



*City of* **MERRITT**

# Official Community Plan

**Bylaw No. 2116, 2011**

**\*\* (CONSOLIDATED FOR CONVENIENCE ONLY, INCLUDING  
BASE BYLAW NO. 2116 (2011) AND AMENDMENT BYLAW NO.  
2141(2013, 2162 (2014), 2252(2019), 2257(2019), 2263(2019),\*\***

*Setting  
Direction  
For Our  
Community*

**CITY OF MERRITT**

**BYLAW 2116, 2011**

**WHEREAS** the Council for the City of Merritt wishes to adopt an updated Official Community Plan pursuant to the *Local Government Act*;

**AND WHEREAS**, pursuant to Section 882 of the *Local Government Act*, the Council for the City of Merritt has examined the plan in conjunction with its Financial Plan and any waste management plan that is applicable in the municipality to ensure consistency between them;

**AND WHEREAS** the Council of the City of Merritt have referred the plan to the Board of the Thompson Nicola Regional District, and the Provincial Agricultural Land Commission;

**AND WHEREAS** the Council for the City of Merritt has held a public hearing on the proposed community plan;

**NOW THEREFORE** the Council for the City of Merritt in open meeting assembled hereby enacts as follows:

1. This bylaw shall be cited as the "CITY OF MERRITT UPDATED OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN BYLAW NO. 2116, 2011."
2. That the City of Merritt Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 1879, 2004 and all amendments thereto be hereby rescinded in its entirety.
3. That "Schedule A" (Official Community Plan) attached is hereby:
  - a) Made part of this bylaw; and
  - b) Designated as the Official Community Plan for the City of Merritt.
  - c) If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, or phrase of this bylaw is for any reason held to be invalid by the decision of any court for competent jurisdiction, the invalid portion shall be severed and the decision that it is invalid shall not affect the validity of the remainder.

<b>READ A FIRST TIME this</b>	<b>14<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>day of June, 2011</b>
<b>READ A SECOND TIME this</b>	<b>14<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>day of June, 2011</b>
<b>PUBLIC HEARING HELD this</b>	<b>28<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>day of June, 2011</b>
<b>READ A THIRD TIME this</b>	<b>28<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>day of June, 2011</b>
<b>ADOPTED this</b>	<b>28<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>day of June, 2011</b>

**Original signed by  
Susan Roline,  
MAYOR**

**Original signed by  
Matt Noble,  
CAO and Corporate Services Manager**

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## **Schedule A**

### **Official Community Plan Text**

**Updated June 28, 2011**

## **1.0 FOUNDATION ON WHICH WE ARE BUILDING**

The City of Merritt's Official Community Plan (OCP) provides an updated vision for the future of Merritt and a framework for carrying that vision forward to the year 2030. The OCP provides Council and the public with direction for development and the basis to evaluate proposals to ensure these proposals are consistent with the vision. The intent of this OCP is to provide an appropriate amount of planning direction while also providing flexibility to customize development to suit specific and unique circumstances within the City as well as facilitating creative and unusual development proposals.

### **1.1 How to Use this Plan**

This OCP will enable Council to work with each new development on a case-by-case basis and to consider the unique variables of new development and work towards the interests of the community. This plan enables Council to promote a culture of partnering as new development comes forward. This approach is in support of Council's overarching theme of "Making the Economic Pie Bigger" in Merritt.

The updated OCP articulates Council's vision to grow Merritt to a sustainable community of approximately 15,000 people. In part this vision comes from the Integrated Growth Strategy Report of 2010 which asked Merritt to describe the kind of city they would want to live in by year 2030. The plan also identifies guiding principles, overarching policies for the entire City and for individual neighbourhoods or "sectors". The Plan also outlines a framework for handling new development.

### **1.2 Organization and Format of the Plan**

The City of Merritt Official Community Plan is organized into the following sections:

#### **Section 1.0 – Foundation on Which We Are Building**

This section provides an introduction to the OCP by outlining the scope of the plan, methodology used to prepare this document, a demographic profile and growth projections.

#### **Section 2.0 - Setting Direction for Our Community Plan**

This section outlines the updated vision which identifies the ideal community Merritt wants to reach and the guiding principles for planning and development in Merritt. This provides the framework and criteria used throughout the preparation of the plan. Council is committed to maintaining this direction as new development, infill and redevelopment occurs within the City.



### **Section 3.0 - City-Wide Policies and Corresponding Maps**

This section outlines general policies that apply to the entire City. These policies are based upon the concept of “Making the Economic Pie Bigger” and include the following:

- Merritt and the Forest Industry
- Creating the Sustainable Community
- Creating the Gateway 286 Sector
- Creating the “Village” and the “Three Storey Downtown”
- Creating the Medium Density, Compact, Walkable City
- Creating the Expanded City
- Investing in Infrastructure
- Working with Nature
- Working with Other Agencies
- Handling New Development in Merritt
- Accommodating and providing for Temporary Use Areas

### **Section 4.0 – Regional Context and Fringe Areas**

This section provides the City’s Regional Context Statement that conforms to and supports the Thompson Nicola Regional District (TNRD) Regional Growth Strategy. Fringe area policies are also included.

### **Section 5.0 - “Umbrella” and Sector Specific Policies**

The City of Merritt has been divided into 11 sectors. Section 5 includes land use and development policies, contains the Sector Map and provides policies and detailed maps for each sector. “Umbrella” policies are also provided which apply to all areas of the City. The sectors include the Bench; River Ranch and Grassland Area; East Merritt/Diamond Vale; South Merritt; North Nicola; Gateway 286; City Centre; West Merritt; Collettville; Voght Street/North Entry Corridor; and the Airport Area.

### **Section 6.0 – Development Permit Areas**

This section outlines Development Permit areas for seven areas including City Centre, Highway Corridor Gateways, Geotechnical Hazards, Wildfire Hazards, Intensive Residential Infill / Small Lot Residential Subdivisions, Riparian Areas and Multi-Family Residential Areas.

## **Section 7.0 - Implementing the Official Community Plan**

This section outlines how the policies contained in this plan will be implemented including integration with other projects, updating support bylaws and policies, and a framework for continuing to facilitate new development.

### **1.3 Scope of the Plan**

The City of Merritt Official Community Plan is defined by provincial statute under the *Local Government Act*. Further to Section 877 an OCP must include the following:

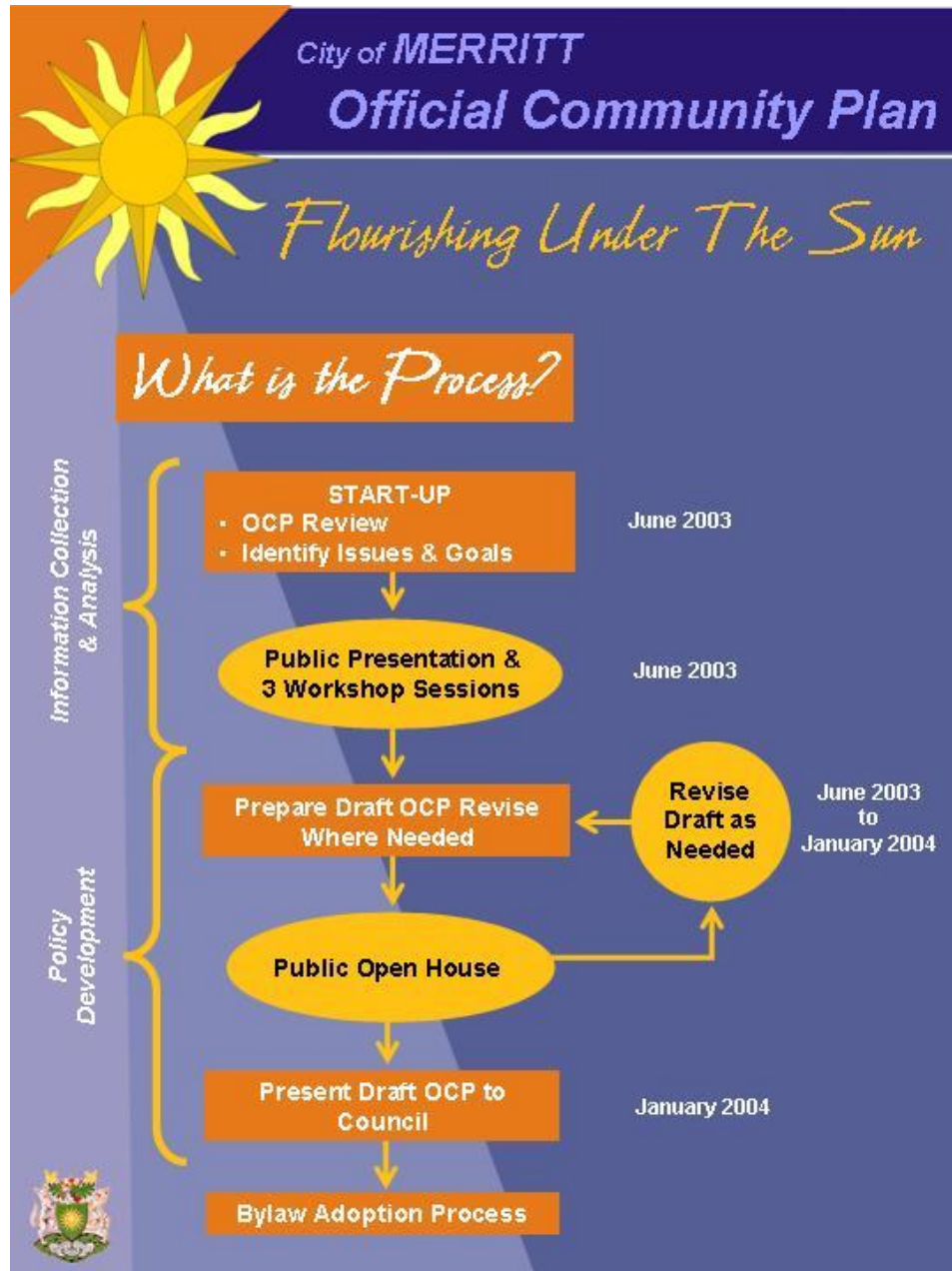
- the approximate location, amount, type and density of residential development required to meet anticipated housing needs over a period of at least 5 years (this OCP uses a 20 year horizon for residential development);
- the approximate location, amount and type of present and proposed commercial, industrial, institutional, agricultural, recreational and public utility land uses (this OCP uses a 20 year horizon for these uses);
- the approximate location and area of sand and gravel deposits that are suitable for future sand and gravel extraction;
- restrictions on the use of land that is subject to hazardous conditions or that is environmentally sensitive to development;
- the approximate location and phasing of any major road, sewer and water systems;
- the approximate location and type of present and proposed public facilities, including schools, parks and waste treatment and disposal sites;
- other matters that may, in respect of any plan, be required or authorized by the Minister responsible for administering the *Local Government Act*;
- housing policies of the local government respecting affordable housing, rental housing and special needs housing; and
- targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and policies and actions of the local government proposed with respect to achieving those targets.

### **1.4 Methodology and Preparation of the Plan and the Update**

To prepare this plan, originally adopted in 2004, Council and City staff consulted with and sought input from Merritt residents and property owners. The plan took direction from visioning and strategy sessions undertaken by the City including the City of Merritt Strategic Planning Session (February 2003), the Nicola Valley Round Tables (February 2003), the three Official Community Plan Visioning Workshop Sessions with the Public (June 2003) and the Public Open House to

Review Sector Plans (December 2003). The plan also considered input from multiple agencies, and organizations as well as input from staff and consultants. Figure 1.1 below illustrates how the year 2004 plan was prepared.

**Figure 1.1**



Prior to the 2011 update of this plan the City undertook an Integrated Growth Strategy – 2010. This identifies a community vision to year 2030 and provides a general framework to guide the development of the City; all prepared in consultation with Merritt citizens through workshops and on line surveys. The Integrated Growth Strategy constitutes the visioning process for this OCP Update.

A Select Committee Focus Group was chosen by the Mayor to review and recommend an updated OCP. The Focus Group included both resident citizens and those who live beyond the City. An OCP Update Working Paper was prepared and several workshops were held to produce an updated OCP based on the Working Paper. Council also held open houses and conducted on line 'questions of the week' to help citizens respond to a new and updated OCP. The plan proceeded through the statutory adoption process and was adopted in June 2011.

### 1.5 Demographic Profile and Population Projections

According to BC Stats, the population of the City of Merritt was estimated at 7,520 in year 2000, 7,338 in 2006, 7,393 in 2007, 7,455 in 2008, 7,460 in 2009 and 7,285 in 2010. They estimate a 2.3% drop in population during this period. The year 2006 Census population for Merritt is 6,998. Data from the 2011 Census will be added as an addendum when it becomes available in 2012.

The age structure of Merritt as reported by Statistics Canada, is illustrated in Table 1.1. It is noteworthy that Collettsville, with an estimated population of 600 people, amalgamated with the City of Merritt in 1996.

**Table 1.1 – Population Distribution 1991 and 2001 and 2006 - Updated**

Age	1991		2001		2006		BC Total - 2006
	Number	% of total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	% of Total
to 14	1,535	24.6%	1,540	21.7%	1,330	19.0%	16.5%
15 to 24	915	14.6%	925	13.0%	830	11.8%	13.1%
25 to 44	1,935	31.0%	1,900	26.8%	1,635	23.4%	27.4%
45 to 64	1,250	20.0%	1,745	24.6%	2,060	29.5%	28.4%
65+	620	9.9%	970	13.7%	1,140	16.3%	14.6%
<b>Total*</b>	<b>6,250</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>7,090</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6,995</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

*\*Note: Totals do not add up exactly. This is due to random rounding and to protect confidentiality.  
Source: BC Stats /Stats Canada*

From 1991 to 2001, the percentage of the community 45 to 64 years old increased from 20.0% to 24.6% and then to 29.5% in 2006. The 65 years and older cohort increased from 9.9% in 1991 to 13.7% in 2001 and then to 16.3% in 2006. As suggested by the Interior Health Authority, a 13% growth is projected for the seniors' population in the coming years<sup>1</sup>. Future planning must consider the different requirements an aging population has with respect to housing, health care, accessibility and community services including street cleaning, enhanced

<sup>1</sup> Interior Health Authority is currently utilizing P.E.O.P.L.E. 28 data.

sidewalks, snow removal and public transit. In addition, as economic development opportunities occur, younger families are expected to locate in the City. Merritt will need to continue to provide a quality lifestyle for both families and retirees.

Table 1.2 projects population growth for the City of Merritt, using three different growth scenarios. The population of Merritt has generally increased at a low, but steady rate between the mid 1980s and 1996. However, since 1996, the population has declined by 8% from 7,924 in 1996 to an estimated 7,285 in 2010. There have been periods of growth within this term. Accordingly, the average growth rate has been approximately 0.64% over the last decade. In spite of this statistic, it is believed that new business and community development initiatives will result in greater population growth especially in the next 5 to 10 years.

The Thompson Nicola Regional District has adopted a growth rate of **1.8%** as part of its Regional Growth Strategy. Using this data and taking into consideration the historical trends in population growth and decline over the past few years, and the desire to reach a population of 15,000 by year 2030, the following table provides projections based on possible growth scenarios of 1.0%, 1.8% and 3.5%.

**Table 1.2 – Population Projections Based on Possible Growth Scenarios - Updated**

<b>Year</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>1.8%</b>	<b>3.5%</b>
2010*	7,285	7,285	7,285
2015	7,656	7,825	8,653
2020	8,046	8,555	10,277
2025	8,456	9,353	12,206
2030	8,887	10,225	14,497

\* Source: *BC Stats Infoline Issue 11/02, January 14, 2011*

Table 1.3 estimates the number of new housing units that will be required over the next 20 years to accommodate the projected populations assuming an average household size of 2.6 persons per household.

**Table 1.3 – Projected Housing Demand - Updated**

Year	1.0%	New Housing Units	1.80%	New Housing Units	3.5%	New Housing Units
2010*	<b>7,285</b>		<b>7,285</b>		<b>7,285</b>	
2015	7,656	143	7,825	208	8,653	526
2020	8,046	150	8,555	281	10,277	625
2025	8,456	158	9,353	307	12,206	742
2030	8,887	166	10,225	335	14,497	881
<b>Total Growth/Demand at 2.6 persons per household</b>	<b>1,602</b>	<b>617</b>	<b>2,940</b>	<b>1,131</b>	<b>7,212</b>	<b>2,774</b>
<b>Total Growth/demand at 2.3 persons per household</b>	<b>1,602</b>	<b>696</b>	<b>2,940</b>	<b>1,278</b>	<b>7,212</b>	<b>3,135</b>

Source: BC Stats Infoline Issue 11/02, January 14, 2011

Whereas there is a land base of approximately 2,479 hectares (6,125 acres), the Integrated Growth Strategy 2010, in consideration of a variety of development constraints, compresses that land base to 279 hectares (689 acres) of easily and directly developable land. **There is an adequate supply of vacant lots and designated residential and future development land to easily meet the expected demand for housing over the next 20 years.** At a growth rate of 1.0% per annum, about 617 additional units will be required over the next 20 years. At a growth rate of 1.8% per annum, approximately 1,131 additional units will be required over the next 20 years. At a growth rate of 3.5% per annum, about 2,774 additional units will be required over the next 20 years. (If the household formation size decreases from 2.6 to 2.3 persons per household over the next 20 years additional units would be required. A 1.0 % per annum growth rate would generate 696 additional units by 2030. A 1.8% per annum growth rate would generate 1,278 additional units by 2030. A 3.5% per annum growth rate would generate 3,135 additional units by 2030.)

