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Planning Commission Releases Draft Dawson Regional Plan

The Dawson Regional Planning Commission released a Draft Land Use Plan for the Dawson region today.

“The Dawson Regional Planning Commission is very pleased to share with the public this Draft Plan, which is the result of the collaboration of many people and our planning partners over the past two years,” said Commission Chair Debbie Nagano. “This Draft Plan reflects our vision and planning philosophy, *‘On the Land We Walk Together’/ ‘Nän kāk ndä tr'ädäl’.*”

The Commission is celebrating the release of the Draft Plan with an event in Dawson City today at 12:30pm on the grounds of the Dänojà Zho Cultural Centre.

“This Draft Plan is guided by the principles of sustainable development and stewardship and is designed to enable the people of this region to build a diverse economy while maintaining a rich cultural legacy and a healthy environment,” said Nagano. “We hope that it will help chart our collective future, prosperity, and our connection to the land we all love.”

The plan includes recommendations for research, mitigations for proponents, government policy, and government actions to be undertaken that provide guidance on topics such as access, caribou, water, wetlands, and mineral development.

The Plan also recommends the creation of a new land use designation called Integrated Stewardship Areas, where varying levels of industrial and other development can occur.

This Draft Plan is the starting point for the next phase of the Commission’s planning process, which will be to develop a Recommended Plan as set out in Chapter 11 of the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in Final Agreement.

The release of the Draft Plan will be followed by public engagement, from June to November. Public and plan partner feedback will be considered by the Commission when it produces a Recommended Plan, which is expected to be completed in 2022.

The Commission plans to implement both in-person and online options to allow people to provide feedback in a safe and meaningful way.



Over the summer, the Commission will gather input from technical experts and key planning partners. In the fall, it will host public engagement events to include everyone interested in the Dawson Region.

“This Draft Plan is the Commission’s best attempt at balancing cultural, economic and environmental values for the Dawson Region,” said Nagano. “We anticipate that substantive changes will be made to this the Draft Plan, and we look forward to hearing from everyone as we move closer to completion of a Recommended Plan.”

The Draft Plan and a Draft Plan Summary are available for viewing on the Commission’s website at www.dawson.planyukon.ca.

More information and details about the public engagement process are available on the Engage Dawson website at www.engagedawson.planyukon.ca.

Contact:

Debbie Nagano
Chair, Dawson Regional Planning Commission
(867) 993-3032

Tim Sellars
Senior Land Use Planner, Dawson Regional Planning Commission
(867) 667-7397
Tim@planyukon.ca

Draft Plan Highlights

Draft plan concepts and principles

Vision: Decisions that impact the future of the Dawson Region are to be guided by the Vision Statement. *The future of the region will include a diverse economy, rich cultural legacy, healthy environment, with shared and respectful use of natural resources.* It reflects community values and will guide the integrated use and stewardship of land, water, and resources.

Sustainable Development: The plan was built with a strong commitment to sustainable development as defined in the THFA. It strives to be inclusive of all people and attempts to balance competing land and resource uses for current and future generations.

Community Stewardship: This is a key guiding principle of the Draft Plan and is an important ancestral responsibility for Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in. Stewardship is taking collective responsibility and actions for the continued health and vitality of the region. It also means being part of a strong community that is connected to the land.

Plan Goals: There are eleven plan goals that fall under the themes of ecology, socio-cultural, and economy.

Land Designation System: The Draft Plan divides the planning Region into 23 Landscape Management Units (LMU). These units allow for varying levels of conservation and development. Each LMU is assigned a land use designation (or zoning) depending on the priority values and land use issues identified:

- **Integrated Stewardship Areas (ISAs):** identify areas where varying levels (1-4) of industrial and other development can occur. Land management in these areas is based on the concepts of stewardship and cumulative effects management.
- **Special Management Areas (SMAs):** are areas that need a higher conservation focus because of high cultural and ecological values. There are two SMA designations (SMA I & SMA II)
- **Highway Corridors:** Transportation and access are a major focus of the plan.
- **Future Planning Areas:** Such as the Yukon River Corridor and the Klondike Valley Corridor where additional planning should occur based on values such as water, residential development, and tourism etc.

Key Recommendations

Access: A strong focus is put on transportation and access to ensure that access development can occur carefully and responsibly while promoting a healthy regional economy.

Caribou: The Commission recognizes the importance of caribou in the Region, including the Fortymile caribou herd whose range spans most of the planning Region. Recommendations for caribou habitat in the plan include the protection of critical habitat, limited development in a key migratory corridor, recommending timing windows and access management planning.

Conservation Priorities: Two areas have been proposed for protected area designations (SMA I) in the plan: Matson Uplands and Upper Klondike.

Culture and Heritage: Designations for many LMUs in the Draft Plan have been guided by the cultural importance of the areas for Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in citizens, and Hän language has been incorporated where possible and appropriate.

Mineral Development and Exploration: Recommendations that recognize the importance of mineral exploration and development in the Region, including support for the implementation of the Yukon Mineral Development Strategy, and the continued viability of existing claims in areas identified as SMA IIs.

Stewardship: The Draft plan introduces the concept of Integrated Stewardship Areas. These not only focus on the 'use' of the land but also the collective responsibility to be stewards of the land. Additionally, a Land Stewardship Trust has been recommended to promote the ongoing practice of stewardship by the community and industry.

Wetlands: The Draft Plan makes many recommendations for wetlands including: the recognition of wetlands of special importance (Scottie Creek and Upper Indian River Wetland complexes), and direction on limiting development in rare and sensitive wetland types.

We Want to Hear From You!

Please tell us what you think. All of the Draft Plan is up for discussion this summer and fall, and there are specific topics that the Commission would like to highlight for engagement during this time.

Within the plan there are call-out boxes that ask questions for the reader to consider on the following subjects:

- Wetlands
- Special Management Area II
- Draft Plan format and usability
- Stories of the land
- Cumulative effects framework