



PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN



SUMMARY

In 2017, the City of Fort St. John, in partnership with the Peace River Regional District and the District of Taylor, created the first Parks and Recreation Plan for our community. This plan looked ahead 15 to 20 years and aimed to help the City make choices about things like parks, sports facilities, programs, and investments.

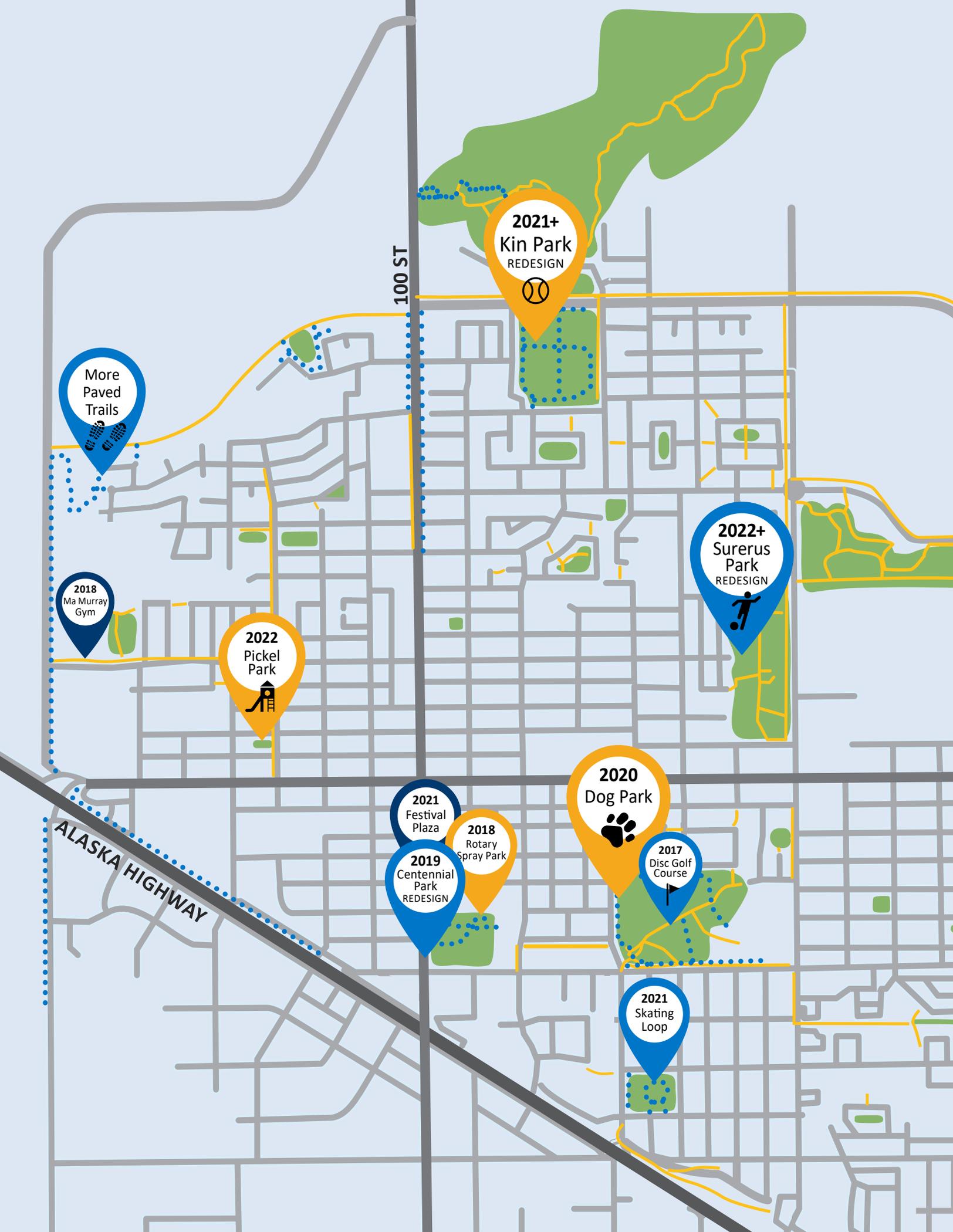
Then, in 2022, the City decided it was time to update this plan. Several ideas from the plan had been put into action, new maps and information were available, and there was a need to align it with other projects like the North Peace Leisure Facility Replacement Project. It was also wanted to share what they had achieved with the community and ask the public for their thoughts on what should come next.

This 2023 updated plan is based on feedback from more than 700 people and provides a fresh way to make decisions about parks and recreation for the next 10 years. This updated plan will ensure Fort St. John continues to be a great place for nature, business, and families.

VISION

Fort St. John will be a community where nature lives, recreation opportunities abound, and families are active and flourish.





2021+
Kin Park
REDESIGN

2022+
Surerus
Park
REDESIGN

2022
Pickel
Park

2020
Dog Park

2021
Festival
Plaza

2019
Centennial
Park
REDESIGN

2018
Rotary
Spray
Park

2017
Disc Golf
Course

2021
Skating
Loop

2018
Ma Murray
Gym

More
Paved
Trails

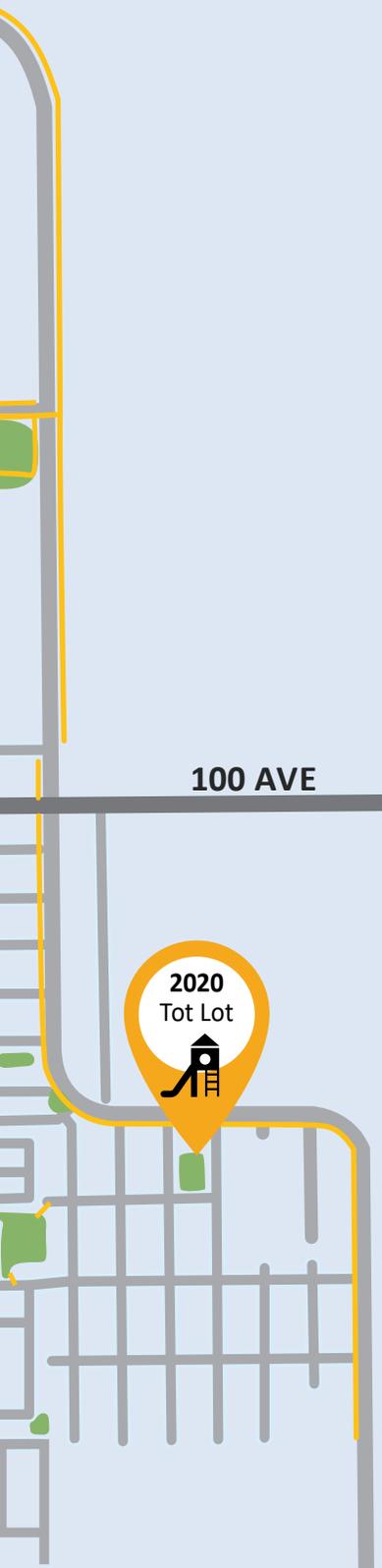
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ALASKA HIGHWAY

