



COMMONWEALTH

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# A HERITAGE STRATEGY FOR THE CITY OF DAWSON CREEK

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SUBMITTED TO  
THE CITY OF DAWSON CREEK

MARCH 2007

COMMONWEALTH HISTORIC RESOURCE MANAGEMENT LIMITED

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## Executive Summary

*Heritage conservation is the management of change.*

*A heritage program preserves and communicates collective memory.*

*A heritage program fuels the local economy.*

*Heritage conservation contributes to community sustainability.*

*The heritage program will provide incentives to encourage voluntary protection of the most significant built heritage resources.*

*A heritage program will strengthen the tourism sector, which Dawson Creek has taken initiatives to develop.*

These are some of the many concepts that are discussed and explained in this Heritage Strategic Plan for Dawson Creek. The plan provides a strategic framework and an action plan that is intended to be implemented in the next five years. The Heritage Strategic Plan was produced for the City of Dawson Creek by Commonwealth Historic Resource Management Limited. The B.C. Heritage Branch, Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts, contributed to the cost of the project.

The heritage of Dawson Creek comprises many things – its people, their stories (i.e. the collective memory), its natural history, its built environment, and more. This plan addresses all these things, although it focuses on the built environment (buildings, structures, and cultural landscapes) and the collective memory (principally archives). New, innovative heritage management programs in municipalities across British Columbia have shown that development and conservation can be partners and not opponents. This plan adopts this progressive direction.

The plan respects and incorporates community values, which have been identified with a program of public consultation that included a visioning workshop, stakeholder interviews, and a public open house. The many people who have been consulted are identified in Appendixes D and E.

In British Columbia, heritage conservation is enabled by Provincial legislation – primarily the Local Government Act – and implemented with municipal bylaws. Dawson Creek has enacted two bylaws that mark the beginning of a heritage program: one to designate the N.A.R. Station as a municipal heritage site (1982) and one to establish a Community Heritage Commission (2005). The Official Community Plan does not yet make reference to heritage objectives or policies.

The management of heritage resources is currently the responsibility of several public and community organizations. Principal among them are the new Community Heritage Commission, Tourism Dawson Creek, and the South Peace Historical Society. The Historical Society created the N.A.R. Station Museum, the Walter Wright Pioneer Village, and the South Peace Historical Society Archives, and is the parent organization of the Peace Country Roots Group. Many other organizations contribute to heritage activity; they are identified in Sections 2.3 and 2.4.

The City boasts a number of significant heritage and cultural facilities. Many, however, will require attention over the next few years. The Archives and the Kiwanis Performing Arts Centre occupy buildings that are threatened with demolition. The museum and Pioneer Village would benefit from more robust staffing and management, as well as physical maintenance. The Art Gallery needs more space. The Grain Elevator should be developed as a heritage attraction. A decision will have to be made whether to develop the proposed Alaska Highway House.

Chapter 4 of this Heritage Strategic Plan proposes actions to address many of these issues. Section 4.1 proposes a vision statement for community heritage:

The City of Dawson Creek, in partnership with the broad Dawson Creek community, will develop and support a heritage program that is inclusive, accessible, and co-operative; which is co-ordinated with cultural activity; and which contributes to the education and enjoyment of residents and visitors.

Section 4.2 proposes nine strategies for Dawson Creek's heritage program. They are:

1. Acknowledge fully that the delivery of heritage services comprises a core municipal responsibility.
2. Develop the City's capacity to manage heritage resources. Rationalize the municipal heritage management infrastructure to include direct municipal participation and coordination, integrate heritage management into municipal operations, and avoid unnecessary overlaps and duplications.
3. Identify the City's built, natural, and intangible heritage resources.
4. Institute a program of preserving and protecting the most significant built heritage resources by using the protection tools enabled by Part 27 of the Local Government Act, including the provision of heritage incentives to encourage voluntary protection.
5. Invest in improving Dawson Creek's Heritage Facilities in order to make improvements to their physical plant, management, and visitor experience.
6. Increase public awareness and appreciation of Dawson Creek's tangible and intangible heritage with programs of education and interpretation.
7. Use heritage as an opportunity and a tool in community development.
8. Use heritage as an opportunity and a tool in economic development.
9. Ensure that heritage (and cultural) programs are inclusive and accessible to all segments of the Dawson Creek community.

Each strategy is accompanied by a number of specific actions. The Implementation Plan (Chapter 5) indicates which entity should be responsible for each action, the scale of the cost, its relative importance to the heritage program, and the timeline for implementation.

The consultants believe that the heritage program is practicable and affordable, meets municipal policy directives, will benefit community and economic development, is compatible with existing programs, and reflects community values. We therefore recommend that the City of Dawson Creek approve and implement the program at an early opportunity.

# 1. Introduction

## *1.1 The Heritage Strategic Plan*

The modern history of Dawson Creek began in 1912, when the federal government opened up land in the Peace River Block for agricultural settlement. The first settlers were the agricultural ‘pioneers’ who continue to be remembered with respect and reverence. The young community, which was centred near today’s Newby Park, grew slowly as a service centre for the farms nearby and in the hinterland. The region became more accessible when the Northern Alberta Railways (N.A.R.) reached – and terminated at – Dawson Creek in 1931. The town centre and many of the first-generation buildings moved from the old town to the area just south of the new N.A.R. Station. The Pacific Great Eastern Railway arrived here a generation later, connecting Dawson Creek to Prince George as well as Edmonton.<sup>1</sup>



The downtown core retains a number of commercial buildings erected at the time of the arrival of the N.A.R. Most have been altered. This is a view of 102nd Avenue. (Photo: H. Kalman)

A defining moment for Dawson Creek was its selection by the US Army as Mile 0 of the Alaska Highway. Construction of the highway in 1942 made Dawson Creek a boom town overnight. It also helped to diversify the area’s economy. Today’s city of about 12,500 remains a prosperous regional service centre in an economy that is fuelled to a large extent by the energy sector – hydroelectric development at Hudson’s Hope, coal at Tumbler Ridge, oil and gas throughout the region, and wind power likely to come soon.

The history of Dawson Creek before modern settlement also influenced life today. Aboriginal nomadic hunters frequented the Peace River area in pursuit of large mammals since the retreat of the glaciers long ago. The two major language groups in the region are the Athapaskan (spoken by the Beaver) and the Algonquian (spoken by the Cree). In time the Peace River became the boundary between their hunting territories. Descendants of both groups, particularly the Cree, remain.

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<sup>1</sup> Source for historical information: Gerry Clare, ‘A Very Brief History of the Peace River Area,’ Accessed at <http://www.calverley.ca/BRIEFHISTORY.html>, 11 September 2006; other information from the Calverley Collection at <http://www.caclverley.ca/>; various brochures and ephemera.

Canada's two great fur-trading enterprises, the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company, both reached the Peace River region in the eighteenth century to trade with the Aboriginal people. Many Métis came with the fur-traders and have settled in the area.

A number of other Europeans passed through the region in the second half of the nineteenth century. Among them were surveyors, geologists (including George Dawson, after whom the City is named), and botanists. These people spread the word about the agricultural potential of the area. The Peace was also visited by gold-seekers.



This garage on 15th Street, near the old town, may be a former Hudson's Bay Company stable. (Photo: H. Kalman)

Dawson Creek may be propelled by recent development and growth, but the community has also taken the time to reflect on its past. The South Peace Historical Society has been active for more than half a century, making residents and visitors aware of the rich history of the region. The Society's achievements include creating the N.A.R. Station Museum and the Walter Wright Pioneer Village, managing the Archives, and supporting the Peace Country Roots Group.

The City has a broad range of heritage resources, both built and natural. The built heritage has recently been showcased by Tourism Dawson Creek, with assistance from the Historical Society, with a *Self-Guided Walking Tour* that describes 40 places. The first step towards the management of heritage resources has come with the formation of a Community Heritage Commission, a Council-appointed board that is enabled by the heritage provisions of the *Local Government Act*.

The City now wants to further these initiatives with a Heritage Strategic Plan. This is a necessary step in developing heritage policy and a formal heritage program. The plan will provide a strategic framework and an action plan to be implemented over the next five years.

Commonwealth Historic Resource Management Limited has been retained by the City of Dawson Creek to prepare the Heritage Strategic Plan. The B.C. Heritage Branch, Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts, has generously contributed to the cost of the project.

## 1.2 Methodology

Several key events preceded the present plan. The BC Heritage Branch presented a ‘Let’s Get Organized’ workshop, facilitated by Sue Morhun, in January 2005. This inspired the creation of the Community Heritage Commission. Additional Provincially-sponsored encouragement and information came by way of a community meeting in 2006 led by Bob Parliament of the Heritage Branch.

The present Heritage Strategic Plan began in early January 2007. Hal Kalman, principal of Commonwealth’s Vancouver office, met with Council, facilitated a workshop, and began to interview stakeholders. An Interim Report was submitted in mid-February. It summarized the current situation, the workshop, and the interviews, presented material on comparable communities, and proposed a draft vision and strategies. A Draft Final Report, which modified the strategies and added actions, was presented to residents at a Public Open House on 8 March. Nearly 30 residents attended.

Comments from the open house, the Heritage Commission, and Council have led to a final round of revisions and additions to produce this, the Final Report.

## 1.3 The Benefits of Community Heritage

Heritage conservation is the management of change. Communities throughout British Columbia, as well as further afield, have come to recognize the many benefits of heritage conservation. Most important among the benefits are:

- *Community Pride.* A heritage program preserves and communicates collective memory. It inspires a strong sense of pride in a city’s history, its built environment, its institutions, and the people themselves. Civic pride and morale, in turn, contribute countless tangible and intangible benefits to the well-being of a community.
- *Community Development.* Heritage conservation and cultural development together enhance the quality of life and thereby make a community more attractive for long-time residents, newcomers, and visitors alike. Heritage programs can stimulate dialogue that is fundamental to people understanding where they have come from, who they are, how they relate to their neighbours, and where they are going – all of which contribute to producing a healthier and more cohesive community.
- *Economic Development.* A heritage program fuels the local economy in many ways. By enhancing the quality of life, it attracts a higher-paid and more educated work force. Heritage and cultural institutions and activities not only create direct employment, but countless studies have shown that they have economic impacts far beyond their direct benefits. And the preservation of historic buildings and the presence of cultural institutions and programming attract tourism, which is rapidly becoming the world’s – and British Columbia’s – leading industry, as the service sector overtakes the resource sector.
- *Cultural Development.* Cultural activity, which is allied with heritage, also contributes to community and economic development. It complements recreational tourism, which is already well developed

in Dawson Creek, with its many outdoor and organized sporting activities. Together, cultural and recreational tourism provide a vital, diversified, and lucrative tourism product.

- *Sustainability.* Heritage conservation contributes to community sustainability. Heritage awareness is an aspect of cultural development, and culture is one of the four ‘pillars’ of sustainability. (The others are environmental, social, and financial.) The conservation of old buildings contributes to environmental sustainability, in that it reduces the land fill and produces an environmental footprint that is smaller than new construction.

Maintaining a community’s strong heritage and cultural character provides measurable economic benefits. In a study of the economic impact of arts and heritage in Nelson, BC, it was shown that the city’s arts and heritage appeal leverages spending far greater than the value of goods and services provided by the supply side of the economy. The study (and many others) demonstrates that arts and heritage have real economic value.<sup>2</sup> Granted, Nelson may be a different kind of community from Dawson Creek, in that its heritage character is more pronounced and its economy is geared more directly to tourism. Nevertheless, Dawson Creek has taken initiatives to develop tourism, and a heritage program will strengthen it.

Conventional wisdom used to say that communities were faced with a choice between development and conservation. New, innovative heritage management programs in municipalities across British Columbia have shown that development and conservation can be partners, and not opponents. In this spirit, heritage conservation is recognized as the management of change – most certainly not as the prevention of change. This Heritage Strategic Plan provides constructive approaches to manage, preserve, and enhance built and natural heritage resources in Dawson Creek.

