



WITSET First Nation

Community Land Use Plan

OCTOBER 2018



WITSET First Nation

Band Council Resolution

No. 0001-_____

2018 - 08

BAND COUNCIL RESOLUTION OF
WITSET FIRST NATION

Date of duly convened meeting:

DO HEREBY RESOLVE THAT: A Quorum of 5 (minimum) or more; WITSET Band Council met on the 21st day of November, 2018.

WHEREAS:

- A. Witset First Nation Council is empowered to act on behalf of Witset First Nation; and
- B. The Witset First Nation Community Land Use Plan was:
 - a. Developed through a community and member-driven participatory planning approach;
 - b. Received broad community support at community outreach activities;
 - c. Incorporated guiding policy and community feedback from the 2017 Phase 1 Land Use Plan project;
 - d. Incorporated member input that was collected as part of the Witset Comprehensive Community Plan project.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council, for and on behalf WITSET First Nation, hereby:

1. Accepts and endorses the Witset First Nation Community Land Use Plan as the community's guiding land use planning document to guide development on Witset First Nation reserves;
2. Commits to conducting regular Community Land Use Plan monitoring and evaluation, so that development review procedures and land use classifications can be revised when and where required.

QUORUM: 5 (FIVE)

(Only to be used when others are not available and have sent regrets, but are fully informed of the BCR)

Victor Jim, *Chief Councilor*

Sandra George, *Councilor*

Gary Naziel, *Councilor*

Sheri Green, *Councilor*

Warner William, *Councilor*

Freda Huson, *Councilor*

Lillian Lewis, *Councilor*

Desmond McKinnon, *Councilor*

Margaret LaRose, *Councilor*

Russel Lewis Jr., *Councilor*

Archie Joseph, *Councilor*

Clement Mitchell, *Councilor*

" The Witset First Nation practices Wiguus¹ by engaging, understanding, inspiring, and empowering our ski ze', revitalizing our roots and cultural systems, integrating traditional knowledge with the knowledge of today through building capacity and resources, celebrating our successes, and adapting to meet the needs and interests of ski ze', and future generations.

#3 – 205 Beaver Road, Smithers, BC V0J 2N1



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Executive Summary

The Witset Community Land Use Plan provides a framework for land use and development in our community. As a community-driven plan, its development was closely linked to, and coordinated with, the Witset Comprehensive Community Plan process. It also includes directions from our 2018 - 2020 Strategic Plan, and builds on what was heard during the preliminary phase of land use planning work that occurred in Witset in 2017.

This plan outlines clear and transparent land management policy to guide future development and land uses on our seven reserves. These include: Babine 17, Babine 18, Bulkley River 19, Coryatsaqua (Moricietown) 2, Jean Baptiste 28, Moricietown 1, and Oschawwinna 3.

As a planning tool, the Witset Community Land Use Plan includes three main policy sections:

- **Land Use Classifications** (page 29) describe what can be built where. Each of the five classifications (Community, Housing, Commercial, Industrial, Cultural Tourism, Forest/Undeveloped) were developed based on current land uses, physical attributes and constraints, and community input (members, staff, leadership).
- **Development Guidelines** (page 37) provide a clear set of standards to minimize any impacts associated with development, such as damage to environmentally or culturally sensitive areas. The Community Land Use Plan includes four kinds of guidelines: Environmental Protection, Cultural Protection, New Housing and Renovation, and Flood Hazard Protection.
- **A Development Review Framework** (page 46) outlines a step-by-step process for reviewing development proposals on Witset reserves to help ensure that future developments meet the standards as outlined in the Community Land Use Plan. While Council remains the final approving authority, their review and approval (or denial) is based on the information and recommendations provided by staff (Housing Department, Public Works, Executive Director, Economic Development). In time, it is the intention of Witset to establish a Lands Office, which, once set up, would be responsible for development review on all Witset lands.

Witset: The People of the First Village





Witset used to be called Moricetown, named after a Catholic missionary, but in May 2018 we officially reinstated our traditional name, Witset. (Photo by Sam Beebe, Ecotrust, CC-by-sa, flickr.com)

Originally named ‘Kyah Wiget, Witset is a Witsuwit’en village in the heart of northwest British Columbia, located on the shores of the Widzin Kwah (also known as the Bulkley River). Witset means “the people of the first village.”

Our current village was built during the early 1900s, but has served as the Witsuwit’en fishing grounds for thousands of years. Radiocarbon dating identifies archaeological evidence of settlement from 3,400 BC and the canyon has served as a traditional Witsuwit’en fishing place for thousands of years.

Witset was one of nine traditional Witsuwit’en Villages located within the traditional territory of the Likhsilyu Clan, and more specifically, the Tsë Kal K’iyikh (House on Top of the Flat Rock). The Witsuwit’en clan is called “didikhni” and a house “yikh”. Clans are largely made up of several families who work together on the land, they share common ancestors and history, whereas houses are smaller family groups who lived together in one house.

WITSUWIT’EN ABORIGINAL TITLE AND RIGHTS

As Witsuwit’en people, we have Aboriginal title and rights throughout our traditional territory. This includes, but is not limited to, the reserve lands our Witset Community Land Use Plan addresses.

This Land Use Plan does not release any claim Witset may have with respect to Aboriginal title and rights. Therefore, the development of this Land Use Plan should in no way be construed as defining, waiving, or limiting the Aboriginal title and rights of the Witset First Nation. It is important to state that Witset does not endorse the reserve system. This plan should in no way be seen as an indication of consent to this system, which was imposed on the Witsuwit’en people by the Government of Canada.

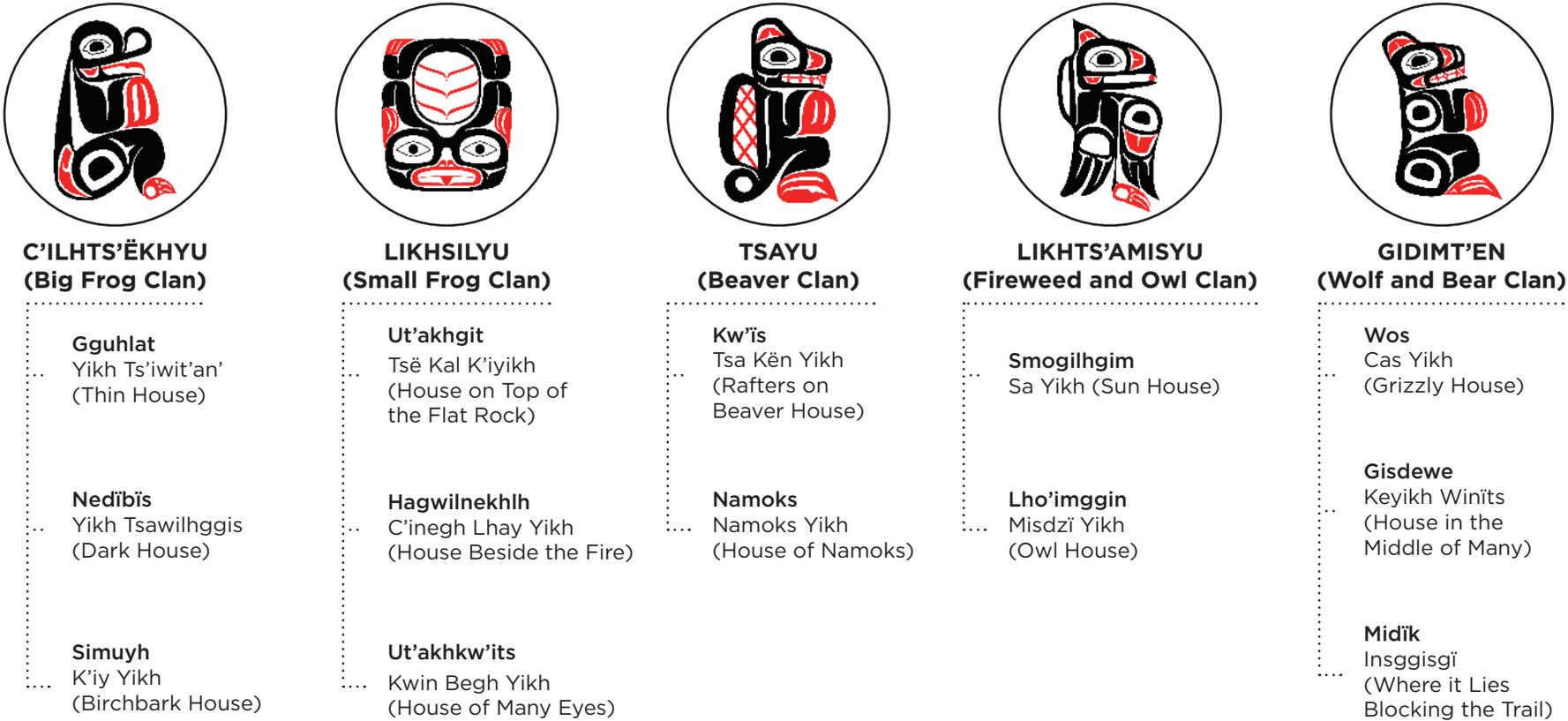
WITSUWIT'EN LAND MANAGEMENT

Prior to the reserve being established in 1891, the Witsuwit'en people were solely governed by a hereditary Clan system. Witsuwit'en peoples who are members of Witset follow a matrilineal system, where a house is closely related to the mother's side. Traditionally, Clans and houses made their decisions during the summer when they gathered in the fishing villages to harvest salmon and hold feasts called balhats. Balhats are a continued tradition, and significant to our culture and decision-making processes.

LAND MANAGEMENT UNDER THE INDIAN ACT

After European contact, Witsuwit'en management, ownership and use of traditional lands and resources gradually shifted as new laws and management regimes were imposed on the Witsuwit'en and Witset through the establishment of both the reserve system and the *Indian Act* (1876), which severely restricted traditional forms of governance and land management. In effect, Witsuwit'en claims to traditional lands were ignored, and Witset was gradually confined to the seven reserves that today make up

FIGURE: *Witset Clans and Houses*



the reserve land base addressed in this plan. It is important to note that under the *Indian Act*, reserve lands are held for the use and benefit of Witset by the federal government and that the *Indian Act* continues to regulate many aspects of First Nation on-reserve land management today.

When drawing boundaries for the reserve system, the government agents who did so did not recognize seasonal migration routes or the traditional Clan system of Witset. This led to today's current situation, where a variety of Witsuwit'en people from different clans and houses are living in the Witset village area, which was historically occupied by members from only one house, the Likhsilyu, or House on Top of the Flat Rock. Elders and the Office of the Wet'suwet'en have both expressed concerns about the conflicts and issues of the underlying traditional territory on which the Witset village area sits and the challenges it may present for land use planning.

BC TREATY PROCESS

Witset entered the BC Treaty Process in the 1990's as part of the Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs treaty table, which is currently in stage four, Agreement-in-Principle, of the six-stage treaty negotiation process.

Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs treaty table represents four communities -- Witset, Hagwilget, Skin Tyee, and Nee Tah Buhn. Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs have overlapping and/or shared territory with its First Nation neighbours: Carrier Sekani, Gitksan, Tsimshian, and Lake Babine.