COMPLETED RECOMMENDATIONS

Since the Parks and Recreation Plan was prepared in 2017, the City has completed many of the recommendations for improvements to our parks, trails, recreation facilities and events. Such as:

- Centennial Park upgrades, including new playground equipment, outdoor stage, and public washrooms
- Festival Plaza and public washrooms
- Kin Park redesign, including new play equipment, outdoor ice rinks, pavillion, pickleball courts and trails
- Toboggan Hill disc golf course
- Rotary Spray Park upgrades
- Bert Bowes Middle School asphalt running track and infield upgrades
- Urban Forest Strategy
- New multi-use paths with lighting
- Toboggan Hill Off-leash Dog Park
- Carrier Park improvements
- Tot Lot Park play equipment upgrades
- Pickel Park play equipment upgrades
- Mathews Park Skate Loop and lighting upgrades
- Upgrades to the Surerus Park soccer pitches
- Mathews Park equipment upgrades and washrooms
- Triangle Park improvements
- Over 500 new trees planted in various parks
- Exterior, lighting, and mechanical system improvements to the North Peace Arena
- Kids Arena Fieldhouse upgrades
- New electric ice resurfacer for the Pomeroy Sport Centre
- Mechanical system and ice plant improvements at the Pomeroy Sport Centre
- Indoor play structure at the Pomeroy Sport Centre
- Planning for the replacement of the North Peace Leisure Pool in partnership with the Peace River Regional District and the District of Taylor
- Operationalized many of the recommendations from 2017 Parks and Recreation Plan, such as:
 - Continue to maintain all-season trails
 - Maintain and flood outdoor ice rinks and provide increased outdoor ice opportunities
 - Increasing operations resources and budgets as population grows and new elements are added to existing parks
 - Added security to monitor parks and recreational facilities
 - Implemented Crime Prevention Through Environment Design (CPTED) principles
 - Increased promotions of opportunities and financial assistance programs



100 AVE

2020
Tot Lot



COMMUNITY INPUT

The Parks and Recreation Plan update process provided an opportunity to share successes and accomplishments with the community and to gather input on the remaining 2017 priorities and new recommendations.

This Parks and Recreation Plan is based on the values and interests of the public, partners, staff, and elected officials of the City and surrounding communities.

During the initial plan development, extensive engagement with a wide range of residents was conducted, including telephone and web surveys, workshops, and numerous pop-up booths.

The 2023 plan update also included multiple engagement opportunities seeking input on the remaining 2017 priorities and new recommendations.

ENGAGEMENT METHODS



Online Survey

436 respondents



Canada Day Booth

250 visitors



Youth Opportunities

10 sessions



Open House

30 attendees

be curious about what our
community wants





guiding practices for success

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals and objectives provide guidance on directions that will be taken to meet community needs. These are based on the 2017 objectives, with minor revisions to reflect the community input received in 2022. The goals are organized within themes, and objectives follow each goal.



CONNECTIVITY & ACCESSIBILITY

Provide a multi-use, connected trail system that links parks and other key destinations

- Expand the trail system to better connect destinations such as downtown and city parks, and to integrate city trails with routes that extend to natural areas beyond the city
- Improve accessibility to and within parks and recreation facilities through the application of universal design principles
- Design well-connected, multi-purpose trails for walking, running, hiking, cycling, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and off-leash dog walking
- Enhance year-round use of trails by snow-clearing and grooming for cross-country skiing
- Expand amenities such as places to sit, rest and picnic along trails
- Connect city neighbourhoods to Fish Creek Community Forest, Charlie Lake, airport and Taylor
- Improve signage and maps for parks and trails



SOCIAL CONNECTIONS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Provide opportunities for social gatherings and connections within parks and recreation facilities

- Distribute a range of parkland types across all neighbourhoods in the city
- Provide spaces within parks and recreation facilities for large and small gatherings
- Encourage and support more festivals and events
- Provide outdoor spaces for various types of events
- Include community engagement in the planning, design, and programming of activities
- Encourage and support volunteerism and community groups through marketing, assistance, and incentives



MEETING NEEDS THROUGH FLEXIBILITY

Plan for adaptable, re-usable and multi-functional spaces

- Consider adaptive re-use of existing facilities to address deficiencies and to meet changing needs
- Expand multi-use opportunities in buildings, parks, trails, and public spaces
- Expand programs and services to include people with varying schedules, considering daily, weekly and seasonal use patterns



ENVIRONMENT & AESTHETICS

Protect and enhance the natural environment and aesthetics of the City's parks

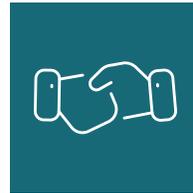
- Protect existing natural areas at the edge of the city and within parks
- Naturalize areas within parks and prioritize the use of indigenous plants and trees
- Increase the number of trees in parks and along streets in the city
- Design parks and trails so they will be a source of civic pride and that they are easy to maintain
- Keep parks and trails well-maintained and clean, and promote stewardship of them



INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

Provide services that reflect the diversity of Fort St. John's population

- Provide programs for all age groups and families to address the City's changing demographics
- Design programs to be inclusive of diverse ethnic and social groups, and those with a wide range of interests and skill levels
- Modify programs over time to address demographic changes, trends, and evolving interests
- Ensure that programs are affordable and accessible for all residents
- Design and manage parks and trails to improve safety and security



ECONOMIC VIABILITY & PARTNERSHIPS

Provide services and amenities in a financially responsible manner

- Pursue opportunities for private investment in recreation facilities through public/private partnerships, and partnerships with Indigenous communities and other levels of government, for development and maintenance of infrastructure
- Collaborate with School District 60, Northern Lights College, and University of Northern British Columbia for shared use of facilities, and with other colleges, surrounding jurisdictions, and private industry to provide complementary services
- Develop cost-sharing and cost-recovery strategies for new and existing facilities
- Provide capacity-building workshops for community groups



YEAR-ROUND HEALTHY & ACTIVE LIVING

Encourage as many people as possible to participate in activities throughout the year

- Increase amenities and recreation opportunities that inspire more winter use
- Focus on the user's experience when designing parks and facilities
- Encourage and promote cycling and walking as recreation activities and as viable modes of transportation
- Improve marketing of events and programs

RECOMMENDATIONS

The next several pages outline the recommendations across various segments of the City's Parks and Recreation functions. The recommendations are divided into the following subheadings; however, not all subheadings apply to each section:

- Land Acquisition
- Planning and Design
- Capital Development
- Operations and Management

Each table includes the recommendation, the source of the recommendation and the timeframe for implementation. The City has accomplished many of the recommendations set out in the 2017 Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Other recommendations have been revised to align better with current needs and priorities, and new recommendations have been added.



teaching | learning | helping

PRIORITIES

Based on the responses received during the engagement opportunities, priority charts were developed with comparisons to the 2017 Parks and Recreation Plan. These priority charts provide a quick look into the top 10 priorities for both indoor and outdoor recreation.