City Council recognizes the potential community and economic benefits of heritage management, and consequently therefore has commissioned the present Heritage Strategic Plan.



A view of N.A.R. Park, with the Station Museum, Grain Elevator, and Art Gallery. (Photo: H. Kalman)

2 Harold Kalman and Dennis McGuire, ‘Economic Impact of the Arts in Nelson, British Columbia,’ *Municipal World*, Vol. 114, No. 2, February 2004, pp. 11-14, 33.



## 2. The Current Situation

### 2.1 *The Heritage of Dawson Creek*

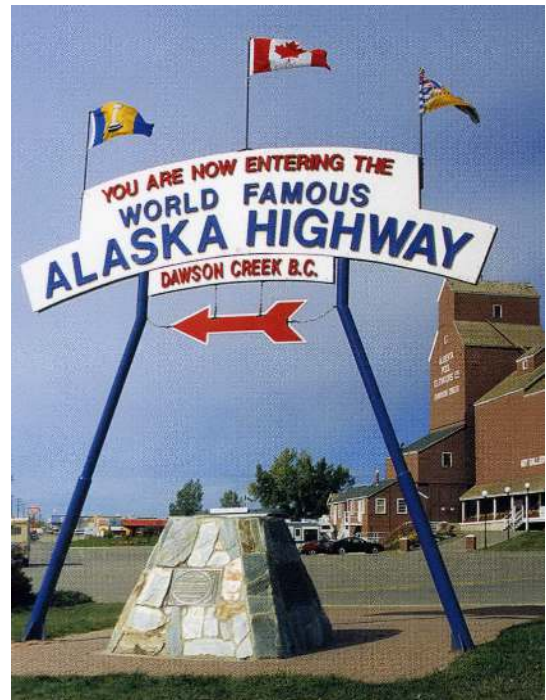
#### A Diversity of Heritage

A community's heritage comprises many things: its people, their stories, its natural history, its built environment, and more. The community made this clear at the visioning workshop held in January 2007 (see below, Appendixes B – D). When asked to identify the heritage of Dawson Creek, participants gave examples of built heritage (buildings, the railways); natural heritage (the creek, the valley); intangible heritage (local characters, ethnic history); and events (the arrival of the U.S. Army, the explosion). The workshop attendees also suggested that the City's cultural products and attractions form a part of its heritage, a point of view that was reinforced in some interviews that followed.

This same view of the diversity of heritage was expressed in the 'Let's Get Organized' workshop held in 2005. When participants were asked what they consider to be heritage in Dawson Creek, responses included the Alaska Highway, the Peace River ('the original highway'), agriculture, and the Art Gallery. That workshop was provided with a definition of heritage: 'That which we have inherited, value, believe in, and wish to keep.'

This contrasts with some other communities in British Columbia, whose perception of heritage focuses on the built environment. While buildings and cultural landscapes are certainly valued by the residents of Dawson Creek, they are not seen as the centre of attention. Indeed, some people expressed the view that the City's old buildings 'were slapped up' and 'are not worth preserving' – a view that the consultants do not share!

A tour of the built heritage of Dawson Creek revealed many buildings and cultural landscapes of considerable interest, with real heritage values of which the community-at-large seems to be mostly unaware.



N.A.R. Park, which is located at what used to be both the end of rail and the beginning of the Alaska Highway, contains the Art Gallery (in a former grain elevator) and the N.A.R. Station Museum. (Bartlett Scenic Postcards)

## 2.2 Legislative and Planning Context

In British Columbia, heritage conservation is enabled by Provincial legislation and implemented with municipal bylaws. The following are the principal statutes, plans, bylaws, agreements, and plans that address heritage in Dawson Creek:

### Province of British Columbia

- *Local Government Act*. Part 27 of this Provincial statute enables municipalities to form a Community Heritage Commission, create a Community Heritage Register, undertake a broad range of programs to manage the built heritage, and use a series of 'tools' and incentives to encourage property owners to work within a heritage program. (See Appendix C.) The Province supports the development of heritage programs financially; this pool of funding has been accessed for the present Heritage Strategic Plan.

### City of Dawson Creek

- *Vision Statement*. The City's new Vision Statement is discussed in Section 4.1.
- *Official Community Plan (Bylaw No. 3550, revised 2005)*. An Official Community Plan (OCP) is a broad general statement of the objectives and policy of the municipality with respect to land use and development. The Dawson Creek OCP does not make specific reference to heritage objectives or policies. This Heritage Strategic Plan will provide a framework for a heritage chapter for the OCP.
- *Bylaw No. 3792: A Bylaw to establish a Community Heritage Commission (2005)*. This Bylaw establishes a Community Heritage Commission, to consist of seven members appointed by Council: one Councillor, one member of the South Peace Historical Society, and five other members with 'an interest in heritage matters.' The purpose of the Commission is 'advising the Council on heritage matters and undertaking and providing support for such activities to benefit and provide for the advancement of heritage in the City.'
- *Bylaw No. 3827: A Bylaw to amend the City of Dawson Creek Community Heritage Commission Bylaw No. 3792, 2004 (2005)*. This bylaw expands the Commission to eleven members, with the same two mandated representatives.
- *Bylaw No. 2271: The City of Dawson Creek Municipal Heritage Site Bylaw (1982)*. This bylaw designates the N.A.R. Station as a Municipal Heritage Site.

A number of past agreements between the City and various organizations may be useful as potential models for future agreements undertaken in fulfilment of this Heritage Strategic Plan:

- *Agreement with respect to the Dawson Creek Public Library, c. 1972*. The community built the present library and gave it to the City on the condition that the City would provide sufficient funding for the ongoing operation of the Library. (We have not seen this agreement.)
- *Lease Agreement with the South Peace Historical Society, 24 November 1983*. The City owns the property on which the N.A.R. Station Museum stands and the Historical Society owns the building. There is a 99-year lease agreement with the Historical Society. The City assumes responsibility of the grounds and utilities, but is not responsible for building maintenance. In a separate lease (5 March 2005), the Historical Society leases a portion of the Station to the Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association for \$8,400 per annum for use as a Visitor Information Centre.

- *Lease Agreement with the South Peace Art Society, 27 October 2003.* The City leases the Grain Elevator Annex and Office to the Art Society for use as a public Art Gallery, for the term of five years (renewable). The City undertakes to pay all costs related to maintenance and services, and to provide administrative assistance if requested. The Art Society undertakes to operate an Art Gallery and retain a curator. This provision of a serviced building in return for a community group's provision of cultural services is generally regarded as a good agreement that benefits both parties and the community at large.
- *Lease Agreement between the South Peace Historical Society and the Mile 0 Rotary Park Society, 1 June 1992.* The Historical Society leases the historic buildings and entrance building at Walter Wright Pioneer Village to the Mile 0 Park Society at nominal rent. The Park Society undertakes to manage and maintain the facilities. A similar lease agreement between the City and the Park Society, 22 January 2004, sees the Park Society manage and maintain the City-owned non-historical buildings at the Village and Park.

A planning study currently in preparation has relevance to the present Heritage Strategic Plan:

- *Attractions Master Plan.* The consulting firm of AldrichPears Associates is completing an Attractions Master Plan for Dawson Creek. It proposes a new attraction (the Alaska Highway House) and also addresses all existing heritage attractions (e.g. Walter Wright Pioneer Village, the N.A.R. Station, and the Grain Elevator Annex / Art Gallery). Commonwealth is a subcontractor to AldrichPears in the project.

## Peace River Regional District

- *Bylaw No. 1105. A Bylaw to establish the extended service of Heritage Conservation within the Peace River Regional District (1995).* The bylaw establishes service related to heritage conservation, in particular a community heritage register. Four buildings have since been placed on the register:
  - o The Tomslake Post Office, Tomslake (1999)
  - o St. Matthias Church, Cecil Lake (2002)
  - o Rolla Hotel (Columbia Hotel) (2006)
  - o Kiskatinaw River Bridge (2006)



The curved Kiskatinaw Bridge, north of Dawson Creek, is an original Alaska Highway bridge. It has been designated by the Peace River Regional District. (Photo: H. Kalman)

- The Regional Directors have instructed staff to prepare a report addressing what would be involved in making heritage a full regional service, including the rural areas and the seven incorporated municipalities (of which Dawson Creek is one). Doing this would require a majority vote by the Directors. Precedents for region-wide cooperation are seen in operational procedures, such as the handling of solid waste.

## 2.3 Community Heritage Organizations

This section introduces a number of community organizations with an interest in heritage. We also include the principal cultural organizations, because it proposed later in this report to include cultural activity within the scope of this Heritage Strategic Plan.

### Community Heritage Commission

In March 2005, Dawson Creek City Council passed a bylaw establishing the Community Heritage Commission (see Section 2.2). This responded to a central recommendation of the 'Let's Get Organized' workshop, held earlier that year, to create a group whose mandate would include the conservation of existing heritage structures, as well as promoting more heritage initiatives within the community. The Commission consists of eleven members, including a councillor and a member of the South Peace Historical Society. At present, two representatives of the Peace River Regional District (one staff, one director) sit on the Commission as observers. Its mandate is:

The Commission is appointed for the purpose of advising the Council on heritage matters and undertaking and providing support for such activities to benefit and provide for the advancement of heritage in the City.

Among the Commission's first tasks have been the development of a 5-to-10-year strategic plan for heritage and the creation of a community heritage register of publicly-owned buildings. Now it has secured the funding to undertake the present Heritage Strategic Plan. This said, the Commission does not, at present, have very much on its plate and is looking to contribute more to the community.

### South Peace Historical Society

The South Peace Historical Society was formed in 1952 to collect, preserve, and display information related to the history of the Peace River area of British Columbia. When officially incorporated in 1959, the South Peace Historical Society's Constitution stated that its purposes were:

- To gather and preserve information, records, and objects of educational, historical and cultural value associated with the Peace River South area, but without limiting the generality of the foregoing.
- To establish a museum and archives for the purpose of preserving, recording, and exhibiting for public enjoyment such materials as defined above.
- To undertake such other activities which from time to time may be deemed appropriate by the Society.<sup>3</sup>

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3 Gerry Clare, President. *The South Peace Historical Society – July 2006.*

The Historical Society has four principal activities. It created and operates the:

- Walter Wright Pioneer Village
- N.A.R. Station Museum
- South Peace Historical Society Archives

and it is the parent organization of the

- Peace Country Roots Group



The Walter Wright Pioneer Village is operated by the South Peace Historical Society and is maintained by the Mile 0 Park Society. (Photo: H. Kalman)

The South Peace Historical Society finds it increasingly difficult to continue to manage the facilities. It can afford only the services of a part-time non-professional curator / programmer, who divides her limited time between the Village and the Museum. Neither facility is staffed by Society volunteers. The Society does not generate revenue through sales or programming. Its primary sources of revenue are donation boxes at the Museum and the Village, which raise about \$10,500 annually; lease payments from the Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association (Tourism Dawson Creek) for the use of the Station as a Visitor Information Centre (\$8,400); and an annual grant from the South Peace Arts Council (\$1,000). These three together provide \$19,900, about 90% of its total revenues. This leaves little for programming or physical improvements.

The Society has actively collected artifacts over the years. It estimates that the total number is between 5,000 and 10,000. With no official collections management policy in place, the Society runs the risk of acquiring and retaining inappropriate material, and thereby making unnecessary additions to the collection. The 'unofficial' collections policy is to take only items from the South Peace area, which are of no later date than the 1950s and are in good condition, with the additional provision that there is a place for them to be displayed. The collection is currently housed throughout the Walter Wright Pioneer Village and at the N.A.R. Station Museum. Another important issue is that the collections – the artifacts and the buildings – do not receive adequate conservation or maintenance care.

The Historical Society has long been Dawson Creek's heritage conscience and rescuer. It has been the primary manager of heritage resources for the South Peace for more than a half century. It wants to continue to contribute, but is challenged by the need to plan for succession. Its constitution provides that, upon the dissolution of the Society, all assets are transferred to the City of Dawson Creek.

