development in the future. The payment of a grant in lieu is entirely consistent with the precedent established by BC Hydro in the Peace River Region (e.g. District of Hudson's Hope and Peace River Regional District) as well as BC Hydro's policy and practice in other parts of the province.



6. Enhance the regional transportation system through investments by BC Hydro and the Province

Both BC Hydro and the communities of the Peace Region would greatly benefit from improvements to regional transportation infrastructure. BC Hydro indicates it is committed to upgrading the Jackfish Lake Road to enable construction workers to access the dam site from the District of Chetwynd. It is also evident that a considerable percentage of the construction workforce would commute by air from other parts of the province and beyond to the North Peace Regional Airport.

Initially, BC Hydro proposed constructing a bridge across the Peace River to connect the south bank and north bank near the proposed dam site to enable access through the work site. BC Hydro has since revised its plans. Council believes that the development of a two lane bridge would have both short- and long-term benefits for both BC Hydro and the region. The City recognizes the economic and social benefits that would be realized by building the bridge and by enhancing other regional transportation infrastructure. The bridge and transportation infrastructure will not only be required by Site C but for future economic development. The City recognizes that not all costs associated with Site C related to infrastructure should be borne by BC Hydro. Some investments may be required by the Provincial Government.

The City is interested in proposing that:

- BC Hydro and the Provincial Government construct the Jackfish Lake Road consistent with a rural provincial highway standard and maintain it as a public road after the construction of the dam.
- BC Hydro and the Provincial Government construct a permanent two-lane bridge across the Peace River near the dam site to connect the Jackfish Lake Road to the North Peace, providing a secondary crossing of the Peace River.
- BC Hydro conduct an assessment to identify the impacts of Site C on the North Peace Airport and pay for any required improvements to accommodate project related increases in air traffic and passenger volumes.



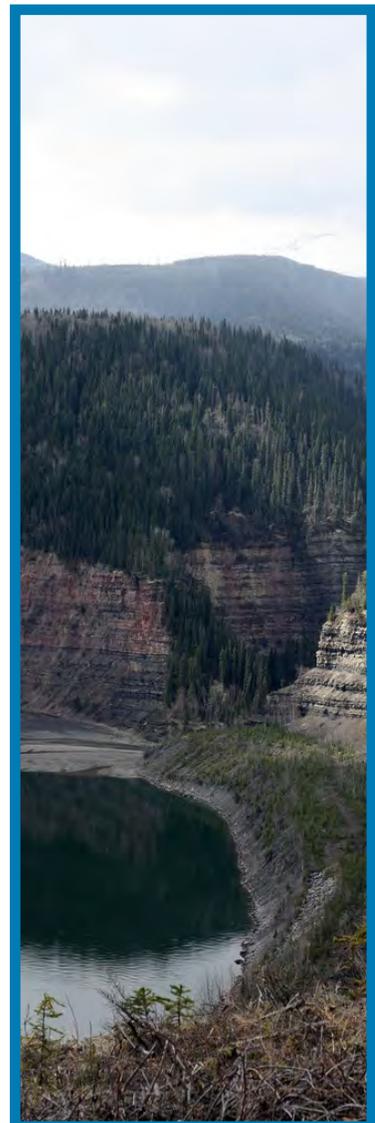
7. Conduct a basin-wide assessment for the Peace River basin

If Site C is approved, it will be the third hydro project on the Peace River. Impacts related to the W.A.C. Bennett Dam and the Peace Canyon Dam were never fully assessed and addressed. Council believes it is important that BC Hydro prepare an assessment and development plan for the entire Peace River Basin.

The plan should address outstanding environmental and socioeconomic issues related to the first two dams and provide a broader context for addressing the impacts of Site C. Communities impacted by the plan must be given opportunity to participate in preparing the plan and must be dealt with fairly. The Peace Trust, proposed on page 10, would provide one of the means for making investments in the environmental, economic and social sustainability of the basin.