INDOOR	
2023 PLAN PRIORITIES	2017 PLAN PRIORITIES
1 Aquatics Facility	New gymnastics facility
2 Court space	Additional sport fields
3 Multi-sport facility Community gymnasium	Leisure pool replacement Program pool replacement
4 Playground	New gymnasium
5 More community use of school gyms	New indoor playground New climbing wall New indoor skate park
6 Rock climbing wall / facility Fieldhouse / sports field	New racquet court spaces
7 Teen space	Teen space
8 Concert venue	Concert venue
9 Online community calendar	Online community calendar
10 New gymnastics facility	New gymnastics facility

OUTDOOR	
2023 PLAN PRIORITIES	2017 PLAN PRIORITIES
1 More winter activities and amenities	Plan for new trail connections
2 More trails in natural areas	New off-leash dog park
3 Improve school sports fields with School District 60	Add new trails
4 New creative play equipment	Create park plans
5 Outdoor rock climbing feature	Implement park plans
6 Connect to regional trails	Improve sports fields and diamonds
7 Upgrade small parks in neighbourhoods	Increase winter uses
8 More programs to encourage community stewardship	Add new park amenities, such as pickleball
9 New park downtown	Improve park and trail maintenance
10 Off-leash dog walking trails	Streamline park operations

Input was also received on activities that are typically provided by the private or social sectors. Although the following amenities may not fall under the City's parks and recreation mandate, they may be useful for the City to know:

- trampoline park
- remote control car track
- mini golf
- indoor concert venue
- cat or treehouse café
- animal shelters
- technology park
- rental space

OUTDOOR RECOMMENDATIONS

PARKLAND

	SOURCE	TIMEFRAME
LAND ACQUISITION		
Pursue acquisition of community or neighbourhood parkland in the existing developed area to connect trails and improve access to parks	2017	0-5 years
Explore opportunities for additional public or park space downtown, including considering brownfields and vacant lots	Revised 2017	5-10 years
PLANNING AND DESIGN		
Establish guidelines for acquiring community and neighbourhood parks in new developments - consider including these guidelines in the Official Community Plan	Revised 2017	0-5 years
Negotiate with developers to acquire identified locations as natural areas in addition to the 5% parkland dedication	2017	0-5 years
Rezone Cadet Park to Park zoning	Revised 2017	0-5 years

TRAILS

	SOURCE	TIMEFRAME
PLANNING AND DESIGN		
Plan for new trail connections to improve connectivity throughout the City	2017	0-5 years
Establish guidelines for the planning of trails in new developments and apply best practices of trail planning to all new trails - consider including these guidelines in the Official Community Plan	Revised 2017	5-10 years
Coordinate among the appropriate City departments the implementation of bike lanes with off-road trails	2017	0-5 years
Coordinate with the PRRD to connect City trails with regional trails	2017	5-10 years
CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT		
Build new trail connections with a project each year	2017	0-5 years
Provide additional trail amenities such as benches, picnic areas and washrooms	2017	0-5 years
Incorporate lighting on trails as per the trail lighting capital plan	2023	0-5 years

PARK DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT

	SOURCE	TIMEFRAME
PLANNING AND DESIGN		
Conduct a park use plan for Toboggan Hill Park	2023	0-5 years
Conduct processes to plan upgrades to neighbourhood parks	2017	0-5 years
Apply guidelines to the design of new and upgraded parks	2017	0-5 years
Encourage School District 60 to invite City input into the design of school sites	2017	5-10 years
Establish a process for reviewing new activities or amenities requested by user groups within parks	2017	0-5 years
Identify potential green spaces that could be improved to be active parks in neighbourhoods lacking active parks	2017	5-10 years
Explore partnerships with the owners of land designated as Natural Areas in the OCP for activities such as trail uses and potentially off-leash dog walking	2017	5-10 years
CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT		
Upgrade community and natural parks (one every four years)	2017	>10 years
Upgrade neighbourhood parks (one every two years)	2017	5-10 years
Continue to improve signage related to parks	2017	0-5 years

SPORTS FIELDS & BALL DIAMONDS

	SOURCE	TIMEFRAME
PLANNING AND DESIGN		
Encourage ball diamond and sports field user groups to extend hours of practice to include weekends	2017	0-5 years
Work with with School District 60 on upgrading school sports fields	2017	5-10 years
CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT		
Develop new sports fields and ball diamonds as needed to support population growth	2017	>10 years
OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT		
Work with School District 60 to coordinate a higher level of maintenance on school sports fields that are upgraded	2017	>10 years

WINTER USES

	SOURCE	TIMEFRAME
PLANNING AND DESIGN		
Explore opportunities to expand the all season trail network in the City	2017	0-5 years
Explore opportunities, including partnerships with community groups, to expand the cross country and snowshoe trail network	Revised 2017	>10 years
Explore opportunities to provide groomed cross-country and snowshoe trails alongside all-season trails	2017	>10 years
Explore opportunities to design and develop a winter-focused park	Revised 2017	0-5 years

OTHER PARK AMENITIES

	SOURCE	TIMEFRAME
CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT		
Include the following amenities as part of upgrading parks and building new parks:		
Dog Off-Leash Areas	2017	5-10 years
Spray Park	2017	>10 years
Outdoor Fitness Equipment	2017	>10 years
Community Gardens	2017	5-10 years
Shelters	2017	0-5 years
Skate Parks	2017	>10 years
Bike Skills Parks	2017	5-10 years
Courts	2017	0-5 years
Track and Field	2017	>10 years

PARKS OPERATIONS & MANAGEMENT

	SOURCE	TIMEFRAME
CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT		
Establish a level of service policy for park infrastructure maintenance by City staff	Revised 2017	0-5 years
Work with police and social service organizations to address vandalism and those taking shelter in parks.	2017	0-5 years
Consider “adopt a park” or “adopt a trail” programs	2017	5-10 years
Consider implementing and enforcing park closures in certain locations at night	2017	0-5 years
Integrate park infrastructure within the City’s asset management system, including life-cycle costing for and establishing resources to maintain the infrastructure over that life cycle, and funds for replacement at the end of the life cycle.	2023	0-5 years



reducing barriers

INDOOR RECOMMENDATIONS

FACILITIES

	SOURCE	TIMEFRAME
PLANNING AND DESIGN		
Update the Community Recreation Facility Construction Policy to use when planning, designing, and developing recreation facilities	Revised 2017	0-5 years
CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT		
Work with School District 60 and Northern Lights College to provide opportunities for more community use of school gyms	2023	0-5 years
Explore opportunities to partner with the North Peace Gymnastics Association to develop a new gymnastics facility	Revised 2017	5-10 years
Plan for and develop the following indoor facilities if not included in the final design of a new aquatic centre:		
Indoor court space	Revised 2017	5-10 years
Community gymnasium	Revised 2017	0-5 years
Indoor playground	Revised 2017	0-5 years
Indoor rock climbing facility	Revised 2017	>10 years
Indoor fields	Revised 2017	>10 years
OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT		
Develop a life cycle renewal policy and process for indoor recreation infrastructure that ensures the sustainability of appropriate service levels.	Revised 2017	0-5 years

building and strengthening our
foundations through connectivity
and passion for all

