



## 4.1 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Pitt Meadows is characterized by the beauty of its landscapes and unique natural features, including many sloughs and rivers, wetlands and bogs, and surrounding mountains and forests. This magnificent setting greatly enhances the quality of life in Pitt Meadows by providing recreation areas, beautiful scenery, and natural habitat for fish and wildlife.

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment involves several factors ranging from the local (managing the floodplain) to global (improving air quality). Schedule 9 of the Official Community Plan identifies those areas of the municipality that are considered environmentally sensitive. Environmentally sensitive areas are sites or areas that have environmental attributes that are worthy of retention or special care.

### 4.1.1 Managing the Floodplain

The majority of the municipality is within the defined 200-year flood zone. Most of the urban area and some small areas in the north part of the municipality are outside the floodplain.

Historically, the lowland flooding enriched the soils, making much of Pitt Meadows suitable for farming and at the same time difficult to develop. Therefore, much of the development in Pitt Meadows is located outside the lowlands.

Development in the lowlands must consider the deep peat and bog soil conditions that can sometimes require considerable fill and/or pre-loading prior to development.

#### *Policies*

- a) Floodplain areas (as shown on Schedule 10) within the Urban Containment Boundary may be considered for development subject to flood-proofing standards and regulations established by the City;



- b) The City will consider adopting a floodplain bylaw that regulates the type of development and the type of construction that may occur within the floodplain;
- c) Maintenance of shoreline habitats should be consistent with the Ministry of Environment's *Dike Maintenance Act* and should preserve the integrity of the dikes.

#### 4.1.2 Shoreline Habitat

The Fraser, Pitt and Alouette Rivers have played a pivotal role in the development of Pitt Meadows by providing transportation routes, fishing areas and nourishing flood water to the farm areas. Today, the Fraser River is an extensively used navigation channel for both industrial traffic and recreational use. The Pitt River sees less traffic, but its foreshore is an important area for log storage. The Alouette River continues to be important to the farming areas.

Log storage leases cover the majority of the shoreline areas in Pitt Meadows. Use of the water areas of the Pitt and Fraser rivers is under the jurisdiction of the Fraser River Harbour Commission, through leases or shorter-term permits. Existing industries are located on the upland of the Fraser River, mainly for manufacturing of forest products.

Development of additional water-related industries is limited to some extent by the lack of available upland for major shipping or mill development. Much of the land near the river is within the ALR, and is therefore unavailable for development. This is further compounded by the lack of roadways to serve industrial traffic along the rivers.

Although parts of the rivers have been developed as outlined above, all three have extensive areas of high quality foreshore habitat that are important to wildlife and fish. In recognition of these areas, the City of Pitt Meadows and the Metro Vancouver have worked together to acquire land on the riversides of the dikes, especially along the Pitt and Fraser Rivers, for recreation and environmental conservation.

#### *Policies*

- a) Maintenance of shoreline habitats as outlined under Policy 4.2 should be consistent with the Ministry of Environment's Dike Maintenance Act and should preserve the integrity of the dikes;
- b) Creation of extended lot areas through fill is not supported. The inter-tidal zone shall be left undisturbed by development; if developed, this zone shall be bridged by ramps or piers with no grounding by structures;



#### 4.1.3 Water and Energy Conservation

Addressing water and energy conservation is essential given the region's growing population and economic activity. Water and energy are valuable resources that must be carefully managed. Managing these resources, which includes gas consumption, may help to offset or slow the effects of climate change.

The OCP addresses these issues in a variety of ways. For example, Smart Growth principles, which strive to limit sprawl and provide jobs and services within walking distance of homes, help to reduce vehicle travel times which in turn reduces gas consumption.

