



City of Mission

Rural Mission Strategy

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To be completed in final Rural Mission Strategy.

Draft for Public
Engagement

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Introduction

Introduction

Mission's rural communities are a defining part of who we are. From Stave Falls, Steelhead, and Silverdale to our other rural neighbourhoods, these communities provide stunning natural landscapes, strong community ties, and unique rural lifestyles.

The Rural Mission Strategy (RMS) is our plan to recognize, protect, and enhance these qualities as our city grows. Building on the new Official Community Plan (OCP), the RMS reflects what matters most to residents in rural areas and acknowledges that Mission's rural character contributes to the quality of life for all residents. The strategy ensures that growth is carefully managed, services are sustainable, and rural identity remains strong for future generations.

Responsibility for Rural Mission's unique identity is shared by all Mission residents, City Council, and Administration. The RMS seeks to identify key opportunities for all these actors to be stewards of Rural Mission in different ways. Successfully implemented, Rural Mission will continue to be a celebrated part of Mission's community fabric.

Background

When Mission's new Official Community Plan (OCP) was adopted in Spring 2025, Council and staff committed to addressing ongoing concerns about how City-wide goals would impact rural communities and their residents.

Leading up to the approval of the updated OCP, many conversations with residents throughout Rural Mission have helped to document their experiences, concerns, and priorities for future development outside the urban growth boundary.

- In 2018, Mission's previous Official Community Plan update engaged 480 residents to establish a vision and guiding principles for future development. Feedback highlighted the following priorities: preserving the character of Mission's rural areas, focusing growth in urban areas, and improving employment opportunities in the local area.
- A civic-led dialogue series in 2022, Community Conversations, engaged North Mission residents in discussions on transportation, economic opportunities, planning and development, outdoor spaces, civic pride and the environment.
- The most recent update to Mission's Official Community Plan engaged residents and youth from across the city, including Northern Mission, from April 2024 to March 2025.
- A specific Rural Mission OCP Open House was held in August 2024 to hear from residents and learn about their community concerns not just related to the OCP but more broadly as well.
- Engagement with the Stave Falls community has helped to co-develop a vision for Brackley Park while also underscoring community concerns and priorities more generally for how the area should develop over time.

In addition to the existing history of rural engagement, a public engagement campaign specific to the RMS was undertaken as part of developing this strategy.

RMS Purpose

The Rural Mission Strategy is a wide-ranging document, covering topics from road safety to land use regulation to municipal finance. Collectively, this document provides direction for Council, municipal administration, Rural Mission residents, and all who visit and enjoy Rural Mission by:

- Clarifying a sustainable level of service for rural communities;
- Providing financial mechanisms to achieve these outcomes;
- Identifying resident concerns and challenges of rural life, and seeking to address them as feasible; and
- Outlining actions and policies the City will undertake directly and through collaboration with other governments and organizations over the short, medium and long term.

A Strategic Framework for Rural Mission Identity

The RMS outlines the issues that matter most to rural Mission communities, and the structure of the RMS reflects this. All recommendations in the strategy are framed within the overarching theme of Rural Identity, defining Rural Identity as the cumulative impacts of:



This structure highlights that what makes Rural Mission unique is not any one individual feature, but rather many distinct components.

Engagement Summary

To be completed following Rural Mission Strategy engagement.

Official Community Plan Engagement

2018

Spring 2022

North Mission Community Conversations

Official Community Plan Phase 1

Apr -Jun 2024

Jun - Jul 2024

Official Community Plan Phase 2

Official Community Plan Rural Focus

Aug 2024

Oct - Nov 2024

Official Community Plan Phase 3

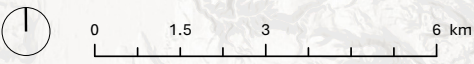
Official Community Plan Youth Engagement

Sep 2024 - Mar 2025

- Rural Strategy Boundary
- Urban Growth Boundary
- Municipal Boundary
- First Nations
- OCP Landuse Designations
 - Agriculture
 - Institutional
 - Municipal Forest
 - Neighbourhood Centre
 - Parks and Open Space
 - Protected Natural Assets
 - Rural
 - Rural Industrial
 - Rural Residential



Rural Mission Strategy
Strategy Boundary



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01 Landscape

1.1. Streamside Protection

The Challenge

Balancing the protection of streams, wetlands, and associated habitats with the realities of rural development in Mission is a persistent challenge. While development entitlements exist on paper, many lands are not ecologically suitable for development.

This is a problem because streams and wetlands can shift over time, making accurate delineation difficult. At the same time, limited municipal resources for monitoring and enforcement reduce effectiveness of streamside protection, and added regulation can increase costs and slow development approvals. Cumulatively; and without clear and consistent guidelines, uncertainty can lead to disputes, delays, or ecological harm. Mission's approach to streamside protection can create more certainty for developers while preserving ecological integrity and the rural character.

Within the existing regulatory framework Mission uses to administer streamside protection, more can be done to emphasize the options available to developers that can help speed up approvals while also increasing protected environmental lands.

Mission's Influence

The Provincial government is primarily responsible for streamside protection through the Streamside Protection Regulation of the Fish Protection Act. However, within this regulation, certain responsibilities, such as administering the protection of these areas, are delegated to municipalities. Further, the Local Government Act (LGA) Section 488(1)(a) authorizes municipalities to designate Development Permit Areas (DPAs) in their OCPs for the protection of the natural environment. This allows for local policies to exceed baseline federal and provincial protections through updated bylaws and DPAs to create clear, consistent streamside protection standards. The City cannot take over enforcement responsibilities from the Department of Fisheries and Ocean (DFO).

Proposed Solution

1. **Emphasize in development pre-applications the option under Riparian Areas Protection Regulation (RAPR) to simply maintain a 30-metre buffer to more quickly move through environmental approvals.**

The current development framework under Riparian Areas Protection Regulation (RAPR) already allows for a simple 30 metre buffer to be applied. However, this option is not promoted as a cost-saving measure to developers. In lieu of paying and waiting for the preparation and review of environmental studies, immediately committing the 30 metre buffer, while consuming more land, allows for much quicker timelines to approval.