## **1.6 Labour Force**

The distribution of the labour force in the City of Merritt is shown in Table 1.4. Education and health services rank the highest in 2001, with manufacturing and construction a close second. In 2006, manufacturing and construction rank the highest with education and health services a near second. Both sectors are higher than the BC average for year 2006.

**Table 1.4 – Labour Force**

<b>Labour Force</b>	<b>% 2001</b>	<b>% 2006</b>	<b>% BC 2006</b>
Wholesale and Retail Trade	10.4	14.1	15.5
Manufacturing and Construction	18.0	19.9	16.2
Education and Health Services	19.7	17.4	16.7
Agricultural and other resource-based industries	13.3	10.8	4.9
Other Services	38.5	37.8	46.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: 2001 and 2006 Census Canada*

### **1.7 Housing Characteristics**

In year 2006 Census Canada identified 2,820 dwellings and households in Merritt. Of these households over 62% were single family detached houses. Within this housing type, a total of 30.5% were occupied by couples with no children.

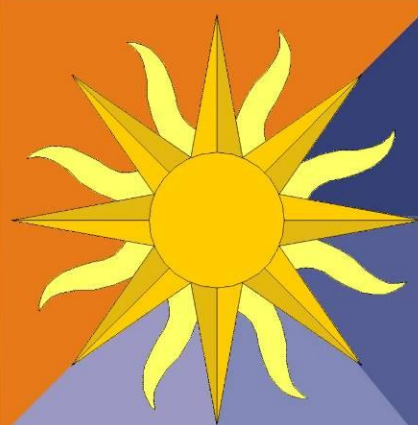
**Table 1.7 – Housing and Household Characteristics – 2006**

<b>Private Dwelling Type</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Household Type</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Single Detached	1,754	62.2%	Couple with children	670	23.7%
Semi Detached	239	8.5%	Couple with no children	860	30.5%
Row House	156	5.5%	Single Person	780	27.7%
Apartment (all types)	465	16.5%	Other	510	18.1%
Other	206	7.3%	Average Household size	2.4 pph	nil
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,820</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,820</b>	<b>100%</b>

## **2.0 SETTING DIRECTION FOR OUR COMMUNITY PLAN**

The attached sheet illustrates the Vision and Guiding Principles established for this Official Community Plan.





# City of Merritt Official Community Plan

## Flourishing Under The Sun

### Our Vision *The Ideal Future We Are Striving For*

#### ☀️ A Healthy Economy

Our economy is healthy and resilient - Merritt's "economic pie" is getting progressively bigger through sustained growth.

#### ☀️ A Thriving Downtown

Our City Center is thriving - it is the "heart" of our community.

#### ☀️ Room to Grow

Suitable sites are available for new development, particularly light industrial / service commercial / business park development.

#### ☀️ Viable City Finances

The City's financial situation is healthy, generating sufficient funds through fair taxes and other sources to do what's required.

#### ☀️ Well Managed City Assets

The City's infrastructure and amenity assets are being well looked after, ensuring an appropriate standard of services in existing and new development areas.

#### ☀️ A Great Place to Live

Merritt is seen by residents as a great place to live from all perspectives - employment, housing, community services, natural amenities, safety, quality, accessibility, community pride.

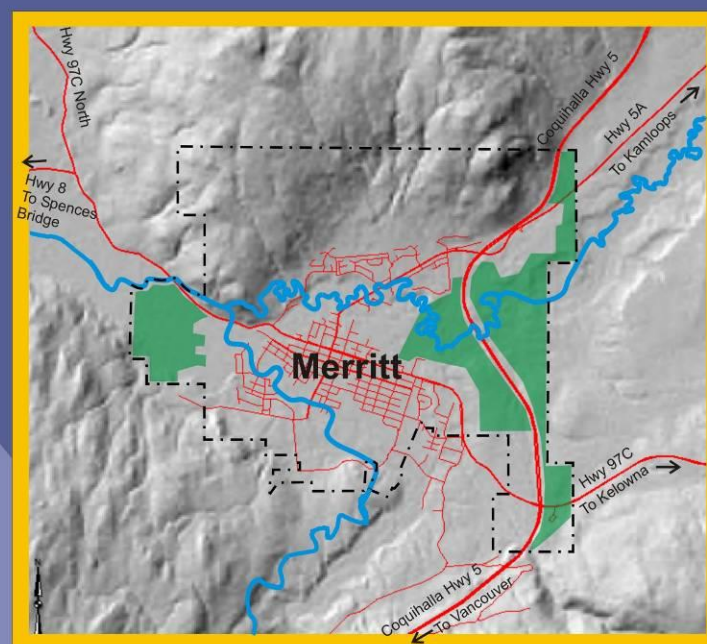
#### ☀️ A Progressive Image

Merritt's image is being transformed - outsiders and residents alike see Merritt as an attractive, progressive community with a bright future.

#### ☀️ A Great Place to Visit

Tourists and highway travellers see Merritt as a great place to visit - lots to see and do, quality support services, positive first impressions enticing visitors to spend more time and money in Merritt.

*"Vision without action is merely a dream.  
Action without vision just passes the time.  
Vision with action can change the world."  
Joel Barker*



### Guiding Principles *Council's Approach To Planning In Merritt*

#### ☀️ Leadership by Council

The people of Merritt are looking to Council to provide effective and inspired leadership in providing vision for the future and taking action in carrying the vision forward.

#### ☀️ Setting a Positive Tone

To promote our community effectively, the attitude and culture of Merritt needs to be as positive as possible. Everyone is an ambassador for our city.

#### ☀️ A Blended Approach for Handling New Development

Council is committed to both facilitating development / creating a development friendly climate **AND** making sure it's done right for the benefit of all parties.

#### ☀️ Partnering With Others

Council will be actively seeking to work cooperatively with others, knowing that by engaging others and combining our resources, we can accomplish far more than any one group can alone.

#### ☀️ Communication in all Directions

Council recognizes the importance and value of good communications and is committed to ensuring effective communications are happening - providing information, listening to what people have to say, engaging others in dialogue and problem solving.

#### ☀️ Emphasis on Results

Council recognizes that plans, goals and actions are important, but they are of no value if they do not yield desired results.

#### ☀️ Investing in the Future

Council is committed to investing the resources required to achieve results, recognizing that without significant investment of effort, critical thinking and money, very little will be accomplished.

#### ☀️ Capitalizing on our Strengths

Council's approach to economic development will concentrate on capitalizing on our strengths, including transportation / location advantages, existing economic drivers, widespread name recognition as well as our natural amenities.

#### ☀️ Working with Nature

Council is committed to protecting and enhancing our natural environment in the process of handling the ongoing development of our community

#### ☀️ Celebration, Recognition and Appreciation

When good things happen toward achieving our goals, we intend to celebrate them and invite the rest of the community to join us.

#### ☀️ Integration With Other Projects

We are undertaking several planning projects to ensure we are well prepared for future development and to provide direction for looking after what we already have. Everything is interconnected, so an integrated approach will be taken.



Bylaw No. 1879, 2004

## Setting Direction For Our Community Plan



This 2030 Vision and guiding principles are enhanced as follows:

- The City of Merritt is committed to manageable and “whole picture” growth and development of the entire community;
- Merritt supports three commercial areas: the City Centre, Gateway 286 and Gateway 290;
- Merritt supports a clean, recreation based, energy self sufficient community interconnected with multi-use greenways and a range of housing for an ideal population of 15,000 people;
- Merritt continues to grow up in density instead of out through urban sprawl;
- Merritt’s economy is vibrant, growing and supports an exceptional health care system for residents;
- Residents and visitors of Merritt are able to move freely throughout the City on attractive bike and pedestrian trails; part of an extensive greenways system which contains streets with multi-use pathways, street trees and parks and a regional cycling network connected to the Kettle Valley Railway Corridor with an abundance of sustainable self-propelled, non motorized outdoor recreation options inside and outside the City boundaries and an effective and economical public transit system; and
- Private developers have built attractive buildings which are complemented by enhancements to the public realm, street trees and green public spaces.

### **3.0 CITY-WIDE POLICIES**

This section outlines policies that relate to all sectors of the City with respect to: the economy, creation initiatives to grow the city to an ideal population of 15,000 people, infrastructure, working with other agencies and the City’s approach to handling new development. The Future Development / Infrastructure Map in Schedule B, provides an overview of the OCP and direction for future growth. The Working with Nature Map in Schedule C indicates agricultural lands, sand and gravel deposits, aquifer protection areas and hazard lands.

#### **3.1 Making the Economic Pie Bigger**

Council is committed to a future with a strong, healthy economy characterized by high employment levels, thriving businesses and new investment in the community. An overarching theme of this OCP is to support Council’s objective of “making the economic pie bigger”.

It is Council policy to:

- .1 Continue working to create an “investment friendly climate” in Merritt.
- .2 Continue revamping the City’s regime of taxes, fees and charges with the dual objective of removing impediments to private sector investment, and generating sufficient revenues to ensure a sustained quality of service.

- .3 Ensure the development community is aware of the City's ample power supply, water supply, data fibre network, and overall robust utility networks.
- .4 Continue forging partnerships with others to increase the City's leverage.
- .5 Take full advantage of opportunities to expand the economy as a result of :
  - Country Music Capital of Canada branding
  - Entertainment and tourism events
  - Sports and recreation opportunities
  - Forestry and natural resources
  - Transportation advantages from highway traffic volumes passing by and Merritt's central location in the Southern Interior
  - Merritt as a vibrant small community; a healthy and active place to be; strategically located in a semi arid desert; having superb weather and being an extraordinary place to live, work, play, think, grow, create, do business and retire.
- .6 Promote "four seasons of fun" in the region and the numerous outdoor recreation opportunities that exist.
- .7 Continue supporting expansion of the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT) campus and programming.
- .8 Continue updating City plans, bylaws, policies and procedures with the aim of being more facilitative and less regulatory, as well as encouraging investment in the city.
- .9 Encourage the development of technology parks and the like.

### **3.1.1 Merritt and the Forest Industry**

Council recognizes that the BC forest industry is an integral part of the City of Merritt and its economic growth. The industry is developing new markets and new opportunities for wood products as a long-term strategy for a sustainable wood industry. The BC Government has passed a Wood First Act to facilitate a culture of wood by requiring the use of wood as the primary material in all new provincially funded buildings, in a manner consistent with the British Columbia Building Code.

It is Council policy to:

- .1 Continue supporting the ongoing development of its wood culture by considering wood champion designers and builders for all municipal building projects so that the opportunities for building with wood cost-effectively are maximized; ensuring all requests for proposals will request excellence in building with wood as a key qualifying criterion;

seeking those who can find practical, efficient, versatile and cost-effective building and design solutions through the use of wood; and ensuring that all municipal construction projects in Merritt receiving either public or wood industry financial support employ the structural and architectural use of wood.

### **3.1.2 Creation Initiative 1 – The Sustainable Community**

Council is committed to moving Merritt forward to a sustainable community with an ideal population of 15,000 people.

A community is economically sustainable when it has the ability to operate, deliver services and grow with a minimal or zero tax increase every year. "Minimal" means a tax increase no greater than the cost of living, consumer price index or less and "zero" applies to a typical residential property notwithstanding any adjustment by the BC Assessment Authority. A community is economically sustainable when it has developed tax base profit centres; typically well designed, compact, dense residential areas. A community is economically sustainable when there is enough annual new growth in the tax base to absorb normal municipal budget increases.

A community is environmentally sustainable when it develops in an environmentally responsible way. It accommodates growth with a preference for medium density residential development, infill development, reuse and adaptation of existing buildings and a compact and dense development pattern within its boundaries. This results in a relatively small environmental footprint and a land use intensive, compact, efficiently serviced municipality.

A community achieves social sustainability if it effectively addresses affordable housing, rental housing and special needs housing and the City will work with all levels of government to meet these needs.

Through the Integrated Growth Strategy 2010 program the citizens of Merritt have expressed a preference for a municipality of up to 15,000 people by the year 2030. They see this as the ideal size for Merritt. They see infill development and higher density development and a variety of housing types as important. Environmentally sustainable development is preferred. Tourism, forestry and outdoor recreation are economic drivers and Merritt continues to be a family focused city.

Growing the City to an ideal population of 15,000 requires an increase of about 8,000 citizens. That would mean an influx of about 400 people every year to year 2030. Over 3,000 homes would have to be built. And whereas there is in the order of 279 ha (689 acres) of easily developable land within the municipal boundaries, the residential growth would consume about 61 ha (150 acres) of the net developable land. Along with growth in the residential sector there would be supporting growth in the commercial sector; estimated to be a 30% increase or 116 new businesses. It is also hoped there would be an increase in the industrial sector; estimated to be 10% or 3 new industries.

It is Council policy to:

- .1 Actively promote Merritt as a vibrant small community, strategically located in a semi arid desert, with superb weather and an extraordinary place to live, work, play, think, grow,

create, do business and retire. Merritt is promoted as a healthy place to be as a result of its investment in bike and pedestrian trails, its abundance of self-propelled outdoor recreation options and its compact, walkable city form.

.2 Plan for residential growth in the municipality such that 75% is in a medium density form including townhouses, multi storey apartments (condominium and rental), quadrplexes, triplexes and similar; and 25% is in a single family form including small lot or narrow lot single family, regular lot single family, duplexes and semi detached units.

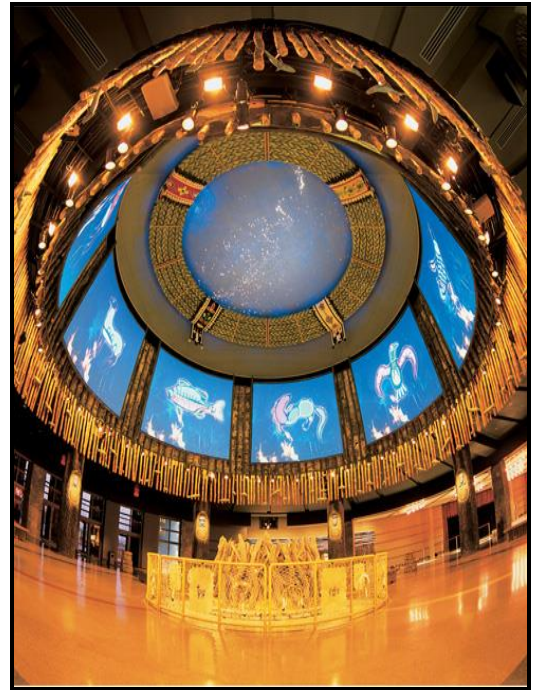
.3 Plan the community in such a way as to create a compact, dense, walkable, green, small scale, attractive city.

### **3.1.3 Creation Initiative 2 – Sector Gateway 286**

Council is committed to establishing a new sector or neighborhood in Merritt. This is a 128 ha (315 acre) parcel of land formerly in the South Interchange and Grassland/Ranchland Sectors. Most of this area is Crown land and about 26 ha (65 acres) is privately held. Most of the area is undeveloped with the exception of the Tourist Information Centre and the provincial roads/highway.

Gateway 286 presents the opportunity for the City of Merritt to do a large joint development project with First Nations and private landholders. The development could have a build out of over 1,100 homes with a population of approximately 3,500 persons. Gateway 286 presents the opportunity to the five local First Nations (Lower Nicola Indian Band, Nooaitch Indian Band, Schakan Indian Band, Coldwater Indian Band and Upper Nicola Indian Band) to develop in excess of 93 ha (230 acres) of Crown land within the City for mixed use development. Gateway 286 presents the opportunity for private landowners to develop their 26 ha (65 acres) of land for mixed residential uses including up to 200 housing units. Gateway 286 also presents the opportunity for a casino development. The City could agree to develop and own the casino jointly with the First Nations. Alternatively, the City could help the First Nations secure a casino license, find a casino operator, facilitate the development of a casino through rezoning the lands accordingly and then share in the casino revenues through a casino revenue sharing agreement.





(‘Casinorama’ outside Orillia, Ontario – A Destination Casino with hotel, restaurant/lounge facilities, meeting and convention spaces, 5,000+ seat entertainment theatre and full service casino)

It is Council policy to:

- .1 Facilitate the development of Sector Gateway 286 with public and private landholders and the First Nations.
- .2 Develop a partnership with the First Nations for the purpose of developing Gateway 286 either as joint landholders or otherwise.
- .3 Consult with the Crown to facilitate the transfer of certain lands within Sector Gateway 286 to the First Nations for development within the boundaries of the City of Merritt.

### **3.1.4 Creation Initiative 3 – The “Village” and the “Three Storey City Centre”**

Council wants to grow a strong and properly developed downtown that will support and service a city with an ideal population of 15,000 people. Two initiatives are proposed.

One is to create a ‘Village’ designation within the City Centre. Merritt, by policy, wants to direct a full range of uses into the Village that would help make its downtown vibrant, healthy and attractive to tourists. Uses include shopping, restaurants, hotels, churches, markets, theatres, tourist attractions, open space, cinemas, transit stations, art galleries, music halls, office and services uses of all types.