Photo by Christine Bruce



Introduction

This section introduces our Land Use Plan and explains what it is, how it will be used, and how we developed it.

OUR LAND USE PLAN: WHAT IS IT?

The Witset Community Land Use Plan is a clear, transparent land management policy that provides useful information and direction for important community development initiatives, such as housing, utilities and servicing, community facilities and business development. We created this plan to help shape the future of our community and **provide staff and Council with a guide for making decisions about land use and development on our reserve lands.**

This plan also recognizes our inherent responsibility to protect our lands and cultural resources for future generations.

OUR COMMUNITY LAND USE PLAN: WHERE DOES IT FIT?

As illustrated, our Land Use Plan fits under two other guiding Witset plans, our Comprehensive Community Plan (CCP) and our 2018 - 2020 Strategic Plan.

In 2017, we completed a project called *Witset Community Land Use Plan Framework Phase 1*. During the project, community members expressed a strong interest in broadening the scope of work from *just* a land use plan to something more comprehensive. From this, we developed a comprehensive community plan (CCP) at the same time as this Land Use Plan, with both plans designed to complement and integrate with one another. Both this Community Land Use Plan and our CCP follow the community's guiding vision as laid out in the Strategic Plan.

The 2018 - 2020 Strategic Plan was developed through planning with Witset First Nation staff and leadership and adopted by Council in February 2018. It outlines the community's values, vision, and mission, as well as goals across eight different priority areas, including good governance, health and safety, and culture and language.

FIGURE: Witset Community Land Use Plan - Where it fits



OUR COMMUNITY LAND USE PLAN: HOW WILL IT BE USED?

Our plan is shaped by the practical realities of our reserve lands as well as our community's vision, principles, objectives, and policies for future land use. As a planning tool, our Land Use Plan:

- Describes what can be built and where;
- Establishes basic guidelines for on-reserve construction and development designed to minimize the negative impacts associated with development;
- Provides a simple and transparent development review process that will help ensure that future development projects conform to Land Use Plan policies and meet Witset's standards for design and construction.

Our Land Use Plan is a living document. We expect our Land Use Plan to grow and change. As our population grows and new housing, infrastructure and facilities are constructed, or as we develop new policy tools or advance in our treaty process, we may need to revise and update this plan. Along with our Comprehensive Community Plan (CCP), we will monitor and evaluate our Community Land Use Plan and **commit to undergoing a review and update every seven years**, or as required, to ensure that it is up-to-date and consistent with our planning needs and members' community development objectives.

Q: *Is our Community Land use Plan connected to the Community Land Use Plan work we carried out in 2017?*

A: Yes!

In 2017, we completed a project called *Witset Community Land Use Plan Framework Phase 1*. During the project, community members expressed a strong interest in broadening the scope of work from just a land use plan to something more comprehensive. The feedback and input that members provided during the earlier project was used in our Comprehensive Community Plan process and helped inform our Community Land Use Plan.

Photo by Christine Bruce

OUR LAND USE PLAN: HOW WE DID IT

This Land Use Plan was developed through a participatory, community-based process that also involved staff and leadership. To respect and honour past community input, the planning team was careful to include member feedback from previous planning initiatives, including *Witset Community Land Use Plan Framework Phase 1*.

We established a project team that included our Executive Director, Assistant Executive Director, Housing Manager, and Economic Development Manager. They worked closely with leadership, Elders and other members on the project. Community, staff and leadership engagement events included the following.

Round One Engagement - March 2018, Witset

- Council presentation
- Staff session
- Community Open House
- Elders session

Round Two Engagement - June 2018, Witset

- Staff session
- Community Open House
- Witsuwit'en Language and Culture Society (WLCS)
- Kyah Wiget Education Society (KWES)
- Youth sessions (Witset Elementary Secondary School, ICount)

Round Three Engagement - October 2018, Witset

- Staff session
- Community Open House
- Elders session
- Witsuwit'en Language and Culture Society (WLCS)
- Kyah Wiget Education Society (KWES)
- Youth sessions (Witset Elementary Secondary School, ICount)
- AGM presentation

Other community outreach included articles in the Beaver Slap News, project updates and information materials on the Witset's website, and project updates on Witset social media.

The project itself was completed over 11 months, as illustrated in the project timeline.

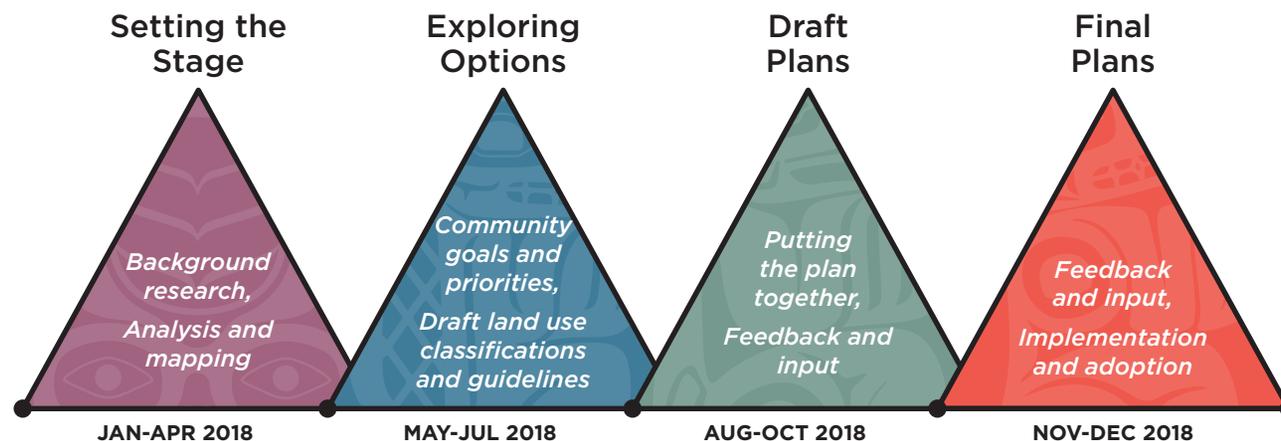


FIGURE: Witset Community Land Use Plan project timeline

FIGURE: Community engagement was an important part of the project and included engagement with youth from ICount



Photos by Christine Bruce

Guided by Our
Vision and Goals





OUR VISION

The vision statement provides direction for our future, and was first identified by leadership in our 2018 - 2020 Strategic Plan. It describes a vision for the future for Witset.

Witset First Nation is a vibrant, healthy, self-sufficient community that enjoys a high quality of life, and practice good governance according to a'nuk'nuwet'en¹

The vision was confirmed with members through the Witset CCP process.

¹ laws of our people

OUR COMMUNITY GOALS

The following goals are the heart of our Community Land Use Plan. They represent the areas that Witset members feel are most important to focus on as we work towards our community vision.

The goals were taken from our CCP, and were reviewed and prioritized by staff, leadership and members. The community goals are all interconnected. We also understand that in time, as we implement our Land Use Plan, that these community goals may change in priority, or new ones may emerge. That’s why we will be reviewing them regularly with the community.

TABLE: *Witset CCP Goals and Land Use Plan Directions*

COMMUNITY GOAL	WHAT OUR LAND USE PLAN WILL DO
Support Elders and youth	Support new and expanded facilities and improved infrastructure and services.
Protect and promote our culture and language	Minimize development impacts on cultural resources and seek opportunities for new development to promote our culture and language.
Improve community health and wellbeing	Ensure any new development supports member health and wellbeing.
Address our housing needs	Encourage a range of healthy, affordable, sustainable housing options and tenures.
Improve education and learning resources	Support new and/or expanded facilities and improved infrastructure and services.
Strengthen our local economy	Support member-focused businesses and minimize the impact of businesses on our community and environment.
Manage our lands and protect the environment	Protect and steward our lands and waters for future generations.

WITSET LANDS & VILLAGE

Witset is comprised of seven reserves totaling approximately 14 square kilometres: Moricetown 1, Jean Baptiste 28, Coryatsaqua (Moricetown) 2, Bulkey River 19, Babine 17, Babine 18, and Oschawwinna 3. The village of Witset, where the Band office and services are located, sits along Highway 16 in the Bulkley River Valley, in Moricetown 1. The community is located approximately 32 kilometres northwest of Smithers along the Yellowhead Highway No. 16 in northwestern BC. The Widzin Kwah runs through the community, and the canyon where the river narrows has long been an important community gathering area.

As shown on the map, the majority of Witset reserves are centered around Witset village, where most commercial services and spaces are located (on Moricetown 1). Oschawwinna 3 and Jean Baptiste 28 are geographically removed from the main community area.