1.2. Tree Protection

The Challenge

Tree loss in Rural Mission occurs multiple ways, and a coordinated approach to both is required. New development compromises native tree cover when clearing for construction outpaces efforts to preserve existing canopy. Established development also contributes to lost tree cover when trees are cleared under the Natural Environment Permit Areas (DPA) E.

Protecting and expanding tree cover is complicated by limited regulatory support, enforcement challenges on private property, and the need to balance environmental goals with wildfire risk, climate resilience, and community preferences.

This is a problem because: new development, particularly in Rural Mission, often results in significant tree loss, current regulation is relatively ineffective; enforcement of tree protection is difficult on private property; existing regulations are insufficient to expand tree canopy coverage; and further challenges include a lack of comprehensive data, fire risks, and FireSmart implementation.

Mission's Influence

The Local Government Act (LGA) Section 488(1)(a) authorizes municipalities to designate Development Permit Areas (DPAs) in their Official Community Plans for the protection of the natural environment. Using this authority, Mission can update and consolidate its local tree protection regulations specific to Rural Mission, establish minimum landscaped buffer requirements and percentages of undisturbed land preservation through zoning bylaw amendments, and integrate tree protection requirements directly into Development Permit Area guidelines.

Mission cannot override provincial forestry regulations on Crown or ALR lands, nor can it enforce tree protection on private property beyond what municipal bylaws legally allow.

The City also cannot control tree removal carried out as part of provincially mandated wildfire mitigation programs. These limitations underscore the need for collaboration with key partners, including the Province, the Fraser Valley Regional District, private landowners, and the development community, to ensure that tree management efforts are both enforceable and effective challenges include a lack of comprehensive data, fire risks, and FireSmart implementation.



Proposed Solutions

1. Amend the Rural and Rural Residential zones in the Zoning Bylaw to:
 - a. Include a requirement for minimum undistributed land buffers surrounding new residential developments; and
 - b. Require the preservation of a certain percentage of undisturbed lands on development sites.

Addressing new development, amending the Zoning Bylaw to reflect these changes will ensure that new development does not immediately clear entire parcels, instead being required to identify and preserve minimum amounts of native vegetation.

2. Amend Development Permit Area E1: Natural Environment to reduce the land disturbance allowance from 500 metres squared to 200 metres squared.

Addressing existing properties, this amendment brings Rural Mission in alignment with the land clearing trigger point for the Urban Growth Boundary. This balances the ability to clear lands in Rural Mission over time while not allowing significant, larger, single event clearings of parcels that can quickly degrade overall tree coverage.

3. Consider allocating a portion of annual municipal tree planting to Rural Mission, particularly identified in View Corridors.

In contrast to the first two recommendations that seek to slow down the degradation of tree canopy coverage, this recommendation promotes the planting of more trees to help support canopy coverage, particularly in areas most likely to be experienced by Mission residents.

Steps to Implementation

1. Incorporate outlined changes into the overall Land Clearing Management Program to ensure all recommended policy and regulation changes work cohesively to affect the intended outcomes.
2. Prepare draft Zoning Bylaw amendments comprehensively so all changes recommended in the RMS are brought forward for Council consideration at the same time.

1.3. Viewshed Corridors

The Challenge

Rural Mission's natural beauty is central to its identity. The experience of driving through the temperate rainforest or looking north into the mountains, or south across the Fraser Valley are all unique hallmarks of living in and exploring this area.

Maintaining these views in the face of new development, land clearing, and infrastructure growth requires careful planning and clear regulatory tools. Preserving view corridors is challenging because it is difficult to define which views warrant protection, which provide greatest public value, and how they can be safeguarded using the tools available to the City. Once identified, the ongoing maintenance of these viewsheds can also become even more complex as the area continues to develop.

Mission's Influence

Mission can develop and enforce policies to preserve and maintain identified view corridors on private and municipal lands through zoning regulations and development guidelines. The City can also coordinate with developers and landowners to encourage view-sensitive design and landscaping practices.

However, Mission cannot regulate land use or development on Crown lands or within the ALR, as these fall under provincial jurisdiction and associated regulations. Coordination with provincial agencies such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Forests will be necessary to address viewshed concerns in these areas.

Proposed Solutions

1. Educate the public around the Forestry Department's legislated obligation to maintain for visual standards when identifying cut blocks, including the preservation of viewsheds and linear corridors experienced by the public.

This recommendation is intended to help highlight the work that is already actively being undertaken in the Municipal Forest to ensure key view corridors are protected. Building awareness of this ongoing effort helps to reinforce why comprehensive view corridor protections are enacted so that the value of the Municipal Forest's contributions to Rural Mission's identity are not compromised.

2. Recognizing the need to support the Forestry Department's existing efforts to preserve viewshed corridors, adopt a zoning overlay or create a new Development Permit Area for all lands abutting the identified view corridors to protect and preserve the natural look and feel of travelling along these key corridors in Rural Mission for both residents and visitors alike. The overlay should:
 - a. Restrict development within the overlay;
 - b. Preserve all existing trees;
 - c. Require re-vegetation and tree-planting in disturbed areas of the overlay as part of any applications on impacted properties so that over time gaps in the corridor are rehabilitated.

This recommendation creates the additional viewshed corridor protections required for lands not in the Municipal Forest, ensuring comprehensive protection is maintained in the identified corridors. Mission should formalize the key view corridors and incorporate corresponding policies that guide development and land clearing within these corridors. Guidelines for development and land clearing within these corridors should emphasize minimizing visual impacts through setbacks, landscaping, and building design.

3. Periodically review the identified corridors and update these policies and initiatives as required.

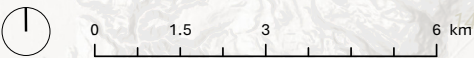
The City can establish a maintenance plan or general reporting timeline to monitor and preserve these viewsheds over time, ensuring ongoing protection amid growth.

Steps to Implementation

1. Adopt a zoning overlay or create a new Development Permit Area for all lands abutting the identified view corridors.
2. Co-develop any zoning overlay or Development Permit Area (DPA) with the City's Forestry department.