The second initiative is to promote and permit a minimum of three storey developments in all sectors of the City Centre with part of Quilchena Avenue, the main street, maintaining a two storey profile. Residential uses would dominate the upper floors in order to create a residential presence in the core. Along with strengthening the downtown this initiative strengthens the sectors/neighborhoods by encouraging the creation of commercial/service nodes within certain sectors; particularly the Northgate and Gateway 286 Sectors. These nodes would not necessarily be three storeys, but could be.

Samples of three storey plus downtown streets follow.



**Three Storey Downtown Streets - Kingston Ontario, Old Quebec, “Covered” Quebec Street in Guelph, Ontario, Downtown Sydney, BC, Salmon Arm, BC, and Three Storey ‘Uptown’ Development in Saanich, BC**



It is Council policy to:

- .1 Create a specific village zone for the City Centre to provide for and direct a full range of commercial, office, retail, service and medium density residential uses.
- .2 Permit and promote new development, redevelopment and infill development in the City Centre while encouraging structures with a minimum three storeys in height.

### **3.1.5 Creation Initiative 4 – The Compact, Medium Density, Walkable City**

Council recognizes that a major factor in making the city economically sustainable, in achieving environmentally responsible development with a small footprint and in developing tax base profit centres, is to accommodate most of the future growth with extremely well designed medium density residential development; multi storey and otherwise. This includes condominium apartments, townhouses, quadraplexes, triplexes and similar. This OCP is updated to include multi-family land use areas in several sectors. All multi-family development areas are designated as Development Permit areas to provide for proper design and development on the site.

Following are samples of multi-family residential projects with character. Such styles could be considered for Merritt.



**Victoria and Sydney Condominium Apartments and Townhouses**





### **Vancouver Condominium Apartments and Quads (Fourplexes)**

Council also recognizes that provision should be made for small lot or narrow lot single family housing development. Narrow lot single family housing/lane houses/garden suites/secondary suites, duplexes and semi detached houses will be considered and encouraged in low density areas of the city.

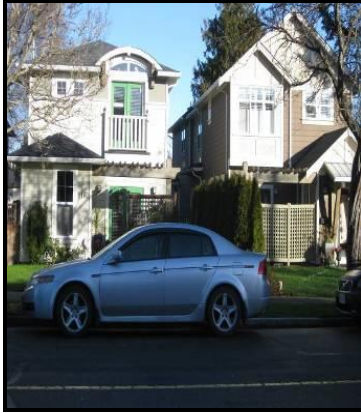
Samples of small lot / narrow lot houses, duplex and semi-detached houses that could be considered are as follows:

### **Narrow Lot Houses in Victoria – New Style and Old Style Samples**





**Victoria Triplexes, Semi-Detached and Duplex Homes**



It is Council policy to:

- .1 Designate many areas of the City for multi-family development and particularly encourage multi-family development and infill in proximity of, and within the Central Business District.
- .2 Encourage small lot / narrow lot single family residential and the development of duplexes, semi-detached houses, garden houses, lane houses and secondary suites in selected areas of the City.
- .3 Develop building envelope and design guidelines for small lot / narrow lot housing.

### **3.1.6 Creation Initiative 5 – The Expanded City**

Council acknowledges past initiatives to expand the City boundaries including the amalgamation of Collettsville. It recognizes there may be other initiatives to incorporate rural areas into the City. In particular the Active Mountain Raceway lands, about 121 ha (300 acres), adjacent the South Merritt Sector; the Thorpe Road/Wilcox subdivision area; and lands to the east of Sector Gateway 286.

It is Council policy to:

- .1 Actively participate with the TNRD in planning development of the Active Mountain Raceway lands with a view to the eventual amalgamation of the development into the City.
- .2 Consider servicing agreements to extend municipal services to the Active Mountain Raceway lands.
- .3 Actively work with the TNRD in developing Sector Gateway 286 particularly as it relates to extending services to areas east of Sector Gateway 286.

### **3.2 Investment in Infrastructure (Water, Sewer, Major Roads)**

The City has a huge investment in its physical assets. One of the main responsibilities of a municipality is to maintain these assets in perpetuity. Future upgrades to the City's main sewer, water and transportation systems are shown in Schedule B, and Table 3.1 below illustrates the City's current infrastructure assets:

**Table 3.1 – City of Merritt – Infrastructure Assets - Updated**

<b>Infrastructure Assets</b>	<b>Approximate Replacement Value</b>
<b>Sewer System</b>	
59,503 m of mains	\$15,170,000.00
treatment plant and RI basins	\$ 7,500,000.00

2,323 services	\$ 3,693,570.00
628 manholes	\$ 2,198,000.00
2 lift stations (Nicola and Collettsville)	\$ 388,300.00
6 crossings	
	\$28,949,870.00
<b>Water System</b>	
72,042 m of mains	\$18,036,315.00
300 fittings	
320 hydrants	\$ 1,760,000.00
898 valves	\$ 1,347,000.00
90 stand pipes	\$ 3,693,570.00
2,323 services	
9 crossings	
4 wells with pumphouses	\$ 2,924,000.00
5 reservoirs	\$ 6,422,000.00
	\$34,182,885.00
<b>Storm Sewers</b>	
26,580 m of mains	\$ 8,231,427.00
273 manholes	\$ 602,896.00
584 catch basins	\$ 1,214,122.00
10 outfalls	
1 pond	
	\$10,048,445.00
<b>Roads</b>	
58,329 m of roads, including allowance for sidewalks, curb and gutter, shoulder and ditches (not including lanes)	\$17,575,423.00
4 bridges	\$ 9,800,000.00
4 traffic lights	\$ 880,000.00
	\$28,255,423.00
<b>Sub-Total Hard Infrastructure</b>	<b>\$101,436,623.00</b>

Civic Buildings – City Hall, Civic Centre, Fire Hall, Workshop/Yard, other	Not Estimated
Recreation Facilities – arena, swimming pool, curling rink, athletic fields, parks, trails, other	Not Estimated
Capital Equipment	Not Estimated

In round numbers, the total estimated replacement value of hard infrastructure works (to current City standards) is approximately \$100,000,000. In addition to this would be at least \$20,000,000 or more for civic buildings, recreation facilities and capital equipment. **The total replacement value of City owned physical assets therefore exceeds \$120,000,000.**

### ***3.2.1 General Infrastructure Policies***

It is Council policy to:

- .1 Work continuously toward reversing the trend of the growing infrastructure deficit through capital reinvestment in order to:
  - Sustain quality of service in Merritt
  - Help create an investment friendly climate
  - Avoid deferral of higher costs to future Councils and taxpayers
- .2 Update the Five (5) Year Financial Plan to provide for the maintenance and expansion of infrastructure and to accommodate growth and economic development.
- .3 Regularly review and update the City's implementation bylaws and policies pertaining to the provision and financing of the City's infrastructure, including: Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw; Development Cost Charge Bylaw; Utility Rates Bylaws; Property Tax Bylaw; and Guidelines for Development Agreements.

### ***3.2.2 Transportation Policies***

The role of a transportation network is to facilitate vehicular and pedestrian traffic movements throughout the community and to encourage a healthy lifestyle through the use of the pedestrian trails and cycling lanes. The performance of the network affects quality of life, the economic well-being and generally the success of neighbourhoods and land uses within the community.

It is Council policy to:

- .1 Implement future street network upgrades and improvements and path and trail network upgrades and improvements, to facilitate safe and efficient movement of people, goods, and services throughout the community.
- .2 Determine and prioritize road pavement rehabilitation projects.
- .3 Determine ways to improve traffic circulation throughout the community with short term emphasis on the Voght Street/North Entry Corridor and longer term emphasis on a one-way couplet along Voght Street and Garcia Street from just north of Blackwell Avenue to Coldwater Avenue as shown on the Future Development and Infrastructure Map.
- .4 Acquire land when new development is proposed to facilitate long term road upgrades along Voght Street from the Coquihalla Interchange to Coldwater Avenue and also to accommodate development of a one-way couplet along Voght Street and Garcia Street between Blackwell Avenue and Coldwater Avenue.
- .5 Ensure that water, sewer and storm infrastructure requirements are considered in conjunction with road upgrading projects.
- .6 Ensure that streetscape enhancement opportunities such as tree planting and sidewalk replacement are considered in conjunction with road upgrading projects.
- .7 Determine and prioritize sidewalk construction or replacement where necessary.
- .8 Work with the physically challenged to continue to improve wheelchair accessibility.
- .9 Acquire lands along existing right of ways where future road widening is anticipated.
- .10 Incorporate required street, road and sidewalk improvements on a priority basis into the Strategic Plan as identified in 3.2.1.2 above.
- .11 Develop a city wide bike and pedestrian trail and path plan connecting all neighborhoods to the CBD.
- .12 Continue to develop the public transit system.

### ***3.2.3 Water, Sewer and Storm Water Management Policies***

The City of Merritt maintains extensive works for: water supply storage and distribution, sewage collection, treatment, disposal and a storm water collection, treatment and discharge system. These systems serve most of the developed urban areas of the City.

#### **3.2.3.1 General Water, Sewer and Storm Water Management Policies**

It is Council policy to:

- .1 Ensure water, sewer, drainage systems, and solid waste collection is provided to support the good health of Merritt residents and protection of the environment.
- .2 Ensure water, sewer, drainage systems, and solid waste collection meet the recognized need, servicing standards and the ability of residents to pay.
- .3 Encourage all residential, commercial, industrial and civic/institutional developments to be served by the City's sanitary sewer system. Any on-site sewage disposal system shall be approved by the appropriate approval authority.
- .4 Require that all residential, commercial, industrial and civic/institutional developments are connected to water systems that provide a safe and healthy supply of water.
- .5 Implement enhancement opportunities when infrastructure improvements are undertaken including: sidewalk replacement, tree planting and trail construction.
- .6 Incorporate required water, sewer and storm water system improvements on a priority basis into the Strategic Plan identified in Section 3.2.1.2 above.

#### **3.2.3.2 Water Policies**

It is Council policy to:

- .1 Aggressively pursue water conservation measures and efforts aimed at managing demand for water, including the summer water conservation program, thereby optimizing the use of this important resource, maximizing the useful life of the City's pumping and distribution systems, and minimizing impact on the City's aquifer.
- .2 Undertake on-going water demand management as outlined in the City's Water Conservation Strategy. These include:
  - Establishing a water resource advisory committee,
  - Determining direction for the water conservation program,
  - Promoting long-term commitment and continuity,
  - Ensure on-going monitoring, evaluation and analysis and collect information for decision making,
  - Implementing an aquifer protection plan, and
  - Implementing water metering for residential properties and commercial properties.

#### **3.2.3.3 Wastewater Policies**

It is Council policy to:



Implement and uphold policies, tasks and capital works provided in the Liquid Waste Management process which has been adopted by Council, accepted by the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection and endorsed by the public and regulatory agencies. The policies include:

- .1 Review and update the Liquid Waste Management Plan.
- .2 Review the unsewered properties of the City and compare to the sewer bylaw which requires all abutting properties less than 2 ha in size to connect to the sewer system.
- .3 Acknowledge the existing treatment plant as the long-term facility for sewage treatment, and through the allocation of City resources (operating, maintenance and capital), assure its continued serviceability.
- .4 Undertake a comprehensive sewer system master plan and recommend appropriate measures for any new large sewer generating developments that want to utilize City services.
- .5 Ensure, through the appropriate allocation of City resources (operating, maintenance and capital), that issues identified in the Liquid Waste Management Plan for further on-going work and analysis are carried forward. These include: monitoring (sampling, monitoring, analysis and reporting); infiltration and inflow reduction; and sludge/bio-solid management.

#### **3.2.3.4 Storm Drainage Policies**

It is Council policy to:

- .1 Require that all residential, commercial, industrial, and civic/institutional development manage storm drainage in a manner which does not impact upon adjacent private or public property, or water ways.
- .2 Require that natural drainage patterns are retained through the use of overland flow, open channels, existing natural drainage courses and swale routing where possible.
- .3 Undertake an integrated storm water management plan.

### **3.3 Working with Nature and Culture**

The City of Merritt is located in the centre of the Nicola Valley, with a considerable amount of flat, rolling topography along the valley bottom which is bounded by steeper terrain and valley walls. Merritt has a dry semi arid desert climate with minor snowfalls in winter and hot temperatures in the summer months. Merritt also has a rich history in ranching, mining, forestry

and the former railroad which is evident in many of the cultural and tourist related events and activities in the community.

The "Working with Nature Map" provided in Schedule C illustrates agricultural lands, sand and gravel deposits, and aquifer protection areas. This map also indicates hazard lands that need to be considered before any new development is approved. These include: steep slopes, the floodplain, wildfire interface areas and environmentally sensitive areas.

The intent of the policies in this section is to maintain the geographical, environmental, cultural and heritage values as well as the integrity of significant features within the City that contribute to the livability of the Nicola Valley. It is also the intent of the policies to steer development to infill areas within the sectors and to vacant lands areas that are easily developable.

It is Council policy to:

- .1 Permit appropriate uses including trails, interpretive facilities, habitat protection and restoration, habitat enhancement, erosion control works, fencing, signage, and other uses that do not degrade the natural environment.
- .2 Ensure lands located on steep slopes, in ravines, directly adjacent to creeks and rivers, in areas considered undevelopable, and lands that provide important wildlife habitat remain in their natural condition.
- .3 Address site grading and drainage control measures in areas where steep slopes and unstable soils exist.
- .4 Consider possible implications for the City's aquifer based on the City's ongoing efforts to prepare an aquifer protection plan.
- .5 Recognize the existence of wildfire interface areas surrounding the entire City and ensure new development considers the risks associated with development in or near these areas.
- .6 Recognize that abandoned coal shafts exist throughout the City and the extent of these historical works are unknown and that any development proposal in these areas must inventory the abandoned coal shafts and provide for safe development in and around the coal shafts.
- .7 Support preservation of sensitive habitat adjacent to the Nicola River, the Coldwater River and other streams that is consistent with the appropriate best management practices for land development in providing protection for streams. Amending Bylaw No. 1940, 2006
- .8 Designate environmentally sensitive areas on Schedule C, the Working with Nature Map.



- .9 Promote the conservation of fish habitat along streams within the municipal boundary as defined under the Riparian Areas Regulations as part of the Fish Protection Act.
- .10 Exercise its powers to implement the Riparian Areas Regulation of the Fish Protection Act.
- .11 Conserve lands, structures and artifacts where possible that have cultural and heritage values.
- .12 Continue to recognize ranching, mining, forestry and the former railroad as an important part of the cultural heritage of the City and the surrounding Nicola Valley.
- .13 Protect open space amenities (including grasslands) where possible for passive and recreation use and enjoyment.
- .14 Recognize where lands that are subject to flooding, the construction and siting of buildings and mobile homes to be used for habitation, business or the storage of goods damageable by floodwaters shall be proofed to standards specified by the appropriate Ministry.
- .15 Minimize land use conflicts between sand and gravel operations and neighbouring properties by ensuring operations are conducted in an appropriate manner.

### **3.4 Working with Other Agencies**

One of Council's stated principles in pursuing the vision of "making the economic pie bigger" is to partner with others to increase the City's leverage. The City prefers not to do it alone. These partnerships must be strong in order to establish a foundation for an enduring partnering relationship of mutual benefit.

It is Council policy to:

1. Undertake partnering, where practical, purposeful and useful, with the following:
  - Thompson Nicola Regional District (TNRD); First Nations; neighbouring municipalities; private development, business and industry; provincial and federal government ministries and agencies; Land and Water BC Inc.; Provincial Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs); and Federal Members of Parliament (MPs)

### **3.5 Handling New Development in Merritt**

Council's guiding philosophy for handling new development in Merritt is based on a blending of two key objectives:

**Objective 1: To facilitate new development.**

Council is committed to making the economic pie bigger in Merritt in order for the City to become sustainable at an estimated ideal population of 15,000 by year 2030. One way of accomplishing this is to create a development friendly climate where economic development is encouraged and facilitated. Extraordinary effort will be taken in facilitating new development opportunities, and recognizing the many positive potential benefits to the entire community.

**Objective 2: To make sure it's done right.**

Council recognizes its responsibility to all parties affected by development, including City taxpayers (present and future), the developer and future users of the development. Therefore, Council is committed to ensuring that development is carried out in a manner that:

- Is consistent with the spirit and intent of this OCP
- Meets sound engineering practices and planning principles
- Contributes to improving the overall quality of development in Merritt
- Contributes to Merritt becoming an attractive, healthy, vibrant, small scale city of 15,000 people
- Avoids preventable pitfalls and problems
- Accept diversity of development ideas from a range of small manufacturers
- Ensures the principle of equity is adhered to in assigning responsibility for development costs

**3.6 Temporary Use Areas**

It is the policy of Council to allow temporary commercial and industrial uses for up to 3 years in all areas identified for commercial or industrial use as outlined on the Land Use Designation Map for each sector.

**3.7 Greenhouse Gas Reduction**

Further to Bill 27, the Action on Climate Control and Emission of Greenhouse Gases, Council is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The City of Merritt will reduce per capita greenhouse gas emissions by 10% on or before the year 2020 from 2007 baseline levels.