PROGRAMS & EVENTS RECOMMENDATIONS

RECREATION PROGRAMS

	SOURCE	TIMEFRAME
OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT		
Formalize and facilitate an ongoing program and event needs identification process	2017	0-5 years
Develop process for reviewing existing and new programs and events	Revised 2017	0-5 years

SPECIAL EVENTS

	SOURCE	TIMEFRAME
OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT		
Establish a consolidated events schedule for all City and community-organized events	2017	0-5 years

REDUCING BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

	SOURCE	TIMEFRAME
OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT		
Bolster support to financial assistance programs	2017	Ongoing
Enhance physical accessibility in existing and new facilities and spaces	2017	Ongoing



the inclusive movement for all

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

ALLOCATION, FEES & CHARGES

	SOURCE	TIMEFRAME
OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT		
Add a principal that no one will be turned away from accessing a public leisure service due to the inability to pay when updating the Community Services Fees and Charges Bylaw	Revised 2017	0-5 years

OPERATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

	SOURCE	TIMEFRAME
OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT		
Update other City bylaws for consistency with the Parks and Recreation Plan, including the Official Community Plan, Zoning Bylaw, Developer Cost Charges Bylaw, Downtown Action Plan, and Subdivision Development & Servicing Bylaw	Revised 2017	0-5 years
Prepare an anti-littering bylaw	2017	>10 years
Explore opportunities for inter-municipal collaboration in the provision of recreation facilities and spaces	2017	0-5 years
Assign a City staff member with the responsibility for tracking and pursuing potential grants	2017	0-5 years
Explore opportunities to collaborate with Northern Lights College	2017	0-5 years



partnering to combine powers

CLOSING

The 2017 Parks and Recreation Plan was intended to cover a 15 to 20 year timeframe. The plan was revisited within six years as many of the recommendations from the plan were implemented and the City wanted to review the remaining recommendations with the community and identify new priorities.

Therefore, while this new plan is intended as a guide for 10 years, various factors could trigger a need to update the plan again before 2033, such as, population growth different from expectations or the use characteristics and trends are changing.

The critical factor is to remain committed to the vision, goals, and objectives in all aspects of parks and recreation planning and service delivery.

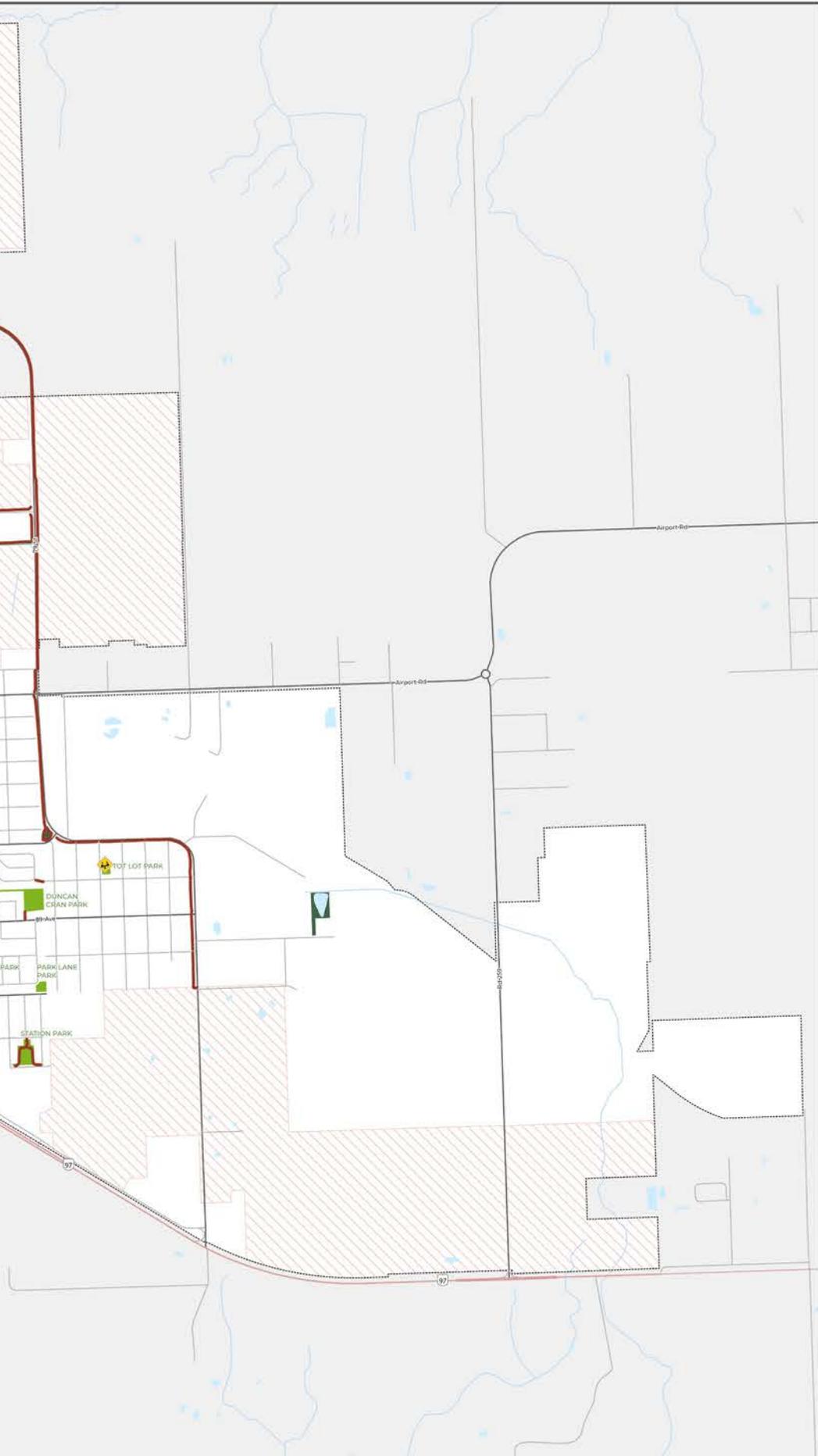
APPENDIX RELATED DOCUMENTS

There are numerous City of Fort St. John documents that provide the context for the Parks and Recreation Plan. They can be found on the City's website and include:

- 2023 - 2027 Strategic Plan
- Official Community Plan
- Zoning Bylaw
- Transportation Plan
- Urban Forest Strategy
- Downtown Action Plan

MAPS

- Existing Parks and Trails
- Walking Distances to Parks and Schools
- Proposed Parks and Trails
- Existing and Proposed Trail Lighting



Fort St. John
Parks and Recreation Plan
Existing Parks and Trails

Legend

- Existing Trails
- Park Areas**
 - Community Parks
 - Neighbourhood Parks
 - Cemeteries and Open Space
 - Natural Areas
- Playgrounds
- School Sites**
 - School - Grounds
 - School - Buildings or Other
 - Future School Sites
- Roads**
 - Highway
 - Major
 - Local
- Other**
 - Watercourse
 - City Boundary
 - Future Development Areas - Parks will be added if residential
 - OCP Natural Areas

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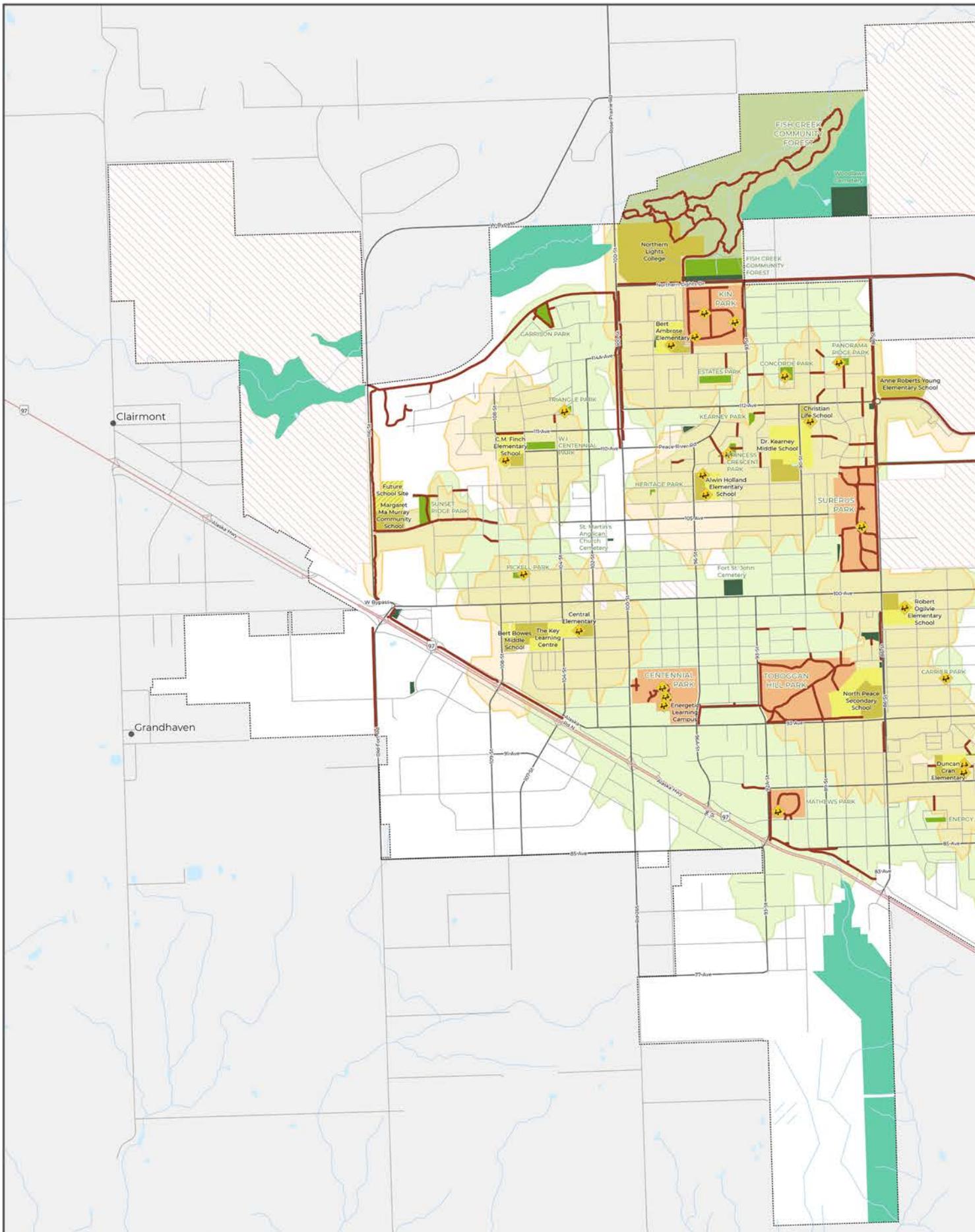
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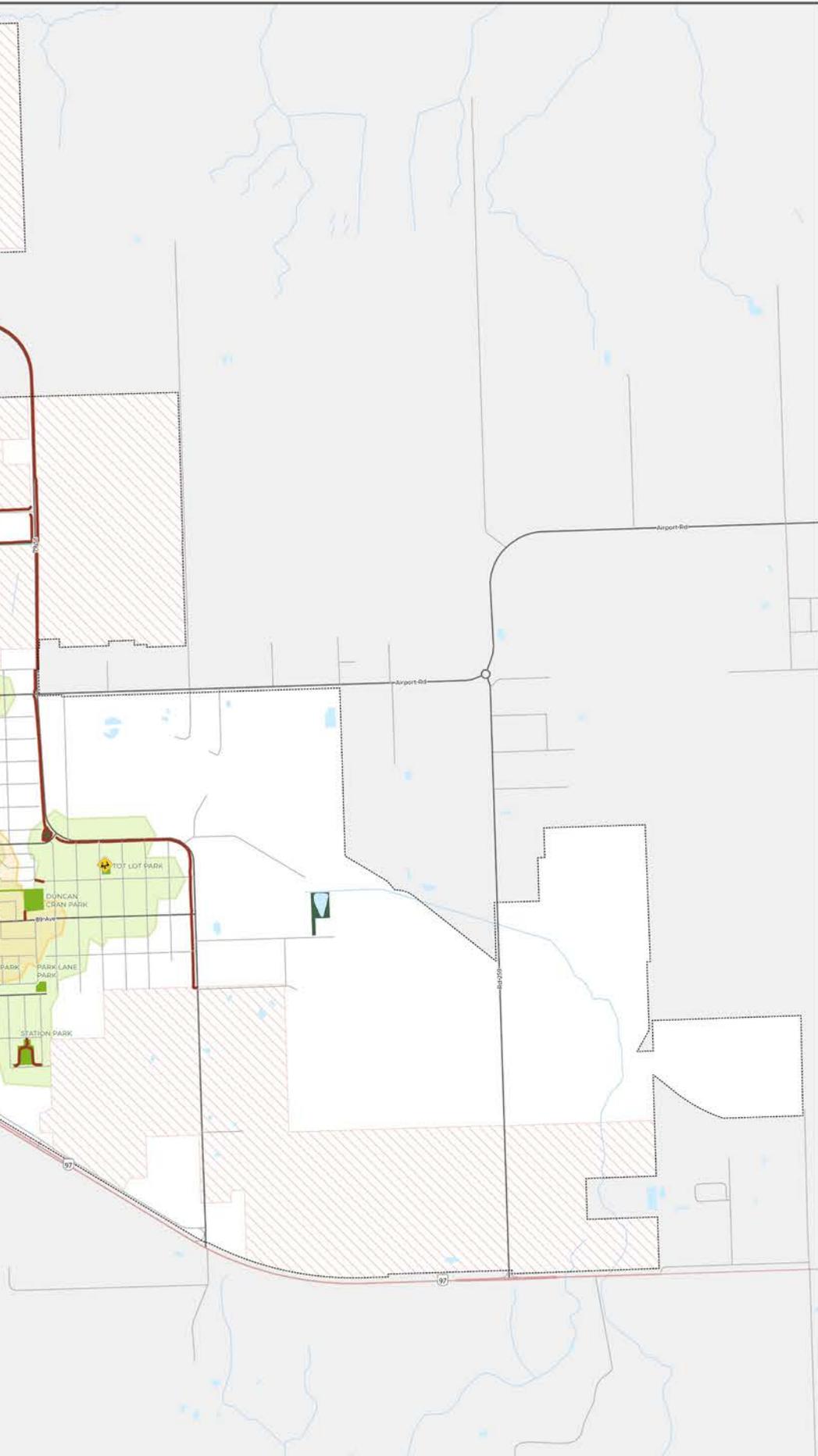
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Project #: 1958.0480.01
Author: CG
Checked:
Status: **DRAFT**
Revision: A
Date: 2023 / 5 / 9



