
February 28, 2014

Dawson Regional Planning Commission
PO Box 8010,
Dawson City, YT Y0B 1G0

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for the opportunity for the Yukon Chamber of Mines (YCM) to provide feedback on the Dawson Regional Land Use Plan Alternatives Package (DRLUP). Several representatives of YCM attended the open house on February 7th, 2014, and found it informative and open to differing interests and viewpoints. YCM is also pleased to acknowledge that the Dawson Regional Planning Commission (DRPC) has conducted the process in a fair and objective manner to date, and cannot sufficiently stress that this must remain the case.

Land Use Planning

Land Use planning can be a valuable exercise as it may create a healthy level of discussion and debate about issues important to all Yukoners, and allows the Territory to progress towards greater land use certainty.

However, the Yukon Chamber of Mines is always concerned when any amount of land is under consideration for withdrawal from staking, or restrictions on development are imposed, as this will reduce the amount of land available for wealth generation for all Yukoners and Canadians. Further, the Mining and Exploration sectors are guaranteed to lose access to some land, as well as to endure compromised exploration and access rights in some or all areas through the current model of land use planning in Yukon.

As the Commission can appreciate, 100% of the land mass in Yukon Territory experiences protection in the form of regulatory bodies, permitting regimes and legislation, along with regulations and policies governing responsible mining, with some areas set aside where non-renewable industries are restricted or prohibited. Some of these protective measures are listed below:

- *Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Act*
- *Quartz Mining Act* and Mining Land Use Regulations
- *Placer Mining Act* and Mining Land Use Regulations
- *Waters Act* and Waters Regulations
- *Fisheries Act* and Metal Mining Effluent Regulations
- *Territorial Lands Act* and Land Use Regulations
- *Yukon Environment Act*
- *Species at Risk Act*
- *Historic Resources Act*

It is important to note that we now live in an era of a modern, responsible mining industry, which is already heavily regulated and operates responsibly within the parameters as defined above.

During the planning sessions and recent Open House sessions, YCM has identified the following issues of concern.

Equality in Consideration of Industrial & Conservation Criteria (Appendix B)

Any Yukon Land Use Planning Exercise must incorporate an equal balance of resource based criteria with environmental criteria. Common-method variance is a risk inherent within any particular exercise where numerous present and future stakeholders and future generations are affected by decisions made today. It is critical to maintain the integrity and confidence in the land use planning process as it exists by ensuring there is no possible bias, real or perceived, in the data being used to inform decisions.

The Yukon Land Use Planning Council (YLUPC), which oversees the DRPC, utilizes the “Marxan” software program, a self-styled conservation modeling software provided free of charge by the University of Queensland (UQ) to inform land use designations for the DRLUP. Marxan was the modelling and threshold application used in the Peel Planning process and is described on the UQ website as providing “decision support to a range of conservation planning[...]” including “the design of new reserve systems, reporting on the performance of existing reserve systems, and development of multiple-use zoning plans for natural resource management.”

The Conservation Value data sets used by the Yukon Land Use Planning Council included 61 kinds of Ecological Land classifications which included: 2 types of Ecozones (Boreal & Taiga Cordilleran), 6 types of Biophysical Units (Alpine, High Boreal, Low Boreal, Subalpine, Taiga Shrub, and Taiga Wooded), Rare or Special values (5 types of wetlands, High Unglaciaded, Unglaciaded Dolomite & Limestone, Old Forests), Key Wildlife Areas (Based on observations or anecdotes & containing several species & seasons), Habitat Suitability Maps & Habitat Models, Tourism Values (High Value Hiking, High Visitor Use, Recreational Features, Canoeing Buffer, River Activity Corridor, Activity Points, with more values to be added later), and Cultural/Archeological/Historical Values.