- Rural Strategy Boundary
- Rural Parcels
- Municipal Boundary
- Urban Growth Boundary
- Proposed View Corridors
- First Nations
- Municipal Forest
- Parks and Open Space

Key Policy Area 10
View Corridors



1.4. Dark Skies

The Challenge

Rural Mission's dark nighttime skies are a highly valued feature for both residents and visitors, contributing significantly to the area's rural character.

Preserving these naturally dark skies requires careful, long-term planning to ensure that future growth and development do not increase light pollution and diminish the ability to observe and enjoy the night sky. This commitment to protecting dark skies also presents an opportunity to support rural tourism focused on night sky viewing. With minimal development north of Stave Falls, views down Stave Lake remain effectively free from light pollution and are easily accessible, making this a unique public asset to safeguard.

The challenge lies in the ongoing growth of Rural Mission, which brings increased outdoor lighting and streetlight installations. Cumulatively, these changes contribute to skyglow and can degrade dark sky conditions. Additionally, light "bleed" from nearby urban areas within the urban growth boundary, especially those at similar elevations or along key corridors like the Lougheed Highway, can encroach into rural zones, further undermining dark sky preservation efforts. Enforcement is complicated by the need for monitoring and regulating lighting practices, which demands resources and the cooperation of property owners and developers.

Mission's Influence

Mission has clear authority under the Community Charter Act (Chapter 26, Section 8 (h,i,j,l)) to regulate outdoor lighting within its jurisdiction, including the power to enact bylaws to manage and reduce light pollution. The city can strengthen existing design guidelines to include lighting performance standards aimed at preserving dark skies, particularly in rural zones and buffer areas near the Urban Growth Boundary.

Mission can also leverage provincial standards such as those outlined in the Electrical and Traffic Engineering Manual to guide lighting design and minimize uplighting and skyglow.

While Mission can regulate lighting on private and municipal lands, it cannot control lighting practices on Crown lands, First Nation Reserves, or other areas beyond its jurisdiction.

Proposed Solutions

1. Explore pursuing a formal Dark Sky designation.

Acknowledging and gaining formal recognition of Mission's unique dark skies will help to build public awareness and appreciation of this communal asset.

2. Develop a bylaw and associated policies for controlling excess light pollution.
3. Strengthen existing design guidelines regulations to include development lighting performance requirements and to include dark sky buffers on the outer areas of the Urban Growth Boundary.

Both recommendations 2 and 3 will help protect Mission's dark skies for the long-term, creating the regulatory framework and tools necessary to ensure future development does not compromise Rural Mission's darkness. The City draw on proven best practices and model bylaws from organizations such as the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada.

4. Collaborate and advocate for tourism initiatives to support opportunities for dark skies-related eco-tourism.

Collaborating with future tourism operations can help position dark sky preservation as an eco-tourism opportunity, attracting visitors interested in night sky viewing.

Steps to Implementation

1. Review sample dark skies bylaws such as the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada's sample bylaws. Some City of Mission bylaws are already referenced as strong precedents for addressing light pollution by the Society.
2. Include dark skies initiatives in any future economic development strategy scope of work.
3. Include dark skies considerations in any future design guidelines review and update scope of work.

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02 Community

2.1. Community Gathering Spaces

The Challenge

Rural neighbourhood centres are the hubs of local community life, providing a central gathering place for residents.

The challenge is that not all Rural Mission residents have nearby access to community gathering spaces where they can meet their neighbours, socialize, and participate in community events.

Further, interest from residents in seeing more services and amenities in their communities is mixed, warranting further discussion on where, what, and how these areas should develop.

Ensuring these hubs exist and are supported is essential to preserving Rural Mission's community character and fostering social connection. However, without appropriate planning for these areas, including identifying deficiencies and proposing solutions, Mission risks unintentionally opening the door to the wrong kinds of development, or worse, stifling community stewardship and interest in these community gathering spaces.

Mission's Influence

Mission can significantly influence the future of rural neighbourhood centres by guiding land use planning, formally designating key locations as community gathering spaces, and engaging residents to determine the types of amenities and activities these spaces should offer.

Mission can also allocate funding, create dedicated budget streams for rural parks, and collaborate with partners such as Mission Public Schools to expand community access to existing facilities. Mission can ensure that its actions align with broader municipal and regional strategies, strengthening the case for investment and support. Despite this, certain factors remain outside of Mission's direct control. Decisions by external agencies—such as the Fraser Valley Regional District or the school board—may not always align with Mission's timelines or priorities. Level of community interest in using or supporting these gathering spaces is also outside of the City's control, requiring any proposed improvements or investments to community gathering places be co-developed with Rural Mission residents.

Lastly, external circumstances such as wildfires, flooding, or other environmental impacts can also shift focus and resources, affecting when and how rural gathering spaces are delivered.



Proposed Solutions

1. Formally identify the lands around the following locations as Rural Community Gathering Places:
 - a. Stave Falls Elementary
 - b. Steelhead Hall
 - c. Silverdale Hall

These existing community halls and school already serve a gathering function in Rural Mission, and are co-located with other institutional, park, or rural commercial uses. Leveraging these existing nodes allows the City to focus investment in established gathering places, while also not prioritizing new areas of focus that might be more controversial or less desirable to Rural Mission residents.

2. Add Rural Community Gathering Places as a distinct park classification in future updates to the Parks, Recreation, & Culture Master Plan.
3. Modify park specifications for rural areas so that land acquisition decisions reflect access to nature and gathering spaces that may not take the form of traditional urban parks.

Adding a new distinct designation for these gathering places in the Parks, Recreation, and Culture Master Plan will ensure that they are given special consideration for how improvements, investments, and activations in these locations should take place. This approach recognizes that a one-size-fits-all approach to parks, recreation, arts, and culture cannot be extended from the urban parts of the city to the rural parts.

4. Engage with Steelhead and Silverdale residents in the preparation of plans for a new park and range of potential land uses they would like to see in Community Gathering Places consistent with the Brackley Park visioning exercise in Stave Falls.

The Brackley Park design process set a strong standard for how comprehensive visioning for community gathering places should happen in Rural Mission.

