

Millar Addition Citizens Coalition

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Citizens of the Millar Addition neighbourhood provide the following information for Council's review. These excerpts are from City of Prince George documents pertaining to Regulations, City Planning, Communications and Air Quality issues. It is our opinion that this information will be of value as you consider the proposed District Energy System and the Notice of Motion before Council on March 31 / 08.

REGULATORY - ZONING

12.1 M1: Light Industrial M1

12.1.5 Development Regulations

2. The maximum height is 12.0 m.

PLANNING

Excerpts From: DISCUSSION PAPER AIR QUALITY IN PRINCE GEORGE: MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP FOR IMPROVING THE AIR QUALITY IN PRINCE GEORGE AS A MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT, AND THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS. Jan. 23, 2008

"The City must work in collaboration with other levels of government, industry and the community in order to improve air quality in the City of Prince George."

"Background reports indicated fine particulates and total reduced sulphur air quality objectives were consistently exceeded in residential areas."

"A good starting point is to recognize the unique local conditions and the inherent restriction on air movement in the Prince George airshed due to geography, wind direction, and stable air events. Combined with the existing levels of emissions, the result is an airshed that exceeds standards in air contaminants, some of which are a health concern, and documented by the Ministry of Environment (MoE). If Council agrees, directions can be set to improve air quality."

"The emphasis in the OCP should be on the appropriate placement of future industrial development in consideration of the inherent sensitivities of our airshed. The OCP should set overarching policy objectives with respect to air quality and speak to the importance of regulating land use (not emissions specifically which is an MoE authority) to minimize the likelihood of emission producing activities impacting quality of life in the City. This would not only include an assessment of the types of industrial development that are likely to generate high emissions, but also an in depth consideration of our geography and climatic conditions."

"The OCP needs to appropriately identify sites for all categories of industrial development. The OCP review will be tasked with evaluating options for locating future light (and possibly "intermediate") industrial activities within City limits. Council has recently approved direction for the light industrial land use study to also consider airshed and transportation as driving factors."

"The City could also create economic development strategies to encourage business development within the City that does not adversely affect air quality."

"The greatest opportunity the City has to control air pollution and manage air quality as a municipality is by the direct control of land use through zoning."

“Once lands have been zoned by Council, there is no opportunity to regulate for air quality available by the municipality in general. In fact, once a proponent has met Development Permit approval guidelines set out by the municipality, the municipality legally must issue the Development Permit.”

“residents may view their contribution to improved air quality as unimportant against the larger emitters if there are no publicly communicated air quality improvement programs for existing emitters.”

“Suggested areas of improvement in the management of industrial air emissions by the Ministry of Environment include:

- more stringent emission standards where warranted by local conditions, for existing permit holders to reduce emissions;
- prediction of effects on local receptors (residents, businesses, etc.), using modeling, including the cumulative effect of adding to existing pollutant levels;”

“One approach is to use good judgment to make air quality improvements without having all the information and research for perfect decisions.”

“A review of all levels of governments and their air quality, climate change, greenhouse gas and bioenergy programs to coordinate the programs, rules and regulations with the City of Prince George in this rapidly changing environment could be discussed as a component of a proposed Corporate Air Quality and Climate Change Strategic Plan as part of the City’s Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP).”

“The unique local conditions and the inherent restriction on air movement in the Prince George airshed due to geography, wind direction, and stable air events combined with the existing levels of emissions result in an airshed that exceeds standards in air contaminants, some of which are a health concern, documented by the Ministry of Environment (MoE). These facts likely inhibit a broad range of positive developments for the City over the short and mid-term. The challenges can be categorized as health concerns or nuisance (smell). For example, on a smaller local area level, air quality in the downtown area could be considered as a possible impediment to Downtown Revitalisation.

Discussion on factual and positive branding and promotion of Prince George in the area of air quality should be considered. Without specific improvements to the persistent odorous emissions, the perception may not change. This area could be explored.”

OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN

Excerpts From: Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 7281, 2001 Adopted September 17, 2001 City of Prince George

Part A – Chapter 1 - Vision

The principles which provide a foundation for this vision include:

Focus on Quality of Life Focus on creating a high quality of life for residents, giving consideration to the visual, social, environmental, economic and general community impacts.

Downtown as the Centre Create a strong, vibrant downtown that is the centre of business activity, and the focus for cultural and recreational activities, provides housing for a diverse residential community, and offers a quality destination for visitors to the city. Visualize the downtown as the showcase of the community, the source of civic pride, and work toward achieving that goal.