Last updated by CGorgatti on May 8, 2023 at 11:41 AM
Last exported by CGorgatti on May 9, 2023 11:40 AM
Last printed by CGorgatti on September 25, 2017 11:44 AM





Fort St. John
 Parks and Recreation Plan
**Walking Distance to Parks
 and Schools:
 Network Analysis**

Legend

- Existing Trails
- 400 m Walking Distance from a School
- Varying Walking Distances from a Park*
- Park Areas**
 - Community Parks
 - Neighbourhood Parks
 - Cemeteries and Open Space
 - Natural Areas
- Playgrounds
- School Sites**
 - School - Grounds
 - School - Buildings or Other
 - Future School Sites
- Roads**
 - Highway
 - Major
 - Local
- Other**
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*** Varying walking distances from a park includes:**
 - 100m from a Neighbourhood Park that is less than 0.2 Ha
 - 400m from a Neighbourhood Park that is greater than or equal to 0.2 Ha
 - 800m from a Community Park

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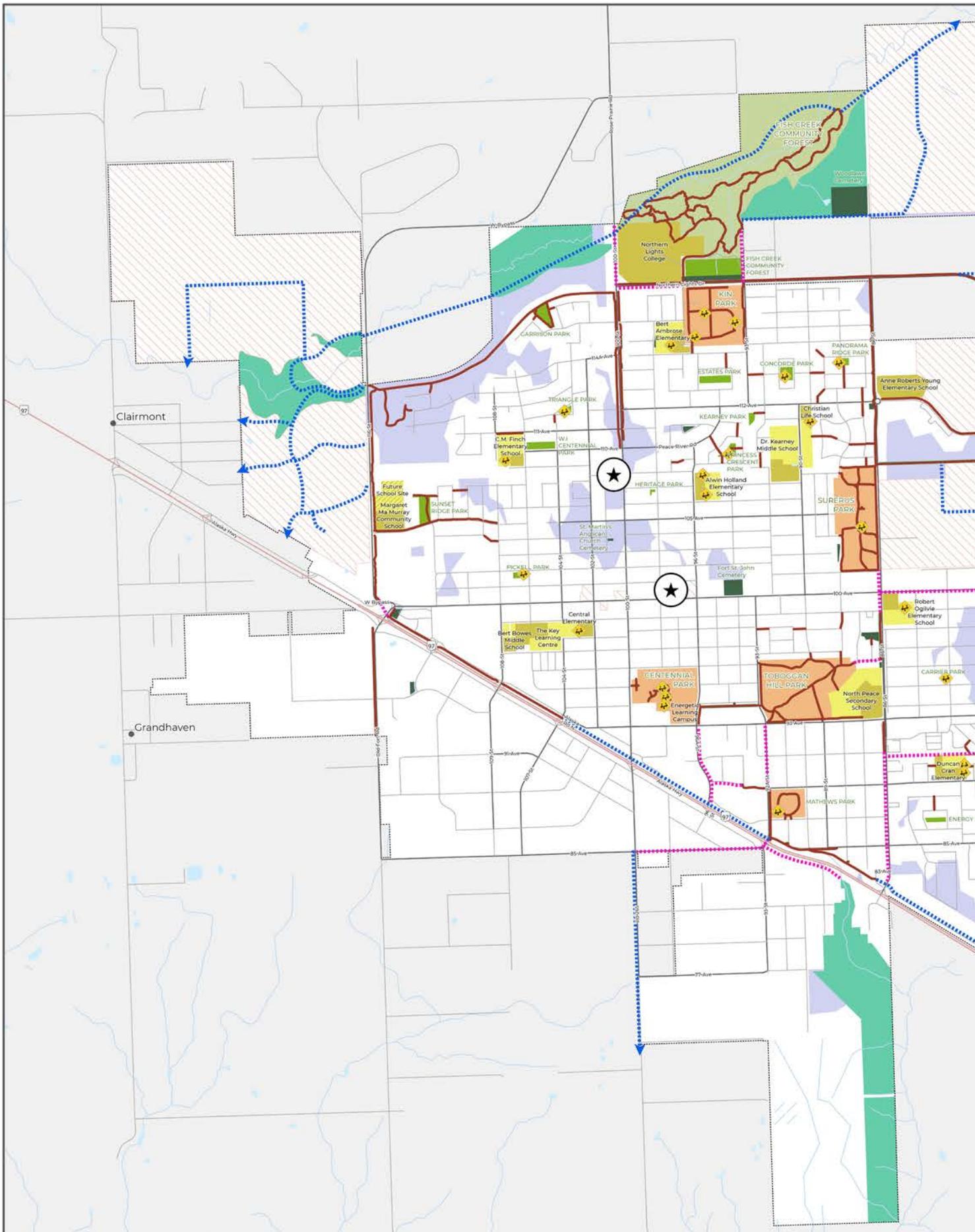
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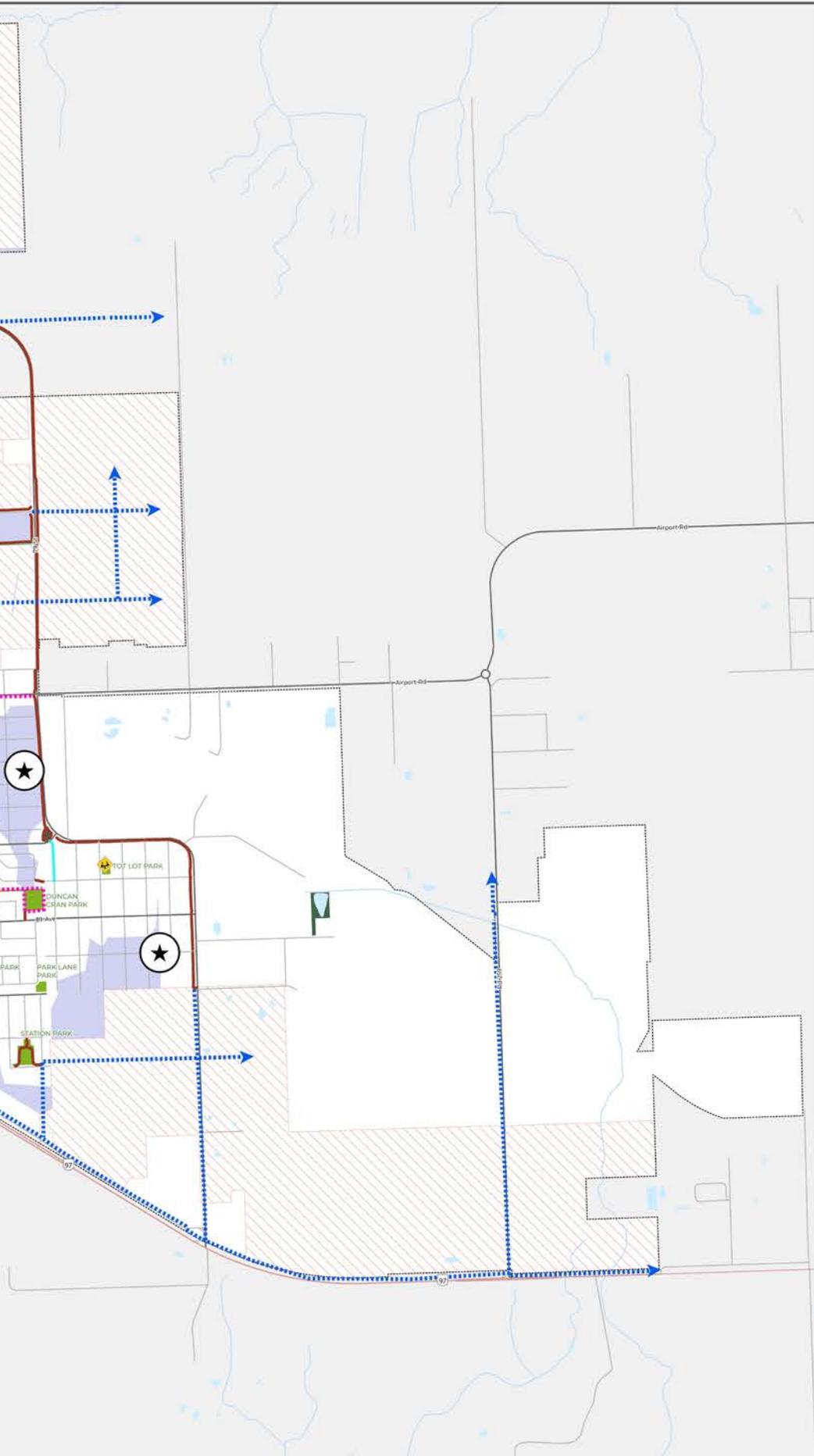
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Project #: 1958.0480.01
Author: CG
Checked:
Status: DRAFT
Revision: A
Date: 2023 / 5 / 9



Last updated by CGorgetti on May 9, 2023 at 11:24 AM
 Last exported by CGorgetti on May 9, 2023 10:33 AM
 Last printed by CGorgetti on September 25, 2017 11:44 AM