MAP: *Witset reserves*

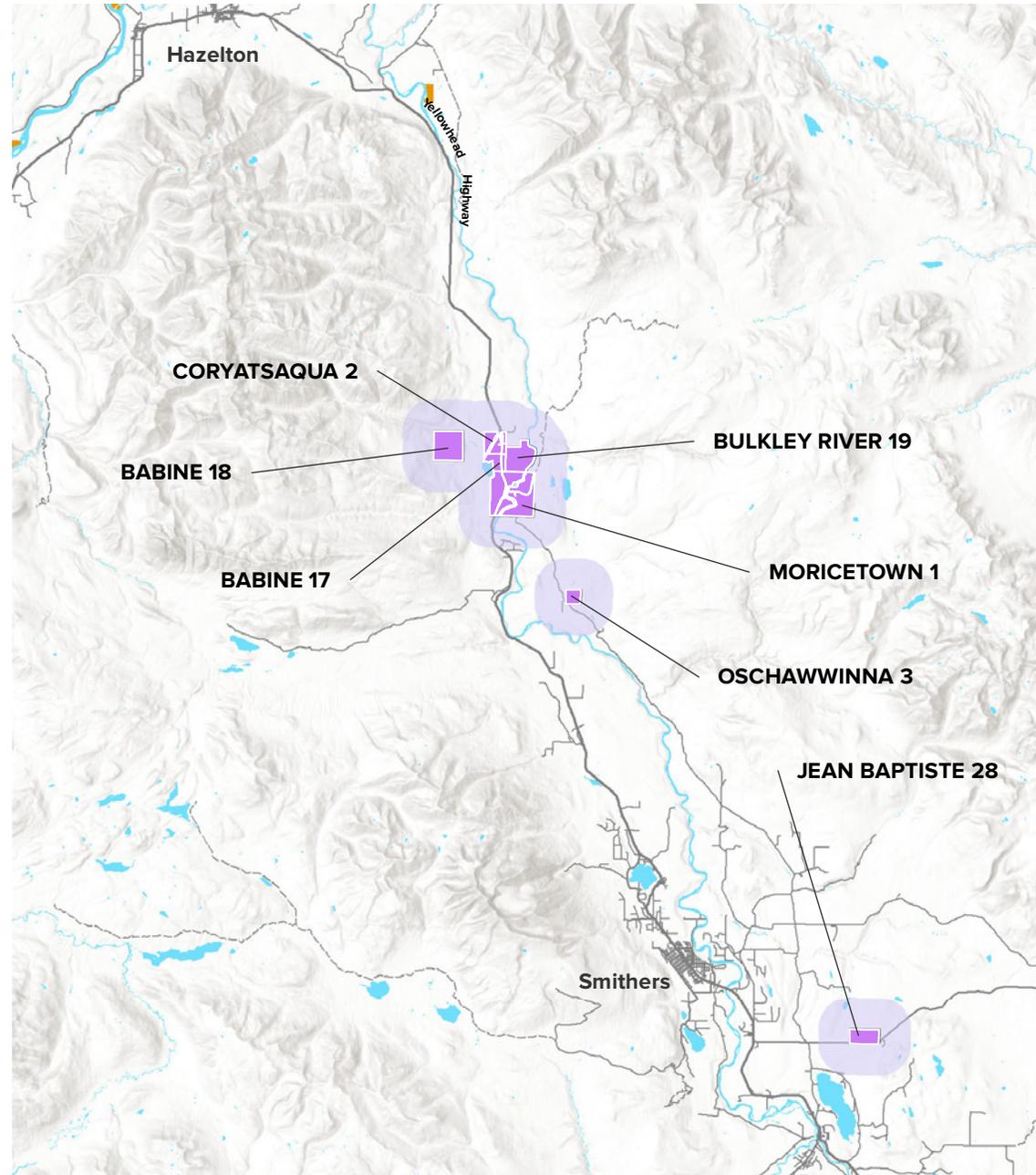


FIGURE: *Witset reserves, size and current land uses*

RESERVE NAME	SQUARE HECTARES	CURRENT LAND USES
Babine 17	83.66	residential, forest
Babine 18	258.69	forest
Bulkley River 19	216.7	residential, forest
Coryatsaqua (Moricetown) 2	123.65	residential, forest
Jean Baptiste 28	129.72	forest, agricultural land
Moricetown 1	530.8	mixed residential, community, commercial uses, and industrial (mill); forest, agricultural land and fields
Oschawwinna 3	65.14	forest, agricultural



WITSET VILLAGE (MORICETOWN 1, CORYATSAQUA 2, BULKLEY RIVER 19, BABINE 17)

Four reserves comprise Witset's main village centre, clustered along Highway 16. The Widzin Kwah (Bulkley River) runs through the area, drawing many fishermen and tourists. A CN rail line runs through Coryatsaqua. Together, these reserves comprise about 955 hectares of land and are home to the majority of Witset's on-reserve population.

Currently, there are 229 homes in Witset, the majority (almost half) of which are located on Moricetown 1 IR. This Land Use Plan anticipates it remaining Witset First Nation's community hub and as the focus of new housing development.

Existing Infrastructure and Facilities

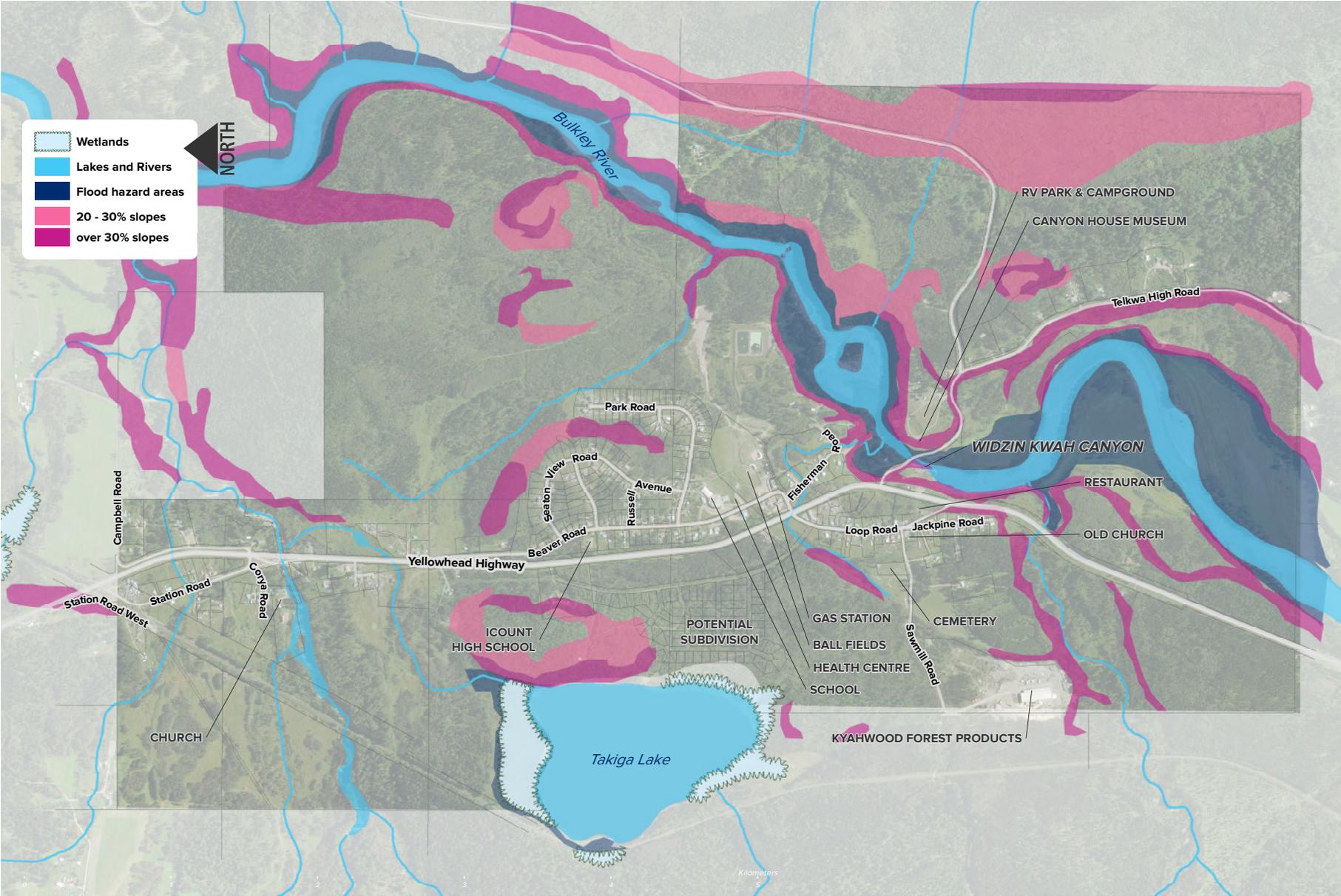
Most of Witset's services and buildings are located here, including the Witset Health Centre, Witset Elementary Secondary School (WESS) and Witset administrative offices, multiplex, fire hall, Centennial Hall, and outdoor sports facilities. Businesses located here include Kyah Food and Fuel gas station, the Widzin Kwah Canyon House Museum, RV Park and Campground, and Kyahwood Forest Products.

Additionally, Witset's infrastructure services include Telus fibre optic internet, and a slow sand water filtration system to provide clean water to residents. Witset community water system consists of a reservoir and man-made lagoons. Witset and surrounding areas are connected by a relatively well-maintained road system, allowing fairly easy access to all of the reserves.

Current Land Use Constraints

The map illustrates general land use constraints in the Witset village area, including steep slopes, flood hazard areas and wetlands.

MAP: Witsset Land Use Constraints



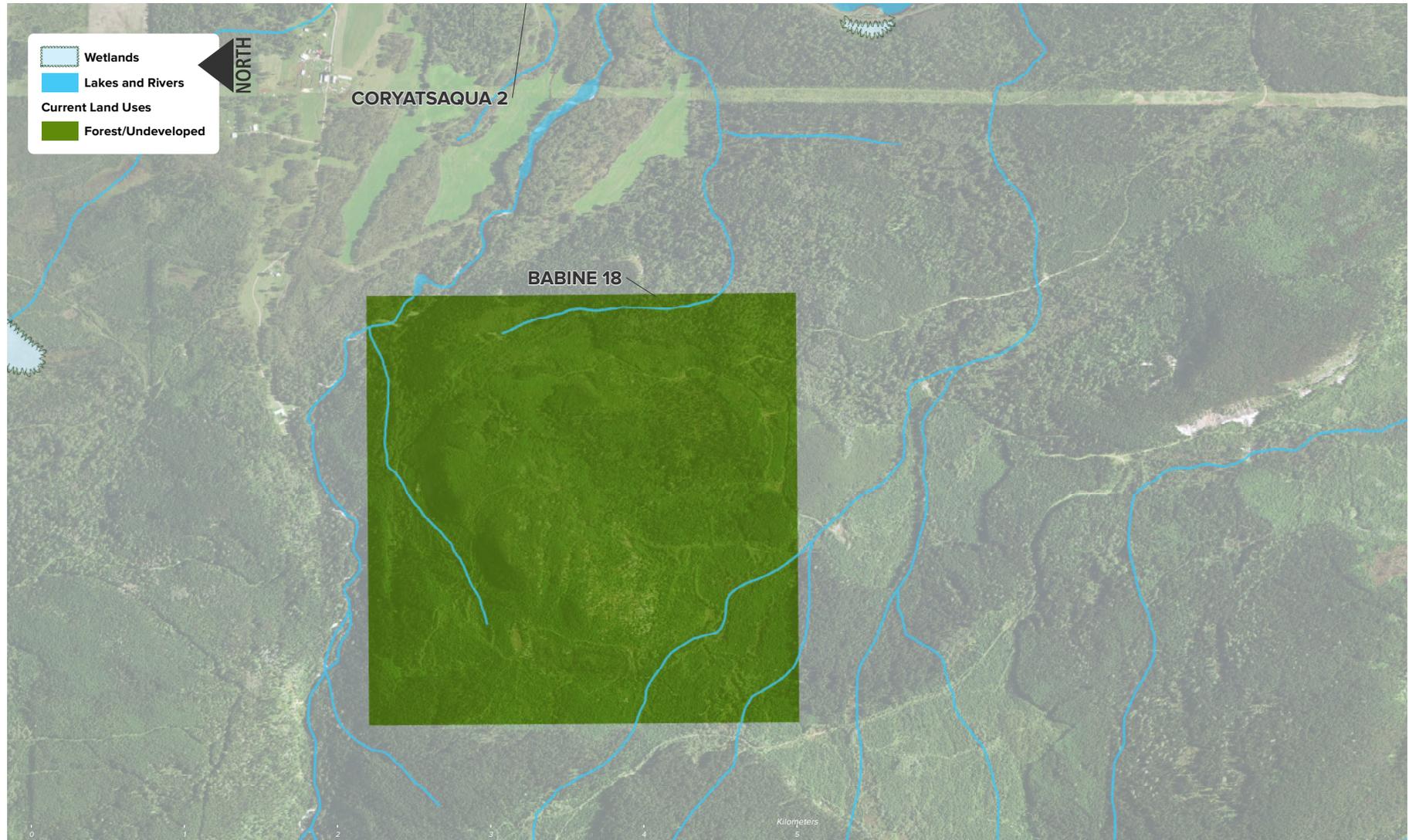
BABINE 18

This reserve is situated along Beaver Road, approximately five kilometers from the main Witset village area. It comprises 258.69 hectares that are forested and unpopulated. There is no road access to the area.

Existing Infrastructure and Facilities

There are no community facilities or buildings located at Babine 18.