## Peace Country Roots Group

As noted earlier, the Peace Country Roots Group and its operations fall under the South Peace Historical Society's organization. The Roots Group chose to become a branch of the Historical Society in 1989. The two groups share staff and have many of the same members. The Roots Group currently occupies a small building in N.A.R. Park, next to the Art Gallery. The Peace Country Roots Group is a committee of the South Peace Historical Society and serves the genealogical interests of members of the Historical Society and the general public, providing extensive resources for family histories. It provides access to the cemetery records and obituaries for the entire community. It also organizes Heritage Week.

## St. Emile Cemetery Committee

The Committee was formed in 2002 to manage St. Emile Cemetery, a burial ground on Highway 49, about 8 km from Dawson Creek. The cemetery was a part of the former St. Emile Mission, which was active from 1916 to 1931. Many area pioneers are buried there. The City bought the cemetery in 1983.

## Tourism Dawson Creek

Tourism Dawson Creek, a subsidiary of the Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association (NRAHTA), was established in 2001 to develop and diversify the tourism industry in Dawson Creek. Tourism Dawson Creek is the recognized Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) responsible for the marketing and promotion of Dawson Creek. It operates the Visitor Information Centre in the N.A.R. Station Museum and offers the Real McCoy Carriage Tours, a horse-drawn trolley, in the summer. Recognizing the high value of heritage to the City's tourism product, Tourism Dawson Creek has commissioned an Attractions Master Plan, currently being prepared by AldrichPears Associates.

## South Peace Art Society

The South Peace Art Society manages the Dawson Creek Art Gallery, which is owned by the City. This is a well-run and well respected organization. Its reuse of the Grain Elevator Annex in N.A.R. Park is widely admired and won the Heritage Canada Foundation Award of Merit in 1984. This heritage resource is the most iconic building in Dawson Creek and the subject of the City's logo. Membership consists of more than 100 practicing artists from Dawson Creek and the surrounding area. Workshops, art rentals, and other special events such as the monthly Culture Café and annual art auctions make this venue a central and vibrant resource to the culture of Dawson Creek. The Society retains a full-time professional curator and two permanent part-time staff. It recently completed a Cultural Scan of Dawson Creek.

Under its Mission Statement of *fostering the growth, awareness and appreciation of the visual arts in Dawson Creek and area*, the South Peace Art Society has a mandate to undertake the following activities:

1. To bring together persons who are actively engaged in creative arts and crafts and persons who are interested in promoting arts and crafts.
2. To arrange for exhibitions of original works of art by the members of the society, either at the seat of the society or in other centres.

3. To promote the showing of works of art by similar groups or individuals and public art institutions.
4. To arrange for its members and interested persons courses and workshops and generally to supply its members with information regarding the evolution and trends in art.
5. To operate the Dawson Creek Art Gallery and by doing so to increase the appreciation of the visual arts by the general public.

## South Peace Community Arts Council

The Arts Council operates as an umbrella group for all other culture- and heritage-related organizations, including those mentioned in this section. As such, it facilitates special project grants and promotions for those organizations as well as being a training organization and community development champion. It offers formal and informal training sessions on topics such as board development and professional development in general. It also coordinates two events: Spirit of BC Week and Arts Week.

There is one paid part-time coordinator, who was hired in the summer of 2006 and seems to be working very well. The South Peace Community Arts Council has its offices in NAR Park, next to the Roots Group and is currently in the process of completing its web site.

## 2.4 Other Relevant Community Organizations

A number of other community organizations have programs and interests that may overlap with heritage programs. The potential is particularly relevant with respect to Aboriginal organizations, education, volunteerism, and natural history. The linkages will be more fully developed in the next report of this Heritage Strategic Plan; for now we identify the groups.

### Dawson Creek Nawican Friendship Centre

A meeting place for the Aboriginal community and others, the Nawican Friendship Centre provides many resources for the community at large. It is rooted in a national network of Native Friendship Centres, whose mission is to *improve the quality of life for Aboriginal peoples in an urban environment by supporting self-determined activities which encourage equal access to, and participation in, Canadian Society; and which respect and strengthen the increasing emphasis on Aboriginal cultural distinctiveness.*

The BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC) is the British Columbia association, whose purpose is:

1. To promote the betterment of Aboriginal Friendship Centres in the Province of BC.
2. To establish and maintain communications between Aboriginal Friendship Centres and other Provincial Associations and the National Association of Friendship Centres.
3. To act as a unifying body for Aboriginal Friendship Centres. To provide an Association for Government Agencies to communicate through and obtain information from. This, in no way takes away a centre's right to negotiate directly with any agency.

4. To advise the Government, when requested by the collective centres, on how and what programs may assist Aboriginal Friendship Centres, in the development programs to better the lives of Aboriginal Native people in British Columbia.

The Nawican Friendship Centre is used, in part, to teach and promote Aboriginal culture and heritage. Lessons are currently provided in traditional activities such as dancing and drum-making. An opportunity exists to integrate the cultural heritage activities here with those elsewhere in Dawson Creek, and to encourage the Aboriginal and mainstream communities to interact through cultural activity.

## School District 59

School District 59 (Peace River South) serves the municipalities of Dawson Creek, Tumbler Ridge, Chetwynd, and surrounding rural areas. The school system undertakes some cultural programming – South Peace High School is known for its drama and music programs – but local history and heritage are not included in regular or extracurricular courses. Individual teachers may choose to work local history into a bigger teaching unit. Some lead school tours to the N.A.R. Museum and Pioner Village. In the past, people from the outlying farming communities would come into town to discuss agricultural heritage, but this may not be done any more. The school system provides an excellent opportunity for bringing up children with an awareness and knowledge of local heritage.

## Northern Lights College

The Dawson Creek Campus of Northern Lights College offers a wide variety of trades, technical, vocational and academic programs. These include instruction in visual arts and graphic arts, but not in history. Again, there is an opportunity to make local students more aware of history and heritage. The South Peace Historical Society is considering running an informal program of ‘history evenings’ at the College; activities such as these would be very worthwhile. The College might also be able to provide a source of part-time or co-operative student workers at local heritage facilities. Another opportunity is the potential for heritage organizations to work in co-operation with the carpentry / joinery program, to teach historic methods of building conservation.

## Dawson Creek Exhibition Association

The Exhibition Association has organized the Fall Fair for 85 years, the last fifty in Collins Park. The Fall Fair is an important reminder and presenter of Dawson Creek’s agricultural heritage.



The Chuckwagon Races are a favourite at the Fall Fair. (Photo: H. Kalman)



## Kiwanis Enterprise Centre

The Kiwanis Enterprise Centre acts as a support and resource centre whose mission is:

*To promote the entrepreneurial spirit through partnerships that provide successful and innovative business development for the benefit of the Peace Region.*

As such, it runs several programs that foster community development, the most significant one for our purposes being *Volunteer Dawson Creek*, a central agency that operates on four main principles:

1. Promoting and facilitating volunteerism in our community.
2. Providing resources on volunteerism.
3. Offering education and training on volunteerism issues.
4. Volunteer opportunity referrals.

The centre also trains volunteers in the basics of electronic learning and business planning.

For a community to prosper in the areas of culture and heritage, a strong and renewable volunteer base is always needed. The South Peace Historical Society is a registered potential user of the Volunteer Dawson Creek service. Volunteer Dawson Creek could participate in strengthening more local heritage and cultural organizations.

## Natural History Groups

The workshop clearly indicated that the community values natural heritage as an important component of heritage. A number of natural history and environmental conservation groups work in and around Dawson Creek. Most of these groups are associated with a certain area or park or exist to preserve and protect the natural beauty of Dawson Creek and surrounding areas. These groups are listed here with a brief description. None has been interviewed.

- *Ducks Unlimited* – A national organization, Ducks Unlimited Canada ‘conserves, restores and manages wetlands and associated habitats for North America’s waterfowl.’ Its dual objectives are to conserve wetlands and to sustain a source of waterfowl for hunters. The organization has 520 projects in BC, 59 in the Peace Region. Some 6 km southeast of Dawson Creek lies Bissette Marsh, where Ducks Unlimited is restoring water levels and creating nest covers – features that preceded agricultural settlement.
- *McQueen’s Slough Committee* – Also a wildlife and bird watching habitat, the area of McQueen’s Slough is promoted through Tourism Dawson Creek and Hello North, Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association.

- *South Peace Bird Atlas Society* – begun in 2001, the Society is collecting data within a certain study area south of the Peace River that will provide a ‘snapshot’ of bird distribution and population. It is intended to be of interest to a wide audience, including land managers, conservation planners, biologists, and birders.
- *South Peace Wilderness Society* – Conservation group where members report any sort of harmful use of nature.
- *Timberline Trail and Nature Club* – When organized more than thirty years ago, the club’s activities included hiking, canoeing, back-packing, cross-country skiing, mountain-climbing, and snowshoeing. Today, the long-time members are interested in less strenuous activities and see themselves as an environmental and ecological group.
- *Dawson Creek Watershed Society*. The Dawson Creek Watershed Society has a mandate to restore and sustain the watershed of the Dawson Creek as a healthy ecosystem, as well as promote stewardship of the watershed through education and public programs.



This building on 114th Avenue is one of many former U.S. Army buildings that were sold to private individuals and moved.  
(Photo: H. Kalman)

## 2.5 Heritage and Cultural Facilities

This section lists the principal heritage and cultural attractions and facilities in Dawson Creek. It does not list historic buildings and other heritage resources.

### N.A.R. Station Museum

The former Northern Alberta Railways station, built in 1931 with subsequent additions, was acquired by the South Peace Historical Society in 1978. The Historical Society opened its museum here in 1983. It is partly a community history museum, interpreting the human and natural history of the South Peace region; and partly a historic station museum, with the stationmaster's quarters upstairs furnished to the historical period. The Museum leases space to Tourism Dawson Creek, which operates a Visitor Information Centre here. The station was designated as a municipal heritage site in 1982. The 4-acre site, known as N.A.R. Park, is owned by the City of Dawson Creek. The building has not been well maintained and requires significant repairs to its foundations. The exhibits vary in quality, condition, and relevance to the history of the South Peace.



The N.A.R. Station Museum. (Photo: H. Kalman)

### Walter Wright Pioneer Village

Walter Wright Pioneer Village is a collection of historic buildings from the South Peace region, which, together with some recent buildings, are arranged in a village-like manner, mostly along the two sides of a main street. The buildings are filled with artifacts that are generally arranged to simulate the way they might have been furnished. Some large artifacts, mostly vehicles and farm machinery, are located on the site. The Village was conceived, and many of its buildings and artifacts acquired, by Walter Wright (1915-1980). In 1969 the buildings were erected on a restricted City-owned site on Highway 2, near the present Multiplex. It officially opened in 1976 as the South Peace Pioneer Village and was renamed in 1981 to honour Wright. The Village was moved to its present location at the junction of the Alaska and Hart Highways in 1990-92, as part of the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the construction of the Alaska Highway. The present site is also City-owned land. Some new replica buildings and other structures have been added. The Village forms a part of Mile 0 Park, which also operates its own RV Park / Campground and Rotary Lake, an artificial lake formed in 1965. The village is open seasonally and attracts about 10,000 visitors a year.

The South Peace Historical Society owns the historic buildings that were moved to the Village and also the entrance building. The City of Dawson Creek owns the remainder of the non-historic buildings that were erected on the site. Under the terms of the lease agreement between the Historical Society and the Mile 0 Park Society (see Section 2.2), the Historical Society leases its buildings to the Mile 0 Park Society at nominal rent and the Mile 0 Park Society undertakes to manage and maintain the buildings and grounds. The Park Society also manages the City-owned buildings under a separate lease with the City. In actual practice, the Mile 0 Park Society staffs the entrance building and performs minimal maintenance, partly on the recommendation of the Historical Society. It uses its own funds, which are partly earned from the RV Park and partly provided

by the City. The Historical Society is responsible for interpretation and programming, but it offers little of either and provides no interpretive staff or volunteers. As a consequence, the Village offers only a fair visitor experience. The Society proposed a long-range plan in January 2004, but this has not been implemented. The Village will be addressed in the forthcoming Attractions Master Plan by AldrichPears Associates. Commonwealth's opinion is that from both an operational and a physical point of view, the Village is not sustainable under present conditions.