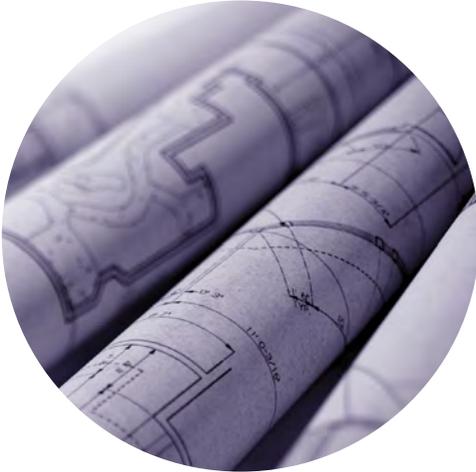


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8

Develop and implement a master plan for the Site C reservoir



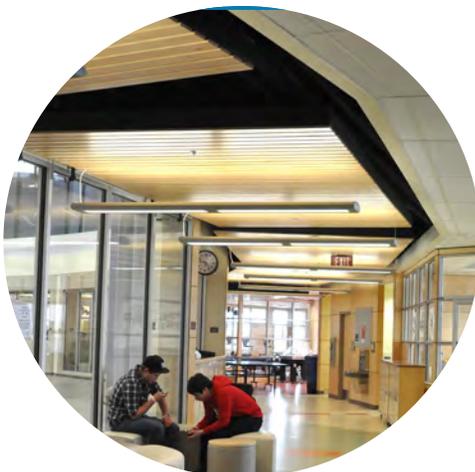
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Improve the project review process



10

Establish a monitoring program to identify and address any unforeseen impacts and issues



11

Enter a formal agreement incorporating all commitments

8. Develop and implement a master plan for the Site C reservoir

If approved, the proposed Site C reservoir may provide benefits to the region for recreation and future economic development. It may also provide a secondary water source for the City. The City believes BC Hydro should prepare a master plan for developing and operating the reservoir, which would address:

- Potential recreational opportunities for the residents of the City and region including boat launch facilities, marinas, swimming beaches, RV and day parks, and other related facilities;
- Tourism related uses including recreation vehicle parks, interpretive facilities; and
- Opportunities for the City to develop a secondary water source.

The master plan must be consistent with the overall basin plan proposed above and must address:

- Navigation requirements;
- Reduction in the fluctuation of water levels; and
- Protection of the environment.



9. Improve the project review process

Council strongly urges BC Hydro to modify its approach to working with communities and assessing project impacts. Council would like a more collaborative approach that involves the community in establishing the terms of reference and carrying out BC Hydro funded assessments and studies.

We believe the current assessment work is being undertaken in a fragmented fashion, making it difficult for the community to respond in a meaningful way. To be able to respond in an appropriate manner to an individual request, the City believes more comprehensive description of the project and its impacts is necessary, given that many of the issues are interrelated. The City has yet to receive a comprehensive project design and description of anticipated impacts.

Council does not believe that BC Hydro is fully considering the City's comments and concerns or giving appropriate weight to them in designing the project. Submissions made by the City to BC Hydro project staff involved in the consultation activities do not appear to be finding their way to engineering and technical staff involved in the project design. The City believes improved communication with BC Hydro is required to enable the City to make informed decisions in a timely manner about the actions that will impact the community.

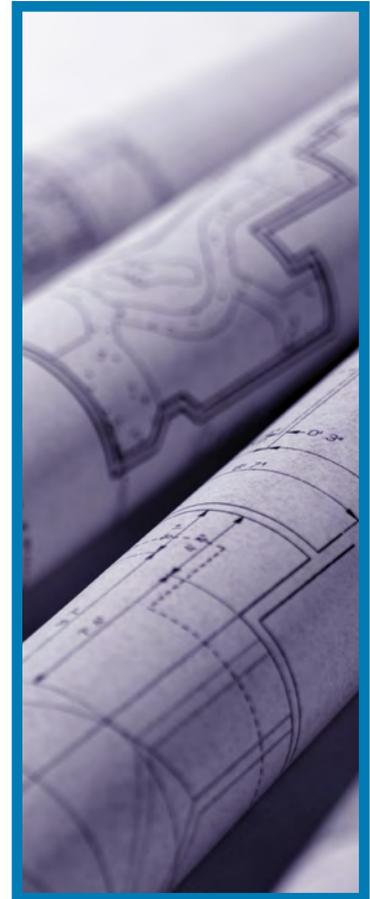


Photo ©iStockphoto.com

10. Establish a monitoring program to identify and address any unforeseen impacts and issues



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The City believes BC Hydro should be required to fund a monitoring program to operate throughout the construction and operation phases of the project. The continuous monitoring would help identify and address any unforeseen impacts and issues during the project's construction and operations phases. It would also help ensure that BC Hydro adheres to the agreement referred to below. The monitoring program should be administered by an independent commission that would have binding authority to enforce the agreement and require BC Hydro to address unforeseen impacts and issues.

11. Enter a formal agreement incorporating all commitments made to address impacts and share project benefits

If the project proceeds, the City believes BC Hydro should be required to enter into a legally binding agreement incorporating all commitments it has made to address impacts and provide benefits. The agreement will be a condition before the City would provide any approvals to BC Hydro.



Photos: City of Fort St. John

Let's Talk Site C

Thank you for taking the time to read the interests and objectives presented in this document. As we mentioned, at this point they are drafts only. We need YOU and your fellow community members to provide feedback over the next few weeks, and ongoing. We look forward to the community dialogue that will be generated. Your input is important to ensure that we accurately represent the interests of the community and can assess the support for potential positions moving forward.