It is Council policy to:

- .1 Encourage compact community design, infill development, well-designed, medium density residential development and planning strategies that reinforce smart growth principles and best practices in sustainable community development.
- .2 Encourage and supports self-propelled pathways, trails and alternative modes of transportation to help reduce automobile emissions.
- .3 Allow home-based businesses in all residential zones.
- .4 Allow secondary suites in all residential zones; and garden suites in site specific cases.
- .5 Encourage energy efficient construction of new buildings and the retrofit of existing buildings.
- .6 Encourage water conservation, including the installation of low-flow plumbing fixtures, and require water meter installation in new construction.
- .7 Encourage water conservation that restricts and reduces water usage and consumption.
- .8 Encourage low-impact renewable energy generation including solar technology, geothermal technology and other similar technologies.
- .9 Have an initiative to upgrade wood-burning appliances through wood stove exchange programs.
- .10 Support the preservation of agricultural lands and local food production within the municipal boundaries and beyond.
- .11 Encourage local community gardens and farmers' markets.
- .12 Have recycling initiatives to divert waste from area landfills.
- .13 Have a composting facility to divert waste from area landfills.
- .14 Have an anti-idling policy for the City fleet.
- .15 Have a policy on energy efficiency for corporate buildings.

Council is taking action by:

- a. Being a signatory to the Climate Action Charter and the City will be taking steps to address and support the goals of the Charter.
- b. Operating a Toro Sentinel Irrigation system on public lands to reduce water consumption.
- c. Operating and purchase machinery with Tier 4 emission standards.
- d. Converting all non-beam vehicle lighting to LED.
- e. Installing LED seasonal lighting.

- f. Maintaining the 400 trees planted since 2006. (Another 5042 lilacs have been planted within the City in the same period.)
- g. Investigating potential incentives for builders and developers who incorporate alternative energy sources.
- h. Supporting waste reduction policies and actions outlined in the Regional Solid Waste Management Plan, including a region-wide goal of 30% reduction in waste disposal by 2013 (from 2004 levels).
- i. Continuing to build and optimize the existing public transit system.
- j. Continuing to support composting and recycling efforts.

#### **4.0 REGIONAL CONTEXT AND FRINGE AREAS**

As outlined in the *Local Government Act*, OCP's must include a regional context statement. The purpose of a regional context statement is to outline the principles of regional growth management strategies as they apply to the municipality and to identify the OCP policies that support those principles.

In 1995, the Thompson Nicola Regional District (TNRD) and its member municipalities undertook a Regional Growth Strategy as outlined in the *Local Government Act* in 2000. The Regional Growth Strategy, which was adopted in 2000, is not a land use plan, but rather a cooperative strategy for achieving a sustainable future for the region.

The regional vision statement for the TNRD as it appears in the Regional Growth Strategy is as follows:

*"The TNRD is a unique region of diversity and contrast characterized by numerous distinct and special places. Building on this diverse mix of urban and rural resource and wilderness settings shall be the dominant guiding principle as new development is encouraged. Urban places will grow while retaining their existing scope and character; rural places will remain rural while accepting appropriate new development; and settlement in resource areas will be limited and carefully managed."*<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> TNRD Regional Growth Strategy, TNRD, p.5

#### **4.1 Merritt's Regional Context Statement**

The City of Merritt's regional context statement was developed in accordance with the TNRD's Regional Growth Strategy. The following describes how the City of Merritt OCP relates to the regional district's growth management policies.

##### **4.1.1 Human Settlement**

The intent the Human Settlement section of the Regional Growth Strategy is to contain urban/rural sprawl by building on the existing network of diverse regional centers, to promote policies of infill and intensification and to ensure adequate levels of servicing are provided. The City of Merritt OCP policies support Human Settlement policies of the Regional Growth Strategy in that they focus on the unique character and setting of each of the 11 sectors of the community. The plan provides direction for future development that meets all of the policies for urban development as outlined in the Regional Growth Strategy. These include:

- Develop in a compact, cost-effective sustainable manner. This applies to all sectors in Merritt with particular emphasis on infill development in the CBD Sector and sectors adjacent to the CBD while encouraging medium density residential development in most sectors of the city.
- Maintain and enhance the community's quality of life by growing the city to an ideal population of 15,000 thereby providing more housing choice, more business, industries and services and more efficient delivery of services and infrastructure. This applies to all sectors in section 5.0.
- Establish a commercial base to provide employment and serve the needs of residents and visitors. This applies in section 5.2.
- Encourage a high standard for development, particularly for medium density residential, to enhance the urban/natural environments. This applies to all sectors, with particular emphasis on areas bordering the Nicola and Coldwater Rivers, and the agricultural and grasslands areas in section 5.0.
- Protect and enhance the quality of the natural environment. This applies to all sectors especially in areas adjacent to grasslands, agricultural areas and wildfire interface areas in section 5.0.
- Ensure a range of housing types capable of meeting the needs of residents. This is indicated in many OCP policies.
- Cooperate in managing regional growth by recognizing the existing scope and character of urban areas and the surrounding Nicola Valley.

#### **4.1.2 Transportation and Energy**

The City of Merritt's OCP is an important tool in achieving regional transportation and energy goals of the TNRD Regional Growth Strategy by integrating land use and settlement planning to achieve mobility, conservation and efficiency goals. The plan supports the transportation and energy policies of the Regional Growth Strategy as follows:

- By outlining policies to implement street upgrades and improvements to facilitate safe and efficient movement of people, goods and services throughout the community as outlined in section 4.1.2.
- By determining ways to improve traffic circulation with particular emphasis on the Voght Street/North Entry corridor. The City intends to undertake corridor planning studies to improve existing function and potential expansion. This corridor provides a critical link between the numerous highways that run through the region and to various areas of the City. These highways include Coquihalla Highway, Highway 97C, Highway 5A and Highway 8.
- By maintaining opportunities for expansion and safe operation of the City's airport as outlined in section 5.4.11.
- By supporting energy and resource conservation programs including water conservation as outlined in 3.2.3.2.
- By encouraging compact community design as well as infill and intensification of existing neighbourhoods as outlined in section 5.0 and 6.0.
- By working towards establishing bicycle and walking paths throughout the community with connections to the Nicola and Coldwater Rivers as outlined in section 5.0.

#### **4.1.3 Economic Development**

The City's OCP outlines policies that support the Regional Growth Strategy to broaden the economic base through diversification and expansion. The plan also maintains the integrity of existing resource industries and promotes new economic development opportunities. One of the overarching goals of this OCP is "making the economic pie bigger." The plan supports the economic development goals of the Regional Growth Strategy as follows:

- By creating an "investment friendly climate" in Merritt and forging partnerships with others to increase the City's leverage in attracting and maintaining industry and new business through a consultative stakeholders and landowners process as outlined in Section 3.1.

- By taking full advantage of opportunities to expand the economy and encourage tourist-oriented developments as outlined in Section 3.1.
- By committing to undertaking a partnering approach with other agencies and stakeholders in the community as outlined in Section 3.4.
- By creating a Development Facilitation Board / Technical Planning Committee to ensure timely and consistent regulatory and permitting processes as outlined in Section 7.3.

#### **4.1.4 Environmental Protection**

The City of Merritt supports environmental protection as outlined in the Regional Growth Strategy. The City recognizes and supports the TNRD's goals to protect and enhance the environment through the adoption and co-operative use of stewardship principles. The OCP supports the environmental protection goals of the Regional Growth Strategy as follows:

- By "working with nature" to permit uses that do not degrade the natural environment, as well as to conserve and to protect the region's natural resources, amenities and attributes as outlined in Section 3.3 and Section 5.0.
- By designating environmentally sensitive areas and preventing development that would negatively impact environmentally sensitive areas as outlined in Section 5.0 and 6.0.
- By recognizing the importance of protection of ground water resources which provide water to residents as outlined in Section 3.2.
- By providing policies for business attraction, retention and expansion.

#### **4.1.5 Open Space and Cultural Heritage**

The City of Merritt supports the TNRD's commitment to protect the open space, rural character and unique heritage features of the region. The OCP supports the open space and cultural heritage goals of the Regional Growth Strategy as follows:

- By partnering and working with Crown land agencies with respect to future development of Crown-owned lands to address open spaces and parks issues as outlined in Section 3.4 and 5.0.
- By encouraging conservation of areas and structures that have cultural and heritage value as outlined in Section 3.3.
- By continuing to recognize ranching, mining, forestry and the former railroad as part of the cultural heritage of the City and the surrounding Nicola Valley as outlined in Section 3.3.

- By identifying and preserving areas within the City that have open space and natural amenities as outlined in Sections 3.3 and 5.0.
- By continuing to partner and work with our First Nations neighbours to celebrate this culture and history in the Nicola Valley as outlined in Section 3.4.

#### **4.1.6 Co-Operation and Process**

The City of Merritt will continue to implement the Regional Growth Strategy through the establishment of ongoing co-operative processes. The OCP supports this co-operative process as follows:

- By working with the TNRD in a partnering relationship to achieve the goals and policies of the Regional Growth Strategy as outlined in Section 3.4.
- By working with the First Nations, the Crown and private landholders to develop Sector Gateway 286 as outlined in sections 3.0, 5.0 and 6.0.

#### **4.2 Fringe Area Policies**

Since the Collettsville boundary extension when most existing fringe area development was incorporated within City boundaries, there has been very little development activity in the fringe areas outside current City boundaries. There are two areas, however, where there is potential for significant development which would have a direct bearing on the City because of their location and size.

The first is the Active Mountain events and development proposals in South Merritt. While portions of this development lie within existing boundaries; a significant portion, about 121 ha (300 acres), lies south of the City boundary.

The second is the Joeyaska Indian Reserve #2 (Lower Nicola Indian Band), located adjacent to the south entry into the City. While there are no definite plans for development, this area's size, prominent location, exposure to the Coquihalla Highway and favourable topography indicate a significant potential for major development.

Even though these areas lie outside the current boundaries, the City has a major interest in their development. Both could have significant implications for the City's infrastructure (e.g. water, sewer, roads) and delivery of services (e.g. fire protection, police protection, recreation amenities). Also, they could contribute significantly to the City's strategy for making the



economic pie bigger, and should therefore be carefully coordinated with the City's overall economic development plans.

It is Council policy to:

- .1 Continue working cooperatively with the Active Mountain proponent with the aim of determining the best approach for the provision of water, sewer and transportation , services; determining an equitable allocation of financial responsibility for provision of these services; and exploring the feasibility of extending the City boundaries to encompass the entire Active Mountain development area.
- .2 Continue working cooperatively with the Thompson Nicola Regional District (TNRD) and Provincial agencies in matters pertaining to the Active Mountain events or to other potential developments within the fringe area including the Thorpe Road/Wilcox area subdivision and lands to the east of Sector Gateway 286 among others.
- .3 Continue working with the Lower Nicola Indian Band in consideration of potential development on the Joeyaska Indian Reserve, particularly with respect to the possible extension of City water and sewer services. This will be in conjunction with the development of Sector Gateway 286.

## **5.0 "UMBRELLA" AND SECTOR POLICIES**

### **5.1 Outline of Sectors**

The City of Merritt has been divided into 11 sectors based on the geography, unique character and special features of each area. By concentrating on each area of the City individually, Council is better able to provide direction for future growth and development based on the differing preferences, conditions and opportunities particular to the various sectors. These sectors are shown on the Sector Map and include: Bench, River Ranch and Grassland Area, East Merritt/Diamond Vale, South Merritt, North Nicola, Gateway 286, City Centre; West Merritt, Colletville, Voght Street/North Entry Corridor, and Airport Area.

### **5.2 Summary of Land Uses and Sectors**

Each sector allows for a variety of land uses specific to the particular sector. These are illustrated on the individual sector maps and in the individual sector policy sections.

### **5.3 “Umbrella Policies”**

Although each sector has unique elements, there are general policies related to all areas of Merritt. These policies will apply in all sectors of the city.

#### **5.3.1 Residential**

Existing residential development within the City of Merritt consists primarily of single family homes, duplexes and small scale apartment/townhouse developments. In order to efficiently service the residential areas of Merritt with road, water and sewer infrastructure, it is important that the City begins to grow in a more compact pattern and with increased density. In order to achieve this, the City encourages the development of existing vacant areas within the serviced areas of the City while remaining sensitive to the character of each neighbourhood.

It is Council policy to:

- .1 Encourage retention, redevelopment and development of a full range of residential types, densities, tenures and prices to accommodate various age groups and household compositions allowing a range of choices for housing.
- .2 Encourage the following types of residential development: Amending Bylaw No. 2257(2019)
  - Single Family Detached Residential
    - Low density with the opportunity for greater density in small lot/narrow lot single family areas or streets
  - Multi-Family Residential
    - Includes multi-family residential and low-rise (three storeys or greater) such as duplexes, triplexes, townhomes and apartments
  - Mixed Use Residential
    - Includes multi-family residential such as duplexes, triplexes, townhomes and apartments with commercial activities on the ground floor.
- .2 Support multi-family residential development complementary to the character, scale and mass of adjacent development.
- .3 Encourage new residential development and redevelopment within existing serviced areas.
- .4 Evaluate the appropriateness of multi-family and mixed use residential development based on the following criteria:

- Residential uses are located on the upper floors, saving the ground level for commercial uses.
- Commercial uses contribute to the life and visual quality of the street.
- New development and redevelopment complements and diversifies the form and character of the neighbourhood.
- The project complements and respects the character and scale of existing residential development in the neighbourhood.
- The project provides direct access to vehicular and pedestrian transportation linkages.
- The project provides adequate access to off-street parking.
- The project does not negatively affect the existing quality of life within the neighbourhood.
- Permit secondary suites in residential areas throughout the community based on criteria outlined in this plan.
- Permit home-based businesses in residential areas throughout the community based on criteria outlined in this plan.

### ***5.3.2 Special Needs and Affordable Housing***

The needs of Merritt residents vary depending on age, stage in the family life cycle and socio-economic standing. It is important to provide a range of housing types that meet varying requirements and income levels. This will ensure a higher quality of life in the community and provide the opportunity for residents of all ages to continue living in Merritt.

It is Council policy to:

- .1 Encourage a diversified range of housing types of ownership for people with varying income levels.
- .2 Encourage the development of a variety of appropriate housing designed for residents in the 55+ age group. This group includes newly retired residents and senior citizens.
- .3 Encourage the development of housing for residents with special needs.
- .4 Work with federal and provincial agencies and private developers in an effort to create more affordable and special needs housing opportunities.

### ***5.3.3 Secondary Suites, Garden Suites and Lane Houses***

Secondary suites provide a source of supplementary income for homeowners and provide an alternative form of affordable housing. Council permits secondary suites in residential areas provided certain criteria are met. Garden suites and lane houses are an effective way of increasing the density and utilizing residential land in an environmentally responsible way without changing the single family form and character of development on the street or in the area.

It is Council policy to:

- .1 Permit secondary suites in residential areas throughout the community subject to the following criteria:
  - The secondary suite is clearly secondary and incidental to the primary residential unit.
  - Requirements as outlined in the Building Code are adhered to.
  - Adequate access to hard surface/paved off-street parking is provided.
  - The secondary suite does not have a detrimental impact in terms of unsightliness, noise or traffic.
- .2 Not permit home-based businesses in secondary suites if the main suite has a home-based business.
- .3 Consider ways to deal with water, sewer and solid waste charges for secondary suites.
- .4 Permit garden suites and lane houses in residential areas throughout the community subject to the following criteria:
  - Only one garden suite or lane house permitted per single family lot.
  - The garden suite or lane house must be designed to be complementary to the single family house existing or proposed on the lot.
  - The garden suite or lane house must be smaller than the primary house on the lot.
  - The garden suite or lane house must have one paved on site parking space.
  - Development permit approval is required for garden suites and lane houses.
  - Lane access is encouraged where possible.
  - Minimum lot size to consider a garden suite as a second building on the property is 750 square metres (8,073 square feet)
  - Garden suites and lane houses are preferred in an R2 zone or similar.

### ***5.3.4 Home-Based Business***

Home-based businesses provide an incubator to encourage entrepreneurship throughout the community and to create new employment opportunities without the risk of large initial capital investments. Home-based businesses contribute to the spirit of “making the economic pie bigger” in Merritt.

It is Council policy to:

- .1 Use the following criteria with respect to applications for home-based businesses in residential areas:
  - The home-based business is clearly secondary and incidental to the residential use of the property.
  - The home-based business is complementary to the scale and character of existing development.
  - The residence where the business is operating provides adequate paved off-street parking.
  - The home-based business does not have a detrimental impact in terms of unsightliness, noise, odour and traffic.
  - Home-based businesses are not permitted in secondary suites if the main suite has a home-based business.

### ***5.3.5 Industrial***

Merritt provides opportunities for industry to operate on a sustained basis within the community. Industry represents a critical component of Merritt’s economy and provides employment and a diversified tax base in the City. Merritt would like to see at least 3 new large industries locate in the City as Merritt grows to an ideal population of 15,000. Large tracts of industrial land are used for timber storage, sawmills and other value-added wood manufacturers and concrete production. The City recognizes the importance of industrial businesses by promoting a “partnering approach” to benefit businesses and residents of Merritt. Opportunities exist to promote and integrate industry with tourism in order to benefit further from this vital component of Merritt’s economy and to attract visitors to Merritt.