MAP: Current Land Use Babine 18



OSCHAWWINNA 3

This reserve is located approximately 10 kilometres southeast of the Witset Band offices along the Telkwa High Road. It is the smallest reserve by area and has no residents. There is a house located just north of the reserve lands. At the center of the reserve is a grass field used for cattle grazing. It is surrounded by forest, and there has been little to no recent logging activity.

Existing Infrastructure and Facilities

There are no community facilities or buildings located at Oschawwinna 3.

MAP: Current Land Oschawwinna 3



JEAN BAPTISTE 28

This reserve is the furthest away from the others, approximately 42 kilometres southeast of Witset along Babine Lake Road. There are three homes on reserve, two of which are occupied by members. Jean Baptiste 28 is surrounded by land used for agriculture, such as cattle and hay.

Existing Infrastructure and Facilities

There are no community facilities located at Jean Baptiste 28.

MAP: Current Land Use Jean Baptiste 28

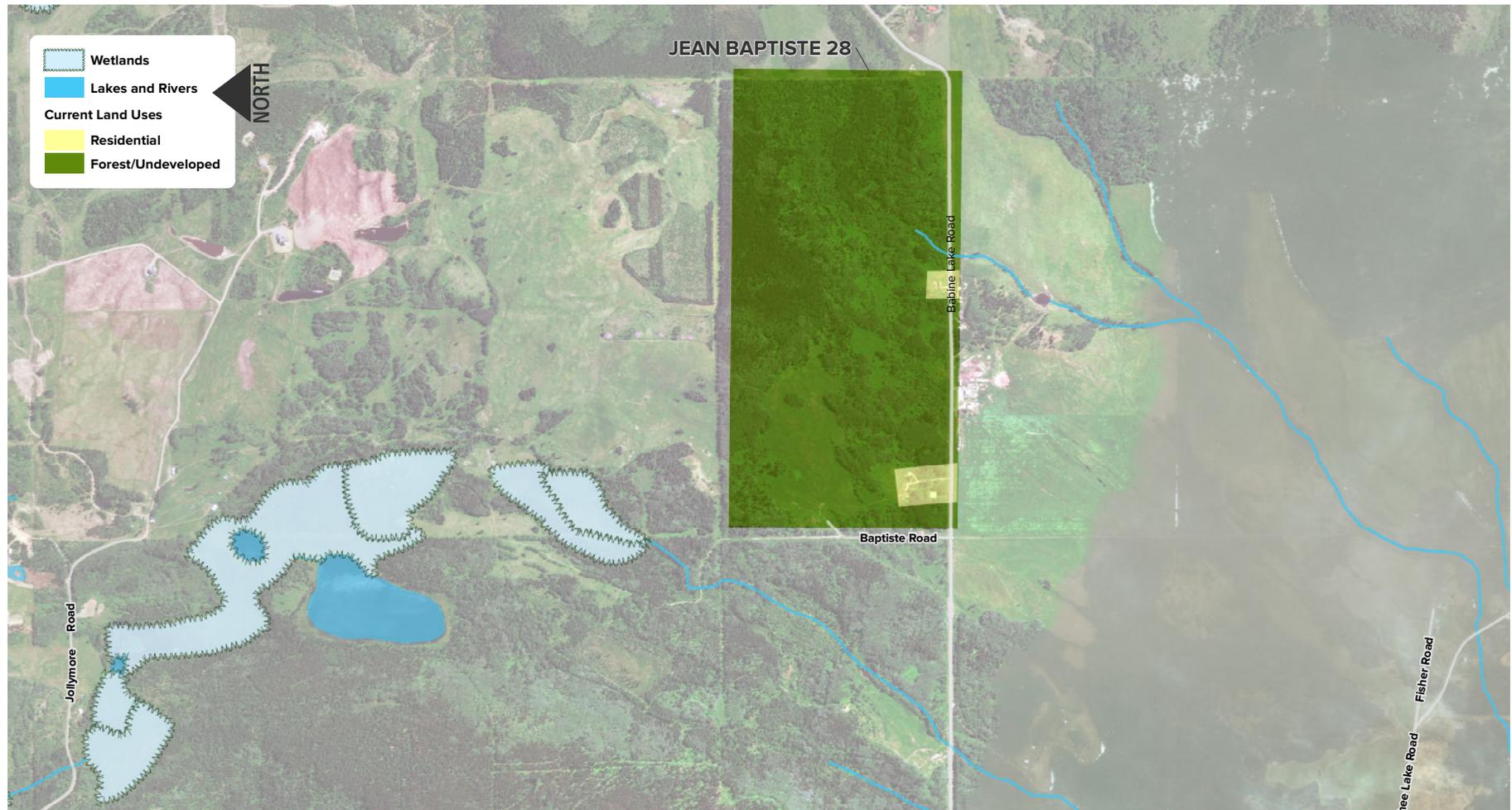




Photo by Christine Bruce

OUR PEOPLE

As of February 2018, Witset’s total population is 2,040 members. Approximately 32% Witset members live on Witset reserves, with the rest living on other reserves or off-reserve throughout BC and Canada. Our membership is growing slowly, from 1,787 members in 2006.

Looking at the big picture, two notable population trends for Witset are:

- **Our population is growing at a faster rate for members living outside Witset.** This will likely continue depending on a number of factors, including availability of housing and employment opportunities.
- **Witset is an aging community.** 11% of members living in Witset are over the age of 65, which is up from 5% in 2010, and 3% in 2006. This means that 70 of our members living on-reserve are over 60 years of age.

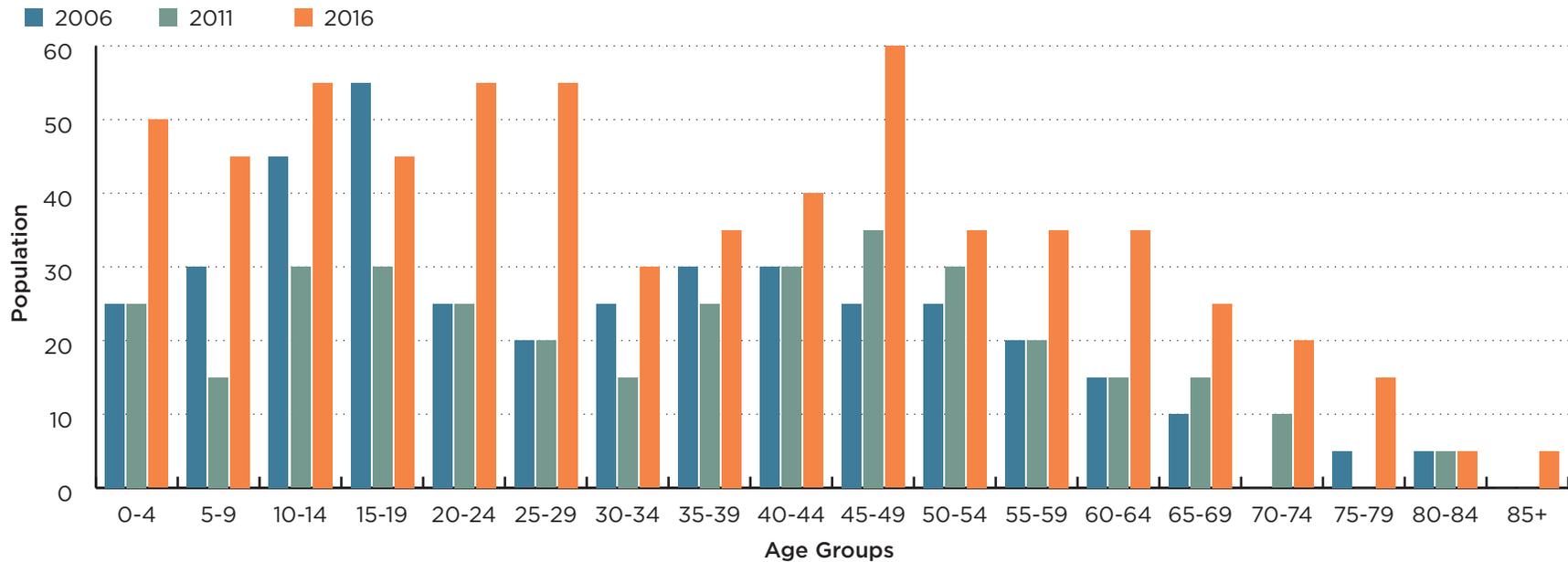
The table provides a breakdown of population growth and projections.

TABLE: *Witset Population and Projections*

	2006	2011	2018	2028 forecast	2038 forecast
Total registered membership	1787	1921	2,040	2281- 2550	2550 - 3188
% members living on-reserve	37%	36%	33%	33% (assumed)	33% (assumed)
On-reserve members	660	693	660	753-842	842 -1052
Off-reserve members	1127	1228	1380	1528-1709	1708-2136

Sources: *ISC, Census Canada*

COMMUNITY OF WITSET POPULATION BY AGE GROUP, 2006 - 2016



Sources: Census Canada

Changes to Witset’s population and demographics will impact community life in a number of ways. A strong, young population means a strong, young workforce ready to create and accept opportunities to build the community. However, a growing population will also put pressure on already stretched resources such as housing.

A closer look at our population broken down by age in the next figure can help us consider the types of facilities and services that we may need in the coming years. The changing size of different age groups and families will impact the provision of community services and facilities, housing, education, and health.



Photo by Christine Bruce

OUR HOUSING

Currently, there are 229 homes in Witset, the majority of which are located in Moricetown 1 IR. The average household size is 2.9 people per house. Approximately 70% of these homes were built prior to 1991, and roughly 47% of them are in need of major repairs. There are also houses that need replacing, including six mobile homes (three of which are abandoned).

Currently there are 119 band members on the waitlist for a new house, which is a possible reflection of a housing shortage of new, quality-built homes. Of those on the waitlist, approximately two-thirds live off-reserve currently, while the rest live on-reserve either with family or in a private rental.

With current trends, the community can expect an increase in the number of seniors, as well as growing numbers of families and young people. These demographics suggest that Witset will need more housing suited to families with

children, as well as housing that will allow seniors to stay in the community as they age.

If our population continues to grow, and our aim is to have almost no one on the housing waitlist, and to have uncrowded housing in good condition, we need to build somewhere between 150 - 240 homes over the next 20 years (between seven and 12 new units a year). New homes could include single family homes, duplexes, triplexes, small apartment buildings, and other housing types.

There are some serviced developable lots still available in Witset. Potential multi-unit developments, including apartments and a supported living Elders centre, have been discussed for the village core area.

An area for a potential 85+ lot subdivision has also been identified on Witset land just below Takiga Lake (formerly Moricetown Lake).

OUR INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES

The following buildings and facilities are located in the Witset village area.

Multiplex. Home to Witset administration, Witset Elementary Secondary School (WESS), Council chambers, a small community Feast Hall, large gym, community kitchen, a hair salon, and other facilities. The building is energy-efficient, heated through a geothermal system and features local artwork and locally harvested timber.



Witset Multiplex (Photo by Christine Bruce)

Witset Health Centre. Completed in 2016, the Health Centre offers personal health services for Witset members as well as home care programs for individuals with chronic injuries or illnesses. The Health Centre also offers mental health services, dental services (treatments such as cleanings, fillings and extractions), and various educational programs to promote healthy living, balanced diets, children’s health and healthy aging.