5. Collaborate with Mission Public Schools to expand community access to school facilities after hours, with a focus on rural schools that often serve as key gathering and recreation spaces. Encourage consideration of alternative policies to support this use.

Rural schools are the cornerstones of social life and gathering spaces, and can also serve an important role as de facto rec centres in the absence of other civic facilities able to provide those services. Continue to build on the City's positive relationship with Mission Public Schools will allow these assets to be further leveraged.

6. Establish a dedicated funding stream to support development and maintenance of rural community park space.

A dedicated funding stream will help to ensure sustainable development and maintenance of rural community facilities and park space, preserving these social hubs for the long-term.

Steps to Implementation

1. Amend the OCP and Parks, Recreation, and Culture Plan to reflect the recommendations.
2. Ensure capital budgeting reflects the priorities and recommendations for Community Gathering Places over the long term.
3. Engage in dialogue with Mission Public Schools.

2.2. Visualizing Rural Identity

The Challenge

Rural Mission's unique identity is a vital part of Mission's overall character and appeal as a community of choice. As Rural Mission continues to grow and change, there is concern that the very qualities that make it an attractive place to live and visit may not be preserved.

Managing growth and investment to ensure they enhance rather than detract from this distinct rural identity is complex.

Rural identity itself is multifaceted, including physical landscapes, recreational activities, community connections, and historical roots. Capturing and protecting all these elements requires a comprehensive approach and an empowered and engaged local population. Without clear strategies and coordinated actions, there is a risk that development pressures and changing land uses could erode the natural, cultural, and social characteristics that define Rural Mission's distinctiveness.

Mission's Influence

Mission's role must align with regional directions, including the Fraser Valley Regional District's emphasis on building a strong regional identity that highlights cultural, natural, and agricultural assets. Mission plays a central role in recognizing, preserving, and enhancing Rural Mission's unique identity as a key part of the broader community's character. Through the OCP, the City acknowledges Rural Mission's distinct mix of land uses, environmental stewardship, and rural lifestyle, providing a strong policy foundation to guide growth and development.

Mission further influences land use decisions with its Zoning Bylaw, supports community programming through its operational budgeting, and implements physical improvements through its capital budgeting. While Rural Mission's identity is shaped by diverse elements—including landscapes, recreational activities, community connections, and heritage—Mission's ability to manage growth and investment strategically enables it to enhance rather than detract from these attributes. The City's influence extends to collaborating with local community groups, operators such as BC Hydro and the Municipal Forest, and neighboring jurisdictions to align efforts.



Proposed Solutions

1. Investigate opportunities to install unique gateway signage for Rural Mission communities.

Reinforcing that travellers are entering a unique place within the City of Mission at key gateways will help to visually emphasize the distinct communities that exist across the city's geography. These signs can be tailored to individual communities (e.g. "Welcome to Stave Falls, City of Mission"), or more general (e.g. "Welcome to Rural Mission").

2. Deliver placemaking elements like wayfinding signs, knowledge sharing story boards about Mission's history, Indigenous nations in the region and programming throughout Rural Mission that is co-developed in collaboration with local community members organizations, and operators (e.g. BC Hydro, the Municipal Forest, Community Associations), fostering stewardship and a sense of collective responsibility for preserving Rural Mission's identity.

To preserve and strengthen Rural Mission's unique identity amid ongoing growth, the City should develop and implement a comprehensive strategy that addresses all facets of rural character. Supporting community and City-led programming that celebrates Rural Mission's unique identity, including events centered around dark skies, nature exploration and education, forestry tours, heritage walks, and hydroelectric tours will all help to reinforce all that Rural Mission has to offer. By creating a shared sense of ownership over and understanding of Rural Mission's innate value, stronger and more sustained support for preserving its unique identity can be fostered.

Steps to Implementation

1. Budget for a preliminary investigation into the costs of various options for gateway signage across Rural Mission.
2. Work across City departments and regional and provincial agencies to increase program offerings and delivery in Rural Mission.
3. Coordinate with Rural Mission community stewards periodically to identify projects of interest that could be led by Rural Mission residents.

2.3. Funding Rural Amenities

The Challenge

Investment in rural amenities is essential for creating vibrant, connected communities by improving access to essential services, recreation opportunities, and gathering spaces, while enhancing quality of life and long-term community resilience.

However, due to a smaller tax base, funding these investments for existing and future residents can be difficult to justify.

At the same time, some areas of Rural Mission experience disproportionately high levels of use and visitation because of their unique character, natural beauty, and proximity to popular attractions such as Municipal Forest trails, Stave Lake, Rolley Lake, and the Hayward Lake Reservoir. The challenge is to establish a sustainable approach to funding rural community amenities that supports both residents and visitors while recognizing the value these amenities provide to the broader community.

Mission's Influence

Mission has several levers to influence investment in rural amenities. The City can develop alternative Amenity Cost Charge (ACC) rates specifically for Rural Mission and investigate alternative approaches for creating a unique Rural Mission class within this framework that could allow a dedicated stream of funding to be allocated to Rural Mission initiatives. The City can prioritize municipal investment in Community Gathering Places in areas that play an outsized role in supporting tourism and recreational access. Mission can also dedicate staff to pursue grants and external funding opportunities, collaborate with Mission Public Schools, BC Parks, and BC Hydro to leverage other government investments, and allocate a portion of Municipal Forest revenue toward rural amenity projects.

Mission cannot stop the level of visitation or tourism pressure on rural communities, and changes in the demand for amenities driven by external population growth or visitor patterns is beyond the City's control.

Mission also cannot directly control broader funding allocations from provincial or federal sources. Additionally, while Mission can influence where and how amenities are funded and developed, it cannot mandate private investment or fully offset the higher costs associated with dispersed rural development beyond what municipal revenues and grant programs allow.



Proposed Solutions

1. Develop alternative Amenity Cost Charge (ACC) rates for Rural Mission that directly feed back into Rural Mission amenities.
2. Propose higher ACC rates for Rural Mission than for lands within the UGB, reflecting the less efficient forms of development and greater cost per unit required for delivering amenities to these communities.
5. Collaborate on capital planning for parks and recreation amenities with Mission Public Schools, BC Parks, BC Hydro and Community Associations so that investments from other levels of government can be leveraged into greater community impact in Rural Mission.