It is Council policy to:

- .1 Ensure an adequate supply of land is made available to meet anticipated demands for a full range of industrial uses.

- .2 Encourage investment by the industrial sector by providing a favourable industrial taxation policy that provides certainty and competitiveness.
- .3 Ensure that industrial uses provide adequate buffering and screening between industrial areas and adjacent residential, commercial or other non-industrial uses to minimize conflicts.
- .4 Ensure industry locates in areas with access to transportation routes that service industrial traffic such as the Houston Street truck route.
- .5 Promote industry in Merritt through partnering initiatives that explore opportunities to integrate industry with tourism.
- .6 Build on the importance of industry within the community by encouraging industrial themes and interpretive tools that communicate a positive message about industry in Merritt.

### **5.3.6 Commercial**

Commercial uses provide one of the main economic drivers in communities and directly contribute to “making the economic pie bigger” in Merritt. As the population increases, so will the number and range of businesses in Merritt. A 30% increase in businesses, or an additional 116 businesses, is anticipated to meet the needs of Merritt at an ideal population of 15,000. Commercial uses widely differ in terms of preferred location, compatibility with needs of consumers and the context of the surrounding neighbourhood. Different types of commercial activities are best suited to different areas of the City.

It is Council policy to:

- .1 Ensure an adequate supply of suitable land is made available to meet anticipated demands for a full range of commercial uses.
- .2 Prefer the infilling of vacant or underutilized commercial parcels currently serviced by the City’s water and sewer system before considering expanding to areas beyond the serviced areas.
- .3 Direct commercial activities to locate in the three commercial nodes of the City; the City Centre, Gateway 286 and Gateway 290 (North Entry).
- .4 Ensure that all commercial development is of high standard and quality.
- .5 Solidify the City Centre as the major commercial focal point for business, finance, government, retail trade, services, entertainment and medium density residential infill and development and to designate a “village” area within the City Centre to concentrate these uses and to encourage a minimum three storey development profile in the City Centre.



- .6 Direct uses that are dependent upon highway exposure to areas adjacent to major highways.
- .7 Promote “service commercial” uses in areas best suited to repair and supply centres that are automobile-oriented and provide small scale industrial activities. These activities include: tire shops, building supply stores, card lock fuel stations, heating and cooling distributors, plumbing, and storage.

### **5.3.7 Agriculture**

River Ranch and Grasslands Area and Collettville are the two main sectors within the City of Merritt where agricultural activities occur and where Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) lands exist. Council recognizes the contributions of agricultural activities to the community and the role of the Agricultural Land Commission in governing land within the ALR.

It is Council policy to:

- .1 Support agricultural production activities on all lands rated with high agricultural capability.
- .2 Minimize conflicts between agricultural operations and non-agricultural uses by encouraging buffering and setback provisions as suggested by the Ministry responsible for agricultural land.
- .3 Encourage a full range of agricultural service businesses within Merritt that support a strong regional agricultural economy.
- .4 Work cooperatively with the Agricultural Land Commission to ensure appropriate designations and boundaries of the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR).
- .5 Recognize that all lands within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) are subject to the provisions of the Agricultural Land Commission Act and the regulations and orders of the Agricultural Land Commission which generally prohibit or restrict non-farm use and subdivision of ALR lands unless otherwise preferred by the policies of this OCP.
- .6 Encourage partnerships with the agricultural community, senior governments and private enterprise to promote the development of the agricultural sector.
- .7 Facilitate the reclassification of ALR land within the Gateway 286 sector to provide for the development of Gateway 286.

### **5.3.8 Public and Institutional Services**

Public and institutional services make an important contribution to the socio-economic health of the community. Health, education, safety, special government services, research, arts and

culture are some of the key contributors to economic diversification and expansion as well as to the health, safety and quality of life of residents. These services are dispersed throughout the community and include the Nicola Valley Health Centre, Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT), elementary and secondary schools, police, ambulance and fire services as well as City Hall, the Civic Centre, the Nicola Valley Aquatic Centre, Memorial Arena, and the Nicola Valley Archives and Museum. The City anticipates the construction of a new fire hall in the Airport/North Entry sector.

It is Council policy to:

- .1 Continue recognizing City facilities and buildings as significant components of the Merritt community and work to maintain their high quality.
- .2 Encourage senior governments to maintain or increase the level and access to government services in Merritt.
- .3 Provide a satisfactory level of emergency health, safety and fire services.
- .4 Encourage maintenance of health services and lobby and work cooperatively with the Province of British Columbia to increase the level of health care services in the community and to expand the hospital facility.
- .5 Encourage congregate care facilities that provide health services for residents with special needs.
- .6 Recognize the important function of institutional uses as economic generators within the community.

### ***5.3.9 Parks, Schools and Open Spaces***

Merritt has numerous parks and open spaces that are accessible and provide opportunities for active and passive recreation and leisure activities. Land designated as Parks, Public Open Spaces and Recreation Facilities include: municipal parks, sports fields, passive parks, nature parks and green belts. The City supports a system of parks and trails and recreational facilities that are accessible to all segments of the population for active and passive use. There is a deficit of park/open space in the North Nicola, Bench and Diamond Vale sectors and the City will seek park dedications when these areas develop and redevelop.

The City recognizes that demand for school lands and educational facilities change with the changing population demographics in the school district service areas. The City is committed to working with the Board of Education on planning for the expansion or compression of school lands and facilities in the municipal boundaries.

It is Council policy to:

- .1 Ensure that as population increases, adequate parks and open spaces are made available in close proximity to new and existing residents.
- .2 Consider the option of requiring park land dedication or the payment of cash in lieu of park land dedication.
- .3 Identify, develop and preserve pedestrian and cycling trail corridors along the Nicola and Coldwater Rivers.
- .4 Continue building or dedicating pedestrian and cycling trail corridors to link existing trails and between Merritt's neighbourhoods and public facilities. Where possible, seek to use existing right-of-ways for new trail development.
- .5 Continue to encourage participation in a tree replacement and planting program in concert with local businesses, property owners and beautification organizations.
- .6 Establish priorities for park facility upgrades.
- .7 Encourage park upgrades in City parks to provide amenities that will serve the entire community.
- .8 Work cooperatively with local citizens and service clubs in establishing and developing new parks.
- .9 Identify ways to safely improve access to the City Centre by various modes of alternative transportation including walking, cycling, motorized scooters and other self-propelled methods.
- .10 Work cooperatively with the Board of Education to provide adequate land for schools and educational facilities.
- .11 Encourage language centres, tutoring services, private colleges and similar educational facilities to locate in the CBD.

#### ***5.3.10 Signage***

The intent of this section is to provide direction for signage throughout the community to provide information to visitors and residents. Signage impacts visitors, tourists, motorists and residents from the moment they enter the City and as they move throughout the community. As such, signage has the potential to communicate information, and to create a positive image of Merritt.

It is Council policy to:

- .1 Ensure signage is not visually intrusive and yet interesting, attractive and a vital part of the design of the building and business it represents and is at a scale complementary to adjacent land uses and surrounding buildings.
- .2 Ensure consistency of appearance and quality of materials and craftsmanship.
- .3 Encourage signage that reflects the heritage and character of the community.
- .4 Promote communication that is clear and presented in a simple and straightforward manner.
- .5 Ensure that signage is maintained to the highest standard throughout the year as supported by a maintenance schedule.

#### **5.4 Sector Specific Policies**

The intent of this section is to provide policies that reinforce the qualities that make each sector unique. For each sector, the following is provided: description of the existing situation; direction for future development; policies specific to each area; and sector map outlining land use designations.

By undertaking a sector approach, land use designations are defined according to the particular features of each sector within the City. The direction for future development for each land use designation is indicated as per the vision defined for each sector. This means that the intent of land use designations may differ from sector to sector. For example, the vision for residential development in one sector may differ from another sector of the City, yet both sectors indicate a “residential” land use designation.

##### **5.4.1 Bench**

###### **5.4.1.1 Description of Existing Situation**

The Bench sector encompasses the area north of Voght Street on the benchlands above the City. It is primarily a quiet, residential neighbourhood surrounded by grasslands and forest. Due to the ecology of the surrounding Douglas Fir and Ponderosa Pines, this sector is considered to be within an urban wildfire interface area.

This neighbourhood is situated at the highest elevation in Merritt and is primarily comprised of low density single family dwellings with large, landscaped lots, curving streets and spectacular views of the Nicola Valley. One exception is a multiple density apartment complex located at the eastern end of this sector. The Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT) campus is located in this area and provides a central venue for post secondary education programs. In addition,

affordable housing units are located on Belshaw Street south of the NVIT campus. A significant amount of undeveloped Crown land, known as the “North Bench”, exists directly north of this neighbourhood. Lower portions of this area are serviceable by the existing water system, but a large proportion is too high in elevation to receive service without upgrades to existing pressure.

#### **5.4.1.2 Direction for Future Development**

Where possible, the City will encourage the development of existing vacant parcels within the serviced areas of the Bench before expanding onto steeper slopes or areas outside existing development. Future expansion of residential development is anticipated to the north, but new development will need to be carefully considered since this area will require extensive infrastructure expansion. It is expected that new development will consist primarily of single family homes compatible with existing development. The City has identified 40 ha (100 acres) of this area as suitable for residential development or technical park development and the expansion of the Bench neighborhood. The City will work with the Crown to make this land available for development.

Some expansion of the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT) has been completed. More expansion will be encouraged on the site of the existing campus for expanded facilities and student housing. The area surrounding the campus has the potential to accommodate multiple family residential housing.

It is Council policy to:

- .1 Maintain the primarily single family residential character of the neighbourhood and support compatible and complementary medium density residential, institutional, parks and recreational land uses and secure more park dedication within the neighbourhood.
- .2 Retain the institutional uses in the area including the NVIT campus, schools and the cemetery and consult with them on new programming ideas.
- .3 Encourage new residential development primarily within existing serviced areas. Once development is exhausted in areas already serviced, the next phase of development could occur within the existing water pressure zone where servicing can be extended.
- .4 Ensure new residential developments are sited and designed so as to take advantage of, preserve and integrate special site features such as mature vegetation, landscaping, topography, adjacent development and scenic views where possible.
- .5 Encourage multiple family residential development and student housing in areas adjacent to the NVIT campus.

- .6 Prevent development within areas designated as hazardous slopes or unstable soils where hazards cannot be mitigated. These include areas adjacent to steep slopes with grades of 30% or greater, areas of soil subsidence, rock fall, land slip or erosion hazards which are known or suspected.
- .7 Ensure geotechnical evaluations are conducted for development in areas greater than 20% slope.
- .8 Ensure consultation with appropriate ministries prior to advancement of new development within or adjacent to potential wildfire interface areas.
- .9 Include wildfire standards in subdivision design where appropriate to safeguard proposed and existing developments.
- .10 Work cooperatively with Crown land agencies with respect to future expansion of areas in the northern area of the Bench. This may include the preparation of a neighbourhood development plan or a comprehensive development plan that would address the following:  
land use and density, infrastructure requirements, wildfire interface issues, transportation (including an east-west link between Belshaw and Juniper Avenue to provide support and access to Voght Street), open spaces and parks, existing habitat and vegetation, and design guidelines for form and character of development

#### ***5.4.2 River Ranch and Grassland***

##### **5.4.2.1 Description of Existing Situation**

Much of the natural vegetation of the Nicola Valley includes semi-arid grasslands with varying agricultural capabilities. The River Ranch and Grassland sector is an extension of this natural landscape and lies to the east of the City. It is bisected by the Coquihalla Highway which runs north and south and the Nicola River which runs east and west. This area is largely flat and undeveloped, with wide, open, natural spaces and some agricultural related activities that contribute significantly to the natural setting of the community. Much of the area is flat and lies within the Nicola River floodplain and may be subject to periodic flooding.

Agricultural operations currently are actively conducted in this sector especially on the River Ranch lands. River Ranch has a long history as an integral component of the agricultural community in the Merritt area. The ranch is situated adjacent to the urban core, bounded to the west by the North Nicola neighbourhood and East Merritt to the east and south. The River Ranch and Grasslands sector represents the largest area of land within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) in Merritt's boundary.



#### **5.4.2.2 Direction for Future Development**

The City of Merritt is fortunate to have visually appealing natural amenities in the heart of the City. These are visible from within the community and at the entry points into the City. The vision for the River Ranch and Grasslands sector is one which offers a balance between retention of the “rural”, natural environment areas and the co-existence with the amenities and services offered along the fringe. The Nicola River, the valley slopes north of the Nicola River and open areas will be respected as an important part of the aesthetic and environmental character of the community.

It is Council policy to:

- .1 Encourage new development on the north side of the Nicola River west of River Ranch Road to provide parkland dedication for the construction of cycling and pedestrian trails.
- .2 Consult with the agricultural community to mitigate the potential negative impacts of recreational trail development through sensitive design, location, adequate signage and fencing.
- .3 Preserve lands suited to agriculture as a means to preserve farmland and the agricultural character of this sector.
- .4 Encourage buffering where non-compatible development is directly adjacent to agricultural lands to avoid land use conflicts.
- .5 Conserve and protect wildlife and riparian habitat and the natural environment where possible.
- .6 Work with landowners to plan developments which achieve community/landowner objectives while leaving the largest possible blocks of grassland intact and functioning in a natural way as much as possible.

#### **5.4.3 *East Merritt/Diamond Vale***

##### **5.4.3.1 Description of Existing Situation**

East Merritt/Diamond Vale lies adjacent to the City Centre and is bounded by the River Ranch Grassland areas to the north and South Merritt. This sector is part of the eastern entry into the City along Highway 97C/Nicola Avenue and contains commercial and industrial uses. This sector contains a significant number of residential neighbourhoods, many of which are adjacent to forest related industries located throughout this sector. The East Merritt/Diamond Vale neighbourhood is attractive to multiple ages due to the relatively flat topography, proximity to

the City Centre and accessibility to various amenities and services including elementary schools, recreational facilities and seniors housing.

The sector is largely characterized by single family dwelling units. A significant number of multi-family, apartment and duplex developments are concentrated in the centre of this sector. The age and quality of homes vary; some homes are aged and have been unaltered over many years while others have been renovated or recently constructed. The eastern portion of the neighbourhood is accessed by curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs while the west is characterized by a traditional grid pattern.

Townhouses, apartments and multi-family complexes are located along Douglas and Menzies Streets. The area contains neighbourhoods dedicated to mobile and modular homes, many of which are located south of Clapperton Avenue. Seniors housing is located in the western most section of the neighbourhood and provides easy access to the amenities of the City Centre.

Forest-related heavy industry dominates the southern portion of this sector and occupies a significant amount of land. The area north of Nicola Avenue is under developed and contains light industrial and service commercial activities. These lots are located along the northern edge of Nicola Avenue and along Margaret Street, Lauder Street, and Douglas Street to the north and south, along Lauder Avenue and Marian Avenue to the east and west. Lands to the east of this area are undeveloped and could be hazardous for development due to the presence of abandoned mine shafts.

#### **5.4.3.2 Direction for Future Development**

The character of this area will be enhanced and diversified by encouraging new residential development and redevelopment that complements the area while providing an inviting entry way into the City along the Highway 97C/Nicola Avenue. Future residential infill development is expected where possible; and larger tracts of land provide opportunities for new single family detached residential development, small lot / narrow lot or otherwise, or multi-family residential development along Bann Street and south of Clapperton Avenue. Opportunities for multiple family residential developments also exist at the corner of Menzies Street and Clapperton Avenue, on the north side of Ransom Avenue and on the south side of Ransom Avenue near Bann Street. The intent for the East Merritt sector is to provide a mix of housing types and tenures to offer people the opportunity to continue to live in the same neighbourhood should their housing needs change.

It is Council policy to:

- .1 Encourage a mix of housing types and densities, including small lot/narrow lot single family detached housing, semi detached and duplex houses, triplexes, quadraplexes, townhouses and apartments to enhance and diversify the residential character of the neighbourhood.
- .2 Particularly encourage, as preferred development, multi-family residential density houses (including triplexes, quadraplexes, townhouses and apartments) that complement the existing mixed density character of the community and complement the scale and character of the surrounding neighbourhood.
- .3 Encourage multi-family residential development on lands west of McLean Place designated for future development.
- .4 Discourage low density residential infilling of the area west of Bann Street and south of Highway 5A in favour of medium density residential infilling.
- .5 Encourage industrial activities to develop on lands designated for future development located between the Coldwater River and Neilson Street.
- .6 Encourage redevelopment of properties along Priest Avenue and south of Houston Street that are suited to industrial uses.
- .7 Continue to facilitate and establish additional landscaping and buffering techniques between industrial, commercial, residential and agricultural uses.
- .8 Encourage intensification of service commercial uses in the northern portion of this sector along Margaret Street, Lauder Street, Douglas Street, Lauder Avenue and Marian Avenue.
- .9 Consider accommodating mixed use commercial establishments that are compatible within multi-family residential developments (e.g. small offices, beauty salons, corner stores).
- .10 Encourage development along Nicola Avenue that is visually appealing.
- .11 Improve and enhance the eastern entryway into the City.
- .12 Work towards establishing bicycle and walking paths in the neighbourhood with connections to the Coldwater River and secure more park dedication.
- .13 Conduct a geotechnical analysis regarding the possible existence of abandoned mine shafts prior to development in the area east of Douglas Street and north of Nicola Avenue.
- .14 Ensure new development areas along the western edge of this sector provide direct access to the City Centre.
- .15 Establish a plan for the transitional area between the City Centre and East Merritt/Diamond Vale that will allow compatible land uses to be developed on vacant lots at the west end of Coutlee Avenue to ensure the character of the neighbourhood and access are not

compromised; such uses could include medium density residential and mixed use commercial with the emphasis on ground floor office use.