Witset Health Centre (Photo by EcoPlan)

Kyah Food and Fuel. Constructed in 2005, the facility is owned and operated by Witset and offers convenience products as well as some groceries, gas and automotive supplies. Renovated in 2016, it also offers a restaurant and enhanced access to the facility with a right-hand turn lane and new paving. In the summer of 2017, a small outdoor patio and mural (created by James Madam, a local artist) was installed on the south side of the building, along with a new POS (point-of-sale) pay at the pump system, and POS sale system in the store.



Kyah Food and Fuel (Photo by Christine Bruce)

Widzin Kwah Canyon House Museum. Adjacent to the RV Park and Campground, the facility includes displays, artifacts, and a small gift shop that sells arts and crafts produced by community members. Cultural tours can also be booked at the facility with professionally trained guides from the community. The Widzin Kwah Canyon House Museum was built in 2016.



Witset RV Park playground with Widzin Kwah Canyon House Museum in background (Photo by EcoPlan)

RV Park and Campground. Extensively upgraded in 2017, this fully serviced 40 site RV Park and Campground features improved site electrical service and drive thru sites. Other upgrades include new accessible bathrooms and showers, laundry facilities, a new playground, onsite caretaker, newly renovated office, an online booking system with the Tourism Witset website, and new picnic tables.



*Witset RV Park and Campground
(Photo by EcoPlan)*

Kyahwood Forest Products. The 58,000 sq. ft. (5,400 m²) value-added wood and lumber plant produces finger joint dimensional lumber for the North American housing market. The business received a 2011 CANDO Community Economic Developer of the Year Award, and a 2012 Best Community Owned Business Award at the provincial Aboriginal Business Awards.



Kyahwood Forest Products (Photo by EcoPlan)

Fire Hall. The two-bay fire hall is operated by volunteer firefighters with First Responder training. The service has been recognized with multiple performance awards over the years.



Witset Fire Hall (Photo by Christine Bruce)

Centennial Hall. Centennial Hall houses Kyah Wiget Education Society Adult Education program and is used as a community gathering space outside of class hours.



Centennial Hall (Photo by Christine Bruce)

Outdoor Sports Facilities. Witset's outdoor recreation facilities include two baseball diamonds, a soccer field, a community playground and a covered outdoor exercise area. There are also bleachers for viewing the annual Moricetown Mud Bog races.



Witset ballfields (Photo by EcoPlan)

ICount. The ICount alternative high school building dates from the 1940s and was originally used as a residential school building. There are two classrooms in the building. The building is in need of substantial upgrades and improvements to meet more current standards.



ICount (Photo by Christine Bruce)

Future Land Use Areas



Our land use plan lays out what types of future development or land uses would be most suitable in specific areas. This includes development categories such as residential, business and light industrial, and protected areas.

A land use plan keeps us from building incompatible things next to each other, such as a home and a chicken-processing plant. It helps members know where future development will happen and where it will not happen. It also makes it easier for Witset to enter into lease agreements for economic development projects.

LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS

To help us guide future development and protect sensitive areas, this plan establishes **land use classifications**. Each classification includes a general category of land use or development types, which are described below and shown on *Land Use Classification* maps. The land classifications are based on current land uses, land attributes and community feedback (members, staff, leadership).

Traditional and cultural uses and activities are supported in all classifications, but some uses like smokehouses may be subject to community fire safety standards.

COMMUNITY

This classification includes the community facilities, most of which are located around Witset village (around the intersection of Beaver Road and Highway 16). This area will continue to be where we focus the development of community facilities, including some types of housing such as multi-family or social housing including supported Elders living.

Management objectives

- Maintain adequate recreation, cultural and educational services and amenities
- Maintain government administrative services
- Maintain member safety, health and wellbeing
- Encourage efficient use of land through infill and densification

Supported land uses for these areas

- Witset program offices (administration and program delivery)
- Community recreation facilities (gym, meeting spaces, program offices, youth centre)
- Schools (Witset Elementary Secondary School, iCount, adult education), daycares
- Community health facilities
- Elders Care facilities and housing
- Cultural facilities and buildings
- Public works and safety facilities (Fire Hall, recycling facility, public works building)
- Parks and recreation facilities (fields and ancillary buildings)
- Housing (multi-family, Elders)
- Churches and cemeteries

HOUSING

This classification includes both the existing serviced residential areas in Witset, including areas that may be developed in the future for serviced residential building lots. There is a small area classified for housing in the Jean Baptiste reserve.

Management objectives

- Support members' housing needs
- Encourage a diversity of housing options and tenures to meet a range of needs, such as for families with kids as well as seniors
- Anticipate and meet future housing needs as member population grows
- Encourage efficient use of land through infill and densification

Supported land uses for these areas

- Members housing (single family, duplex, triplex, multi-family, bachelor units, small homes, carriage houses²)
- Elders care facilities and housing

COMMERCIAL

This classification includes space for existing businesses and new commercial businesses that may be developed in Witset. The classification is primarily intended to support highway commercial type businesses located next to Highway 16 and commercial tourist operations, like the RV Park and Campground.

Management objectives

- Support Witset community economic development

² A carriage house is a self-contained dwelling that is constructed as a separate building to a single family home.

- Improve and expand available local-serving commercial businesses
- Support Witset cultural tourism initiatives

Supported land uses for these areas

- Gas station/service station
- Convenience store
- Restaurant/café
- Cultural tourism related business
- Retail store

INDUSTRIAL

This classification includes the Kyahwood Forest Products mill site, but is intended to support future potential and complimentary light industrial uses near the mill.

Management objectives

- Support Witset community economic development
- Support Kyahwood Forest Products operations
- Minimize impacts of economic activities (noise, dust, vibrations, light pollution) on nearby residential areas
- Minimize impacts of development and activities on adjacent environmentally sensitive areas

Supported land uses for these areas

- Light industrial uses, including, but not limited to, sawmilling and value-added wood processing, warehousing, general manufacturing and fabrication, food processing, service industrial (repair shop), offices and sales shops, and storage.

No heavy industrial uses, such as waste incinerators or chemical processing facilities are permitted in the industrial classification.

CULTURAL

This classification includes areas of cultural and historic significance to the community, in particular the Widzin Kwah Canyon, which is considered one of the most archeologically significant sites in the province. While these lands are home to tourism operations, including the Widzin Kwah Canyon House Museum, the area is both environmentally and culturally sensitive and must be developed carefully and minimally. Development guidelines included in this plan explain that development procedures should include site-by-site investigations to identify such areas and establish appropriate setbacks and buffers to protect them.

Management objectives

- Protect traditional and cultural use sites
- Protect known archaeological sites
- Protect traditional and cultural uses and activities
- Protect waterways and sensitive ecosystems, including the Widzin Kwah canyon
- Support Witset community economic development
- Support the Witset cultural education, interpretation and awareness building

Supported land uses for these areas

- Protected environmental areas, including Widzin Kwah [Bulkley River], lakes and wetlands
- Protected cultural areas, including traditional use areas, and registered archeological sites
- Traditional and cultural uses and activities
- Limited eco-tourism and cultural tourism activities, such as the Widzin Kwah Canyon House Museum, RV Park and Campground, and the future Widzin Kwah Interpretive Centre
- Habitat restoration, protection and stewardship activities

FOREST OR UNDEVELOPED

This classification includes the forested areas surrounding the village centre and the largely forested and undeveloped areas of other Witset reserves. It also includes lands that are currently being used for limited agricultural uses, such as haying or livestock grazing.

Management objectives

- Maintain ecological integrity of forested areas
- Support agriculture on areas previously used for agricultural purposes, as is currently done on Oshawwinna and Jean Baptiste reserves
- Support traditional and cultural uses

Supported land uses for these areas

- Limited timber harvesting
- Agricultural activities such as growing crops or animal grazing
- Traditional and cultural uses and activities
- Non-timber forest product gathering and harvesting
- Limited eco-tourism and cultural tourism activities
- Habitat restoration, protection and stewardship activities

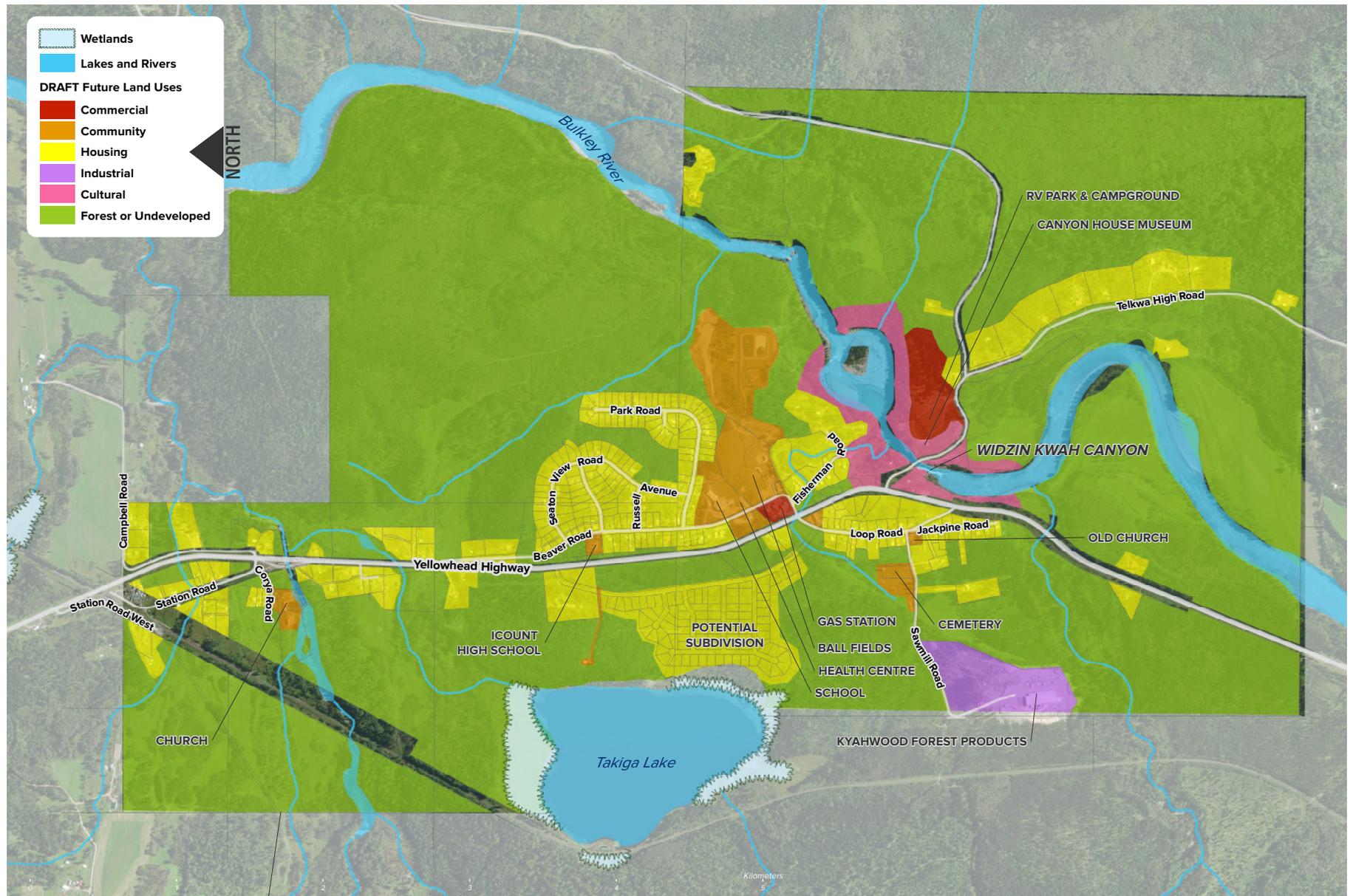
TABLE: Land Use Classifications and Appropriate Land Uses