## South Peace Historical Society Archives

The Archives of the South Peace Historical Society is a small and successful community archival repository. It is a good facility with adequate space and archival-quality storage conditions and materials. Access to resources is provided to the public on a limited basis. This is an entirely volunteer-run organization, but due to the committed efforts of its two volunteer archivists it works very well. It occupies space in a City-owned building that is scheduled for demolition in the next few years. Therefore a new facility is needed.



The Reading Room (Photo: H. Kalman)

## Dawson Creek Art Gallery

The Dawson Creek Art Gallery occupies a former grain elevator annex in N.A.R. Park, immediately east of the Museum. It and the tall elevator were built in anticipation of the arrival of the railway, and were moved to its present location in 1982. The elevator is currently used partly as workshop space by the Gallery, although it is underused and provides an opportunity for a significant heritage interpretive facility. Two small offices also form a part of the site. One is used by the Gallery and the other by the Peace Country Roots Group. The Art Gallery is a widely admired facility that is professionally operated by the South Peace Art Society. Its success has led it to require more space. The Society and its lease / service agreement with the City of Dawson Creek are described earlier in this report.



The interior of the Art Gallery. A spiral ramp makes effective use of the former grain elevator annex. (Photo: H. Kalman)

## Kiwanis Performing Arts Centre

The Kiwanis Performing Arts Centre (KPAC) is operated by a non-profit society whose mandate is to enhance the performing arts and related cultural industries within the region. It occupies a former school in the northern part of the City; the school is leased to the KPAC but is scheduled for demolition in a few years. The facility contains a 215-seat auditorium and many classrooms. It offers private and group lessons in dance, music, choir, drama, band, and a wide variety of musical instruments. KPAC also houses the Kiwanis Community Band & Jazz Band, Kiwanis Kids Choir, DC Spinners & Weavers, and Quilters Guild. KPAC works closely with School District #59 to provide quality fine arts programming for regional students. As well as providing workshop, rehearsal, and studio space to a number of community groups and guilds, the Centre

also provides an on-going series of concerts and coffeehouses in its auditorium. It will soon require a new (or adapted) building. The re-use potential of the former Post Office is currently being investigated.

## Unchagah Hall

This 630-seat performing arts theatre is located in the local high school. The auditorium hosts numerous musical, dance, and drama presentations from both local and touring artists

## Proposed Alaska Highway House

The Dawson Creek Attractions Master Plan, currently in preparation and cited earlier in this report, is recommending the development of Alaska Highway House as a major interpretive centre. This facility is under discussion.

## Summary

Dawson Creek boasts a number of significant heritage and cultural facilities. Many, however, will require attention over the next few years. The Archives and KPAC are threatened with demolition and need new facilities. The Museum and Pioneer Village would benefit from more robust staffing and management and from physical maintenance. The Art Gallery needs more space. The Grain Elevator should be developed as a heritage attraction. A decision will have to be made over whether / where to develop Alaska Highway House. Chapter 4 of this heritage strategic plan proposes actions to address many of these issues.

## 2.6 Community Heritage Values

The workshop and the interviews revealed a number of community heritage values. The quotations in parentheses are cited from interviews and the workshop.

- Community heritage includes a broad range of heritage resources – tangible and intangible, built and natural – and relates to all periods of Dawson Creek’s development and all segments of its society. The built heritage (i.e., buildings and cultural landscapes) does not predominate. (“Heritage” does not mean only old buildings.)
- Heritage and culture are closely related, and both should be addressed in the Heritage Strategic Plan.
- Quality of life – which includes valuing culture and heritage – is becoming increasingly important, in part responding to current demographic change. (‘A decade ago people would do anything for business. Now there is more interest in the quality of life.’)
- Aboriginal heritage is often neglected. (‘We turn a blind eye to Aboriginal heritage.’)
- The City’s archives are important and should have a good permanent home.
- The various groups involved in heritage activities should cooperate closely.

- Heritage and tourism should work together, yet be separate. The two have many overlaps and also many differences in their objectives. ('There is still heritage here when the last tourist says good-bye.')
- The wider community should be made aware of its history and heritage. ('Inspire the community to respect and protect its heritage.')
- Heritage does not rank highly among the broad community's priorities. It is absent from the Official Community Plan and appears in the City's new vision statement only in the last of the Guiding Principles, with the statement that the City will engage in 'Celebrating arts, heritage and culture.'

This Heritage Strategic Plan will respect these community values.

### 3. Other Communities

This section describes three BC communities of similar scale and ambitions, with which to compare Dawson Creek (population about 12,500) and its heritage initiatives.

#### 3.1 Revelstoke, BC



Downtown Revelstoke



Revelstoke Museum and Archives

For a city with a small population (7,500), Revelstoke has a disproportionate number of offerings that are both heritage and culture related. Five museums, a playhouse and a visual arts centre serve this community well. Its many festivals, among them 5 major ones and one specifically history-focused make this a vibrant community for its citizens and visitors, especially during the summer months.

- 5 Museums: Revelstoke Museum and Archives, Revelstoke Railway Museum, BC Interior Forestry Museum, Firefighters Museum and the Nickelodeon Museum make up the heritage offerings for tourists and residents alike.
- The museums have formed a collective called the Revelstoke Museums Collective, which includes all of those above except the Firefighters Museum, and also the Visual Arts Centre. The groups do some joint marketing, and a future objective is to share professional expertise.
- Most of the community history is well documented and professionally managed by the Revelstoke Museum and Archives: *The Museum and Archives is a place where all are welcome to participate, to learn, to share, and to explore...*
- The yearly festivals Railway Days and Timber Days both celebrate the unique ties Revelstoke has to railway history and the forestry industry

- The city has no municipal heritage program as such, including no heritage commission or heritage register. It does allocate a yearly operating grant to the Revelstoke Museum and Archives to carry out its heritage activities as well as maintaining and owning the Museum's building, which is the former post office.
- The City's economic development commission recently completed a Cultural Strategy (by Commonwealth), which was adopted by Council in June 2006. This will enable greater cooperation and stronger management and marketing for local cultural organizations.
- The heritage of Revelstoke is one of its main selling features and a large part of its marketing of the community. Last year the Chamber of Commerce used a heritage-related tourism slogan – 'Moments in Time become a Century of History'. The downtown was revitalized in the 1980s, restoring and renovating many of the heritage buildings on the City's main streets.

### 3.2 Quesnel, BC



Hudson's Bay Company store



Quesnel & District Museum

Quesnel (population 10,000), in Cariboo Regional District, is in the early stages of developing a formal heritage program. The City commissioned a Heritage Strategic Plan in 2004-05 (by Commonwealth). Before then, the City administered and funded the Quesnel and District Museum and Archives, conserved a handful of historic structures, maintained a heritage-themed Riverfront Trail, and was placing plaques on selected historic buildings.

Since the completion of the Heritage Strategic Plan, the Museum Commission has been expanded to become a Museum and Heritage Commission (a community heritage commission under the provisions of the *Local Government Act*), has retained a Museum and Heritage Manager, and is currently developing a heritage register and planning an enlarged or new museum. The community has recognized the economic benefits of promoting its heritage. For example, Quesnel has been designated an overnight stop on the new excursion train from North Vancouver to Prince George, and is preparing heritage excursions for visitors. It also hopes to take advantage of its location at the entrance of the road to Historic Barkerville.

The Cariboo Regional District has just initiated a study that will lead to its having a heritage program for the rural areas, including Quesnel Fringe. It is not intended at present to integrate the regional and municipal programs.



### 3.3 Terrace, BC

Terrace (population 12,000) falls within the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine. It currently acts as the regional business centre for the area. Terrace was once the site of a Tsimshian Village. The Kitsumkalum Tribe (one of 14 Tsimshian tribes) is the main Aboriginal group, with a large presence in Terrace. With fur trading and gold prospecting in its history, Terrace remained primarily a sawmill town until the 1950s, when it began to take on the service role for the region.

Terrace and the Regional District are just now initiating a heritage program:

- The Regional District has solicited proposals for a heritage registry implementation plan, which would develop terms of reference for the Regional District Heritage Advisory Commission; develop a process for evaluating and determining historic sites; cataloguing and tracking methods for these sites, and text for the OCP in relation to the heritage register.

The City has some heritage attractions, although their management is not coordinated:

- ‘Stroll along the Grand Trunk Pathway where interpretive panels tell the area's story. Or get a glimpse of pioneer life at Heritage Park Museum.’ These invitations are contained in the tourism website at [www.terracetourism.bc.ca](http://www.terracetourism.bc.ca).
- The large First Nations community is a part of the heritage of Terrace. The neighbouring communities of Kitsumkalum and Kitselas are participants in the many events associated with heritage in Terrace, such as Riverboat Days.
- Historic buildings include those that can be seen at the Heritage Park Museum, as well as the George Little House. Little was the owner of the first sawmill and the man credited with founding Terrace, which originally named Littleton, after him.



Heritage Park Museum



George Little House

### 3.4 Analysis

The three communities and Dawson Creek have many heritage resources in common. All have a museum and/or a heritage village, as well as a few recognized important heritage buildings or areas. Only Quesnel and Dawson Creek have formal heritage programs with community heritage commissions, and both are very new. None (other than the Peace River Regional District) has a heritage register, although Quesnel is preparing one at present. Of the four, only Revelstoke has undertaken a Cultural Strategy.

Although it has no formal heritage plan, Revelstoke has done a good job of integrating its built and intangible heritage into the very fabric and aesthetic of its downtown core. It also celebrates its heritage through its many museums and festivals. Heritage is addressed as a part of culture in the strategies for cultural development, and is included in Revelstoke's Vision for Culture: *Revelstoke will maintain and strengthen its position as a cultural community for both residents and visitors by celebrating its authentic culture and heritage.*

All these communities began their modern history with the resource industries, and their economies are shifting towards the service industries. For all, commemorating industrial history can be as much a part of heritage programming as conserving old buildings or holding festivals honouring historical people and events.

What is lacking in most of the communities, including Dawson Creek but perhaps excluding Revelstoke, is a general awareness among residents of the nature, significance, and economic potential of heritage. Articulating what is valued by residents, as we are doing with this Heritage Strategic Plan for Dawson Creek, is an important first step in determining goals and actions for the community.

## 4. A Community Heritage Program for Dawson Creek

### 4.1 Vision

#### The City's Vision Statement

The City of Dawson Creek adopted a new Vision Statement and Mission Statement in January 2007, the day before the heritage workshop.

The Vision Statement cites culture, but not heritage, among its objectives:

Dawson Creek will be a visionary community that works together for innovating social, cultural, economic and environmental vitality.

The Mission Statement reads:

The Corporate Mission of the City of Dawson Creek is to provide excellence in service and leadership that promotes a dynamic community within a healthy environment for all generations.

The Guiding Principles refer to heritage only briefly in the last of the seven principles, 'Lifestyle':

We will nurture engagement in a collective sense of belonging and contribution by ... celebrating arts, heritage and culture.

This principle provides an opportunity to develop and expand municipal heritage services.

#### A Vision for Heritage

Participants in the January 2007 heritage workshop declined to define a vision for heritage in Dawson Creek, because they preferred to start with one of the vision statements articulated in the 2005 workshop:

Through an all-inclusive and cooperative approach, inspire the wider community to contribute to the education, planning and preservation of past, present and future heritage resources.

We propose the following as a vision statement for community heritage:

The City of Dawson Creek, in partnership with the broad Dawson Creek community, will develop and support a heritage program that is inclusive, accessible, and co-operative; which is co-ordinated with cultural activity; and which contributes to the education and enjoyment of residents and visitors.