Amendments to the ACC bylaw that allows funds raised in Rural Mission to stay in Rural Mission will allow for reinvestment into key community amenities over time. This can be a key vehicle for delivering funds required to build out parks in Community Gathering Places, for example.

3. Commit a portion of Municipal Forest revenue remitted to the City to funding community amenity projects that benefit public access to trails and parks in Rural Mission.

Reflecting the symbiotic relationship between Municipal Forest operations and recreational enjoyment of the lands by hikers, mountain bikers, and more, committing a dedicated revenue stream towards trailhead infrastructure and public access improvements could help to further enhance quality of public amenities in Rural Mission.

4. Assign dedicated City staff to spend a portion of their time seeking and applying to opportunities to fund investment in rural amenities through applicable community grants.

Leveraging senior government and not-for-profit funding streams to help pay for community amenities in Rural Mission will help investments in this part of the City go further and develop faster, all while saving Mission residents tax dollars.

Opportunistically “piggy-backing” on planned capital improvements being led by other institutional partners is another means for helping dollars invested in Rural Mission go further.

Steps to Implementation

1. ACC Bylaw revision will require additional work to identify and value rural amenities to be included in the new charge regime.
2. Funding discussions around Municipal Forest revenue, staffing allocations, and other financial decisions will require further discussion and decision-making from Administration and Council prior to implementation.

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03 Development

3.1. Preserving Rural Residential Development Patterns

The Challenge

Development in Rural Mission presents a complex issue: while the demand for rural and rural residential lots reflects the desirability of life in these communities, the impacts of such growth risk altering the very character that makes them attractive.

Other concerns, such as aquifer capacity, fall under the jurisdiction of senior levels of government, but the City of Mission has control over aspects like lot sizes, landscaping, and development processes.

The core challenge is to balance the demand for new rural lots with the need to preserve Rural Mission's unique character, recognizing that existing development entitlements permit this growth to occur.

Mission's Influence

The City has direct control over land use regulations and development standards, meaning it can amend zoning bylaws to set minimum separation distances between dwellings, establish native landscaping requirements, reduce impervious surface coverage, and increase minimum lot sizes. Beyond zoning and subdivision regulations, Mission can investigate the introduction of rural development guidelines, ensuring that new residential and commercial development reflects the established rural identity. Through its planning authority, Mission can guide lot sizing, landscaping, and built form in ways that preserve the rural character while still accommodating growth.

At the same time, there are important limits to what Mission can do. Aquifer capacity and other groundwater management issues are regulated by senior levels of government, meaning Mission cannot unilaterally control or restrict development on this basis but can only advocate for provincial studies and oversight. Broader housing supply requirements, such as the mandate under the Local Government Act to pre-zone land for 20 years of demand, also constrain how restrictive the City can be in limiting development generally, although the City can and does prioritize the majority of all new growth within the Urban Growth Boundary. In this way, Mission can influence the form, pace, and character of development within its jurisdiction but cannot prevent growth outright or regulate environmental factors that fall under provincial authority.

Proposed Solutions

1. Increase minimum contiguous developable area requirements for new lots in the Rural and Rural Residential zones of the Zoning Bylaw which would, in some cases, reduce the maximum lot yield on large parcels otherwise possible under existing zone allowances.
2. Establish minimum distance separation for residential dwellings in the Rural and Rural Residential zones of the Zoning Bylaw.
3. Increase current minimum lot areas for bare land strata in the Rural and Rural Residential zones of the Zoning Bylaw.

These Zoning Bylaw amendments work cohesively to ensure development respects the established character of Rural Mission, preserving native vegetation by concentrating growth to contiguous developable blocks, limiting the impacts of development on existing neighbours, and requiring new development to provide adequate land to accommodate growth sensitively.

4. Amend the Development and Subdivision Control Bylaw to regulate the maximum number of lots per subdivision considered in a single application for lands outside the UGB.

This change is intended to ensure that future land development occurs in an organized, methodical, and appropriately paced manner commensurate with the overall rate of development anticipated in Rural Mission. This approach to managing pace of development will ensure that new development does not overwhelm established communities or fundamentally alter community character by dramatically altering rural communities in one single application, while also allowing for a more intentional and responsive approach to development approvals that can more readily account for incremental impacts of development on shared community resources such as the aquifer.

5. Advocate to the Province for further study into Rural Mission's aquifer capacity.

While study related to aquifer health and capacity is a responsibility outside the City's jurisdiction, Mission can actively advocate for the Province to engage in further study of this shared resource.

Steps to Implementation

1. Prepare draft Zoning Bylaw and Development and Subdivision Control Bylaw amendments comprehensively so all changes recommended in the RMS are brought forward for Council consideration at the same time.

3.2. Maintaining Rural Residential Character

The Challenge

Development in Rural Mission presents a complex issue: while the demand for rural and rural residential lots reflects the desirability of life in these communities, the impacts of such growth risk altering the very character that makes them attractive.

Other concerns, such as aquifer capacity, fall under the jurisdiction of senior levels of government, but the City of Mission has control over aspects like lot sizes, landscaping, and development processes.

The core challenge is to balance the demand for new rural lots with the need to preserve Rural Mission's unique character, recognizing that existing development entitlements permit this growth to occur.

Mission's Influence

The City of Mission has significant direct authority over rural residential character through its zoning regulations, development permit processes, and bylaw development powers. Mission can establish and enforce standards for lot sizes, building coverage limits, setbacks, tree protection, and landscaping requirements for new developments. The municipality has regulatory tools to control light pollution through comprehensive bylaws, protect view corridors through zoning overlays and development permit areas, and manage land clearing through permitting processes. Additionally, Mission can convert its own streetlighting to dark sky-friendly LED systems and create rural development permit areas that guide how new development integrates with existing rural character.