#### **5.4.4 South Merritt**

##### **5.4.4.1 Description of Existing Situation**

The forest industry is a critical component of the Merritt economy; it provides employment and a strong tax base. The South Merritt sector, located south of the Coldwater River, represents one of the main industrial areas in Merritt. The Active Mountain Entertainment Corporation land is located south of the industrial area, and is separated by the "Truck Route" along Houston Street. Abandoned coal mines underlie much of this area and present a potential subsidence hazard (i.e. sink holes) to future development. Historical mining activities are also a possible source of methane and carbon monoxide gases. Archaeologically significant sites have been identified along the southern shore of the Coldwater River, and any land-altering developments that may threaten these sites should be designed to avoid them.

##### **5.4.4.2 Direction for New Development**

The vision for South Merritt is to maintain the existing heavy industrial activities occurring on the lands south of the Coldwater River and to facilitate development of the lands south of the Houston Street truck route known as Active Mountain; such development to be mixed density residential and to create a new neighborhood.

It is Council policy to:

- .1 Recognize this area as a significant contributor to the economy of Merritt and maintain and strengthen existing industrial activities in designated areas.
- .2 Promote future development on the lands south of the Houston Street truck route and the Coldwater River for industrial and residential uses. Amending Bylaw 2252, 2019
- .3 Encourage buffering and screening between industrial uses and incompatible uses as well as along the shores of the Coldwater River.
- .4 Have assessed the potential for mining-induced subsidence and the likelihood of encountering mining-related hazards (such as old mine shafts or mine entrances) when new development is proposed in this sector.
- .5 Avoid land-altering developments along the southern shore of the Coldwater River that may threaten archaeologically significant sites.

#### **5.4.5 North Nicola**

##### **5.4.5.1 Description of Existing Situation**

The North Nicola sector encompasses much of the land north of Nicola Avenue, south of Voght Street and along the banks of the Nicola River. Residential development consists mainly of single-family dwelling units with some multi-family housing. Many parcels in this sector are adjacent to amenities such as the golf course, Central Park, agriculture, grasslands, and the Nicola River. Voght Street runs through the entire length of this sector, providing access to many residential, commercial, institutional and recreational facilities.

The Coyote Bluffs neighbourhood is located on benchlands south of Voght Street and has views of the Nicola Valley and the City below. This area is characterized by low density, single family residential development along Irvine Avenue and bounded by River Ranch Road to the east. Large tracts of undeveloped lands are located south of this area and is intended for future residential development.

##### **5.4.5.2 Direction for New Development**

The vision for new development in this sector is to provide opportunities for residents to enjoy the natural amenities of the area and to promote safe and convenient access and enhancement along Voght Street. Considerable lands exist for future residential development in the southern portions of this sector.

It is Council policy to:

- .1 Preserve the residential character of each area within this neighbourhood and direct commercial, institutional, and recreational uses along the Voght Street corridor.
- .2 Encourage mixed density residential development that complements the scale and character of surrounding neighbourhoods.
- .3 Encourage mixed density residential development on lands south of Irvine Avenue and north of Nicola River.
- .4 Encourage park upgrades in Central Park and Rotary Park to provide amenities that will serve the entire community and secure more park dedication.
- .5 Work towards establishing bicycle and walking paths in the neighbourhood with strong connections to the Nicola River.

- .6 Ensure future development and improvements respect the ecology of the Nicola River while taking into consideration any impacts of the designated 200 year floodplain.
- .7 Maintain view sheds of the Nicola River and the Nicola Valley where appropriate.
- .8 Support safe and convenient access along Voght Street for pedestrians and vehicles.
- .9 Support enhancement initiatives along the Voght Street corridor.

#### **5.4.6 Sector Gateway 286**

##### **5.4.6.1 Description of Existing Situation**

The Gateway 286 area is a significant and major entry into the City of Merritt. It provides the connection point for Highway 5 (Coquihalla) and Highway 97C (Okanagan Connector) and a major access into Merritt. The land surrounding the interchange is largely undeveloped with the exception of the Visitor Information Centre which provides tourist information.

Over the years, there have been overlapping interests among various ministries including Ministry of Transportation and Ministry of Forests in this sector. Gravel reserves exist in the southwest section of this sector, and a series of hiking trails known as the Godey Creek Hiking Trails traverse the wooded slopes adjacent to the Visitor Information Centre.

More recently interest has been expressed by private landowners to develop property and by the First Nations to divest land from the Crown and develop it as a mixed use, mixed density neighborhood.

##### **5.4.6.2 Direction for Future Development**

The direction for development of Gateway 286 is to increase the profile of this area as a significant gateway into the community through enhancement, signage and promotion of future development in this area. Significant developable land, about 128 ha (315 acres), is located within this sector. Future development of this area will be promoted, while recognizing and working with the various interests that exist in this area.

It is Council policy to:

- .1 Establish and implement a corridor plan to provide direction for enhancement initiatives, improved circulation and informative signage to facilitate development of this area as a significant gateway to the community.



- .2 Work cooperatively with various agencies and stakeholders such as the Ministry of Transportation, to determine future expansion of the highway corridor at the Highway 5 (Coquihalla) and Highway 97C (Okanagan Connector) interchange.
- .3 Ensure high standards of water and sewer services for new development.
- .4 Provide safe access for new development in a manner which does not compromise the function or safety of the existing or future configuration of the interchange for Highway 5 (Coquihalla) and Highway 97C (Okanagan Connector).
- .5 Preserve view corridors and the scenic quality of the valley from this area.
- .6 Maintain access to the Godey Creek Hiking Trails adjacent to the Visitor Information Centre.
- .7 Actively pursue the development of Sector Gateway 286 as a mixed use neighborhood with public and private landholders and the First Nations landholders.
- .8 Encourage the development of a commercial node in the sector; such node to be a mixed use development including commercial, office and residential, and three storeys including medium density residential development.

#### **5.4.7 City Centre**

##### **5.4.7.1 Description of Existing Situation**

The City Centre is the business and retail heart of Merritt. It provides a good mix of office and retail uses along major streets and malls. The City Centre is home to many residents, including single and multi-family units and seniors accommodation.

The “main street” of Merritt runs along Quilchena Avenue in the middle of the City Centre area. This represents a unique and important concentration of businesses and services and is one of the most attractive assets of the City. It is flat, easy to walk around and contains a variety of shops and services.

##### **5.4.7.2 Direction for Future Development**

City Council is committed to working with property and business owners to ensure a thriving City Centre as the “heart” of the community. A strong City Centre is vital to the future well being of the entire community as it grows to an ideal population of 15,000 people. More than any other sector in the community, it symbolizes economic health, quality of life and community pride to residents and visitors. The character of the City Centre reflects the character of the community as a whole, and as such, efforts will be made to ensure this area is well designed and planned, puts forward a positive image and will attract residents and visitors to work, live and shop. The

City Centre sector has been designated a Revitalization Area and subject to Façade Design Guidelines as set out in Schedule “E”.

Development, redevelopment and infill in the City Centre will be encouraged at a three storey or greater profile. The “main street” area will be encouraged to develop at a two storey profile along Quilchena Avenue stepping up to three storeys mid block along Granite Avenue and Coutlee Avenue. All development in the City Centre is subject to a development permit. A full range of uses in the City Centre will be encouraged in the “Village” area.

It is Council policy to:

Ensure a thriving City Centre in Merritt. City Council will pursue a strategy consisting of four interrelated elements: Land Use and Development, Organization, City Centre Revitalization and Marketing.

#### **5.4.7.3 Land Use and Development Policies**

It is Council policy to:

- .1 Encourage existing and new development of the following types in the City Centre in general and in the “Village” in particular in a minimum three storey profile:
  - a. Retail and service commercial uses to attract people to the City Centre including financial services, personal services, medical and health services, professional offices, government offices and services – e.g. City Hall, Post Office, , entertainment – e.g. performing arts theatre, movie theatre, music halls/lounges, retail commercial, especially street and pedestrian oriented, specialized, boutique type businesses including restaurants, art and artisan shops and galleries, institutional uses – e.g. churches, private learning centres or schools and hotels.
  - b. Residential uses including small lot / narrow lot single family detached, multiple family and mixed use residential to ensure a permanent presence of people in the City Centre area. These may include smaller dwelling units catering to the emerging “baby boomer” population approaching retirement and multi-family residential, either stand alone or in combination with commercial development while encouraging a three storey profile .
- .2 Continue a two storey profile development pattern in the “main street” area.
- .3 Promote conversions and reuse of older buildings to appropriate types of commercial / service uses.

- .4 Encourage improved access to the City Centre through various modes of alternative transportation including walking, cycling, and motorized scooters and encourage direct pedestrian and cycling links into the City Centre especially across major roads (such as Nicola Avenue).
- .5 Amend the Development Cost Charge Bylaw to provide for reduced development cost charges for any residential units above three stories developed in the CBD.

#### **5.4.7.4 Organization Policies**

Council will work to ensure organizational elements are in place so that the City Centre can fully capitalize on its potential.

It is Council policy to:

- .1 Partner with the City Centre business community and undertake initiatives to strengthen the City Centre.
- .2 Ensure City bylaws are supportive of building a strong City Centre (e.g. off-street parking requirements, tax levels, DCC levels, and development approval procedures).
- .3 Encourage establishment of City Centre BIA [Business Improvement Area] as provided for in provincial legislation.
- .4 Encourage joint initiatives between the City and BIA aimed at strengthening the City Centre such as investment in City Centre revitalization, investment in joint marketing initiatives, and participating in City-wide economic development activities and initiatives.
- .5 Assist in assuming responsibility and providing resources for keeping the City Centre clean, neat and tidy year round.

#### **5.4.7.5 City Centre Revitalization Policies**

City Council will work cooperatively with the City Centre business community to revitalize this area.

It is Council policy to:

- .1 Incorporate streetscape improvements to enhance attractiveness and interest.
- .2 Create special feature areas or places of "showpiece quality" such as greenspaces, plazas and/or a town square.

- .3 Capitalize on heritage values and the unique history of Merritt.
- .4 Develop signage and information kiosks.
- .5 Encourage functional improvements along sidewalks / walkways, within parking facilities, and with respect to traffic handling.
- .6 Upgrade infrastructure – high quality streets, sidewalks, bike lanes, lighting and encourage advanced telecommunications systems to create a connected city.
- .7 Concentrate the “Walk of Stars” features in the City Centre.

#### **5.4.7.6 Marketing Policies**

City Council will work with the City Centre business community to market and promote the City Centre.

It is Council policy to:

- .1 Encourage activities that generate interest, excitement, and provide appealing things to see and do in the City Centre.
- .2 Encourage a Performing Arts Centre or similar to provide a year-round venue for all events, various music performances, a “farmer’s market”, centre for the “Walk of Stars” and to help Merritt live up to its name as Country Music Capital of Canada.
- .3 Attract a higher percentage of Coquihalla Highway traffic into Merritt through attractive and appealing entryways into Merritt from the Highway and effective signage.
- .4 Promote and welcome bus tours to make it more appealing for them to spend more time and more money in Merritt.
- .5 Coordinate marketing initiatives to deliver a consistent message about Merritt.
- .6 Coordinate hours of business.
- .7 Coordinate with other attractions in Merritt and the surrounding region.
- .8 Raise the profile of the tourism information centre in the City Centre area at the City Hall building.
- .9 Celebrate interesting heritage features throughout the community by encouraging heritage conservation efforts and façade treatments and upgrades.
- .10 Encourage new development to incorporate heritage and history of Merritt in its architecture and design.

#### **5.4.8 West Merritt**

##### **5.4.8.1 Description of the Existing Situation**

West Merritt consists mainly of low density single-family detached residences and contains community parks and open spaces including Voght Park, schools and an abandoned Canadian Pacific (CP) rail line that runs adjacent to Quilchena Avenue. The City's public works yard is located west of Main Street and provides a central venue for the City's crews and equipment as well as the sewage treatment plant. The neighbourhood is generally flat with a traditional street grid pattern and is conveniently located directly west of the City Centre. This southern edge of this sector lies along the banks of the Coldwater River where Voght Park is located. This sector is linked directly to the Collettsville sector via the Main Street bridge.

##### **5.4.8.2 Direction for Future Development**

The direction for future development of West Merritt is to remain as a pleasant residential neighbourhood. Amenities such as the local parks, quiet residential streets and proximity to the City Centre and the Coldwater River, make it a desirable section of Merritt in which to live. As such, the vision for West Merritt is to continue to nurture and enhance the existing parks and green spaces. Stronger connections to the Coldwater River and the City Centre will be achieved through development of pedestrian and cycling paths.

#### **Policies**

It is Council policy to:

- .1 Encourage a mix of housing types and densities, including single family detached housing which complements and enhances the residential character of the neighbourhood.
- .2 Encourage multi-family residential density development (including triplexes, townhomes and apartments) that diversifies the existing low-density character of the community and complements the scale and character of the surrounding neighbourhood.
- .3 Consider accommodating mixed use commercial establishments that are compatible within residential developments. All such development is subject to a development permit.
- .4 Encourage development along Quilchena Avenue that is visually appealing and is compatible with surrounding residential uses.
- .5 Enhance parks and green spaces.
- .6 Extend pedestrian and cycling paths along the Coldwater River and within the neighbourhood.

#### **5.4.9 Collettville**

##### **5.4.9.1 Description of Existing Situation**

Located in the southwest of Merritt, Collettville is physically separated from the urbanized core of the City by the Coldwater River. Access is provided by three bridge crossings. The first crossing is at Main Street, the second is at Voght Street/Lindley Creek Road, and the third is from South Merritt via the Houston Street truck route. Agricultural land occupies much of the western area where ranching activities are on-going. Steep slopes are located in the southeast corner of Collettville where evidence of past coal workings exist. Underground shafts are reported throughout the steeply-sloped portions of the southeast sector beyond the City boundary. The full extent of these workings is unknown.

Development in Collettville predates the area's amalgamation with the City of Merritt in 1996. As such, the area is characterized by variations in parcel size and a semi-rural standard of servicing. Shortly after inclusion within the City boundaries, sewer services were extended to the Collettville area and the old Coldwater Improvement District water system was replaced by extension of the City's system. Today, Collettville's semi-rural standard of servicing includes community water and sewer services provided by the City, and paved roads lined with gravel shoulders and swales or ditches rather than more intensive infrastructure such as curbs, gutters, sidewalks and underground storm water drains. Overhead wiring provides electrical, telephone and cablevision services. Existing commercial activities occur in this area including a welding shop and heavy machine/truck operator training. The City's Fall Fair and rodeo grounds are also located in this area along with the Collettville Elementary School. Large tracts of vacant land exist in this area which provides future development opportunities.

##### **5.4.9.2 Direction for Future Development**

The direction for future development for Collettville is to maintain the semi-rural form and character of the neighbourhood and to maintain a mixture of residential dwelling types. Agricultural operations in the western portion of Collettville will continue to be supported, and industrial uses will be encouraged south of Lindley Creek Road. Public access will be maintained to open spaces traditionally used for recreation. Opportunities exist to establish stronger linkages to the parks and open spaces in West Merritt and connections with the Coldwater River.

It is Council policy to:

- .1 Retain the large lot semi-rural character and servicing standards in the area.
- .2 Maintain a mixture of residential dwelling types while preserving the character of the area.



- .3 Encourage industrial uses south of Willow Avenue.
- .4 Preserve lands suited to agriculture as a means of retaining farmland and the semi-rural character of this sector.
- .5 Ensure future development and improvements that respect the ecology of the Coldwater River and other streams in this sector including erosion prone riverbanks, fisheries values and the area identified as an environmental buffer along the southern shore.
- .6 Encourage adequate buffering and screening between industrial areas and adjacent residential, commercial, agricultural or other non-industrial uses.
- .7 Ensure future developments on lands abutting steep slopes to the south of this sector consider potential geotechnical hazards.
- .8 Identify and develop potential walkways along major roads for pedestrian safety.
- .9 Maintain access to Windy Canyon for recreation and public access.

#### **5.4.10 Voght Street/North Entry Corridor**

##### **5.4.10.1 Description of Existing Situation**

The Voght Street/North Entry Corridor is the northern gateway to the City of Merritt via the junction of Highway 5 (Coquihalla), Highway 5A and Voght Street. Located in the northern section of the City, this corridor provides Merritt's first impression as well as highway commercial services to residents and the traveling public. Land uses in this area include a mixture of motels, gas stations, fast food outlets and large scale retailers. A major truck stop has been built on the east side of the highway interchange and provides additional highway commercial services. Greyhound bus and freight service is now based there.

Lands adjacent to the airport along Airport Road are also part of this sector. The Nicola Valley Health Centre, located north of Voght Street, is easily accessed by emergency vehicles entering Merritt from the highway interchange.