## 4.2 Proposed Heritage Strategies

This section proposes a series of high-level goals – we call them ‘strategies’ – for Dawson Creek’s heritage program. Each strategy is accompanied by a short rationale and a number of specific actions. The Implementation Plan (Chapter 5) indicates which entity (e.g., the City, a particular community organization, etc.) should be responsible for each action, the scale of the cost, its relative importance to the heritage program, and the timeline for implementation. It is intended that these strategies should be accomplished within a five-year horizon.

This report recommends that heritage management be coordinated with cultural activity, as an acknowledgement that many of the same people and organizations are involved in both, to avoid duplications, and to achieve economies of scale. For this reason, the strategies and actions refer to culture at the points where the two disciplines intersect. This report is not a cultural strategy, and so no details are provided with respect to cultural development.

### *Strategy 1:*

*Acknowledge fully that the delivery of heritage services comprises a core municipal responsibility.*

### *Actions:*

#### **1.1 Prepare a framework for the Official Community Plan statement and/or chapter on heritage.**

- The framework for the OCP revisions is included in the scope of work for the present heritage strategic plan and is provided in Appendix A.
- Dawson Creek’s heritage embraces the built, natural, and intangible heritage, and it overlaps with cultural activity. This should be reflected in the OCP amendments.

#### **1.2 Make the appropriate detailed additions and/or revisions to the OCP.**

- This will be undertaken by the City, either by staff or under contract.

### *Rationale:*

*The municipal responsibility for heritage was acknowledged by Council when it created a Community Heritage Commission and commissioned the present heritage strategic plan. Amending the Official Community Plan will complete the enabling of this service.*

*Strategy 2:*

*Develop the City's capacity to manage heritage resources. Rationalize the municipal heritage management infrastructure to include direct municipal participation and coordination, integrate heritage management into municipal operations, and avoid unnecessary overlaps and duplications.*

*Actions:*

- 2.1 Provide the Community Heritage Commission with more detailed terms of reference, to describe the range of their responsibilities.
- 2.2 Introduce management of the built heritage into the municipal planning process.
  - This activity will focus on the regulation of heritage property, and will be the responsibility of the Department of Development Services. See also Strategy 4.
  - The Community Heritage Commission will work closely with the department and will serve as the advisory liaison to City Council.
- 2.3 Initiate a dialogue between the City of Dawson Creek and the Peace River Regional District, as well as with other municipalities within the Regional District, to explore the potential to integrate their heritage services in order to avoid duplication and benefit from economies of scale.
  - The Regional District has enacted a heritage bylaw that establishes heritage conservation as a local government service and it has formed a community heritage register.
- 2.4 Work with the South Peace Historical Society to ensure that a succession plan is put in place as its members age, and that its facilities are adequately funded.
  - The Society manages the City's most important heritage attractions. Its members are finding it increasingly difficult to maintain staffing and funding levels.
  - See Actions 5.1 - 5.2 and Appendix B

*Rationale:*

*This strategy and the accompanying actions are intended to establish a cost-effective management infrastructure to coordinate heritage activity. It is proposed that the infrastructure have the capacity to address culture as well.*

### *Strategy 3:*

#### *Identify the City's built, natural, and intangible heritage resources.*

##### *Actions:*

- 3.1 Create an official Community Heritage Register and begin the process of nominating built heritage resources to the Register.**
- The Register is created by municipal bylaw.
  - Methods for nominating heritage resources to the Register have been established. Technical and financial assistance are available from the B.C. Heritage Branch.
  - Work creating the Register can be initiated by a consultant, volunteers, and/or municipal staff.
  - Some lists already exist, such as the walking tour brochure produced by Tourism Dawson Creek and the South Peace Historical Society.
  - The Register may include landscape features that were produced by people (i.e., cultural landscapes), but not natural landscapes. (See 3.2 below)
  - Nominated resources must be approved by Council at a public hearing to comply with the *Local Government Act*.
- 3.2 Create an inventory of significant natural resources and identify mechanisms for conserving the most important ones.**
- This work can be done by a consultant, volunteers with natural history societies, and/or municipal staff.
  - Some lists likely already exist and are known to the natural history societies.
  - The *Local Government Act* does not provide mechanisms for protecting significant natural resources.
- 3.3 Create an inventory of significant intangible heritage resources, including traditional use sites.**
- This will include sites of value to Aboriginal people. The inventory should be compiled in co-operation with local First Nations and Métis organizations.
  - The Provincial legislation enables protection of traditional use sites only if they were in place before 1846.

##### *Rationale:*

*It is necessary to know what resources exist before one can begin to manage them. Some significant efforts have already been made to identify heritage resources, but these are isolated and scattered.*

*Strategy 4:*

*Institute a program of preserving and protecting the most significant built heritage resources by using the protection tools enabled by Part 27 of the Local Government Act, including the provision of heritage incentives to encourage voluntary protection.*

*Actions:*

- 4.1 Convene a seminar, to be facilitated by the B.C. Heritage Branch and/or a private consultant, to familiarize the City and all interested parties in learning about the regulations, incentives, and other opportunities enabled by the legislation.
- 4.2 Protect publicly-owned properties on the Community Heritage Register through heritage designation.
  - One heritage resource - the N.A.R. Station - has been designated.
  - The City should lead by example.
- 4.3 Introduce a program of heritage incentives.
  - See Appendix C for a description of tools and incentives.
- 4.4 Seek opportunities to designate private properties listed on the Community Heritage Register.
  - Negotiate with owners to identify appropriate incentives or benefits in order to secure the owners' consent, commensurate with the City's policies and resources, in order to secure their agreement to designate their properties.

*Rationale:*

*The incentive program will offset potential hardships to property owners that may be caused by heritage protection. Both controls and incentives are enabled by the Local Government Act. Municipal staff says that they appear to be compatible with current planning and permitting procedures.*

*Strategy 5:*

*Invest in improving Dawson Creek's Heritage Facilities in order to make improvements to their physical plant, management, and visitor experience.*

*Actions:*

- 5.1 **The City and the South Peace Historical Society enter into an agreement with respect to the N.A.R. Station Museum, whereby the City takes ownership of the station building and pays a fee to the Historical Society for operating the Museum and retaining a professional Manager / Curator.**
  - The City will do the necessary repairs to the station building.
  - The proposed agreement is described in more detail in Appendix B.
- 5.2 **The City and the South Peace Historical Society enter into an agreement with respect to Walter Wright Pioneer Village, whereby the City takes ownership of the historic buildings at the Village and pays a fee to the Historical Society for operating the Village; and the professional Manager / Curator hired for the Museum manages the Village as well.**
  - The proposed agreement is described in more detail in Appendix B.
  - The new agreement will supersede the lease agreement between the South Peace Historical Society and the Mile 0 Park Society.
- 5.3 **Provide a permanent home for the Archives in a new or adapted building.**
  - The core collections will include the community archives currently managed by the South Peace Historical Society and retired City of Dawson Creek records.
  - Management will be by the City, with cooperation and support from the Historical Society.
  - Initiate a dialogue between the City of Dawson Creek and the Peace River Regional District, as well as with other municipalities within the Regional District, to explore the potential for this to be a regional archive to include local government, institutional, and private records.
  - The proposed arrangement is described in more detail in Appendix B.
- 5.4 **Consider the development of the Grain Elevator in N.A.R. Park as a heritage attraction that commemorates the agricultural history of the South Peace.**
- 5.5 **Make a timely decision on whether and where to develop the proposed Alaska Highway House.**
  - Tourism Dawson Creek has commissioned studies from AldrichPears Associates with respect to Alaska Highway House and a related Attractions Master Plan.
- 5.6 **Support the Peace River Regional District in the development and marketing of the Kiskatinaw Bridge and Old Alaska Highway as a heritage tourism attraction.**

*Rationale:*

*Section 2.5 of this report concludes that Dawson Creek boasts a number of significant heritage and cultural facilities, but many will require attention over the next few years. The reasons vary: some buildings are due for demolition, some are in need of maintenance, and others are only in the preliminary planning stage. In several cases the management structure and visitor experience are weak, and they too need improvement*



*Strategy 6:*

*Increase public awareness and appreciation of Dawson Creek's tangible and intangible heritage with programs of education and interpretation.*

*Actions:*

- 6.1 Encourage School District 59 and Northern Lights College to add formal and informal instruction in local history and heritage.**
  - Local schools and the College do not at present offer instruction in local history and offer little or no programming related to heritage. The most effective way to increase public awareness of heritage is to teach it in the schools.
  - Local heritage organizations and the Community Heritage Commission should become involved in outreach programs to the schools, in order to supplement new school programming in these subjects.
- 6.2 Use Dawson Creek's upcoming 50th anniversary (2008) as an opportunity to increase public awareness of community heritage.**
  - This will require immediate action. It may begin by the Community Heritage Commission working closely with City staff who have been assigned to planning the anniversary to identify opportunities for commemoration and celebration.
  - Local schools and the College may also be asked to propose anniversary programs; this would be a good way to mobilize their participation in heritage matters at an early date.
- 6.3 Use the City's web site to make heritage information available to the public.**
  - This information might include agendas and minutes of the Heritage Commission meetings, the Community Heritage Register (Action 3.1), the inventories of natural and intangible resources (Actions 3.2 and 3.3), and links to web sites of heritage organizations and information (this is already done).
- 6.4 Commemorate and communicate the value of the City's heritage resources with interpretive plaques and signs.**
- 6.5 Institute a program of Heritage Awards to recognize achievement in heritage activities.**
  - Recipients might be people, organizations, books, conserved buildings, or other deserving things.
- 6.6 Increase opportunities for the mainstream community to learn about Aboriginal heritage and culture, and vice versa.**
  - Encourage the Nawican Friendship Centre to promote its lessons in Aboriginal heritage among members of the mainstream community.
- 6.7 Continue to develop guided and self-guided tours of Dawson Creek's heritage and natural resources.**

***Rationale:***

*Many residents seem to be unaware of the importance of heritage to community and economic development, or are uninterested in participating in heritage programs. Many people will be increasingly affected by them, whether through programs of recognizing and protecting built and natural resource or by being asked to contribute additional tax revenues to heritage programs. It is important to help residents to recognize the benefits of these activities so that they will support and participate in them.*

***Strategy 7:***

***Use heritage as an opportunity and a tool in community development.***

***Actions:***

- 7.1 Include descriptions of the City's heritage in municipal promotional material.
- 7.2 Address issues of relationships among diverse cultures within the community.
- 7.3 Organize festivals that celebrate the City's heritage.
  - Dawson Creek already celebrates the Fall Fair and the 10-day-long South Peace Arts Festival. Perhaps a heritage festival can be organized as a sister event.

***Rationale:***

*Conserving heritage resources and community participation in heritage programs contribute to enhancing the quality of life for residents and make the community more attractive for newcomers. Heritage activities also encourage interaction among different segments of society. These values are consistent with the City's mission to 'promote a dynamic community within a healthy environment for all generations.'*

*Strategy 8:**Use heritage as an opportunity and a tool in economic development.**Actions:*

- 8.1 Encourage Tourism Dawson Creek to continue to develop heritage-related tourism products.
- Heritage is already the principal focus of Tourism Dawson Creek.
- 8.2 Encourage the conservation of historic commercial buildings as a key aspect of the revitalization of the downtown core.
- A downtown revitalization scheme is currently underway, focussing on streetscape improvements. This should be accompanied by an initiative to encourage the rehabilitation of the authentic historic downtown buildings, returning them (where feasible) closer to their historical appearance.
  - The objective should be to create and maintain the authentic heritage ambiance of the downtown core.