Several important factors affecting rural character fall outside municipal jurisdiction or face significant enforcement limitations. The City has limited ability to control private property lighting on existing developments, BC Hydro-managed streetlights and infrastructure, or forestry operations on private lands beyond the municipal forest. Market forces such as development demand, property values, and private landowner decisions on existing properties also remain largely outside municipal influence, though zoning and development regulations can help shape how these pressures manifest in the community.

Proposed Solutions

1. Introduce minimum native vegetation preservation requirements for new developments that preserve tree and natural vegetation coverage in the Rural and Rural Residential zones of the Zoning Bylaw.
2. Decrease the maximum lot coverage allowed for impervious surfaces in the Rural and Rural Residential zones of the Zoning Bylaw.

Both of these Zoning Bylaw amendments will help to preserve natural vegetation during development, and ensure that significant portions of development lots are not cleared and hardscaped. This will help to retain native tree canopy and enable the retention of the forested characteristics that define Rural Mission.

3. Investigate the potential to introduce rural specific development permit area guidelines to Rural Mission for commercial and industrial developments.

Mission can maintain rural residential character through a comprehensive approach to rural development for both residential and commercial uses. These guidelines can address landscape planning for new developments, matters related to dark skies preservation, and other matters important to preserving rural character in new buildings.

Steps to Implementation

1. Prepare draft Zoning Bylaw amendments and new rural design guidelines comprehensively so all changes recommended in the RMS are brought forward for Council consideration at the same time.

3.3. Enabling Appropriate Commercial Developments

The Challenge

Supporting rural communities requires allowing appropriately scaled development that contributes to the creation of Community Gathering Places, where residents can gather, socialize, and access local services.

While limited commercial entitlements already exist throughout Rural Mission and can help form these small nodes of activity, the challenge lies in ensuring that such uses are introduced in ways that complement the established rural character rather than undermine it. At the same time, there is a need to provide a framework that makes local commercial activity economically viable, while also addressing resident concerns about potential impacts such as excess traffic, noise, and light pollution that could negatively affect the quality of rural life.

Mission's Influence

Mission can shape how limited commercial development is introduced in Rural Neighbourhood Centres by updating the Zoning Bylaw to create a specific zone that allows only contextually sensitive uses, ensuring they complement rural character. The City can also investigate the use of rural development guidelines to regulate the design of both residential and commercial projects, ensuring that issues such as traffic, noise, and light pollution are minimized.

Through the Official Community Plan, Mission can identify and reinforce where commercial development is appropriate, while engaging with residents to balance local concerns with community needs.

What Mission cannot directly influence is whether these small-scale commercial ventures are ultimately viable in the marketplace, since business success depends on resident demand, economic conditions, and private investment decisions. Similarly, broader regional policies and growth pressures shape the level of interest in developing such uses, and Mission



Proposed Solution

1. Update the Zoning Bylaw to introduce a specific zone to be used for commercial development in the OCP-identified Rural Neighbourhood Centres, enabling contextually sensitive rural commercial uses.

To support appropriately scaled development in Rural Mission, the Zoning Bylaw should be updated to introduce a specific zone tailored for commercial uses within the Rural Neighbourhood Centres identified in the OCP. This zoning would enable contextually sensitive rural commercial development that supports community gathering while maintaining the established rural character. This will work in conjunction with the proposed rural development guidelines, ensuring that future development is designed in a way that complements and enhances the unique identity of Rural Mission.

Steps to Implementation

1. Prepare draft Zoning Bylaw amendments and new rural design guidelines comprehensively so all changes recommended in the RMS are brought forward for Council consideration at the same time.

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3.4. Post-Extraction Transition

The Challenge

While the new Official Community Plan (OCP) provides a range of acceptable uses for future exhausted sand and aggregate pits, there is currently limited specific direction on how these transition plans should be developed and approved.

This gap creates uncertainty in effectively managing the shift of extraction lands from active gravel pit uses to other purposes. The City's goals are to support the transition of these extraction lands to new uses and to refine the permitted uses for gravel pit lands once they are no longer used for extraction.

Mission's Influence

Mission has strong authority over land use regulation within its jurisdiction, enabling the City to require land use redesignation and to establish policies guiding the redevelopment of exhausted sand and aggregate pits. Through the Official Community Plan (OCP) and its Rural Industrial Plan, Mission sets the framework for permissible future uses and development processes for these lands. The City can require comprehensive site plans, buffer zones, and engagement with adjacent landowners and local First Nations.

Provincial regulations such as the Mines Act and related reclamation codes set mandatory standards for environmental rehabilitation and reclamation processes, meaning the City's policies must align with these provincial requirements and environmental legislation. Mission's influence is strongest in shaping land use, development approval, and community engagement, while coordination with provincial authorities ensures compliance with reclamation and ecosystem health standards.



Proposed Solutions

1. Require a land use redesignation, consistent with the policies of the OCP, to enable future redevelopment of exhausted sand and aggregate pits.
2. Implement a standalone policy for the redesignation of OCP-identified Rural Industrial lands that:
 - a. Requires the development of a comprehensive plan for the entire site;
 - b. Requires mirroring adjacent land uses or creating lower-intensity buffers against adjacent land uses (e.g. buffering adjacent Rural Residential with Rural Residential or naturalized areas before transitioning to other uses);
 - c. Establishes a minimum separation distance for employment-generating uses from Rural Residential designated lots;
 - d. Is developed through a process that includes engagement with adjacent landowners and local land-based First Nations; and
 - e. Clarifies that only the uses identified in the OCP and the following additional uses are permitted:
 - i. Institutional
 - ii. Agricultural
3. Establish a prioritization framework where City-owned pits transition to primarily parks and Municipal Forest uses, and privately-owned pits transition to primarily tax-generating uses.

Consistent with the first two recommendations, this approach ensures that City lands are returned to public-benefiting public uses such as parks and Municipal Forest operations while privately-held extractive resource operations are transitioned to uses that continue providing economic value to the City.

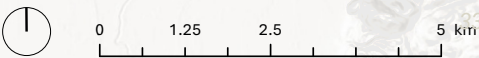
Steps to Implementation

1. Develop and adopt a standalone land use redesignation policy for Rural Industrial lands, consistent with the OCP's Rural Industrial Plan and employment goals.
2. Require comprehensive site-wide plans for all redesignation applications covering buffering, land use transitions, and community engagement.
3. Establish minimum separation distances between employment-generating uses and adjacent rural residential properties to reduce conflicts.
4. Review and refine the Employment Lands Strategy to support job growth, tax diversification, and strategic land use on transitioned gravel pit lands.