##### **5.4.10.2 Direction for Future Development**

The direction for future development of the Voght Street/North Entry Corridor will be centered on providing a welcoming gateway to the community. Through enhancement initiatives, improved circulation and informative signage, this corridor will serve as an attractive entry point to draw visitors into the community and promote pride in Merritt. This area has potential to make the

economic pie bigger for Merritt by encouraging vehicle-oriented commercial development that caters to both the traveling public and local residents.

It is Council policy to:

- .1 Encourage vehicle-oriented commercial uses to locate in areas best suited to meet the needs of the traveling public and residents such as highway interchanges on the Coquihalla Highway. These uses include: motels and hotels, gas and service stations, fast food outlets, large scale retailers (big box stores) and truck stops, recreational and personal vehicle service centres.
- .2 Establish and implement a Voght Street/North Entry Corridor Plan to provide direction for enhancement initiatives, improved circulation and informative signage to ensure this area is a showpiece the community can be proud of.
- .3 Work cooperatively with the Ministry of Transportation to maintain the corridor as a safe and attractive feature of the community.
- .4 Ensure access is built to provide efficient and safe traffic flows at access points along the Voght Street/North Entry corridor.
- .5 Encourage commercial uses that complement existing activities within the corridor and serve the needs of the traveling public and local residents.
- .6 Ensure the appearance of highly visible new development along Voght Street is compatible with enhancement initiatives and surroundings of the site.
- .7 Where appropriate, encourage buffering from adjacent highway uses with landscaping to reduce impacts on new and existing development and provide a visually appealing environment.
- .8 Ensure development of lands adjacent to the airport property (south of Airport Road) will not impede future land requirements for expansion of airport capacity.
- .9 Encourage commercial development adjacent to the Merritt Airport to be low intensity so as not to adversely affect the day to day operations of the airport.
10. Encourage high density multi-family development in the Residential designation. Amending Bylaw No. 2263, 2019

#### **5.4.11 Airport Area**

##### **5.4.11.1 Description of Existing Situation**

The Airport sector is located in the northeast sector of the community. It is surrounded by agricultural lands to the south, east and west of the airport and the Ministry of Forests' offices to the north.

An Airport Development Plan was prepared in 2003 for the City which stated that the Merritt Airport is currently equipped to provide for existing air transportation demand for the community. While there are minor deficiencies such as lack of control over lands where manmade facilities or agricultural activities could constrain expansion, at the present time, these would not appear to impede air transportation requirements expected in the near future.

##### **5.4.11.2 Direction for Future Development**

The direction for future development of the Airport sector is to maintain opportunities for expansion and safe operation of the airport while enabling new development that is compatible with aviation requirements.

While the existing air terminal building is serviced by its own well and septic disposal field, the construction of the new truck stop and future development directly adjacent to the Airport provides the opportunity to connect to the municipal water and sewer systems. Lands in the south east corner of the Airport sector have been identified as well-suited for composting facilities.

It is Council policy to:

- .1 Ensure development of lands surrounding the airport runway will not impede future land requirements for expansion of airport capacity as outlined in the Airport Development Plan for Merritt Airport (2003).
- .2 Encourage airport-oriented commercial development which will not affect the following areas:
  - a. between Airport Road and the Airport property
  - b. on the Airport property south of the taxiway.
- .3 Extend the water and sewer services to the Airport sector.

- .4 Ensure new development meets the requirements outlined in the City's Airport Development Plan as updated.
- .5 [Restrict airside access for properties directly adjacent to the west side of the Airport runway. Airside access will only be permitted from the east side of the runway.](#)
- .6 Complete and maintain a hard surface access road with turn around at the terminal and design, install, and maintain low-profile energy efficient road lighting to enhance the appearance of the airport and use a lease land concept to market the airport lands.

## 6.0 DEVELOPMENT PERMIT AREAS

This section identifies areas of the City where development permits are required before a subdivision is approved or a building permit is issued. Each permit area has guidelines for development. After submitting a development permit application and the appropriate plans, and reviewing the recommendations of the Development Facilitation Board (DFB)/Technical Planning Committee, Council can decide to issue a development permit. The development permit can also modify conditions found in the City's regulatory bylaws (e.g. zoning; subdivision and development servicing), but it may not modify use or density.

The Merritt Official Community Plan contains seven Development Permit Areas as outlined in Schedule D:

<b>Development Permit Area No. 1 City Centre</b>	This Development Permit Area has been established to promote good planning, design and building architecture in the City Centre.
<b>Development Permit Area No. 2 Geotechnical Hazards</b>	These areas within Merritt are considered potentially hazardous for development due to unstable soils and steep slopes. This Development Permit Area is intended to alert property owners of potential dangers and to assist in safeguarding public safety and private property.
<b>Development Permit Area No. 3 Highway Corridor Gateways</b>	These areas are the main gateways to and from the City. They form the first impressions that visitors and potential investors have of the City. Landscaping, screening and design guidelines are suggested. Properties along Voght Street, Highway 5 (Coquihalla), and Highway 5A/Nicola

	Avenue are included in this Development Permit Area.
<b>Development Permit Area No. 4 Wildfire Hazards</b>	Certain areas around Merritt are fire hazard interface areas. This Development Permit Area provides guidelines to highlight and mitigate risks associated with these hazards.
<b>Development Permit Area No. 5</b>	This development permit area will encourage new intensive, small lot residential development to achieve high quality design, be compatible with area neighbourhoods and be attractive and functional for residents. Areas within established residential neighborhoods are included.
<b>Development Permit Area No. 6</b>	This development permit area includes Environmentally Sensitive Areas which designate all streams within the City that have been designated to protect riparian fish habitat.
<b>Development Permit Area 7</b>	This development permit area applies to multi-family residential development areas in every sector. Its purpose is to provide for and regulate good design, good site planning and good land use planning of multi-family development projects. Multi-family includes triplex, quadraplex, townhouses, apartments and similar housing types.

#### **6.1 Development Permit Area No. 1 – City Centre Development Permit Area Category**

- .1 The City Centre area is designated as a Development Permit Area under Section 919.1 (1):
- (d) of the *Local Government Act* for the revitalization of an area in which a commercial use is permitted
  - (e) of the *Local Government Act* for the establishment of objectives for the form and character of intensive residential development

- (f) of the *Local Government Act* for the establishment of objectives for the form and character of commercial, industrial or multi-family residential development.

### **Area**

- .2 The City Centre Development Permit Area is shown on Schedule D, Development Permit Areas Map.

### **Justification**

- .3 Merritt's City Centre represents the heart of the community; it is a focal point for City residents and visitors. It is Council's objective to ensure that the form and character of new development is of high quality and physical appearance in order to promote a vibrant, healthy, safe and welcoming downtown.

### **Exemptions**

- .4 A development permit is not required for the following minor alterations; interior renovations and changes in plant material in established landscaped areas

### **Guidelines**

- .5 Development Permits should be issued in accordance with the following:

#### Site Planning

- .1 A linear continuity of buildings should be established, consistent with the existing pattern.
- .2 With the exception of larger institutional buildings and buildings with significant gross floor area requirements, buildings should be oriented towards a street.
- .3 Development Permit applications must first receive the approval of the Facades Design Approval Committee pursuant to the guidelines attached to this bylaw as Schedule "E".

#### Design

- .4 Design should be sensitive to the natural surroundings and the historical architecture in Merritt.

- .5 Monolithic structures and long expanses of straight walls should be avoided. Large buildings should be designed in a way that creates the impression of smaller units and less bulk by building jogs and irregular faces. Building shape, siting, architectural features and exterior finish should be sufficiently varied to create interest and avoid a monotonous appearance.
- .6 Buildings are encouraged to be surfaced with natural building materials. Wood is preferred, and brick, hardi-plank/hardiboard (also known as cement fibre board), stone or stucco is acceptable.
- .7 The use of dormers, bay window and balconies is encouraged to break up the massiveness of large structures in order to create the appearance of several smaller structures.
- .8 The use of a variety of wood and earth-tone colours is encouraged. Bright colours are acceptable as accents such as trim and special features such as doorways.

#### Landscaping

- .9 Development should include the planting of trees parallel to the street.
- .10 Encourage the use of drought tolerant native plant species; or alternatively low water consumption xeriscape species, suitable for use in dry arid environments such as that of the Lower Nicola Valley.
- .11 The use of native species is preferred and the use of cedars is discouraged because of their fire hazard and consumption of water.
- .12 Consider in-ground irrigation where appropriate to promote water conservation and ensure on-going use of maintenance and quality of landscaping.
- .13 Landscaping should be included where there are any building edges or blank, expansive wall faces.
- .14 The site should be provided with supplementary screening in the form of fencing, hedging, planting or other screening materials in the following areas: around outdoor storage areas, around garbage waste containers and around heating and cooling equipment and similar service areas

#### Parking

- .15 Parking should be encouraged behind buildings and not consume street frontage.



- .16 Parking areas should include landscaped features, including between buildings and parking areas. Trees should be encouraged where possible.
- .17 Secure off-street parking for bicycles shall be provided convenient to building entrances.
- .18 All parking areas should be paved.

## **6.2 Development Permit Area No. 2 – Geotechnical Hazards Development Permit Area**

### **Category**

- .1 Merritt's geotechnical hazards are designated as a Development Permit Area under Section 919.1 (1) (b) of the *Local Government Act* for the protection of development from hazardous conditions.

### **Area**

- .2 The Geotechnical Hazards Development Permit Area is shown on Schedule D, Development Permit Areas Map.

### **Justification**

- .3 It is the objective of this Development Permit Area to protect development in areas noted as subject to potential geotechnical hazards, steep slopes, or abandoned mines.

### **Exemptions**

- .4 A development permit is not required for the following situations where no subdivision of land is involved where the following minor alterations are proposed: interior renovations, exterior maintenance requiring only the repair or replacement of surface materials or colours, and an alteration which is limited to the addition, replacement or alteration of doors, windows, building trim or roofs.

### **Guidelines**

- .5 Development permits should be issued in accordance with the following guidelines:
  - .1 Before issuing a development or building permit within these areas, the City may require the applicant to provide, at his expense, a report certified by a professional

engineer with experience in geotechnical engineering pursuant to section 920 (11) of the *Local Government Act* to:

- assist the City of Merritt in determining what conditions or requirements it will impose in the permit
  - certifies that the land may be used safely for the use intended.
- .2 Before issuing a development or building permit, the applicant shall provide, at the applicant's expense, a detailed site plan illustrating all proposed development, structures, impervious surfaces and existing vegetation to assist the City of Merritt in determining what conditions or requirements it will impose in the permit.
  - .3 Areas of steep slopes having a natural slope of greater than 30%, and/or geotechnical hazards should be considered for preservation in its natural state and free of urban development unless proven otherwise by geotechnical report, save and except any trail development or necessary infrastructure approved by the City.
  - .4 No alterations to the natural drainage, construction nor excavation shall be permitted which might cause or contribute to hazardous conditions on the site nor on adjacent lands.
  - .5 No septic tank, drainage or deposit fields or irrigation or water systems shall be constructed in any designated hazard area unless approved in a geotechnical report prepared by an appropriately qualified engineer or geoscientist and a permit is approved by the provincial authority responsible for these issues.

### **6.3 Development Permit Area No. 3 – Highway Corridor Gateways**

#### **Category**

- .1 Merritt's Highway Corridor Gateways are designated as a Development Permit Area under Section 919.1 (1):
  - (d) of the *Local Government Act* for the revitalization of an area in which a commercial use is permitted
  - (f) of the *Local Government Act* for the establishment of objectives for the form and character of commercial, industrial or multi-family residential development.

#### **Area**

- .2 The Highway Corridor Gateways Development Permit Areas is shown on Schedule D, Development Permit Areas Map.

### **Justification**

- .3 Development along the highway corridors, Nicola Avenue and Voght Street form the initial impression that visitors have of the community. It is important, therefore, that any development within the corridors present an attractive appearance as gateways to the community. Multi storey and multi use commercial nodes and highway oriented commercial uses are encouraged in this area.

### **Exemptions**

- .4 A development permit is not required for the following:
- any single lot/single family residential development/ building
  - the following minor alterations: interior renovations, exterior maintenance requiring only the repair or replacement of existing surface materials or colours, changes to plant material in established landscaped areas and an alteration which is limited to the addition, replacement or alteration of doors, windows, building trim or roofs.

### **Guidelines**

- .5 Development Permit Areas should be issued in accordance with the following:

#### Design

- .1 Monolithic structures and long expanses of straight walls should be avoided. Large buildings should be designed in a way that creates the impression of smaller units and less bulk by building jogs and irregular faces. Building shape, siting, architectural features and exterior finish should be sufficiently varied to create interest and avoid a monotonous appearance.
- .2 Buildings are encouraged to be surfaced with natural building materials. Wood is preferred, and hardi-plank/hardiboard (also known as cement fibre board), brick, stone or stucco is acceptable. The use of steel and concrete are permitted but large, un-articulated walls of concrete block, corrugated steel, vinyl siding and similar materials are discouraged.
- .3 The use of a variety of colours that are predominant in the natural environment such as earth-tone colours is encouraged.

- .4 Mechanical appurtenances on the rooftop of buildings should be completely screened from public view and combined with natural landscaping where they are visible from adjacent roadways. Consideration should be given to a rooftop garden to soften the impact of the building from adjacent roadways.

#### Landscaping

- .5 The front setback areas should be landscaped to soften the visual image of the development but not in a way which impedes the sightlines on the street.
- .6 Development should include the planting of trees parallel to the street or highway right-of-way. To help ensure proper growth, the trees should be protected from damage and be of an appropriate species considering relation to power lines.
- .7 For major highway commercial development with large land area requirements, a landscape plan certified by a member of the British Columbia Society of Landscape Architects shall be submitted and accepted by the City if considered appropriate.
- .8 Loading, garbage and on-site storage areas shall be screened and landscaped from view of the highways or adjacent residential or commercial properties.
- .9 Encourage the use of drought tolerant native plant species; or alternatively low water consumption Xeriscape species, suitable for use in dry arid environments such as that of the Lower Nicola Valley.
- .10 Consider in-ground irrigation where appropriate to promote water conservation and ensure on-going ease of maintenance and quality of landscaping.
- .11 The use of native species is preferred and the use of cedars is discouraged because of the fire hazard and consumption of water.

#### Parking

- .12 Parking should be developed where conveniently located for ease and safety of access.
- .13 Shared access and egress points should be encouraged where possible.
- .14 Parking areas shall include landscaped features to minimize the visual impact of large areas of open asphalt.
- .15 All parking areas should be paved.

#### Signage

- .16 Signage should be unobtrusive and form an integral part of the landscaped setback areas of individual buildings.
- .17 Signage should be in a scale in keeping with the size of the building and not dominate the visual plane of the highway corridor.

#### Access

- .18 Access to new development should address safety and congestion issues.
- .19 Access should comply with existing access management plans.

#### Traffic Study

- .20 A comprehensive traffic impact study and management plan may be required as part of the development permit application. These documents will assess traffic generation rates, access issues, impacts on existing infrastructure (particularly through traffic utilizing Voght Street), and new infrastructure requirements. While the Ministry of Transportation will have its own independent approval process, the City will review and approve the traffic impact study and management plan before a development permit is issued.

### **6.4 Development Permit No. 4. – Wildfire Hazards**

#### **Category**

- .1 Wildfire hazards have been identified as a Development Permit Area under Section 919.1 (1) (b) of the *Local Government Act* for protection of development from hazardous conditions.

#### **Area**

- .2 The Wildfire Hazards Development permit Area is shown on Schedule D, Development Permit Areas Map.

#### **Justification**

- .3 The justification for this designation is to ensure that Council has the ability to regulate development within high and extreme wildfire hazard risk areas in a way that minimizes the risk associated with these hazards.

### **Exemptions**

- .4 A development permit is not required for the following situations where no subdivision of land is involved where the following minor alterations are proposed: interior renovations, exterior maintenance requiring only the repair or replacement of surface materials or colours, and an alteration which is limited to the addition, replacement or alteration of doors, windows, building trim or roofs.

### **Guidelines**

- .5 The following guidelines will apply to every application for a development permit within high and extreme interface fire hazard areas:
- .1 A report for minimizing interface fire hazard may be required by Council and recommendations from that report for ongoing protection may form the basis of development permit conditions.
  - .2 In order to minimize the risk of damage to property and persons from interface fires, the following restriction may be imposed as development permit conditions or in a covenant as a condition of subdivision by the Approving Officer:
    - all roofing material and insulation requirements meet the Class "B" fire rating requirements contained within the current BC Building Code.
    - Fuel reduced buffers around individual homes to the property boundary.
    - Screening all eaves, attics, decks and openings under floors to prevent the accumulation of combustible material.
    - All wood burning appliances are to be installed with approved spark arresters.
    - Landscaping should use native species and cedars are prohibited because of their fire hazard and consumption of water.
  - .3 Building design and construction should generally be consistent with the standards in the National Fire Protection Association Standards. This may include 1144 - Standard for Protection of Life and Property from Wildfire.