And yet, with all of these data points entered for Conservation Values, there were only 5 renewable and non-renewable resource criteria grouped into a single Industrial Value Classification (Quartz Potential, Placer Potential, Forestry: FRMZ, Oil & Gas Basins & Linear Access). This data set excluded information such as mineral potential, copper potential, non-gold potential and current & peak numbers of quartz and placer claims of the region. This data was included in the Resource Assessment Report, albeit with very limited visual representation.

These data points, which were heavily weighted towards conservation values, were entered into a self-styled “conservation modeling software,” combined with a lack of extrapolated and detailed data for the mineral resource, oil and gas, forestry and agriculture sectors, amongst others. This calls into question whether all interests and objectives are being treated on a fair and level playing field. YCM has included in this submission is a map delineating areas of high and highest mineral potential, indicating areas of importance to the mining industry (see Appendix B).

The Marxan website provides the following disclaimer on omitted data: “How much time you choose to invest in acquiring data can be highly variable and will largely depend on whether you are risk adverse to uncertainty or biases in your dataset. Marxan includes or excludes planning units in a conservation network based on information about the distribution of conservation features across your planning region. Marxan does not consider uncertainty in the data so the quality of what you put in is reflected in the results generated.”

It is critical to have a consistent planning process, as this maintains the integrity of the Commission, the Planning Process and the Final Plan. Without this, the inconsistencies will generate mistrust and will cause people to lose faith in the process.

First Nations Engagement & Environmental Stewardship

YCM encourages all proponents of active projects, whether small, medium or large, to engage, at the earliest stage feasible, with the appropriate First Nation(s) through the “Engaging with Yukon First Nations and Communities” (2012) publication produced in partnership with Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in and the First Nation of Na-Cho Nyak Dun. The YCM is cognizant of how the culture of First Nations is fundamentally linked to the land and the natural environment, and how it is imperative to acknowledge and respect these values.

The Yukon Chamber of Mines also promotes environmental stewardship through its “Yukon Mineral Exploration Best Management Practices and Regulatory Guide” (2010). This Best Practices guide assists proponents in understanding their legal obligations under the numerous permitting and regulatory regimes, and how best to minimize impacts to sensitive ecological and cultural values.

The Yukon Chamber of Mines is committed to responsible and respectful development of the Territory’s resources in tandem with all levels of government, while employing modern technologies and solutions.

Preservation of Corridors for Access, Transportation & Renewable Energy Projects (Appendix A)

Please note that Appendix A is an internal draft.

It is important to note that, through the aforementioned regulatory and permitting bodies, access is achieved by using existing road networks to whatever extent possible. New access considerations involve joint planning with affected First Nation governments, stakeholders and further evaluation by YESAB. Through this evaluation, the maintenance of water quality and quantity, functional integrity and productive capacity of habitats are considered. Best practices are employed, with the objective of minimization and mitigation of the impacts from land use activities.

All the while, Best Management Practices are designed to maintain diversity, connectivity, and natural dynamics across the landscape.

An ongoing challenge is keeping up with shifting demand for different transportation routes. Given the extensive lead time involved in transportation and energy projects, there is a proven need to anticipate and plan proactively for future demands, whether they are for access corridors, transportation routes or future renewable energy projects.

It is critical that all current and future access corridors must be kept available for non-renewable resource activities, future transportation routes for rail or road, and potential renewable energy projects (hydro, biomass or wind). This includes corridors within Traditional Economy Areas, if this form of Land Management Area (LMU) is adopted.

In addition to these, several other significant issues were identified:

1. **Clarification of the meaning and implications of all land designations.** There remains some ambiguity as to allowable activities in certain Land Management Units.
2. **Clarity of LMUs classed as Integrated Management Areas regarding upper threshold limits for cumulative impacts:** As of Feb 3rd, 2014 cumulative impact thresholds, or even whether to utilize these, have not been established. This needs to be done to determine amounts of allowable exploration. Thresholds should only be emplaced for activities following implementation of the Plan, and excluding previous activities.
3. **Elimination of cumulative impact thresholds in some LMUs:** They are too restrictive for future discoveries in regions with abundant historic mining activity, such as the Sixtymile and Klondike areas.
4. **Exclusion of areas with identified high mineral potential from LMUs having Protected Area, Traditional Economy Area or Conservation Area status.**
5. **Recognition that areas deemed to have low mineral potential often means that the area has been underexplored, rather than known to have low mineral potential:** The White Gold deposit, as well as many others elsewhere in Yukon and Canada, were discovered in areas considered to have low mineral potential.
6. **Ability to fine-tune boundaries of LMUs classed as Protected, Conservation and Traditional Economy Areas to accommodate mineral industry interests within these boundaries:** In some areas, the boundaries require the ability to be modified to exclude areas of high mineral potential from protection.
7. **Use of standardized Class 1 thresholds for all areas not fully protected:** Variable, potentially more restrictive standards for reporting of planned Class 1 activities would result in an unworkable process. All Class 1 thresholds should be the same throughout the Dawson planning region, and throughout Yukon.

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- 8 Creation of a “buffer zone” around any claim blocks in Protected, Conservation or Traditional Economy Areas to allow for the expansion necessary to develop a project:** This would be similar to “Zones of Control” typically surrounding a claim block on Crown Land.
 - 9 Preservation of potential for energy developments:** Areas for potential for oil and gas or uranium extraction are to be kept available for exploration and development.
 - 10 Elimination of any contradictions set out in the final Plan:** Contradictions between Terms of Reference and plan details have been noted in previous Plans.

Conclusion

The Mining, Quarrying and Oil & Gas Extraction sectors’ contribution to Yukon’s Real GDP from 2002 – 2012 has increased by 500% from \$54.2 Million (4%) in 2002 to \$451.6 Million (20%) in 2012 (Source: NAICS Table 379-0030). This sector employed 1,945 people in the Territory in 2012 (Source: Statistics Canada CANSIM: Table 383-0030).

These statistics serve to highlight the importance of the economic and strategic significance of mineral and energy resources and their contributions to Yukon communities, infrastructure, and not the least of which, Yukon families. People engaged in resource extraction are our neighbours, volunteers, team mates, friends and colleagues; they pay taxes to continue improving Yukon’s infrastructure. They also support or are involved in aspects of Yukon life not typically associated with resource extraction, such as Yukon’s arts and music communities. Like you and I, they enjoy a quality of life second to none while raising their children in Yukon. Decisions made today will affect future generations of Yukoners and Canadians alike.

YCM appreciates the fact that the DRLUP Commission has operated in an objective and fair manner to date, considering all of the information it has been presented equally in nature. The Commission members are to be commended for their dedication and openness to all stakeholders, willing to discuss any issue, regardless of how big or small.

YCM encourages the Yukon land Use Planning Commission (YLUPC) to improve the methods of how information is provided to the particular land use commissions during its deliberations. This would be in the form of its selection of “other” reports, data sets used in conceptual mapping, or how information is disseminated in the Resource Assessment Report.



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We look forward to continuing to participate in the Dawson Regional Land Use planning process and would be more than pleased to avail ourselves to the DRPC and YLUPC with respect to any of the information contained herein or otherwise.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Hugh Kitchen'.

Hugh Kitchen,
Chair
Yukon Chamber of Mines

Encl: Appendix A, Access Corridors for Transportation and Energy
Appendix B, Mineral Potential of LMUs

cc. Yukon Prospectors Association
Klondike Placer Miners Association
Yukon Chamber of Commerce
Minister Scott Kent

DRAFT

MAP DISCLAIMER

Considerations for use:

This map is one of a series and accompanies the report "Conceptual Study to Identify Potential Natural Resource Infrastructure Access Corridors". The potential natural resource infrastructure access corridors identified on this map have been determined from analysis of available data for the best possible engineering choice for route establishment. Only very limited environmental or socioeconomic considerations have been made in this resource reconnaissance and route engineering exercise as described in the report. Furthermore, it is understood that these potential access corridors will be critically analyzed within environmental and socioeconomic parameters upon identification of real development targets within their service areas. The temporal existence and persistence of any of these corridors on the landscape is assumed to be variable and would be a function of further engineering, environmental, and socioeconomic considerations.