These two recommendations work in tandem to ensure future redevelopment of these lands is done intentionally, and with a comprehensive plan for their full build-out. It is important that existing municipal tax revenue-generating uses are transitioned to development schemes that still retain some revenue-generating potential so as to not unfairly burden Mission taxpayers upon their end of extractive use.

-  Rural Strategy Boundary
-  Municipal Boundary
-  Urban Growth Boundary
-  First Nations
-  Resource Extraction Lands

Resource Extraction Lands



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04 Transportation

4.1. Street Lighting

The Challenge

Rural streetlighting in Mission presents a complex issue shaped by competing priorities. While residents highly value dark skies and the area's rural character, there is also a pressing need to improve safety along rural roads, particularly at key intersections where visibility is limited.

This creates a challenge because opportunities to install streetlights are constrained by the desire to minimize light pollution and protect night skies and sensitive ecosystems.

Balancing these conflicting goals of enhancing public safety through strategic lighting while reducing light pollution requires a thoughtful and informed approach. Moreover, streetlighting is often not the primary factor affecting road safety in Rural Mission; existing City studies, such as the Rural Road Safety Improvement Report, provide guidance for prioritizing investments to address safety concerns more effectively.

Mission's Influence

Mission has authority to regulate streetlighting within its jurisdiction through its Official Community Plan, Development Permit Areas, and the Development and Subdivision Control Bylaw. This allows the City to set standards for streetlight placement, lighting levels, and colour temperature on municipal roads and City-owned properties, and to transition to warm, dark sky-friendly LED lighting.

Mission is unable to control lighting on highways and major routes as these are managed by the Ministry of Transportation. This division of responsibility requires coordination between MOTI and Mission to balance public safety needs with the goal of minimizing light pollution and preserving the rural night sky.

Proposed Solution

1. **Continue implementing prioritized streetlighting upgrades on municipal roads as identified in the Rural Road Safety Improvement Report.**

This ongoing commitment to implementing the Rural Road Safety Improvement Report will help to address some of the most important challenges leading to road safety issues in Rural Mission.

2. **Convert all City-owned lighting in Rural Mission to dark sky-compliant LEDs.**

This ongoing body of City work will help to reduce the overall impact of streetlighting on Rural Mission's dark skies while also saving the City money and improving overall safety.

3. **Establish formal communication and collaboration channels with the Ministry of Transportation and Transit to coordinate lighting policies and projects on provincially controlled roads within Mission's boundaries.**

With the City's competing goals around Rural Mission road safety and preserving dark skies it will be important to ensure that all stakeholders involved in delivering streetlighting and other road safety measures are aligned and working together. Establishing these formal and ongoing communication channels will help to deliver on these shared goals.

Steps to Implementation

1. Develop and adopt a standalone land use 1. Continue implementing prioritized streetlighting upgrades on municipal roads as identified in the Rural Road Safety Improvement Report.
2. Establish formal communication and collaboration channels with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to coordinate lighting policies and projects on provincially controlled roads within Mission's boundaries.

4.2. Street Safety

The Challenge

Beyond streetlighting, other road safety issues have been identified by Rural Mission residents, industrial users of rural roads, and by professional technical study of Rural Mission's road network.

The width of road shoulders (or lack thereof) for safe travel by means other than vehicle, enforcement of truck routes, and maintenance of safer routes for forestry vehicles are all ongoing challenges in Rural Mission. Ensuring all of these challenges are addressed in a coordinated and efficient manner can be a challenge across multiple different departments and levels of government.

Mission's Influence

The City holds primary responsibility for the ongoing maintenance and improvements of City roads. Where this responsibility intersects with matters of Provincial interest such as emergency detour routes and other Provincial agency infrastructure (such as dams), certain responsibilities are abdicated to these bodies.

Proposed Solutions

1. Create a new annual budget item for shoulder widening on roads that support overall network connectivity, considered through updates to Transportation Master Plan and discussions with the City's Forestry Department.

Forestry and Rural Mission residents have shared concerns about the width of paved shoulders on many of the roads surrounding the Municipal Forest. Improvements to these, including longer-term commitments to developing a connected network of shouldered roads throughout Rural Mission, will help improve the safety of forestry hauling through Rural Mission and of residents and visitors alike travelling along the sides of roads by active modes of transportation.

2. Update the City's Truck management network and signage.

Ongoing work to update the City's Truck management network and commensurate signage throughout Mission should be implemented as quickly as possible to ensure that these roads are appropriately signed and monitored for compliance.

Steps to Implementation

1. Transportation and Forestry departments within the City should continue to liaise on these issues and implement improvements as opportunistically viable.



4.3. Rural Transit

The Challenge

There is currently no transit service in Rural Mission. While some interest has been expressed from residents to extend service to various locations in Rural Mission, the population densities and ridership potential throughout this area make justifying the costs required to introduce service difficult.

Mission's Influence

Recent transit planning initiatives by the FVRD and City of Mission have also confirmed that extending transit service to Rural Mission is not currently a priority over increasing service frequency within the Urban Growth Boundary.

Proposed Solution

1. Maintain the current approach to transit service expansion and delivery, with the option to reassess and extend service to Rural Mission as demand or need arises.

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4.4. Trailheads and Parking

The Challenge

As the popularity of Rural Mission's recreational amenities continues to grow, challenges associated with accommodating demand for parking and access infrastructure will also grow. Recognizing the desirability of Rural Mission's substantial hiking, fishing, mountain biking, boating, and other recreational options can be contentious, as improvements to this infrastructure can induce further demand. At the same time, neglecting to invest in these amenities can in turn lead to traffic safety concerns, increased user conflict, and a diminished ability of Mission residents themselves to access and enjoy our backyard.

Mission's Influence

Mission has the ability to develop trailhead and other access-supporting infrastructure on any lands it maintains provided improvements comply with applicable Provincial environmental legislation.