LAND USE	Community Facilities	Commercial Businesses	Light Industrial Activities	Multiple Family Residential	Single Family Residential	Forestry	Agriculture and Farming	Utilities	Trails and Outdoor Recreational Facilities	Cultural and Traditional Uses
Community	Y	Y		Y			Y	Y	Y	Y
Housing	C2			C2	Y			Y		Y
Commercial		Y						Y	Y	Y
Industrial	C3	C4	Y					Y	Y	Y
Cultural		C1						C1	C1	Y
Forest or Undeveloped						C1	Y	Y	Y	Y
Right of Ways								Y	Y	

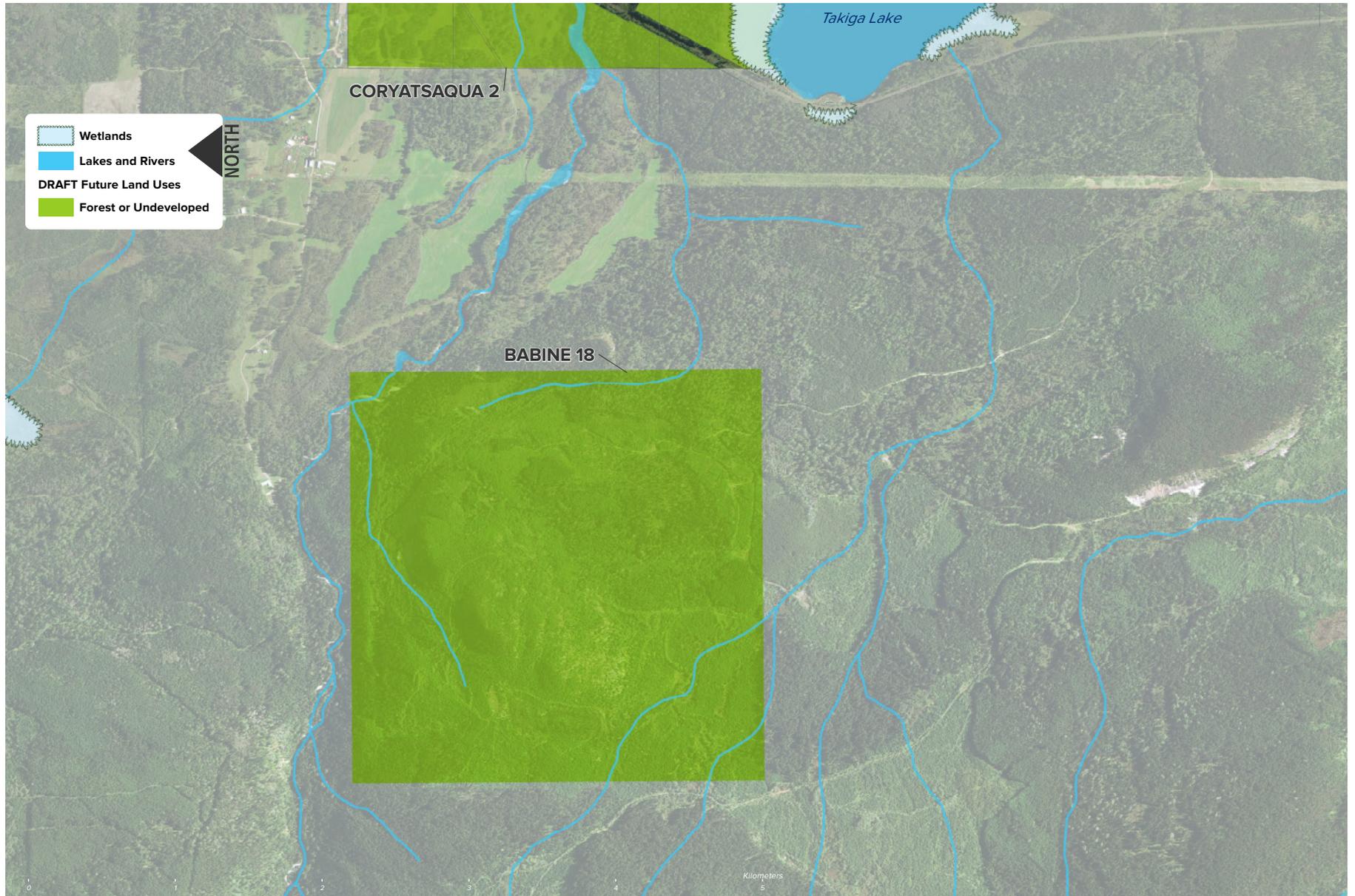
(C) Conditions

1. Mitigate and/or minimize impacts on protected/sensitive areas.
2. Roads and services must be adequate for proposed use
3. Maintenance and Operations only
4. Offices and services only (no commercial retail)

MAP: Witsset Land Use Classifications



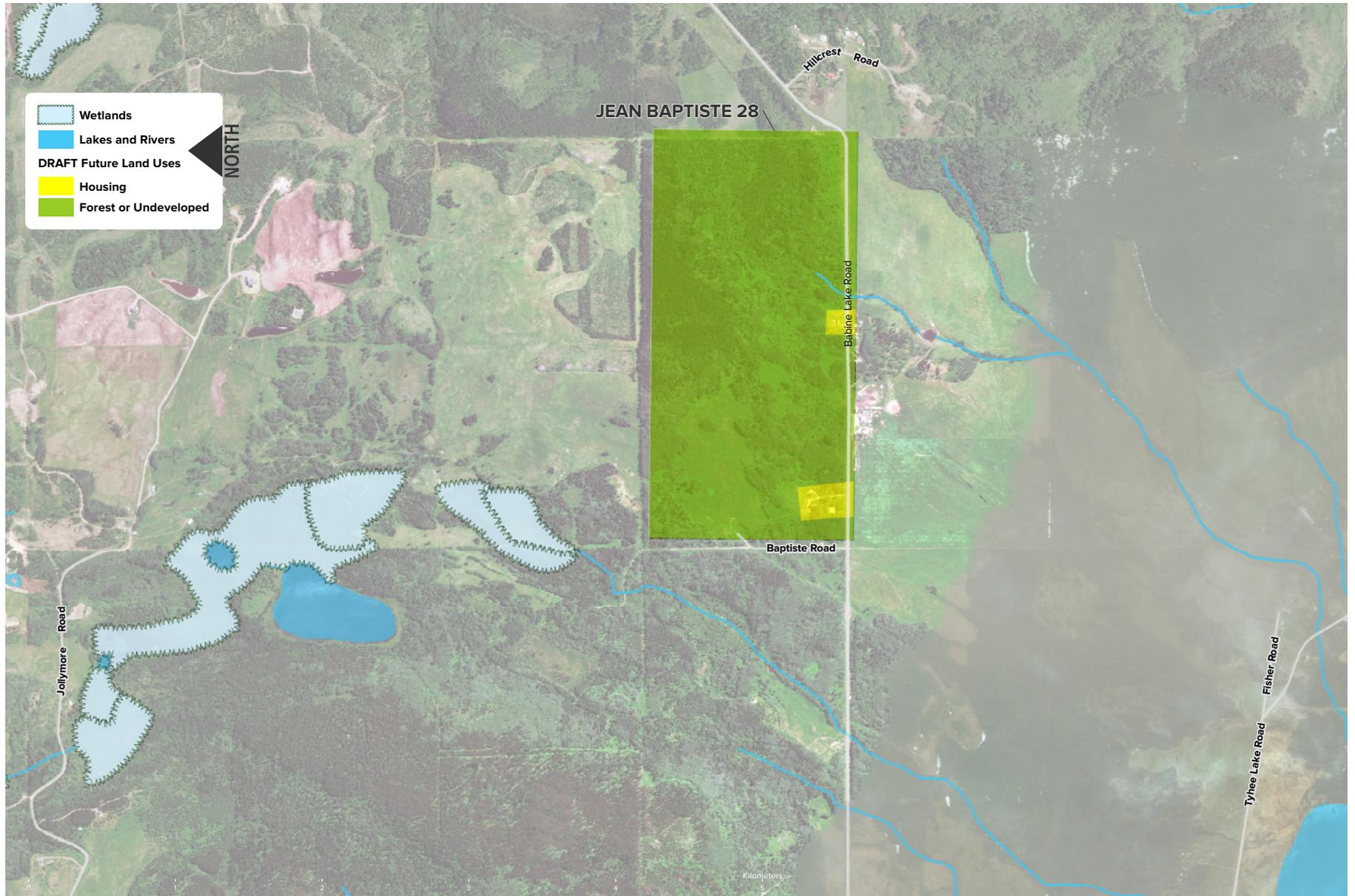
MAP: Babine 18 Land Use Classifications



MAP: Oschawwinna 3 Land Use Classifications



MAP: Jean Baptiste 28 Land Use Classifications





Land Use Development Guidelines

Land use development guidelines provide a clear set of standards for on-reserve development. The guidelines are designed to minimize the negative impacts associated with development, such as noise, damage to environmentally-sensitive areas, and dust),while maximizing community members' safety and wellbeing. The Community Land Use Plan provides four kinds of guidelines:

- Environmental Protection Guidelines
- Cultural Protection Guidelines
- New Housing and Renovation Guidelines
- Flood Hazard Protection Guidelines

Whether a new building is built independently by a member or a third-party business, or developed by Witset First Nation, **all new development on Witset reserve lands is subject to these guidelines and the development review process outlined in this plan.**

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION GUIDELINES

Environmental protection guidelines outline how we will protect our important ecological areas from development impacts. These guidelines apply to any kind of development anywhere within Witset lands. Protection measures include requirements for careful pre-development considerations and specific precautions regarding the method and location of any construction. We accept our role as stewards of our lands and waters and take the challenge very seriously.

ENVIRONMENTAL AREAS

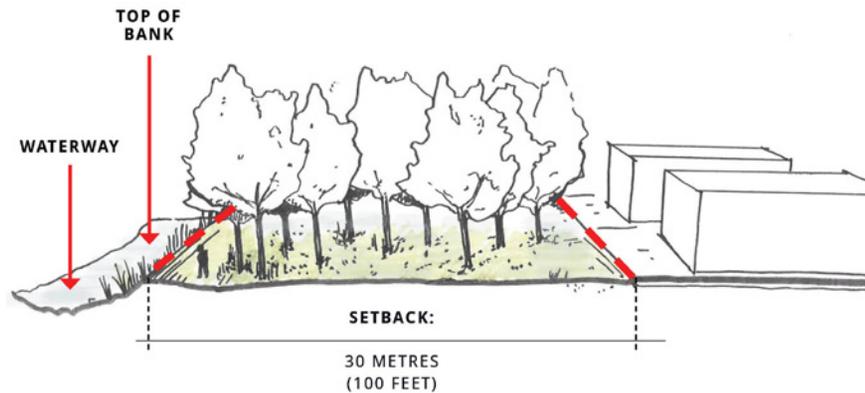
1. Important environmental areas include:
 - a. Any waterways or waterbodies and the forested areas adjacent to these features within 30 metres (100 feet);
 - b. Areas where the landscape or vegetation provides habitat for important species, including raptor nesting sites, etc.; and
 - c. Areas that connect important habitats and provide natural movement corridors for animals.
2. On each site that may be developed, important environmental areas may include existing mature vegetation, soils, and topography which combine to contribute to the natural functioning of the landscape, especially with regard to soil erosion and drainage.
3. On each site that may be developed, environmental contaminants may exist that restrict specific land uses and/or require mitigation prior to development.

