

2.11 ENVIRONMENT

Preamble

Fredericton is a community that places significant value on the health of its environment and the City of Fredericton is an environmentally progressive corporation. The quality of the environment is an important component of the quality of life that is cherished by citizens in the community. Residents often say that living in Fredericton is like “living in a garden.”

A number of places of natural significance exist within the boundaries of the City that are actively protected by the municipality, the University of New Brunswick, and other property owners. The City works with private property owners and senior levels of government to provide appropriate protection to these important areas including wetlands and environmentally significant areas.

Three major watercourses that pass through the City as well as a number of smaller streams dominate Fredericton’s landscape. These watercourses provide important habitat for a number of plant and animal species and they are valued recreational and scenic amenities for residents but they also make significant parts of the City prone to flooding. The City is actively involved in restricting land use in flood plains and is trying to reduce the impacts of river and stream flooding. Stream corridors are actively protected by the City to maintain the integrity of the watercourse and adjacent habitat and to provide recreation and open space for residents. The Riverfront Master Plan, a planning document that provides strategic direction to City Council on matters affecting the City’s major watercourses, also manages shoreland resources.

The City of Fredericton is also involved in taking action locally to address global environmental issues. The municipality has adopted policies and practices to address climate change and to contribute toward Canada’s commitments under the Kyoto Protocol.

2.11.1 OBJECTIVES

- (1) To identify and protect those areas of significant scenic, environmental and wildlife habitat value.
- (2) To provide for the orderly and comprehensive management of shorelands and floodplains.
- (3) To sustain or enhance, where possible, the quality of the environment within the City as it relates to urban development and human activity.

2.11.2 POLICIES

General Future Land Use Map

- (1) Council shall designate the City’s most environmentally significant areas as Open Space on Schedule “A” - Generalized Future Land Use Map.

Kyoto Protocol

- (2) There are several policies and proposals throughout the various sections of the Plan, which are intended to move the City closer to meeting its commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions under the Kyoto Protocol. Council shall seek to implement operational changes to increase the energy efficiency of its day-to-day operations as well as examine ways to assist the public to reduce energy consumption.
- (3) Council will continue to monitor the impact of climate change and, where necessary, introduce new standards and operational approaches to reduce potential climate change impacts. This may include working with the Province of New Brunswick to review, and if required, update the City's flood plain mapping to ensure flood plain mapping adequately reflects flood limits and areas at risk.

Environmentally Significant Areas

- (4) Council shall endeavor to protect and limit development in all environmentally significant areas, including:
 - (a) River and stream banks;
 - (b) Areas with flooding risk;
 - (c) Areas with significant development constraints;
 - (d) Significant natural habitat;
 - (e) Other areas of open space value;
 - (f) Wetlands.
- (5) Council shall endeavor to ensure that land uses within and abutting designated open spaces and other environmentally significant areas are compatible with and have minimal impacts on the natural environment.
- (6) Council shall endeavor to protect land within environmentally significant areas:
 - (a) Through appropriate zoning mechanisms;
 - (b) As a condition of approval for development agreements;
 - (c) Through land acquisitions, where appropriate.

Wetlands

- (7) Council shall continue to encourage the Province of New Brunswick to conduct wetland inventories and evaluations in order to provide predictability and consistency in the development decision making process.

Flood Plains

- (8) Council shall consider the implementation of flood plain zoning in accordance with the following:
 - (a) A prohibited zone corresponding to the 20 year flood and in which only recreational or agricultural uses should be permitted;
 - (b) A restricted zone corresponding to the 100 year flood in which the uses as designated on the Generalized Future Land Use Map may be permitted where specific floodproofing measures are taken;
 - (c) A warning zone in which owners or developers would be warned of the flood risk but no restrictions would be imposed.

- (9) Council shall encourage the Provincial Government to enact legislation to:
 - (a) Require floodproofing for future development;
 - (b) Provide relocation incentives, as appropriate.