*Rationale:*

*Heritage programming and preservation have a positive impact on the economy in a variety of ways. By enhancing the quality of life, they attract a more educated work force. The preservation of historic buildings generates tourism. Building rehabilitation is labour-intensive and pumps money into the local economy. An attractive downtown core draws more shoppers.*

*Strategy 9:**Ensure that heritage (and cultural) programs are inclusive and accessible to all segments of the Dawson Creek community.**Actions:*

- 9.1 Encourage effective and ongoing communication and collaboration between the City and Aboriginal groups with respect to heritage opportunities.
- Aboriginal heritage is often neglected, and little interaction on heritage and cultural matters occurs between Aboriginal residents and the mainstream population.
- 9.2 Ensure that promotion and marketing of heritage events target all segments of the local population.

*Rationale:*

*Interviews and observations made it evident that the majority of people who deliver and consume heritage services are middle-aged or older and of European extraction. It is important to reach out to youth and younger adults as well as to members of other ethnic groups.*

## 5. Implementation Plan

### 5.1 Action Plan

The table that follows provides a strategic guide for implementing the actions recommended in Section 4.2.

The table provides the following information for each action:

#### Importance

- The importance as a component of the City's developing a heritage program is indicated as being high, medium, or low (H, M, L)

#### Phase

- Recommendation as to whether the action should be introduced in Phase 1 or 2 of implementation. While no precise timeline is proposed, it is recommended that Phase 1 and 2 be achieved within the next 5 years, each taking 2 to 3 years. An action that has already begun and is ongoing is so indicated with an 'O'.

#### Responsibility

- This column identifies the entity that should be responsible for implementing the action. Most are the responsibility of the City, but some provide opportunities for other organizations.
- Abbreviations used:
  - o City           City: Department or staff to be determined by City
  - o DDS           City: Department of Development Services
  - o CHC           Community Heritage Commission
  - o TDC           Tourism Dawson Creek
  - o SPHS          South Peace Historical Society
  - o PRRD          Peace River Regional District

#### Resources

- This column indicates the scale of the financial resources required:
  - o \$: low or no cost
  - o \$\$: moderate cost
  - o \$\$\$ high cost

The Heritage Strategic Plan is ambitious and recommends many actions. Some are complex, others quite simple. The consultants believe that the heritage program is practicable and affordable, meets municipal policy directives, will benefit community and economic development, is compatible with existing programs, and reflects community values. We therefore recommend that the City of Dawson Creek approve and implement the heritage program at an early opportunity.

STRATEGY		ACTION		IMPORTANCE	PHASE	RESPONSIBILITY	RESOURCES
1	Acknowledge that delivery of heritage services comprises a core municipal responsibility	1.1	Prepare framework for OCP statement	H	1	Commonwealth	\$
		1.2	Make the appropriate additions / revisions to the OCP	H	1	DDS	\$
2	Develop the City's capacity to manage heritage resources	2.1	Provide CHC with detailed terms of referencen	H	1	City	\$
		2.2	Introduce management of the built heritage to the planning process	H	1	DDS	\$\$
		2.3	Explore potential to integrate heritage services with PRRD	L	2	City, PRRD	\$
		2.4	Help SPHS with a succession plan	M	1	City, CHC, SPHS	\$
3	Identify the City's built, natural, and intangible heritage resources	3.1	Create a Community Heritage Register	H	1	City, CHC	\$\$
		3.2	Create an inventory of natural resources	L	2	Community groups	\$
		3.3	Create and inventory of intangible heritage resources	L	2	SPHS?	\$
4	Initiate a program of preserving and protecting built heritage resources	4.1	Convene a seminar to familiarize City with regulations and incentives	H	1	City, BC Heritage Branch	\$
		4.2	Designate publicly-owned properties	H	1	City, DDS, CHC	\$
		4.3	Introduce heritage incentives	H	1	City, DDS	\$
		4.4	Designate private properties	H	2	City, DDS, CHC	\$
5	Invest in improving heritage facilities	5.1	City and SPHS enter into agreement re: N.A.R. Station Museum	H	1	City, SPHS	\$\$\$
		5.2	City and SPHS enter into agreement re: Walter Wright Pioneer Village	M	1	City, SPHS	\$\$\$
		5.3	Provide permanent home for the Archives	H	2	City, SPHS	\$\$\$
		5.4	Consider development of Grain Elevator	M	2	City, SPHS	\$\$\$
		5.5	Make decision re: Alaska Highway House	M	1	City, TDC	\$\$\$?
		5.6	Support PRRD with Kiskatinaw Bridge	L	2	City, PRRD	\$

STRATEGY		ACTION		IMPORTANCE	PHASE	RESPONSIBILITY	RESOURCES
6	Increase public awareness and appreciation of tangible and intangible heritage	6.1	Encourage SD59 and NL College to add instruction in local history and heritage	L	2	City, Schools	\$
		6.2	Use Dawson Creeks' 50th anniversary to increase awareness of heritage	M	1	City	\$\$?
		6.3	Use City web site for heritage information	M	0	City	\$
		6.4	Commemorate heritage with plaques	H	2	City, CHC	\$\$
		6.5	Institute program of heritage awards	H	1	CHC	\$
		6.6	Increase opportunities to learn about Aboriginal heritage	M	2	City, Community groups	\$
		6.7	Continue to develop guided tours	M	0	TDC, CHC, SPHS	\$
7	Use heritage as an opportunity for community development	7.1	Include heritage in municipal PR	M	1	City, TDC	\$
		7.2	Address relationships among cultures	M	2	City, Community groups	\$
		7.3	Organize festivals that celebrate heritage	H	0	City, Community groups	\$\$
8	Use heritage as an opportunity for economic development	8.1	Encourage TDC to develop heritage-related tourism products	H	0	TDC	\$\$\$
		8.2	Encourage conservation of historic buildings in Downtown revitalization	M	1	City, Property owners	\$ (for City)
9	Ensure that heritage programs are inclusive and accessible	9.1	Encourage communication between City and Aboriginal groups re: heritage	M	2	City, Community groups	\$
		9.2	Ensure that promotion and marketing target all segments of the population	M	2	City, TDC, CHC	\$

## APPENDIXES

*Appendix A. Framework for Official Community Plan Revisions*

[TEXT TO FOLLOW]



## *Appendix B. Proposed Management Plan for Dawson Creek's Heritage Attractions*

Commonwealth and AldrichPears Associates have done extensive consultation with representatives of Dawson Creek's heritage, cultural, and tourism organizations and with municipal officials in the course of their current planning assignments in the city (This appendix will also appear in AldrichPears Associates' Attractions Master Plan). A consensus has emerged. In light of this, both firms recommend the following management structure.

### **N.A.R. Station Museum**

- The South Peace Historical Society will transfer ownership of the station building to the City of Dawson Creek.
- The City will undertake the necessary repairs to the station building.
- The Community Heritage Commission will be required to comment on the plans and ensure that work follows good heritage conservation practice.
- The City and the Historical Society will enter into an agreement, similar in structure to the City's agreement with the Art Society, whereby the City pays the Historical Society a fee for operating the Museum and retaining a professional Manager / Curator. The City will undertake to pay for maintenance and services, and may provide administrative support. This agreement should also extend to Walter Wright Pioneer Village (see below).
- The Historical Society will retain ownership of the moveable artifacts. In the event of dissolution of the Society, ownership of the artifacts will be transferred to the City.
- The City will appoint two voting members to the Board of the Historical Society. This will allow the City a degree of oversight to the properties (Museum and Village) that it will own and maintain. It also addresses the need for succession planning, which is discussed in the report.
- Tourism Dawson Creek will appoint one voting member to the Board of the Historical Society. The improved Museum and Village will become significant tourism attractions. The addition to the Board will give the tourism industry a share of oversight and will further address board succession.
- The Historical Society will undertake to increase earned revenues and to pursue fundraising opportunities.
- The Historical Society will provide regular reporting to the City with agreed-upon deliverables (e.g., annual financial statements, annual operating plans, strategic plan, collections management policy)

### **Walter Wright Pioneer Village**

- The South Peace Historical Society will transfer ownership of the historic buildings and the entrance building to the City of Dawson Creek. (The City already owns the non-historical buildings, other than the entrance building.)

- The agreement between the City and the Historical Society described with the Museum will extend to the Village. The professional Manager / Curator retained by the Historical Society will be responsible for operating the Village as well as the Museum. The new board appointments will provide additional oversight and help with board succession.
- The Historical Society will be responsible for staffing the Village entrance building, and for all programs and interpretation in the Village.
- The City will take responsibility for maintenance and heritage stewardship of the buildings and grounds.
- Any changes to the buildings or grounds must be approved by the Historical Society and reviewed by the Community Heritage Commission.
- The Historical Society will retain ownership of the moveable artifacts. In the event of dissolution of the Society, ownership of the artifacts will be transferred to the City.
- The current lease agreement between the Historical Society and the Mile 0 Park Society will be terminated. The future management of Sudeten Hall should be negotiated at that time.
- The Historical Society will undertake to increase earned revenues and to pursue fundraising opportunities.
- The Historical Society will provide regular reporting to the City with agreed-upon deliverables (e.g., annual financial statements, annual operating plans, strategic plan, interpretation and program plan)

## Archives

- The City will provide a permanent home for the Archives in a new or adapted building.
  - o Ideally, this will be located in the new cultural district that is proposed in the Attractions Master Plan.
- Discussions will be held between the City and the Peace River Regional District, to investigate whether the Regional District might become involved with ownership and/or management.
- Overall management and direction will be the responsibility of the City (unless by Regional District), with the City (or Regional District) hiring a Manager and other staff as needed.
- The Historical Society may continue to maintain and expand the community archives, working in cooperation with the archives Manager.
- The initial collections will comprise the present South Peace Historical Society Archives (i.e. the community archives) and retired City of Dawson Creek records (currently all municipal records other than bylaws and Council minutes are destroyed after a period of time). If agreement can be reached with the Regional District and/or other municipalities in the region, their records will be held here as well.
  - o As an example of the opportunities, the Pouce Coupe Council recently approved destruction of its municipal records. The Administrator has agreed to retain them over the short term, pending discussions about a regional archive.

- Other public institutions and private records may also be deposited in the new archives over time; this could include, for example, the records of Northern Lights College and School District #59. It is presumed that such collections would be accompanied by either a cash endowment or an annual service fee.

## **Art Gallery / Grain Elevator Complex**

- The Dawson Creek Art Gallery will continue to be operated as at present.
- The City will work with the Art Gallery to meet its expansion needs in a manner consistent with the heritage values of N.A.R. Park and with any future site and attractions planning.
- Any proposed additions or alterations within N.A.R. Park will be reviewed by the Heritage Commission.
- The City will work with the Roots Group to find it long-term accommodation, preferably in the same building as the Archives.
- The City, Tourism Dawson Creek, the Historical Society, and the Art Gallery will work together to find a more intensive new heritage-based use for the Grain Elevator, perhaps as a facility that interprets the agricultural history of the South Peace.

## **Alaska Highway House**

- The City of Dawson Creek (Council, staff, and the Heritage Commission), Tourism Dawson Creek, and the Historical Society will work together to determine the manner of implementing the proposed Alaska Highway House.

## **Kiskatinaw Bridge**

- This heritage resource lies within the jurisdiction of the Peace River Regional District and is listed on the Regional District's heritage register.
- The Regional District, Tourism Dawson Creek, and NRAHTA will work together to investigate ways to interpret and market the bridge and the Old Alaska Highway more aggressively and in coordination with marketing other heritage attractions in Dawson Creek and the South Peace region.

## **Community Heritage Commission**

- The Heritage Commission will assert its mandate to advise City Council on all matters relating to the City's heritage.
- This includes, but is not restricted to, reviewing and making recommendations with respect to:
  - o The Heritage Strategic Plan
  - o The Attractions Master Plan
  - o Creating a community heritage register and a designation program

- o Management of publicly and privately owned heritage resources within the City that have been placed on the heritage register or designated
  - o Proposed alterations and additions to all municipally-owned heritage buildings and properties
  - o Promotion of heritage awareness and education. Some initiatives may include a program of installing interpretive plaques and/or panels and a heritage awards program
- The Commission will receive support from the City for administrative services, and for a program of upgrading the skills of its members.