Community Involvement Involve and communicate with the community on land use and community development decisions, provide information on these issues, and build consensus on actions that affect the city’s future.

Build Strong Neighbourhoods Recognize that quality of life is most important in the local neighbourhood, and create neighbourhoods that provide housing choices, recreation, open space and services close to home.

4.2 Air Quality

Improving air quality in the City of Prince George is another key goal expressed by city residents, particularly within the bowl area, which has the most serious air quality problems. There are many factors affecting air quality in the city. These include:

- Road dust
- Major industries
- Vehicle exhaust

12. Industrial Lands Strategy

a. Support major industrial uses within the existing sites in the city. With existing heavy industrial uses air quality is to be monitored with an emphasis on reduced emissions and minimization of impacts on city neighbourhoods. New heavy industrial businesses will be encouraged to work with the City of Prince George and the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George to locate on appropriate sites.

b. New industrial development within the city will be in the form of industrial uses which do not create adverse environmental impacts. The Plan provides significant new land areas for future industrial use; as with urban development, current areas where environmentally appropriate, should be infilled prior to new areas being developed.

OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN REVIEW

*Excerpts From: City of Prince George Official Community Plan Review Background Paper #1
– Industrial Land September 20, 2007*

2.2 Air Quality

While recognizing the importance of industry to Prince George's economic development, air quality is an equally important consideration and is a major part of the city becoming a more sustainable community.

The updated OCP must ensure that the city's airshed is considered in deciding upon the appropriate placement of future industrial development.

6.2 Stronger Emphasis on Air Quality

Given the considerable public concern over the city's air quality, particularly in the Bowl area, consideration should be given to a stronger policy stand in the OCP on the relationship between industrial development and air quality. This might include, for example, a statement that the City strongly encourages existing industry to reduce its air emissions and that, where it has the ability to do so, the City will not permit new industrial development, whether heavy or light, if it will adversely affect the city's airshed as a result of point source emissions. Industry that impacts on air quality should continue to be encouraged to locate outside the airshed.

This is particularly important if the City is to succeed with promoting densification and infill of the Bowl area, and in attracting more residential development to Downtown as part of revitalizing the area.

6.3 Redefining Major and Light Industry

Consideration is being given to amending the current definitions of major and light industry in the OCP. For example, parcel size might be removed as one of the factors in how major industry is defined, with a focus instead on use and impacts on the community, such as air quality and traffic.

EXTERNAL INFORMATION

Excerpts from the Prince George Mayor's Task Force on Air Quality Improvement

Over the past ten years, new research has changed society's understanding of air quality and health in at least two important ways. It is now known that air quality varies significantly within a community as well as between communities. People who live near a major traffic artery or a train yard, directly downwind of an industrial site, or directly downwind of uncontrolled open burning, may experience a disproportionate risk of heart and lung disease. People with low incomes are more likely to be living in these less than optimum conditions and they consequently bear a greater burden of illness and death from air pollution. (p.10)

In the OCP, Chapter 3 – Growth Management, Policy 12 concerning Industrial Lands states that for existing heavy industrial uses, air quality is to be monitored with an emphasis on reduced emissions and minimization of impacts on city neighbourhoods. (p. 27)

Recommendation: The BC Ministry of Environment, the City of Prince George, and the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George should ensure that new sources of pollutants that are estimated to measurably impact air quality in the airshed are not allowed until existing sources have been lowered sufficiently for significant continuous improvement in ambient levels... (p. 31)

CITIZEN VIEWS

Excerpts From: City Of Prince George 2007 Quality of Life Survey

Section IV focused on industrial development and results showed that 66% of respondents thought industrial development in the city is having an 'unfavourable impact' on the quality of life in residential neighborhoods. 88% of those naming unfavourable impacts name air emissions.

84% support collaborative efforts with the Regional District to identify appropriate sites for future major industrial operations outside of the City's airshed.

ID4). Do you believe industrial development in the City is having an impact on the quality of life in residential neighbourhoods (i.e., air emissions, noise, appearance, etc.)? N=412

1. No impact **11.2%**
2. Unfavourable impact **65.5%**
3. Favourable impact **6.3%**
4. Not sure **17.0%**

S7). Annually, Council sets priorities and directions for the City of Prince George. Please indicate how you would like to be involved in assisting Council to set the City's priorities and directions. **The majority of responses to this question involved people wanting to have some type of public input on matters of high priority. Respondents were also in favour of referendums as well as questionnaires such as this one.**