Data Limitations:

Access Consulting Group (ACG) compiled data from various sources and agencies to prepare the maps in this atlas. Since the compilation contains information derived from multiple sources the data provided herein may be inaccurate or out of date. Furthermore any person who relies on said information for any purpose whatsoever does so with a recognition of the data limitations and solely at his or her own risk. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy, precision and timeliness of materials presented in these maps, ACG assumes no responsibility for errors or omissions inherent in the original data prior to its being compiled by ACG. ACG is not responsible for claims by a third party. The maps shown here are for illustrative purposes only, are intended for use only at the published scale, and are not suitable for site-specific decision making. The data may have a number of errors which may contain but are not limited to the following:

• Spatial Errors • Registration Errors • Attribute Errors • Currency Errors
• Completeness Errors • Projection Distortion

Recommended Citation:

Volume I, this report.

Acknowledgements & Data Sources

See Volume I, Table 1

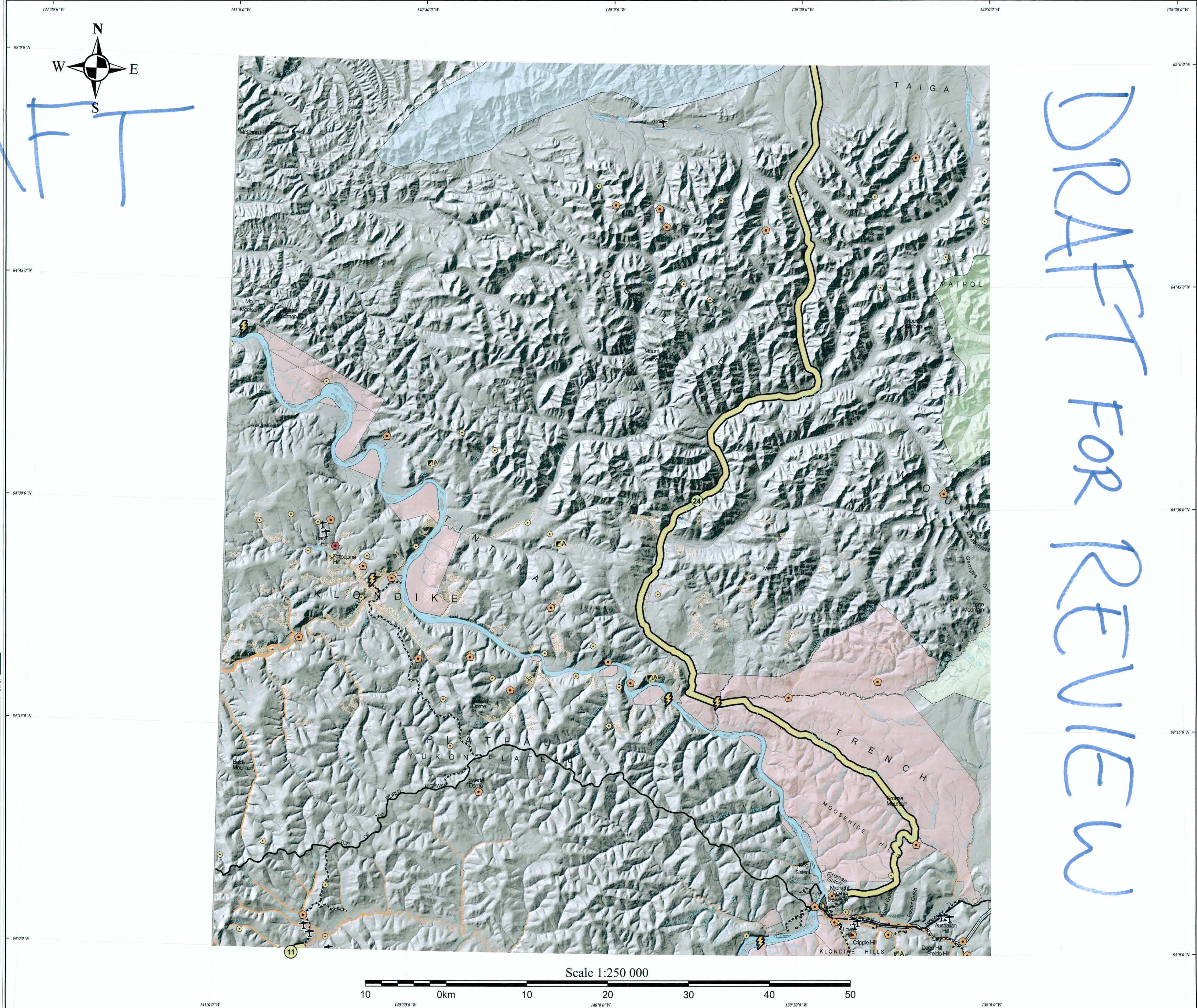
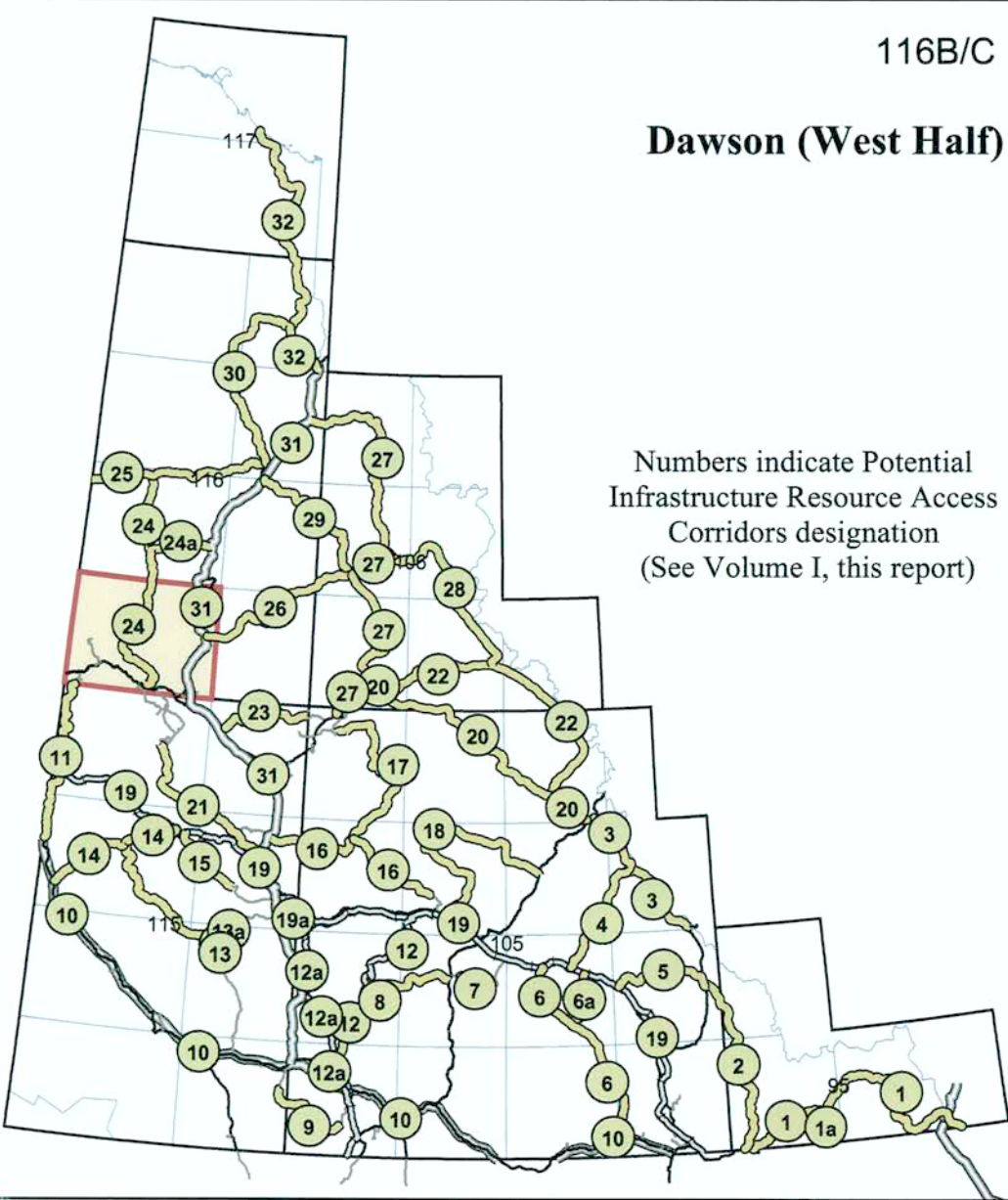
Map Production Date, January 23, 2003