## *Appendix C. The Provincial Legislative and Planning Frameworks*

### *C.1 The Legislative and Planning Framework*

The Province of British Columbia has managed a comprehensive heritage program since the enactment of the first *Heritage Conservation Act* in the 1970s, and these were revised significantly in 1994. Current heritage legislation is found in the present *Heritage Conservation Act* and, as it refers to municipalities, in Part 27 of the *Local Government Act*. The best guide to heritage management programs that apply to municipalities may be found in *Heritage Conservation: A Community Guide* (1995). The original book is out of print, but an up-to-date version is available on line at [http://www.cserv.gov.bc.ca/heritage\\_branch/conserv/intro.htm](http://www.cserv.gov.bc.ca/heritage_branch/conserv/intro.htm).

The provincial Heritage Branch advocates a strong planning basis for heritage conservation. It provides assistance to municipalities to undertake planning initiatives – such as by contributing to the present Heritage Strategic Plan. The Branch advocates a basic framework comprised of what it calls planning tools, support tools, and protection tools.

The heritage conservation legislation applies mostly to the built cultural heritage. It is relevant to landscape features only if they have cultural or historical value – in other words, if they are cultural landscapes. The conservation of natural landscapes, which is important to residents of Dawson Creek, must resort to planning and protection tools other than those provided for in the conservation legislation.

### **Planning Tools**

The two principal planning tools are:

- **Community Heritage Commission.** Dawson Creek has created a community heritage commission pursuant to the Legislation. Its mandate is to advise Council on heritage matters.
- **Community Heritage Register.** The Register is an official listing of properties identified by a local government as having heritage value or heritage character. Listing on the Register does not offer designation or protection to the properties, but it does enable the municipality to ‘flag’ the property in the event of a permit application and to withhold approvals and demolition permits; and listing allows a property to be eligible for planning incentive programs and for special provisions in the *B.C. Building Code Heritage Building Supplement*.

Other planning tools that the Province has enabled are:

- **Heritage Inspection.** The municipality may inspect a listed or registered property either to determine its value or as part of a determination of the need for protection.
- **Heritage Impact Assessment.** The Council may request a study of a protected property that is threatened by a proposal.

## Support Tools (Incentives)

The provincial legislation enables certain financial and non-financial incentives to support conservation:

- **Tax Exemptions.** The Council may exempt the owners of protected property from all or some of their property taxes for heritage purposes for a period of between one and ten years. Some municipalities, most notably Victoria, have used tax exemptions successfully. This is discussed below, in Section C.2.
- **Grants.** The municipality may give financial grants to property owners to encourage conservation. This is done in some municipalities, including Victoria.
- **Non-Monetary Incentives.** The municipality may provide various kinds of non-financial support to encourage conservation; this includes regulatory relaxations, additional density, and the allowance of special provisions in the *B.C. Building Code Heritage Building Supplement*. In addition, the municipality may provide support services, such as program coordination, assistance to a non-profit society, technical advice, public works projects, commemoration, and/or priority routing of heritage applications. These are potentially the most effective incentives.

## Protection Tools

The provincial legislation further defines and enables a wide range of tools intended to protect heritage property. These are:

- **Temporary Heritage Protection.** This creates mechanisms that allow protection of a property for a limited period of time. This may include withholding approvals and/or demolition permits, or granting temporary protection orders, bylaws, and control periods.
- **Heritage Conservation Covenant.** A covenant is a contractual agreement between a property owner and a local government or heritage organization, which is registered on the title of the property. It outlines the responsibilities of the covenanted parties with respect to the conservation of a natural or a built heritage property.
- **Heritage Revitalization Agreement (HRA).** A HRA is a formal agreement negotiated by a local government and the owner of a heritage property. It is a powerful tool that describes the duties, obligations, and benefits negotiated by both parties. An HRA generally addresses the conditions that apply to a property regarding conservation, maintenance, and use. It is approved by Council and registered on the title of the property, and may be amended only with the agreement of both parties and an amending bylaw.
- **Local Government Heritage Designation.** This provides long-term protection to a property by means of a designation bylaw. Changes to a designated property may be made only upon issuance of a heritage alteration permit.
- **Heritage Alteration Permit.** This permit, issued by the local government, allows certain changes to be made to protected property. It is usually issued when the municipality agrees that changes proposed by the property owner will not provide a loss to the heritage character of the property.

- **Local Government Compensation for Heritage Designation.** The legislation provides for compensation to be paid by a local government to the owner of a designated property where heritage designation is proved to cause a reduction in the market value of the property at the time of designation. Compensation may be monetary or it may take some other form, such as planning relaxations. The owner may choose to waive the right to compensation at the time of designation.
- **Heritage Conservation Area (HCA).** A HCA is a distinct district with special heritage value and/or heritage character, which is identified for heritage conservation purposes in the official community plan. It provides long-term protection to a distinctive area that contains heritage resources. The HCA usually includes a schedule that lists the protected properties and identifies their character-defining elements.
- **Heritage Site Maintenance Standards.** These standards establish minimum requirements for the care and maintenance of land and improvements that are either designated or are located within a heritage conservation area. The municipality may order a heritage inspection to verify that the standards are being met. Enforcement provisions include application by local government to the Supreme Court to order the property be brought up to the required standards.
- **Tree Protection.** A tree protection bylaw enables local government to protect and maintain trees that it identifies as having significance because of their heritage, landmark, or wildlife habitat value.
- **Reservation and Dedication of Heritage Property.** The local government may create a binding commitment to protect heritage property that it owns by reservation or dedication (they have subtle differences explained in the legislation). This provides long-term conservation protection to publicly owned property. It is a stronger form of protection than heritage designation.

In summary, the *Local Government Act* and the *Heritage Conservation Act* enable municipalities to use a broad range of tools to identify and protect heritage property, and to encourage property owners to accept – even embrace – protection. A number of these tools will be appropriate for heritage conservation in Dawson Creek. The next section shows how some of the tools have been used in other British Columbia municipalities.

## *C.2 Selected Programs in Other Municipalities*

A look at heritage management programs in some other BC municipalities helps to understand some of the ways to use the tools introduced in the previous section. This section is not intended to be at all comprehensive, but rather to illustrate some initiatives that may be applicable to Dawson Creek.

### **Victoria**

The City of Victoria has the most highly developed program of support tools in BC. Victoria provides a relevant parallel to Dawson Creek. Its residents take great pride in the way their community is today, and while they want to see change, they want that change to be closely managed. One area in which the two municipalities differ considerably is that Victoria has a strong tourism economy that comes to see the City's heritage, whereas Dawson Creek does only to a much lesser extent.

Victoria has a strong infrastructure for heritage management. Municipal staff include a heritage planner and a part-time assistant heritage planner. The Heritage Advisory Committee performs the duties of a community heritage commission. The community has a long established and respected advocacy group, the Hallmark Society; as well as a separate Victoria Historical Society.

The City's particular distinction is its high level of investment in heritage, in recognition of the positive impacts and benefits accruing from that investment. In 2002 Victoria (with a population of 74,000) spent \$524,000 on heritage, representing 0.52% of municipal expenditures and \$7.07 per capita. By contrast, Kelowna (population 96,000; see below), which has a moderately developed heritage program, spent \$59,000 on heritage, representing 0.11% of municipal expenditures and \$0.59 per capita.

Victoria has two arm's-length foundations that disburse municipal funds to support the conservation of heritage properties: the Victoria Heritage Foundation and the Victoria Civic Heritage Trust. Together they distributed about \$325,000 in 2002. Altogether the city has four grant and incentive programs:

- House Grants Program
- Building Incentive Program for Commercial and Institutional Buildings
- Tax Incentive Program for Downtown Heritage Buildings
- Design Assistance Grants

The City's investment in heritage conservation has yielded many tangible paybacks:

- The Building Incentive Program grants leverage \$18.12 in private investment for every \$1.00 in grant funds.
- More than \$28.4 million in private investment was committed to 59 commercial buildings through Building Incentive Program grants between 1989 and 2002.
- The Tax Incentive Program generated 98 new residential units downtown, stimulated \$31 million in private investment, and enabled seismic retrofit for 10 buildings between 1998 and 2002.
- The House Grants Program helped improve more than 250 houses and leveraged \$2.7 million in private investment between 1978 and 2002.
- The tax base is being raised through assessment increases attributable to investments in heritage.
- Council considers that heritage spending has improved the quality of life for Victorians.<sup>4</sup>

The ultimate beneficiaries have been the residents of Victoria, whose municipal environment is richer and more attractive as an outcome of these investment programs.

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<sup>4</sup> Commonwealth, *A Heritage Strategic Plan for the City of Victoria*, 2002, pp. 10-13.



## Vancouver

Vancouver's approach to heritage management is quite different from Victoria. Rather than giving grants to the owners of heritage property, it relies on a complex system of non-financial incentives. (The exceptions are Gastown, Chinatown, and Hastings Street, where new management plans have introduced grants and tax incentives as well as non-financial incentives.) The Vancouver conservation program is based on the principle of *quid pro quo*: a conserved and protected heritage property is an amenity that enhances the quality of life for all residents, and so the owner deserves a benefit in return for accepting protection. The incentive system also responds to the clause in the *Local Government Act* that states that a municipality may be required to compensate the owner of a designated property where heritage designation is proved to reduce the market value of the property (see Section 1.3, above). Vancouver's approach is to offer non-financial incentives in lieu of financial compensation, whereas Victoria offers grants and tax incentives.

The incentives – or 'tools' – in Vancouver heritage planners' 'toolkit' are intended to enable commercial property owners and developers to increase their revenues, and thereby offset any additional capital costs attributable to a conservation activity (i.e. the increment between conventional construction costs and the cost of conservation). Vancouver's tools include:

- Planning incentives, which include zoning relaxations – e.g. reducing front-, rear-, and side-yard setbacks, permitting land uses not scheduled in the zoning bylaw, permitting additional height and density – as well as subdivision relaxations, parking relaxations, and sign relaxations
- Transfer of density rights (TDR), enabling unrealized density / FSR (floor space ratio) to be transferred and sold at market value from the property being conserved to a destination property elsewhere
- Accelerated consideration (fast-tracking, also called the 'green door policy') for conservation-related development proposals

The incentives are twinned with protective measures, which include:

- Heritage designation
- Heritage revitalization agreements
- Heritage alteration permits
- Heritage inspections
- Impact assessments
- Temporary protection
- Withholding of approvals and permits
- Heritage control periods
- Heritage site maintenance standards

This trade-off – incentive for protection – is the core of the *quid pro quo*. A building must be listed on the Vancouver Heritage Register to be eligible for incentives, and the owner must accept protection at the end of the day. The incentive system is effective. Developers recognize the benefits and frequently apply to have their properties placed on the Vancouver Heritage Register so that they may participate in the heritage management program.

Vancouver also has a Private Property Tree Bylaw, which requires the retention or replacement in kind of mature trees affected by development. Outstanding trees and other landscape features are listed on the Vancouver Heritage Register.

## Kelowna

Kelowna has an active heritage management program, although it is not as fully developed as Victoria's or Vancouver's. Kelowna residents value the character of their neighbourhoods. Consequently Kelowna has relied on the designation of heritage conservation areas to a greater extent than the designation of individual properties. The City designated the Abbott Street and Marshall Street Heritage Conservation Areas in the 1990s. The objectives of the two are:

- Maintain the areas' single / two-family residential and historical character
- Promote the retention and restoration of existing heritage homes
- Encourage new development or additions to existing development in a manner that is compatible with the form and character of the existing neighbourhood context

The consensus is that management of these areas is effective, and the number of protected resources increases.