## **6.5 Development Permit No. 5. – Intensive Residential Infill / Small Lot Residential Subdivisions**

### **Category**

- .1 Merritt's residential areas surrounding the City Centre are designated as a Development Permit Area under Section 919.1 (1) (e) of the *Local Government Act* for the establishment of objectives for the form and character of intensive residential infill and small lot residential subdivisions.

### **Area**

- .2 The Intensive Residential Infill / Small Lot Residential Subdivision Development Permit Area is shown on Schedule D – Development Permit Areas Map.

### **Justification**

- .3 In areas where more intensive, small lot single family residential development is proposed, good design becomes increasingly important. This development permit area will encourage new development to achieve high quality design, be complementary to area neighbourhoods and be attractive and functional for residents.

### **Exemptions**

- .4 A development permit is not required for the following minor alterations: interior renovations, exterior maintenance requiring only the repair or replacement of existing surface materials or colours, changes in plant material in established landscaped areas, and an alteration which is limited to the addition or alteration of doors, windows, building trim or roofs.

### **Guidelines**

- .5 Development permits should be issued in accordance with the following:

#### Site Planning

- .1 Lot sizes may be as narrow as 8 metres (26 feet) and no greater than 10 metres (33 feet)
- .2 Continuation of the grid pattern for streets is preferred.



- .3 Provision for pedestrian connections should be made to adjacent subdivisions.
- .4 Corner lots should be larger than interior lots and should include provisions for greater setbacks and landscaping.
- .5 The buildings should be oriented toward the street. This can be accomplished by the position of the building, windows directed toward the street, prominent rooms such as kitchen and living rooms with a window to the street and other features such as porches or patios.

#### Form and Character

- .6 The buildings should vary in colour and form. This can be accomplished by such measures as different primary and accent colours, building wall offsets, recesses, changes in floor level, varying shapes, rooflines, windows and garages. Buildings must be a minimum of two full storeys in height.
- .7 Bay windows, picture windows, projecting or recessed walls, dormers and similar architectural features are encouraged.
- .8 Accent trim on houses are encouraged rather than one dominant colour.
- .9 The roofline heights and setbacks of the buildings should be varied to avoid a monotonous, wall-like appearance and instead present architectural interest and variety.
- .10 Porches, patios, sun decks and similar amenities are encouraged.
- .13 The front door should be prominent, embellished by means such as architectural features, colours or elevation.
- .14 Lane access and rear yard garages are encouraged.

#### Landscaping

- .15 Before receiving a development permit, a detailed, lot by lot landscape plan should be submitted by a landscape architect registered in British Columbia. This plan should be accompanied by Schedules L-1 and L-2 of the British Columbia Society of Landscape Architects (BCSLA). Pursuant to the *Local Government Act*, the City may request the posting of a bond up to 100% of the value of the landscaping works. The City should release the bond after the installation of the works is completed to the satisfaction of the landscape architect, who will indicate the completion of the landscape plan by submitting BCSLA Schedule L-3.
- .16 Native species are preferred and cedars are discouraged because of their fire hazard and consumption of water.

- .17 Each lot should contain at least 20% landscape area, including 40% of the front yard which should be landscaped.
- .18 At least one medium sized deciduous tree (maximum 10 metre height at maturity) should be planted on every lot.
- .19 Shrubs, lawn and other groundcover are encouraged.
- .20 Xeriscaping (utilizing low water usage plant material and landscape features) is encouraged.
- .21 Natural features such as significant trees, rock outcroppings and changes in topography should be maintained.

## **6.6 Development Permit No. 6. – Environmentally Sensitive Areas**

### **Category**

- .1 Lands adjacent to streams are designated as a Development Permit Area pursuant to Section 919.1 (1) (a) of the *Local Government Act* for the protection of the natural environment, its ecosystems and biological diversity.

### **Area**

- .2 Development Permit Area No. 6 consists of all riparian assessment areas within the City of Merritt. (*Note to Reader which does not form part of this Bylaw: The definition of "riparian assessment area" and "stream" can be found in the Riparian Areas Regulation of the Fish Protection Act.*)

### **Justification**

- .3 Development Permit Area No. 6 seeks to protect riparian areas and the features, functions and conditions that are vital in the natural maintenance of stream health and productivity.

### **Exemptions**

- .4 Development Permit Area No. 6 does not apply to the reconstruction or repair or a permanent structure described in Section 911 (8) of the *Local Government Act* if the structure remains on its existing foundation.

- .5 Development Permit Area No. 6 does not apply to agricultural, mining, or forestry related development.

**Guidelines** (*Note to reader which does not form part of this bylaw: The definition of "development" can be found in the Riparian Areas Regulation.*)

- .6 Development Permits shall be issued in accordance with the following:
  - .1 Development within Development Permit Area No. 6 including streams that may not be shown on the map, shall be permitted only if:
    - .1 a) a Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) in an assessment report certifies he or she is qualified to conduct the assessment; certifies that the assessment methods as set out in the schedule to the Riparian Areas Regulations were followed; provides an opinion that no natural features, functions or conditions that support fish life processes in the riparian assessment area that will be harmfully altered, disrupted or destroyed; and
    - b) The City is notified by the Ministry of Environment that the Ministry and DFO have been notified and have received the QEP's assessment report that meets the above conditions;
  - Or
  - .2 the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans or a regulation under the *Fisheries Act (Canada)* authorizes the harmful alteration, disruption, or destruction of natural features, functions and conditions that support fish life processes in the riparian assessment area that would result from the implementation of the development proposal.

## **6.7 Development Permit No. 7 – Multi-Family Residential Areas**

### **Category**

- .1 All lands designated as multi-family residential on the sector maps are designated as a Development Permit Area under Section 919.1 (1) (e) of the *Local Government Act* for the establishment of objectives for the form and character of multi-family residential development.

### **Area**

- .2 The Multi-Family Residential Development Permit Area is shown on Schedule D – Development Permit Areas Map.

### **Justification**

- .3 In areas where more intensive, multi-family residential development is proposed, good design and site planning becomes increasingly important. This development permit area will encourage new development to achieve high quality, value added design, be complementary to and enhance the density and range of housing stock within the neighborhood, be attractive and functional for residents and generate increased property values in the neighborhood.

### **Exemptions**

- .4 A development permit is not required for the following minor alterations and development: interior renovations, exterior maintenance requiring only the repair or replacement of existing surface materials or colours, changes in plant material in established landscaped areas, an alteration which is limited to the addition or alteration of doors, windows, building trim or roofs, and single family houses, semi-detached houses and duplex houses.

### **Guidelines**

- .5 Development permits should be issued in accordance with the following:

#### Site Planning and Building Guidelines

- .1 For **triplexes and quadraplexes and similar housing units** shallow setbacks are encouraged;
- these units should look more like large, multi door/multi window houses and less like attached houses;
  - porches, patios, veranda, sun decks, ornamentation, bay windows, picture windows, projecting or recessed walls, dormers and similar architectural features and other design features which provide heavy curb appeal and visual interest are encouraged;
  - lane access for vehicles and garages are encouraged wherever possible;
  - the use of a minimum of three cladding materials is encouraged;
  - the use of natural building materials particularly wood is preferred, and brick, hardi-plank/hardi-board (also known as cement fibre board), stone or stucco are acceptable;



- parking areas should be paved; and
- landscaping should include native species and cedars are discouraged because of their fire hazard and consumption of water.



- .2 For **townhouses and row houses and similar houses** shallow setbacks of no less than 3 metres are encouraged;
- these units should look unified and complementary to each other; a maximum of four units per building is encouraged,
  - vehicular access to garages should be through courtyards or rear lanes where possible and garages in the front yards are discouraged,
  - townhouses should be a minimum of two stories in height and the front doors should be prominent, embellished by means such as architecture features, colours or elevation;
  - significant patio and deck/balcony space should be provided;





- porches, patios, veranda, sundecks, ornamentation, bay windows, picture windows, projecting or recessed walls, dormers and similar architectural features and other design features which provide heavy curb appeal and visual interest are encouraged;
- the use of a minimum of three cladding materials is encouraged;
- use of natural building materials particularly wood is preferred, and brick, hardi-plank/hardi-board (also known as cement fiber board), stone or stucco is acceptable;
- parking areas should be paved;
- landscaping should include native species and cedars are discouraged; and
- designed to incorporate the principles of CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) as developed by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.



.3 For **apartments, either condominium or rental or otherwise**, a minimum of four stories is encouraged;

- these units should look unified and complementary to each other;
- underground parking is preferred and surface parking should be limited to parking for visitors and any surface parking should be screened;
- lane access for vehicles is preferred;
- density should be a minimum of 40 units/hectare;
- every unit should have an outdoor room or significant outdoor space in the form of rooftop gardens, large balconies and/or decks, ground level patio space or common space;
- buildings should be heavily articulated with ornamentation, architectural features and other design features which provide heavy curb appeal and visual interest;
- the use of a minimum of three cladding materials is encouraged;
- use of natural building materials particularly wood is preferred, and brick, hardiplank/hardiboard (also known as cement fiber board), stone or stucco is acceptable;
- parking areas should be paved;
- landscaping should include native species and cedars are discouraged because of their fire hazard and water consumption; and
- designed to incorporate the principles of CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) as developed by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police; Parking areas should be paved.







## 7.0 IMPLEMENTATION

The Official Community Plan sets out policies and direction to Council in making future land use decisions and responding to development proposals in a way that is consistent with the community's vision and guiding principles. While the various tools for implementing the plan are not part of this document, they are critical to ensure follow through on the commitments and direction set by Council. This section articulates steps that Council can take toward implementing the plan.

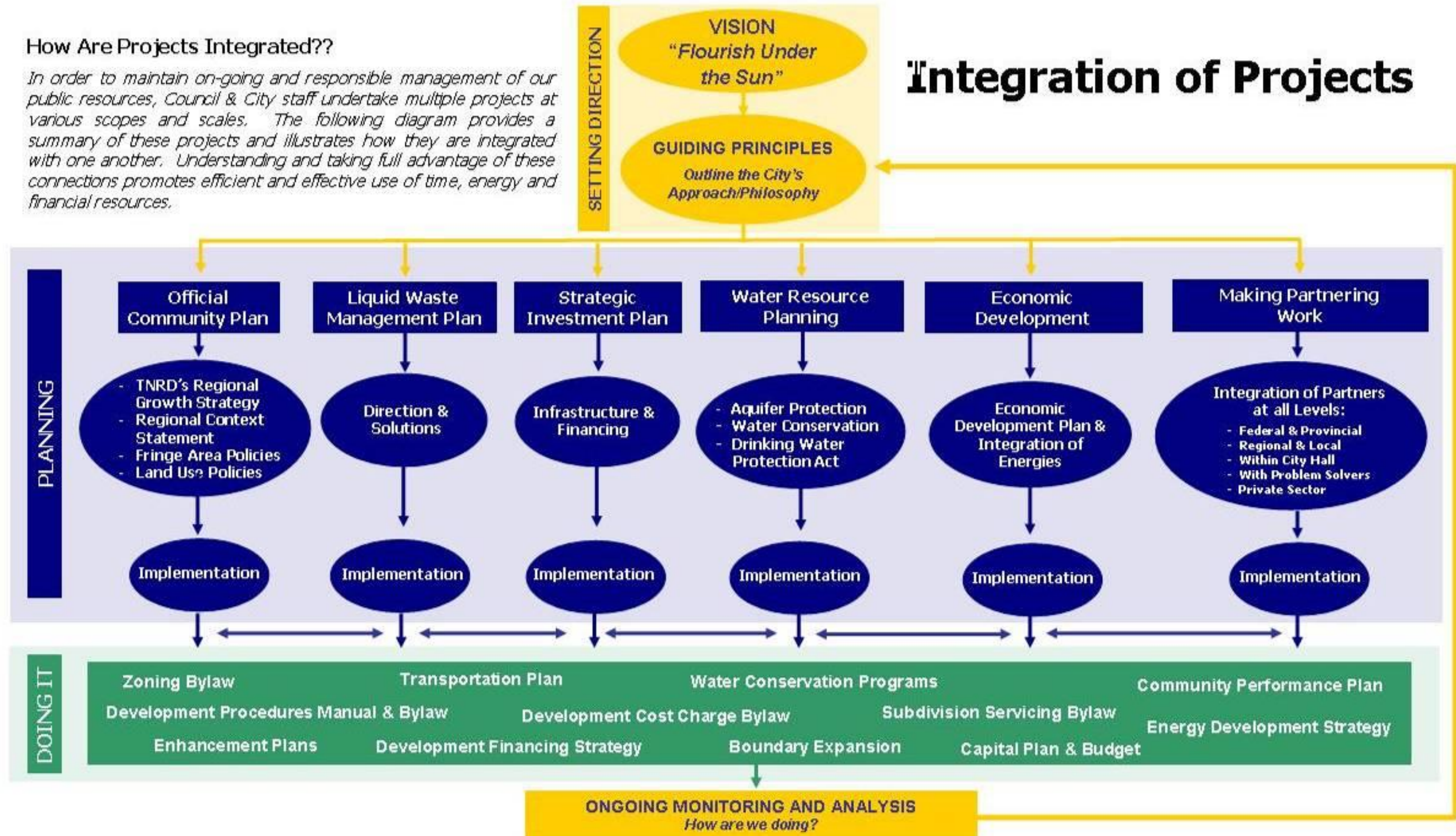
### 7.1 Integration with Other Projects

In order to maintain on-going and responsible management of public resources, Council and City staff undertake multiple projects at various scopes and scales. The Official Community Plan provides much of the direction for the various planning activities, economic development and making partnering work. The following diagram provides a summary of initiatives related to the plan and illustrates how they are integrated with one another. Understanding and taking full advantage of these connections promotes efficient and effective use of time, energy and financial resources.

## How Are Projects Integrated??

*In order to maintain on-going and responsible management of our public resources, Council & City staff undertake multiple projects at various scopes and scales. The following diagram provides a summary of these projects and illustrates how they are integrated with one another. Understanding and taking full advantage of these connections promotes efficient and effective use of time, energy and financial resources.*

# Integration of Projects



## 7.2 Updating Support Bylaws and Policies

The following table summarizes the implementation actions required to realize the vision and goals outlined in the Official Community Plan. Priority 1 actions are expected to begin within the two years following adoption of this plan. Priority 2 actions are expected to begin within 2 to 5 years of the adoption of this plan.

**Table 7.1 – Implementation Matrix**

<b>Implementation and Action</b>	<b>Priority 1 (0 to 2 years)</b>	<b>Priority 2 (2 to 5 years)</b>
Handling New Development Guide & Establish Development Facilitation Board/TPC	✓	
Strategic Plan – Five Year Financial Plan	✓ (complete and ongoing)	
City Centre Forum and Coalition (City Centre Task Force)	✓	
Zoning Bylaw Update	✓	
DCC Bylaw Update	✓	
Water Conservation Strategy (?)	✓	
Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw	✓ (ongoing)	
Gateway 286 Sector Development Strategy	✓	
Granite Street Beautification Project	✓	
North Entry Enhancement	✓ (ongoing)	
Strategic Economic Development Plan		✓
Boundary Expansion Opportunities		✓ (ongoing)
Trail and Greenways Plan	✓	
Review Incentives for City Centre Development		✓
Hazards Protection Plan (i.e., Wildfire, Coal Mines, etc.)		✓



### **7.3 Framework for Facilitating New Development**

Council is committed to undertaking a new process for reviewing and approving development proposals at City Hall that creates a development friendly climate. This new approach will facilitate and encourage economic development and ensure that development proceeds as outlined in this Official Community Plan as well as according to other land use regulations and applicable bylaws. To implement this, Council will take the following steps:

#### **Step #1 Establish a Development Facilitation Board (DFB)/Technical Planning Committee (TPC)**

The DFB/TPC is a committee appointed by the Mayor consisting of selected representatives from Council, senior staff, specialist advisors and support staff. The DFB/TPC is accountable to City Council.

The role and function of the DFB/TPC is to review and advise on development related issues requiring Council approval, including:

- Current development proposals
  - Negotiating customized development agreements
  - Finding creative solutions to issues facing developers and the City (e.g. level of service, off-site servicing requirements, financing of services)
  - Providing direction for Development Permits, OCP and Zoning amendments
- Getting the City's "house in order" regarding bylaws, procedures and policies affecting development in Merritt

#### **Step #2 Develop a "made in Merritt" approach to financing of services for new development**

This will be a **combined approach**, consisting of the following mechanisms:

- **Development Cost Charge Bylaw** – a simplified and updated DCC Bylaw would serve as an effective and equitable tool for recovering costs for major infrastructure projects which will benefit all sectors of the City.
- **Customized Development Agreements** – following a consistent framework of principles, guidelines and check lists, customized development agreements will allow for creative, tailor made solutions for major or complex projects.

- **Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw** – apply to straightforward developments regarding the provision and financing of required infrastructure works.
- **Specified Area Taxation** – may be used in select circumstances to finance off-site infrastructure works required to accommodate future development in a larger area consisting of multiple parcels with different owners.
- **General Taxation** – may be used to finance off-site infrastructure works required to accommodate future development where there is a demonstrable economic benefit to the entire community.

**Step #3 Prepare key support bylaws and guidelines including:**

- Terms of Reference for Development Facilitation Board/Technical Planning Committee
- Updated and new Development Cost Charge Bylaw
- Framework for Customized Development Agreements
- Update Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw
- Develop guidelines for specified area financing