SITE PLANNING AND DESIGN

4. **Mapping.** Pre-planning for development should include site investigations for environmentally sensitive areas. The extent of any environmentally sensitive area should be investigated, mapped, and included in the site plans and construction documents for any site development project.

5. **Setbacks.** No clearing, tree removal, construction, or construction-related activities should occur within 30 metres (100 feet) from the top-of-bank of any waterways or waterbodies. Setback areas should be clearly indicated on all site planning and construction drawings. Structures such as trails or boardwalks for community use that are carefully designed and located to minimize disturbance may be located within these setbacks.

FIGURE: *Top-of-bank setback*

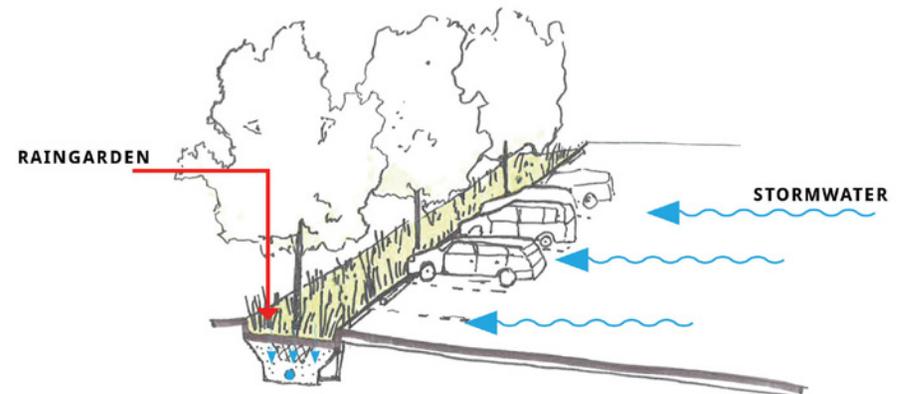


6. **Preservation of existing natural landscapes.** Beyond the 30 metre (100 feet) setbacks from waterways and waterbodies, the natural features of any landscape area should be protected by:
- Identifying and retaining mature trees and woody vegetation on building sites wherever and as much as possible; and
 - Designing and planning each site to require as little grading or excavation as possible.
7. **Runoff and protection of waterways.** Waterways should be protected from long-term hydrologic impacts by using drainage strategies that slow down,

absorb, and filter rainwater. Basic strategies should focus on landscape and soil-based management practices (rather than underground pipes that carry polluting sediments directly to nearby waterways). Strategies include:

- Minimizing paved or impervious areas such as parking lots and roads; and
- Using rain gardens, swales, ponds, and deep un-compacted soils to collect and filter rainwater, including drainage gardens at the edges of roads and parking lots.

FIGURE: *Using raingardens to collect and filter stormwater runoff*



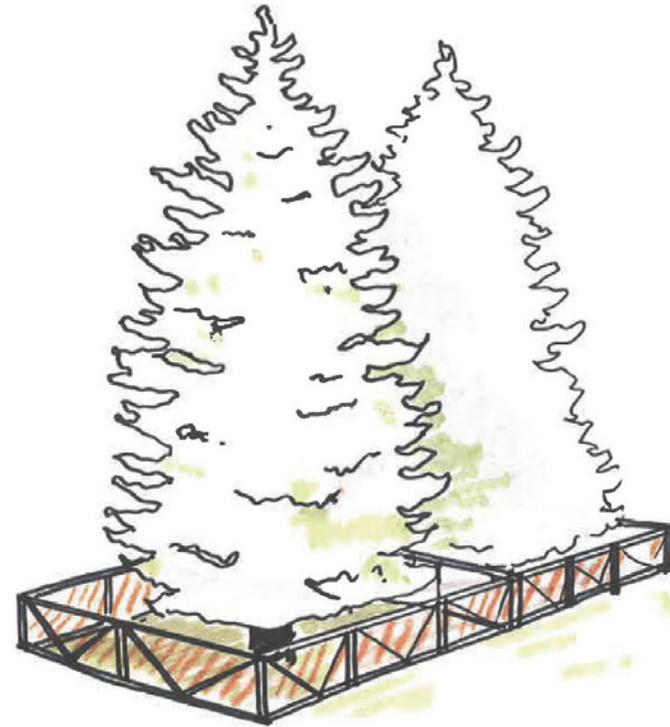
BUILDING DESIGN

8. **Healthy, green buildings.** New community facilities play a central role in promoting good development practices within our community. We will endeavor to build new community facilities that incorporate both our cultural values and the highest standards for energy efficiency, water conservation and occupant health. New community facilities will act as examples or role models for other developments to follow and establish clear expectations around what our best practices should be.

DURING CONSTRUCTION

9. **Setbacks.** During site development and construction, established setbacks from waterways and other protected areas should be indicated with high visibility flagging or fencing.
10. **Preservation of existing natural landscapes.** The natural features of any landscape area should be protected by:
 - a. Identifying and retaining mature trees and woody vegetation on building sites wherever and as much as possible;
 - b. Limiting soil compaction near those trees to the drip line of the tree canopy or the edge of the vegetation; and
 - c. Physically protecting trees and vegetation from damage and soil compaction with construction fencing placed at or outside the drip line of the canopy.
11. **Runoff and protection of waterways.** Water bodies and waterways should be protected from sedimentation and erosion by:
 - a. Installing sediment fencing between the construction site and down slope waterways prior to any other construction activity. This fencing should remain in place until all other construction is complete and bare soils have been completely revegetated.

FIGURE: *Identifying mature trees and tree protection fencing*



CULTURAL PROTECTION GUIDELINES

Cultural Protection Guidelines outline how we will protect our important cultural areas from development impacts. These guidelines apply to any kind of development anywhere within Witset lands, and have particular implications for the Widzin Kwah Canyon area. Protection measures include requirements for careful pre-development considerations and specific precautions regarding the method and location of any construction. We accept our role as stewards of our culture and history and take the challenge very seriously.

CULTURALLY SENSITIVE AREAS

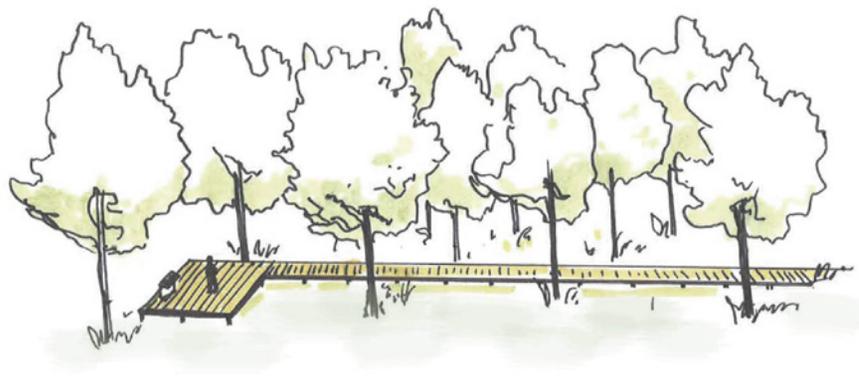
1. **Important cultural areas include:**
 - a. Registered and/or known archaeological sites;
 - b. Sites identified during pre-development site investigations;
 - c. Sites accidentally discovered during site construction; and
 - d. Sites identified as important traditional use, historic, or culturally significant areas through pre-planning input from members and Elders.

SITE PLANNING AND DESIGN

2. **Mapping.** Pre-planning for development should include site investigations for culturally sensitive areas. The extents of any culturally sensitive area should be investigated, mapped, and included in the site plans and construction documents for any site development project.
3. **Setbacks.** Appropriate setbacks for each area should be established based on the nature and use of each cultural area, including archeological sites, and traditional use or cultural practice areas. No clearing, tree removal, site grading, digging, storage, construction, or construction-related activities should occur within the established setback. Setbacks should be indicated in any site plans or construction documents.

4. **Exceptions to setbacks** may be made to allow for path construction, boardwalks, viewing platforms and shelters, or similar structures to control access to the site, where appropriate.

FIGURE: Boardwalk and viewing platform



BUILDING DESIGN

5. **Celebrate and express Witsuwit'en culture.** Developments should:
 - a. Include spaces for expressing and practicing our culture - such as places to display our art in parks and streets, spaces for celebrations and gatherings, and spaces for making traditional crafts or undertaking other cultural activities.
 - b. Include 'gateway' or similar signature features at the edge of the village to indicate the presence of our people and our culture.
 - c. Architecturally refer to our traditional building styles and practices.

DURING CONSTRUCTION

6. Protection of culturally sensitive areas should be maintained by indicating the boundaries of setback areas with high visibility flagging or fencing.

NEW HOUSING AND RENOVATION GUIDELINES

The goal for these guidelines is to make sure that houses are built in a safe and healthy way. These guidelines are in addition to the Cultural Protection Guidelines and Environmental Protection Guidelines, and they apply specifically to both new and existing residential building lots.

Should other new subdivision developments proceed, additional housing development guidelines could be prepared to ensure the highest quality development standards are maintained.

1. **Environmental, Cultural Protection, and Flood Hazard guidelines apply to residential areas.**
2. **Site development and landscaping.**
 - a. Existing vegetation and trees should be retained as much as possible.
 - b. Drainage and runoff from each property should be managed on site wherever possible, and not directed towards adjacent lots.
 - c. Impervious surfaces (all buildings and any pavement) should not exceed one-half (50%) of the site.
 - d. All structures should be set back from the front, rear, and side lot lines by at least 4.5 metres (15 feet). This does not include porches, ramps, and stairs.
 - e. Parking areas should be beside or behind the house on each lot where practical and possible.
 - f. For safety reasons, storage structures including garages should not block the visibility of the main house from the street in any way.

3. Buildings.

- a. A range of housing types may be considered, including single family detached houses, single family detached houses with suite(s), attached duplexes on a common lot or separated by a party wall on the lot line, tandem duplexes (front/back on lot), and tandem houses (front/back on lot) separated by a courtyard.
- b. Building heights may be 2 storeys above grade or Flood Construction Elevation with a finished attic under the roof.
- c. Maximum building coverage, including building foundations and any garage should not exceed 40% of lot.
- d. For carriage houses, the maximum size is equal to 10% of total parcel area (maximum of 50% parcel coverage for all buildings).
- e. Any carriage house development should respect the privacy of adjacent properties through appropriate placement of windows, location of decks, and other features that may infringe upon the privacy of a neighbouring member.