116B/C

Dawson (West Half)

Numbers indicate Potential Infrastructure Resource Access Corridors designation (See Volume I, this report)



Dawson (West Half) - 116B/C

Conceptual Study Report to
Identify Potential Natural Resource
Infrastructure Access Corridors

LEGEND:

Potential Resources

HYDROELECTRIC

Potential Hydroelectric Power Generation/
Storage Sites (Generalized Location)

MINERAL

Minfile Occurrence (Yukon Minfile Database 1999)

Open Pit past producer
Underground past producer
Deposit
Prospect
Showing

Yukon Placer Activity Database (2001)

Major Gold-Bearing Streams
Proven or Potential Gold-Bearing Streams

OIL & GAS

Oil & Gas Basins
Coal Lease (as of November 2002)
Coal Licence (as of November 2002)
Oil & Gas Dispositions (as of July 2002)
Oil & Gas Well

FORESTRY

Presently Merchantable Timber
Harvested Areas (as of August 2002)

Infrastructure

EXISTING

Airstrips
Roads (Primary/Secondary)
Railroad (not currently in use)
Power Generation Station (Hydro/Diesel)
Hydroelectric Transmission Line
Pipeline

POTENTIAL

Potential Natural Resource Infrastructure
Access Corridor
Potential Railroad
Potential Pipeline

Special Consideration Areas

National & Territorial Parks and First Nation Final Agreement Chapter 10 Special Management Areas (SMA). Designation and withdrawal status of SMA are subject to change.


First Nation Settlement Lands, Lands Interim Protected for future FN Settlement Lands (as of August 27, 2002) - subject to change.

Approximate sketch of highest/high Mineral Potential in DLUP for
i) Gold ; ii) Copper iii) "Non-gold" (Source : DLUP database)

7 (NOTE: lines are approximate only and would need to be converted to DLP maps by GIS.).

Concept? To Consider.....

i) All "Highest" Mineral Potential

 would be deemed as "Resource Development Use" (RDU) a new Land use designation only subjected to current Reg's, EA, upcr. conditions i.e., no new restrictions.

ii) High Mineral Potential to be deemed as either IM IV, III or II.

Protected Areas.
Proposed

Assumptions

- No traditional economy area
- corridor areas should be delineated and categorized as "UC" - "utility corridor" to recognize roads, transm. lines, optic fibre cable run etc;

QUESTIONS

Q. Are there pockets within areas 27, 28, 7, 4, 5 and possibly more of 8 that would be considered for

- conservation area?
- protected area?

Q. What designation of IM would we want in areas not designated as high/highest mineral potential?

Q. are there areas of high mineral potential which we would be willing to designate as some form of IM?

Q. Is there a part of the Yukon River that could be designated as "Yukon River Corridor"?

Draft by KB
Feb. 12014.