##### *Policies*

- a) Water and energy conservation is supported by:
  - Working with Metro Vancouver and utility companies to encourage all sectors to practice energy and water conservation;
  - Ensuring that water and energy conservation is practiced by the City;
  - Ensuring the effectiveness of the current water metering program and investigating the feasibility of a City-wide metering program;
  - Supporting increased recycling (e.g. supporting a program for composting);
  - Supporting increased water conservation (e.g. supporting a program promoting the use of rain barrels);
  - Supporting alternative modes of transportation, including public transit and bicycling;
  - Planning for highest density residential development in Pitt Meadows' Town Centre as part of putting more residents in close proximity to commercial and community services and close to transit stations and corridors.
- b) The City supports energy and water conservation and encourages innovative energy / water saving solutions for all private and public sector developments.

#### 4.1.4 Air Quality

Although Metro Vancouver currently experiences good regional air quality relative to most other urban areas, emissions of some air contaminants - such as particulate matter and greenhouse gases - are forecast to increase as a result of growth in population, commerce and transportation. These emissions, in turn, may contribute to climate change.



LOCAL CYCLISTS

*Policy*

- a) The City supports the reduction of harmful air emissions in the following ways:
- Ensuring that the City leads by example;
  - Participating in national, provincial, and regional programs aimed at reducing air emissions;
  - Continuing to plant and maintain new trees on public lands, in parks and along boulevards;
  - Encouraging tree retention and tree protection programs on private lands;
  - Partnering with Metro Vancouver to encourage homeowners to adopt more sustainable yard care practices such as reducing the use of chemical fertilizers, gas powered lawnmowers, and other yard care equipment;
  - Supporting alternative transportation initiatives and the use of public transit;
  - Promoting the protection of green space and natural areas;
  - Maintaining a compact urban area where many shops and services are within walking distance of most homes;
  - Continuing to regulate and consider banning outdoor burning.

4.1.5 Environmental Impacts of Future Development

Pitt Meadows is committed to ensuring that future development is accomplished in an environmentally responsible manner.

*Policies*

- a) Pitt Meadows will establish development permit guidelines and bylaws to ensure that appropriate measures are taken when development occurs in potentially hazardous areas, such as slopes or in flood prone areas. These guidelines and bylaws will require mitigation techniques for erosion and sedimentation to be identified as part of the development review process and implemented and monitored during the construction process;
- b) Pitt Meadows will require environmental impact assessments to be completed where rezoning or subdivision is proposed outside of the Urban Containment Boundary



- c) Pitt Meadows will encourage the retention of existing trees where possible and ensure that additional trees and plant material are provided as part of all development proposals. The use of native trees and plants will also be encouraged;
- d) Pitt Meadows will encourage new developments to incorporate integrated stormwater management plans consistent with the regional Liquid Waste Management Plan;
- e) The City will explore opportunities for using energy and resource efficient systems and building techniques and materials in municipal building and infrastructure;
- f) The City will promote the use of energy efficient site design and building practices for new developments through education and outreach efforts;
- g) Environmentally responsible residential, commercial, institutional, agricultural and industrial development is encouraged through Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) or other sustainable building standards;
- h) Preference will be given to areas close to public transit routes or stations for higher density residential developments;
- i) Best Management Practices (e.g., waste management, reduction of fertilizers and pesticides, sensitive habitat protection, cover crops, stormwater management) are encouraged for urban and rural development as per guidelines established by the Ministry of the Environment and contained within Metro Vancouver's Stormwater Control Design Guidelines.

#### 4.1.6 Partnering in Environmental Protection

Protection of Pitt Meadows' natural environment requires the commitment and participation of not only the City but other government agencies as well.

##### *Policies*

- a) Schedule 9 identifies the Environmentally Sensitive Areas of Pitt Meadows. The City will work cooperatively with Regional, Provincial and Federal environmental agencies to ensure effective management of these environmentally sensitive areas, including but not limited to the Fraser River Estuary Management Program, Pitt River Regional Greenway, Codd Island Wetland, and the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and its regulations;
- b) The City will work cooperatively with public transportation agencies to ensure that Pitt Meadows is well served by public transit.