

LEADING THE WAY TO LAND USE PLANNING IN THE NEW ERA

Final Report of the Task Force on Land Use Planning

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1. Introduction

Purpose of the Task Force:

Premier Gordon Campbell established an MLA Task Force on Land Use in the fall of 2003 to review how Crown land use plans are implemented across B.C. and to recommend to government how these processes can be improved.

The task force consists of the following MLAs: Bill Belsey, North Coast, (Chair); Rod Visser, North Island; Gillian Trumper, Alberni-Qualicum; Walt Cobb, Cariboo South; John Wilson, Cariboo North; and, Bill Bennett, East Kootenay.

The specific Terms of the Reference of the Task Force are as follows:

Consult with MLAs, business representatives, local governments and other interested parties to:

- *Review the regulatory structures, and operational approval processes that apply to decision-making at the local and regional level in the implementation of existing Crown land use plans; and*
- *Identify and recommend improvements to structures, approval processes and administrative processes used to implement land use plans that will expedite decisions, avoid unnecessary costs and facilitate investment and job creation; and*
- *Profile specific case studies that highlight examples of decisions and processes that have either helped or hampered past and current projects in clearing land use regulatory requirements.*

Recommend what changes, if any, might be made to provide greater clarity and direction to help those responsible for executing delegated and/or statutory authority in furtherance of their duties with respect to the administration of Crown land use plans. Particular attention should be paid to the challenges inherent in decision making with respect to land use plans that allow competing and multiple land and resource uses in furtherance of multiple objectives.

Recommend what changes if any might be made to engage MLAs more effectively to expedite investment and job creation in the implementation of land use plans in their constituencies.

2. Land Use Planning in BC

Land use planning is a process for determining how crown land will be used, both now and in the future. Plans emerging from this process are intended to provide land use certainty and thereby promote investment opportunities and economic growth while protecting the environment.

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3. Data Collection

The Task Force used two methods to collect information: consultations with business representatives, local governments and other interested parties; and, case studies.

All Task Force consultations were conducted "in camera" so that frank and fair exchanges could be assured. Consultations occurred between December 10th, 2003, and May 19th, 2004. During this period the Task Force consulted with 15 sectors and 8 provincial agencies in various locations throughout the province. These are outlined in Appendix 1.

Seven case studies were selected to study how decisions and processes have either helped or hampered past and current projects in clearing land use regulatory requirements. The key learnings from the case studies are outlined in Appendix 2. The case studies can be found in a companion document titled *The Task Force on Land Use Case Studies*.

4. Key Messages Received

The Task Force identified a number of recurring messages from the consultations and the case studies. These have been converted to the following key messages:

1. Land use planning is necessary for the orderly development and conservation of crown resources.
2. The most successful regional plans are those that have strong community ownership.
3. The land use planning process developed by the previous administration was inefficient, expensive, unbalanced, onerous and lengthy.

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4. This administration's improvements to land use planning have been beneficial. The following improvements were identified:
 - introducing time-bounded processes;
 - establishing clear responsibilities for land use planning participants; and,
 - involving First Nations in the land use planning process.
5. Steps being taken by this administration to stimulate economic activity in rural BC are headed in the right direction.
6. Crown land and resources generate the wealth in rural BC. Restrictions on access to land and resources will have economic consequences.
7. Lack of private land for development is an impediment to investment in rural BC.
8. Government agencies working cooperatively with the resource sector can successfully resolve land use issues.

5. Land Use Planning Principles

The Task Force developed the following land use planning principles based on messages received during the consultations and learnings from the case studies. These principles were used to help shape the recommendations.

The Task Force recommends that these principles be applied to regional and sub-regional planning as indicated below.

Regional and sub-regional planning principles:

1. Land use plans should be developed with the involvement of local people in interest-based negotiations.
2. Independent science-based information is a critical element of the land use planning process.
3. The social, economic and environmental implications of proposed land use plans must be understood by planning tables and decision makers.
4. Land use designations and constraints should be reviewable by the appropriate Minister, for socio, economic or environmental considerations.
5. Roles and responsibilities must be clearly defined for all parties involved in land use planning.
6. Local land use issues should be addressed locally.

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Additional regional principle:

7. Regional land use plans must have a transparent governance structure that is responsible and accountable for plan implementation and revision.

Additional sub-regional principle:

8. Investments in sub-regional planning must be commensurate with the projected level of social/economic benefit.

6. Land Use Recommendations

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Figure 3

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Figure 4

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7. Related Recommendations

During consultations the Task Force heard of land use issues that were not directly tied to land use planning. The Task Force has considered these issues and made recommendations in the following areas;

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8. Financial Implications

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Appendix 1 Task Force consultations

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Number appearing</u>
January 27	Vancouver	8
January 27	Ucluelet	30
January 28	Port Hardy	14
January 29	Bella Coola	12
January 30	Smithers	17
January 31	Prince George	5
February 2	McBride	13
February 3	Williams Lake	12
February 4	Kamloops	10
February 5	Cranbrook	13
February 16, 18, 19, 26	Victoria	16
March 3	Victoria	2
April 14, 19, 20, 21, 22, 26, 27	Victoria	14
May 4, 11, 19	Victoria	8

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Consultation by Sector, Agency and
Date 2004

Sector	10 Dec	26 Jan	27 Jan	28 Jan	29 Jan	30 Jan	31 Jan	2 Feb	3 Feb	4 Feb	5 Feb	16 Feb	18 Feb	19 Feb	26 Feb	3 Mar	14 Apr	19 Apr	20 Apr	21 Apr	22 Apr	26 Apr	27 Apr	4 May	11 May	19 May
Mining			X		X	X			X	X	X															X
Community			X		X	X		X	X		X		X													
Forestry			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X			X								X
Local govt			X	X	X	X	X	X	X					X												X by post
Aquaculture			X																							
ENGO			X												X											
IPP				X		X		X																		
Tourism					X	X		X	X	X			X													X
First Nation				X	X																					
Guiding						X	X																			
Ranching						X			X																	X
Hunting/fish						X					X															
Trappers								X	X		X															
Recreation											X															
LWBC		X														X	X			X						
MSRM	X	X							X				X			X		X						X		
Labour																		X								
Academics																			X							
EnergyMines			X																		X					
Transport.																						X				
MOF		X																				X				
WLAP		X																				X				
TNO		X																					X			
Oil and Gas C.		X																								
EAO																									X	

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Appendix 2. Summary of Key Learnings from Case Studies:

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Appendix 3. Six principles for local government involvement in regional planning

1. Local government is to be recognized as an order of government.
2. During the regional planning process design stage, local government is to be consulted regarding: interest in participating in the planning process; and the design of the planning process, including ways to achieve effective local government participation.
3. Regional plans are to be coordinated with other relevant provincial initiatives to the maximum extent possible.
4. Information on socio-economic impacts should be comprehensive and in a form understandable by local government and the general public.
5. Local government is to be formally offered briefings at key stages of the regional planning process to identify degree of support and outstanding areas of concern.
6. Local government is to be given opportunity to comment on the results of a regional plan prior to final approval by the table of recommendations to government whether or not local government participated at the table.