St. John River and Other Watercourses

- (10) Council shall continue to undertake measures to protect the quality of water in the St. John River and other water bodies in the City. Specifically, Council shall:
 - (a) Provide adequate sewage treatment facilities;
 - (b) Implement adequate storm water management practices;
 - (c) Protect shoreland areas and implement setback requirements for development;
 - (d) Ensure industry and other incompatible uses have minimal environmental impacts on any water course;
 - (e) Encourage uses which are within the environmental capacity of the river or other water bodies;
 - (f) Regulate pits and quarries in shoreland areas;
 - (g) Investigate methods to regulate the commercial removal of topsoil in shoreland areas.
- (11) Council shall encourage the Provincial Government to:
 - (a) Maintain rigorous environmental standards to maintain river water quality;
 - (b) Maintain a comprehensive water quality monitoring program for the St. John River.
- (12) Council shall recognize the Riverfront Master Plan as a plan to guide the conservation of riverfront lands in the public domain.

Ground Water

- (13) Council shall endeavor to protect ground water quality in all areas of the City. Specifically, Council shall:
 - (a) Implement measures to protect the City's water supply;
 - (b) Seek to limit unserved development;
 - (c) Seek remedial solutions to address existing ground water environmental problems;
 - (d) Encourage the provincial departments of Health and Wellness and Environment and Local Government to enforce rigorous standards to protect ground water.

Air Quality

- (14) Council shall discourage the development of industry and other land uses in the City and region that generate emissions with deleterious impacts on the quality of air.

Impact of Electrical Transmission Lines

- (15) Council shall monitor the impacts of major power transmission lines and facilities and shall establish policies to provide appropriate separation distances with residential areas, hospitals and other land uses.

Wind Power

- (16) Council shall direct further study on the placement of power windmills to ensure appropriate land use regulations are in place to mitigate any potential negative impacts.

Pesticide Use

- (17) Council shall continue to examine ways to reduce the use of pesticides on municipal and residential properties to protect human health and the environment.

Rural Sprawl

- (18) Council shall request that the Province of New Brunswick implement land use controls to prevent further rural sprawl in the unincorporated areas that surround the City.

Waste Disposal Sites

- (19) Council shall encourage all waste disposal facilities serving the City to:
- (a) Operate according to rigorous standards and procedures to ensure optimum environmental protection;
 - (b) Provide sufficient separation from environmentally significant areas in order to minimize impacts.
- (20) Council shall permit the reuse of former disposal or industrial sites for alternate uses only upon determination that such use will not result in a health risk due to contamination or methane gas.
- (21) Council shall require development proposals involving hazardous materials or waste to:
- (a) Be adequately separated from environmentally significant areas, residential uses and other public facilities;
 - (b) Incorporate rigorous storage and operational standards pursuant to the National Building Code, Provincial standards and any additional conditions as deemed necessary by Council.
- (22) Council shall seek Provincial Government assistance to relocate or provide any necessary remedial actions to ensure existing land uses involving hazardous materials pose minimal risk to the environment and public health.
- (23) Council shall show leadership and implement programs for the promotion and implementation of environmentally friendly practices regarding the four R's: reduction, reuse, recycling and recovery.

Tree Planting

- (24) It shall be the policy of Council to maintain a tree planting program within public rights-of-way and on lands owned by the municipality to improve the quality of the urban environment.

The Urban Forest

- (25) Council encourages the retention of mature, natural tree growth, where possible on private property.

2.11.3 PROPOSALS

Tree Planting and Landscaping

- (1) It is proposed that Council consider measures to encourage and/or require tree planting and landscaping on private property to beautify the City and to contribute to the City's commitments under the Kyoto Protocol.

The Urban Forest

- (2) It is proposed that Council develop a plan to manage municipally owned forest lands that are not intended to be managed as parkland.

Watercourse Corridors

- (3) It is proposed that Council encourage the development of watercourse corridors for multi-purpose use including, but not limited to, storm water management, linear trails, recreation and open spaces to protect their environmental, recreation and aesthetic character.