## Heritage Foundations

Many British Columbia municipalities have established heritage foundations as arm's-length organizations that provide funding and/or other programs to encourage the good conservation of heritage resources. Among the communities cited above, Victoria has the Victoria Heritage Foundation and the Victoria Civic Trust, Vancouver has the Vancouver Heritage Foundation, and Kelowna has the Kelowna Heritage Foundation. The source of their funds is both municipal allocations and public fundraising.

The Vancouver Heritage Foundation has a particularly strong program of fundraising, planned giving, and revenue-generating activities. At the end of 2003, the VHF's fund balance was \$391,000, in a year that saw cash flow of about \$175,000. The True Colours program (which helps homeowners paint their houses in authentic historical colours, in return for designation) and the annual Heritage House Tour are popular and successful programs. So too was the annual Heritage Fair, but this was discontinued after 2002, despite being profitable, because of the enormous volunteer effort required.

The former British Columbia Heritage Trust, a provincial agency that was abolished by the present BC Government, used to provide funds for conservation work across the province. The new Heritage Legacy Fund, a joint program of the Heritage Society of British Columbia and the Land Conservancy of British Columbia, is developing a program that will ultimately replace the Trust.

## Historic Places Initiative

The federal government, through Parks Canada, recently introduced the Historic Places Initiative (HPI), a program that encourages private property owners to practice good standards of heritage conservation. Since the federal government has no jurisdiction over private property – this is a provincial responsibility – it must rely on an incentive program. The long-term goal of HPI is to provide income tax credits to owners of listed heritage property whose improvements follow the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*. At present only a short-term grant program for commercial property has been instituted, the Commercial Heritage Property Incentive Fund, which offers up to \$1 million to tax-paying Canadian corporations.

To prepare for HPI, many municipalities are upgrading their heritage inventories and registers to qualify for the Canadian Register of Historic Places (CRHP), since properties must be on that register to qualify for HPI benefits. This requires writing a ‘Statement of Significance’ that follows a federal-provincial template. Many municipalities across British Columbia are placing their listed properties on the CRHP. Joining this initiative will be a consideration for Dawson Creek.

## Public Education and Awareness

Most municipalities with heritage programs support heritage education and awareness. The City of Victoria has published a series of do-it-yourself brochures; this parallels the community efforts of the North Shore Heritage Preservation Society. The City of Vancouver provides public information on heritage issues and conservation techniques, as well as distributing annual Heritage Awards (also done in West Vancouver) and undertaking a Heritage Plaque Program, which identifies municipally designated properties with a distinctive plaque that provides information and acknowledges the owners’ conservation efforts. The City of Quesnel, whose heritage program is in its infancy, places plaques on selected historic buildings and has also created and maintains two heritage trails that identify heritage sites along them.

## *Appendix D. People Consulted*

The following people have been interviewed for this report, some in person and some by telephone.

Lyle Braden, Director, Roots Group

Pauline Castleman, Volunteer Dawson Creek

Gerry Clare, President, South Peace Historical Society

Ellen Corea, Manager, Dawson Creek Art Gallery; and Director, South Peace Community Arts Council

Greg Dobrowolski, Director of Development Services / Aboriginal Liaison, City of Dawson Creek

Gary Fellows, Building Inspector, City of Dawson Creek

Anne Haycock, Chair, Roots Group

Wayne Hiebert, Director, Electoral Area D, Peace River Regional District

Evelyn Higen, Director, South Peace Historical Society

Calvin Kruk, Mayor, City of Dawson Creek

Debbie Kunz, Long-range Planner, Peace River Regional District

Marcheta Loeppky, Secretary, South Peace Historical Society; Director, Roots Group

Ryan MacIvor, Chair, Community Heritage Commission; and Tourism Development Coordinator, Tourism Dawson Creek

John Malcolm, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, City of Dawson Creek

April Moi, Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association

Sue Morhun, Manager, Community and Heritage Services, Township of Langley; and workshop consultant for BC Heritage Branch

Elaine Peterson, Council & Community Liaison, City of Dawson Creek

Ruth Portman, Dawson Creek Nawican Friendship Centre

Bud Powell, Councillor, City of Dawson Creek

Richard Powell, School Trustee, School District 59

Day Roberts, Vice President, South Peace Historical Society

Roxanne Rusin, Community Coordinator, South Peace Community Arts Council

Fran Schilds, Member, Community Heritage Commission

Ellen Schoen, Treasurer, South Peace Historical Society

Walter Schoen, Director, South Peace Historical Society

Ron Storie, Manager of Community Services, Peace River Regional District

Cliff Washington, Director, South Peace Historical Society and Roots Group

Lynn Washington, Director, Roots Group

## *Appendix E. Workshop Participants*

The following people participated in the Visioning Workshop held in January 2007. Some of these people have also been interviewed individually and are therefore listed in Appendix D as well.

Marilyn Belak, Councillor, City of Dawson Creek

Mike Bernier, Councillor, City of Dawson Creek

Ellen Corea, Manager, Dawson Creek Art Gallery

Giles Dudley, Community Heritage Commission

Paul Gevatkoff, Councillor, City of Dawson Creek

Wayne Hiebert, Director, Electoral Area D, Peace River Regional District

Bill Lawrence, Community Heritage Commission

Tanya Machula, Community Heritage Commission

Ryan MacIvor, Chair, Community Heritage Commission; and Tourism Development Coordinator, Tourism Dawson Creek

Joe Marion, Dawson Creek Nawican Friendship Centre

April Moi, Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association

Wayne Mould, Educator

Blaine Nicholson, ReMax Dawson Creek Realty

Connie Patterson, President, Dawson Creek Exhibition Association

Elaine Peterson, Council and Community Liaison, City of Dawson Creek

Bud Powell, Councillor, City of Dawson Creek

Fran Schilds, Community Heritage Commission

Susan Shepherd, Administrator, Dawson Creek and District Chamber of Commerce

Ron Storie, Manager of Community Services, Peace River Regional District

## *Appendix F. Workshop Agenda*

Dawson Creek Heritage Strategic Plan

Visioning Workshop

George Dawson Inn

January 9, 2007

8:00 am to 12:00 noon

Facilitator: Hal Kalman, Commonwealth Historic Resource Management Limited

### **AGENDA**

- 8:00 Introductions
- 8:15 The Heritage Strategic Plan
- 8:30 Community Values
- 9:30 Refreshment Break
- 9:45 'SWOT' Analysis
- 10:45 A Vision for Dawson City's Heritage Program
- 11:45 Conclusions

## *Appendix G. Workshop Proceedings*

Dawson Creek Heritage Strategy Visioning Workshop  
January 9<sup>th</sup> 2007, George Dawson Inn, 8am – Noon

1. What makes Dawson Creek SPECIAL?
  - Art Gallery (many people said)
  - Library
  - Dorthea Calverley Collection at the DC Public Library
  - Agricultural History (social/people based)
  - Pioneer Women (Attraction)
  - Beauty of DC – e.g., Canola Fields
  - City Hall
  - Fred Newby Park / Other Parks
  - The People
  - Wide Streets
  - Agricultural heritage / Grain Elevator / Fall Fair
  - Where Bandshell used to be
  - Dawson Creek Exhibition (1922)
  - Archaeology of the area
  - Energy heritage
  - The Canadian Horse
  - Territory of Beaver Indians/Aboriginal Heritage
  - Cemetery (St. Émile)
  
2. What are the EXPECTATIONS people have of this plan? Focus and Priorities for the Heritage Commission?
  - Emphasis on Women's contributions
  - Make Heritage Commission productive
  - How do we tale our history and get it where (so and so's) is?
  - More definition to heritage
  - Preserve heritage without spending a lot of money
  - Archives need to be preserved and used
  - Gather history in one place
  - Preserve family collection
  - Get library more involved in heritage
  - Direction(s) of heritage groups – pull together and focus
  - Make history accessible
  - Figure out how to identify heritage
  - Move Forward / Develop formula or manner to preserve heritage





- Strong middle-aged community; they came and they stayed
- Well-developed cultural community that was built by Volunteers
- Need to teach Youth to Volunteer

#### 7. WEAKNESSES:

- History of Spotty / Uncoordinated attempts at saving history
- Negativism
- Lack of Formal professional approach
- Volunteer burn-out
- Robust economy (also = strength) so would rather be paid than volunteer
- Disengagement of Youth
- Lack of community-wide awareness of heritage
- Spilt interests and loyalties – e.g. agriculture vs. US Army
- No overall plan in place for Heritage
- No coordination in ‘Ownership’ of heritage programs, etc.

#### 8. OPPORTUNITIES:

- Need coordinated approach to Heritage
- Bring different groups together, both professional coordinator and the physical space
- Training and Education
- Facilitate/Stick handle solutions to Council and the School District
- Find a common spirit that will excite people, often needs an outsider
- 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary could spark Heritage in the Community
- Timing – the robust economy can attract funds
- Retirees who have time – also need professional support to make volunteerism fulfilling
- Have a Volunteer Dawson Creek group – Struggling; Kiwanis Enterprise Centre
- Also have strong Church and Service groups
- Province has funding for Heritage programs
- Municipal / Rural infrastructure fund – Heritage, Tourism, Culture, Green, Recreation - \$250,000 or less
- Opportunity for Regional Plan
- Increasing Regional District / City interaction

#### 9. CONSTRAINTS:

- Lack of money – to do a program and buildings – to maintain and operate
- Lack of will – there are many ideas with little follow-through, some due to financial issues, others due to priorities and awareness
- Can Alaska Highway House be combined with other attractions?
- Competition among interest groups – no overall priorities and fragmentation within the groups
- Lack of Coordinator / Coordination
- Lack of Vision
- Lack of Leadership
- Lack of Coordinated Plan

#### 10. So what are our PRIORITIES?

- Professional Curatorial Management  
*Concerns:* Funding, Leadership, Commitment, Too big of a starting point?  
Timing for 2008
- Identify Vision – Plan – Council
- Move Forward
- Develop Heritage Register?  
*Concerns:* No funding for it; sufficient awareness?
- “Heritage” does not mean only old buildings!
- VISION – inspire the Community to respect and protect its heritage

#### ORGANIZATIONS AND FACILITIES:

- Council
- Heritage Commission
- Historical Society
- Art Gallery

#### A VISION FOR DAWSON CREEK

- Council adopted new Mission and Principles for Dawson Creek yesterday
- 2005 Workshop – Vision #1 – should be a starting point: ‘Through an all-inclusive and cooperative approach, inspire the wider community to contribute to the education, planning and preservation of past, present and future heritage resources.’
- Vision important, but Action + Implementation + Evaluation are key
- Workshop participants = Advisory Group for the Heritage Strategic Plan

#### PRIORITIES FOR HERITAGE AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

- The participants wrote three priorities for heritage and cultural development on index cards. The cards were placed on the wall and sorted under categories. The categories were:
  - Facilities
  - Funding
  - Education
  - Policies, Bylaws, and Regulations
  - Building Preservation
  - Exhibition
  - Communication and Coordination
  
- The consultant has consulted the index cards. They have influenced the values and the strategies proposed in this report, and will continue to influence the final product of the study.

## *Appendix H. The South Peace Historical Society's Priorities*

This section lists the priorities expressed by directors of the South Peace Historical Society in a meeting held on 9 January 2007 and in a separate interview with the President later that day. This 'wish list' is in the order in which the ideas were expressed, and were not subsequently weighted to determine which might be the higher priorities.

- Provide a proper long-term home for the Archives
- Identify heritage resources (i.e. create a community heritage register)
- Protect significant heritage resources
- Recognize 'what is history'
- Repair the N.A.R. Station Museum
- Maintain the buildings in Walter Wright Pioneer Village
- Achieve proper communication among the different agencies that participate in the management of the Walter Wright Pioneer Village
- Secure a permanent home for the Kiwanis Performing Arts Centre (perhaps in the old Post Office)
- Provide a long-term home for the Roots Group (this could be with the Archives)
- Provide work space for the Museum
- Build support for heritage into municipal planning initiatives
- Recognize heritage and tourism as separate activities

### *Appendix I. Project Team*

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Cheryl Wu, Production

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