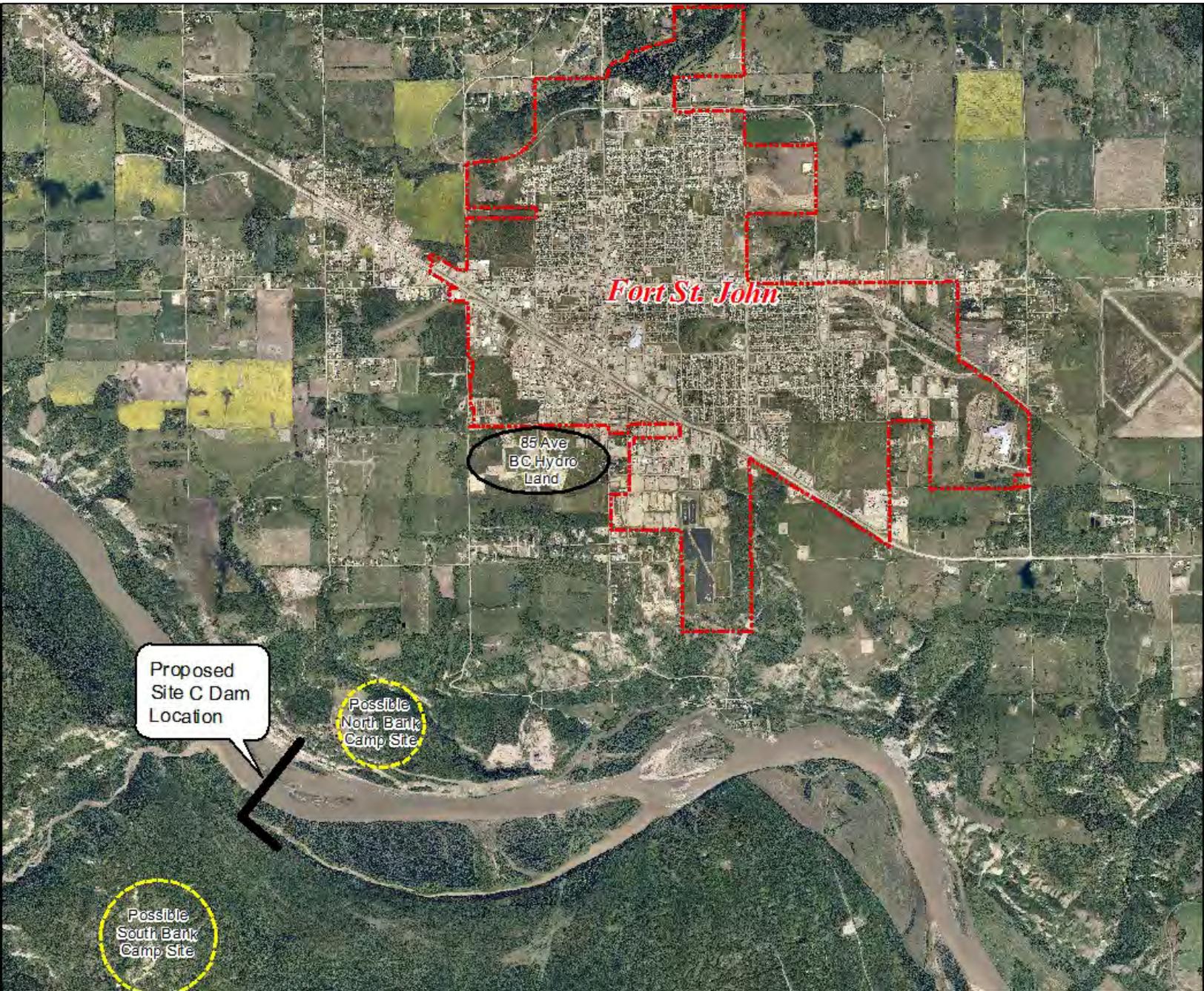
Through our website at www.fortstjohn.ca, Twitter @fortstjohn, and Facebook page www.facebook.com/fortstjohn, you can receive information about planned community consultation activities and offer your thoughts through ongoing dialogue and formal surveys. We will also be providing opportunities to access information through the media, at City Hall and at community meetings designed to get us together to discuss the issues.

You can also find our Mayor and Council in a park near you during the summer months, with lawn chairs, lemonade and a willingness to hear your thoughts directly.

The location and schedule for these "Let's Talk Site C" discussions will be advertised well in advance so that you can plan to attend.



Photo: City of Fort St. John



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