Proposed Solutions

1. Prepare a Trails Master Plan that addresses the gap between Active Transportation and Parks planning, specifically addressing challenges in providing adequate parking at key trailheads and access points.
2. Create a trailhead development and improvement plan for phased development of a comprehensive network of formal trailheads to access Mission's Municipal Forest and lakes.

Comprehensive trail planning has never been undertaken in Mission, and developing this asset will allow the City to take an informed and principled approach to decision-making around where and how funds should be invested in improving access to Rural Mission's recreational amenities. Appropriately applied, this initiative will help improve access to Rural Mission's nature for all recreational users, from anglers to hikers to boaters and more.

3. Continue supporting the Hayward Lake Reservoir trail to promote connectivity between Steelhead, Stave Falls, and Silverdale.
4. Prioritize development of the Silverdale Creek pathway and continue this 'active modes' link north along Dewdney Trunk Road up to Steelhead.

Investing in and supporting the development of these backbone trails will eventually foster a top-to-bottom off-road connector from the Fraser River to Stave Lake. This connectivity will not only improve quality of life for residents but also serve as an economic development vehicle for adventure and eco-tourism, elevating Mission's profile as a city in the rainforest.

Steps to Implementation

1. Capital plan for developing and implementing the Trails Master Plan and subsequent infrastructure projects.
2. Continue ongoing dialogues between City departments to address existing pinch points for trails access such as Wilson Street and Hayward Lake access.

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Implementation

Implementation

Implementation of the RMS recommendations will take place over several years, with some recommendations immediately implementable, but others requiring longer-term commitments.

The chart on the next page outlines how this implementation can take place.

Matrix Legend

- **Actions** are described briefly and organized based on the RMS's chapters. Guidance on their intent and specifics that should be considered as part of the implementation process are discussed in relevant chapters and sections within this document.
- In most instances, **actions support more than one element of Rural Identity through their implementation.** As such, the elements of Rural Identity (Landscape, Community, Development, Transportation) being achieved through the action are also identified.
- A ballpark **Timeline** for implementation is also indicated, ranging from Immediate, to Short-Term, to Medium-Term, to Longer-Term.
- Lastly, **Indicators for successful implementation** are included to allow for periodic reporting back to Council on the ongoing success of RMS implementation.

Matrix

	Actions	Goals				Timeline	Indicator
							
Landscape	Emphasize the 30m buffer option in lieu of Riparian Areas Protection Regulation (RAPR)'s more detailed technical review approach as an option as development application.	●		●		Short-term	• Increase in protected streamcourses • Percentage towards completion of RMS amendments to the Zoning Bylaw • Rate of loss of undisturbed lands • Number of new or proportion of total new municipal trees planted outside the UGB
	Implement all recommended Zoning Bylaw amendments.	●	●	●		Short-term	
	Amend the OCP's Development Permit Area E: Natural Environment to include: • higher targets for retention of undisturbed lands • dark sky buffers • stronger requirements for development lighting on lands close to the Urban Growth Boundary	●	●	●		Short-term	
	Conduct a study to determine an appropriate allocation of municipal tree planting for rural communities and view corridors.	●	●			Medium-term	
	Develop resources to educate the public on legislation that directs visual standards and viewshed preservation.					Medium-term	
	Dark Sky Designation and tourism	●	●	●		Long-term	

Implementation

	Actions	Goals				Timeline	Indicator
							
Community	Dedicate a portion of staffing resources to identifying grant and investment opportunities for rural amenity projects.		●			Medium-term	Net increase in utilization of community space outside the UGB
	Review and update joint use agreement with Mission Public Schools to: - provide access to school facilities outside of regular school hours - promote more collaboration on capital planning for park and recreational amenities		●			Medium-term	Number of capital projects to implement parks, recreation, and culture amenities (including signage and wayfinding) outside the UGB
	Develop a framework for guiding amenity provision in rural Mission that: - commits a predictable revenue source to fund capital projects in rural areas through ACCs and Municipal Forest returns - accounts for relative access to natural areas - reflects the higher cost per unit for development and maintenance - encourages external investments	●	●	●		Medium-term	- Amount of non-City funds leveraged to deliver amenities outside the UGB - Delivery of wayfinding signage, gateway signage, and other rural identity installations
	Incorporate Rural Community Gathering Place as a park classification in future updates to Mission's Parks, Recreation, & Culture Master Plan that includes: - priority locations suited to the classification - modified levels of service - rural character design standards		●	●		Medium-term	
	Secure funding to develop rural signage and wayfinding in collaboration with communities, local organizations and operators.	●	●		●	Medium-term	

Implementation

	Actions	Goals				Timeline	Indicator
							
Development	Amend Rural and Rural Residential zones in the Zoning Bylaw consistent with the recommendations of the RMS.	•	•	•		Short-term	- Decreased rate of rural subdivision - Decreased rate of tree canopy decline - Established design guidelines for rural development - Stable municipal revenues from extractive resource properties
	Amend the Development and Subdivision Control Bylaw consistent with the recommendations of the RMS.		•	•		Short-term	
	Evaluate the benefits of preparing new development guidelines to direct rural development through future updates to the Official Community Plan.		•	•		Long-term	
	Develop a policy to guide future redevelopment of exhausted sand and aggregate pit that requires: - a land use redesignation consistent with OCP policies - a comprehensive site plan - appropriate interfaces with adjacent land uses - min. separation distances between employment and residential uses - engagement with adjacent landowners and local land-based First Nations			•		Medium-term	
	Create a prioritization framework that maintains a municipal use for City-owned pits and a tax-generating use for privately-owned pits.	•	•	•		Medium-term	

Implementation

	Actions	Goals				Timeline	Indicator
							
Transportation	Convert all remaining City streetlights to LEDs.		•	•	•	Short-term	- Kilometres of shoulders paved - New or expanded access points to trails
	Implement standing road shoulder paving program in partnership with the Forestry Department.		•		•	Medium-term	
	Develop and implement Trails Master Plan and associated improvements to rural amenity infrastructure throughout Rural Mission.	•	•		•	Medium-term	

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