FLOOD HAZARD PROTECTION GUIDELINES

These guidelines should be referred to during the planning and development of any land or structures that fall within a Flood Hazard Area. Flood hazard areas are not specifically surveyed or delineated, and should be considered during development planning for any area that may be considered to be at risk.

1. Environmental and Cultural Protection guidelines apply to this area.

2. Mapping and setbacks

- a. The map indicates historical flood hazard areas and should be used for reference until a more accurate study is available. Any land that is known to flood seasonally or historically should be considered a potential flood hazard area.
- b. Development planning for any subdivision or major facility should include a flood hazard study.
- c. No structure should be constructed within 30 metres of the natural high-water boundary of the Bulkley River, as indicated in the Environmental Protection Guidelines. Boat-related facilities and structures may be exempted from this guideline.

3. Flood proofing

If it is considered to be in a flood hazard area:

- a. Any public building should either be floodproofed by elevation or demonstrate some other appropriate means of floodproofing. Outdoor structures such as bleachers or playgrounds are exempt from this guideline.
- b. Where landfill is used to raise the natural ground elevation, it should be adequately compacted and the face of the landfill slope should be adequately protected against erosion from flood

flows, wave action, ice or other flood debris. In addition, the fill must not adversely impact neighbouring properties by increasing the surface water elevation or directing flows toward those properties.

- c. Flood construction levels (FCLs) including appropriate freeboard should be established by a qualified engineer through an area study or on a site-by-site basis.
- d. The structure of the building up to the FCL should be built to withstand erosion and debris flow during flooding and be durable in the event of prolonged inundation.
- e. The following may be constructed below the FCL:
 - Storage, warehousing, and parking;
 - Utility infrastructure provided it is adequately protected against flood hazards;
- f. The following should be constructed above the established FCL:
 - living or working spaces for any structures and their supporting floor systems, including Witset First Nation Administrative uses; and
 - Building mechanical equipment that is susceptible to flood damage.

4. Existing lots and buildings

- a. Structures built prior to these guidelines, and lots being redeveloped, should consider flood protection options during any significant renovation or addition.

Land Use Plan Procedures



The Development Review Framework provides a general, step-by-step process for reviewing development projects on Witset lands. As illustrated, **Witset Council remains the final approving authority**, but their review and approval (or denial) is based on information provided on the development from Witset staff and, at such time the department is created, the Witset Lands Office. While this Land Use Plan refers to the Witset Lands Office, until this department becomes active, the Executive Director will be responsible for providing staff reports to Council based on information provided by relevant Witset departments including Housing, Public Works, and Economic Development.

As illustrated, some small-scale or minor applications may proceed based on preliminary review by the Witset Lands Office. These projects would include such things as most accessory buildings like a garage and would still be reported to Council during their regularly scheduled meetings. However, any accessory building that has the potential to pose risks to the community, such as a smokehouse would still need to be reviewed by Council.

An illustrated development review framework is provided on the following pages.

Notes on figure:

Note 1

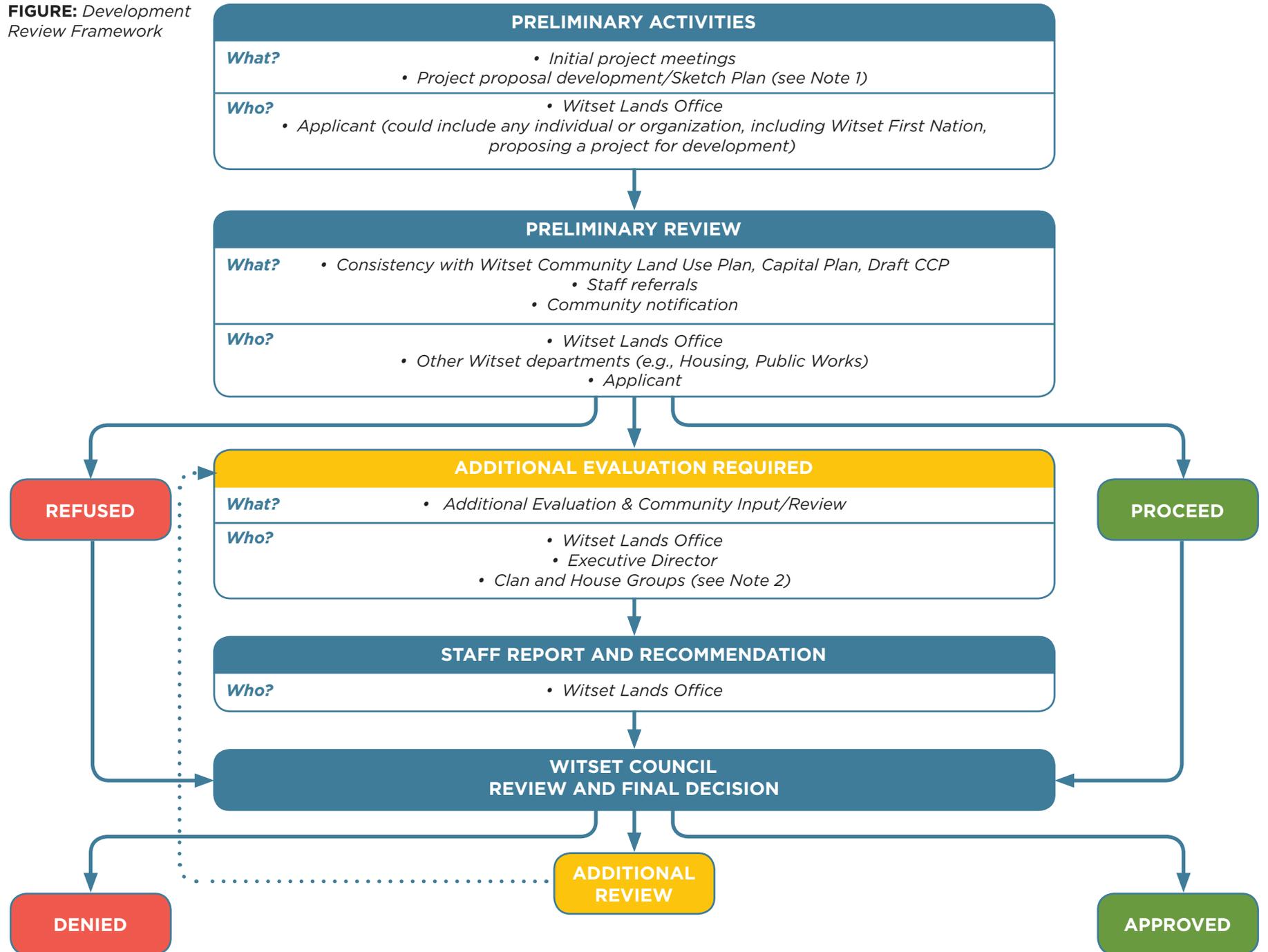
Sketch Plan should include:

- *A short description of the project – size and type of building (i.e., residential, business, administrative), business or administrative activities that will take place at the building and/or on site, number of people living and/or working in building and/or on site*
- *Sketch to include nearby features (e.g., nearby buildings, environmentally or culturally sensitive areas, roads, etc.).*

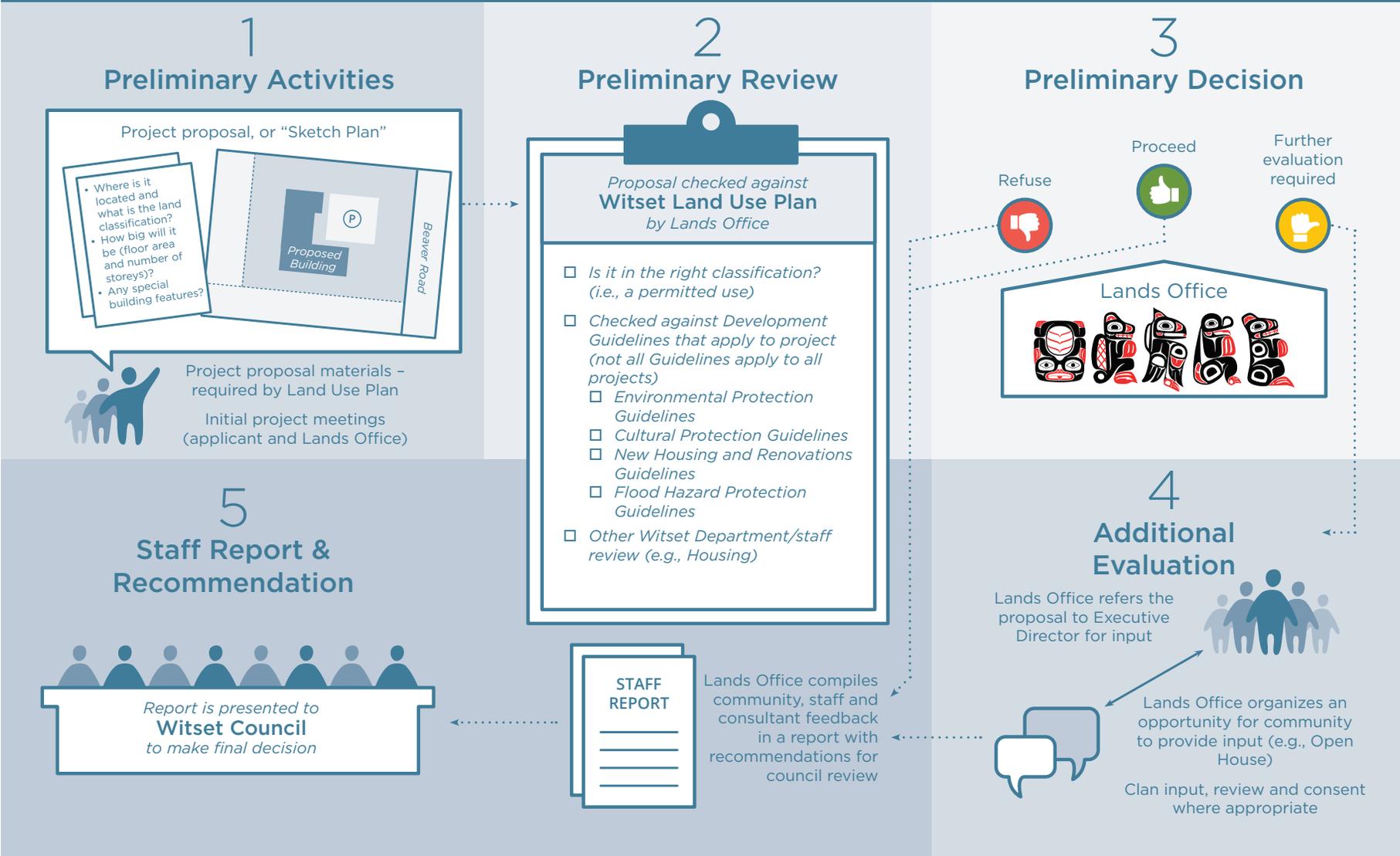
Note 2

Some larger development proposals that would change land use classifications or impact Witset cultural and/or natural resources may require input, review and consent from Clan leadership.

FIGURE: Development Review Framework



TAKE A WALK THROUGH THE WITSET DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS





WITSET First Nation



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