Fort St. John
Parks and Recreation Plan
Proposed Parks and Trails

Legend

- Existing Trails
 - - - Proposed Trails
 - · · Proposed Future Trails
- Park Areas**
- Community Parks
 - Neighbourhood Parks
 - Cemeteries and Open Space
 - Natural Areas
- Gaps in Neighbourhood Park Supply
 - Playgrounds
 - Proposed Park
- School Sites**
- School - Grounds
 - School - Buildings or Other
 - Future School Sites
- Roads**
- Highway
 - Major
 - Local
- Other**
- Watercourse
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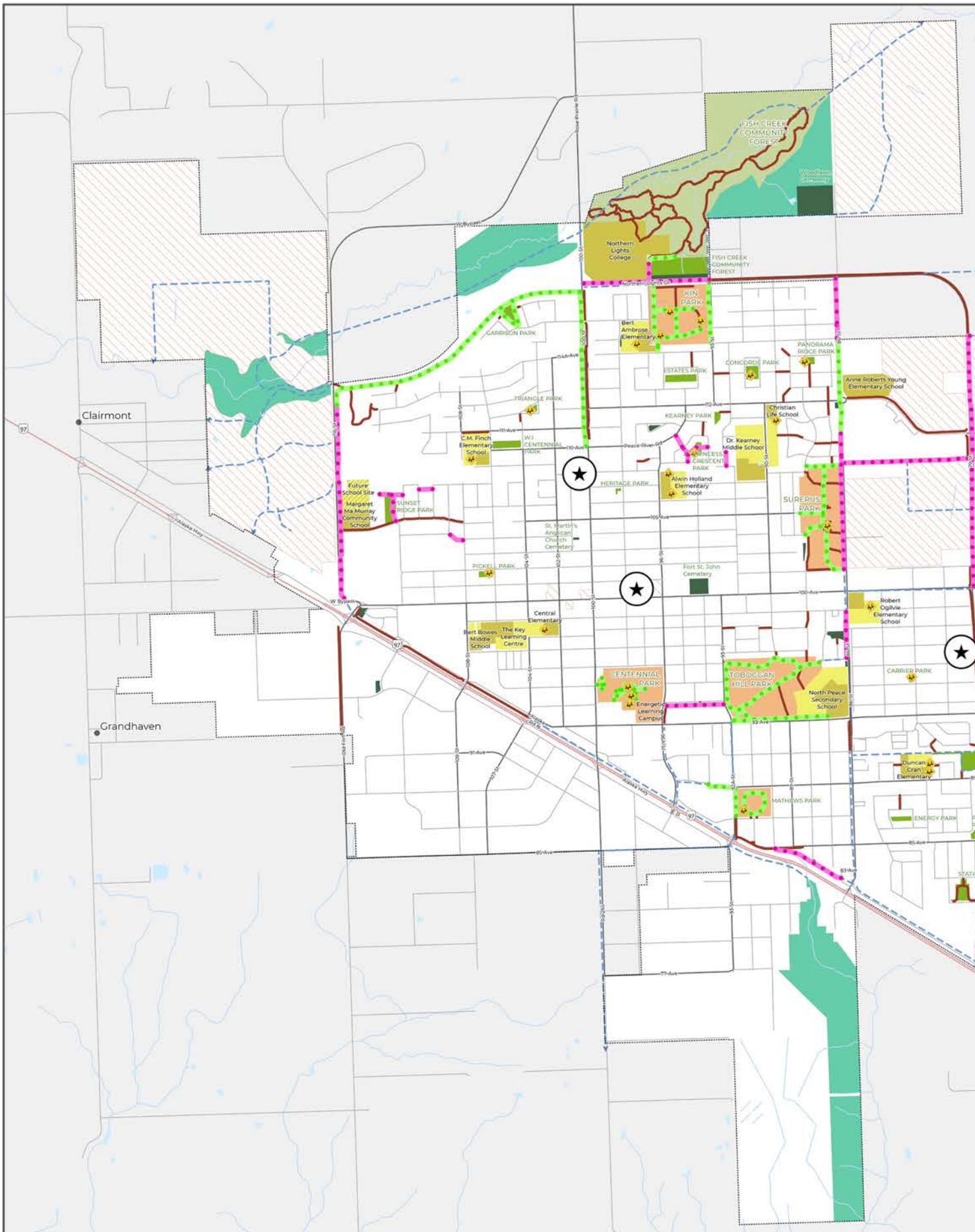
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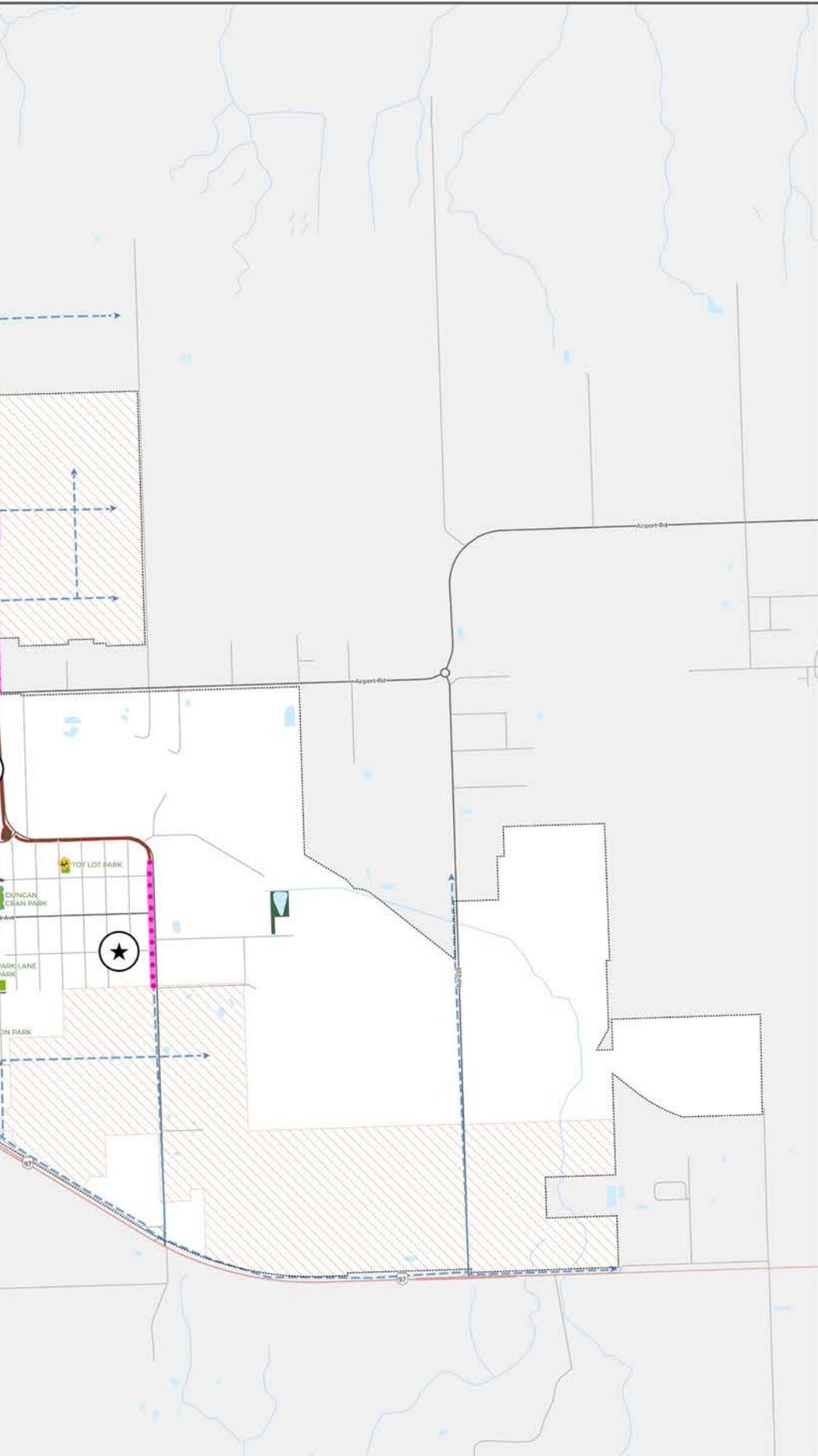
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MAP 3





Fort St. John
Parks and Recreation Plan
Existing and Proposed Trail Lighting

Legend

Lighting

- Existing
- Proposed

Trails

- Existing
- - - Proposed

Park Areas

- Community Parks
- Neighbourhood Parks
- Cemeteries and Open Space
- Natural Areas

- Playgrounds
- Proposed Park

School Sites

- School - Grounds
- School - Buildings or Other
- ▨ Future School Sites

Roads

- Highway
- Major
- Local

Other

- Watercourse
- City Boundary
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Project #: 1958.0480.01
Author: CG
Checked:
Status: **DRAFT**
Revision: A
Date: 2023 / 5 / 9



MAP 4

Last updated by C.Giorgetti on May 9, 2023 at 11:54 AM
Last exported by C.Giorgetti on May 9, 2023 11:54 AM
Last printed by C.Giorgetti on September 25, 2017 11:48 AM



FORT ST. JOHN
The Energetic City