

January 11, 2001

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Re: Compilation of Land Use Issues - North Yukon Land Use Planning Region

As you know, Section 7 of the General Terms of Reference for the North Yukon Planning Commissions requires each of the Parties to provide a detailed list of issues to the Commission for inclusion in the Precise Terms of Reference. Outlined below is a list of issues that the Yukon Government has identified for this planning region. Please note that these issues are not listed in order of priority.

1. Oil and Gas Development

A significant portion of the planning area is located within the Eagle Plain basin. The basin contains discovered oil and gas reserves and represents additional significant petroleum potential. Due to present and future demands, further oil and gas development is likely to occur in this area in the near future.

Specific issues that the Commission should examine in relation to these potential developments include:

- Eagle Plain region is one of only two Yukon areas with discovered hydrocarbon reserves. In addition, this area contains significant undiscovered oil and gas potential. Regional resource assessments have been completed for all the petroleum areas in Yukon. Based on current knowledge, they outline where in Yukon oil and gas is likely to be found.
- The areas of oil and gas potential make up only a small percentage of Yukon Territory and are limited by specific geological parameters. It is important the land use plan helps to create a positive environment for the responsible development of oil and gas resources in northern Yukon.
- Future oil and gas development of northern Yukon is expected to have a profound and direct effect on the local and regional economy. In addition to direct government revenues such as taxes, rentals and royalties, it will result in training, employment and business opportunities for all Yukon people.

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- The Yukon Oil and Gas Act is being developed jointly with the territorial government and Yukon First Nations. It embodies legislation, regulations and processes to manage the industry's development. The Act and accompanying regulations address the protection of Yukon people and of the environment as well as conservation of our oil and gas resources. This approach of orderly development complements traditional land use planning methods.
- Infrastructure and transportation pipelines, such as feeder lines and the Dempster Lateral Pipeline Option, are necessary for oil and gas industry development. Consideration must be made for access to oil and gas resources by road and/or pipeline.
- It is important that areas of special habitat or extra sensitivity are identified for future development consideration. For example, salmon spawning waterways or viewscapes from the Dempster Highway may be subject to extra care during operations. Specific strategies should be developed to address operations in extra care areas. These will provide certainty to industry and ensure work will proceed appropriately in these areas.

2. Renewable Energy

Five large-scale potential hydro projects have been identified in the region. Three sites are on the Porcupine River, two are on the Bell Rivers and all are larger than 100 MW. There is no baseline information on small-scale wind or hydro renewable energy in the region and there is very limited hydrology information. Currently there are only two hydrometric sites; one at Old Crow and one on the Porcupine River near the border. In addition, renewable energy options for Old Crow need to be reviewed.

Specific issues for the Commission to consider are:

- The ability to reduce the area's reliance on diesel generated electricity and move towards the development and use renewable forms of energy is an important long-term consideration
- The commitments of Governments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions should be considered in relation to any energy related options for the area.
- Impacts of any proposed energy related development on the environment, particularly aquatic ecosystems and the hydrology of the area (i.e. water quality and quantity)

3. Forestry

Due to its sub-Arctic location, significant forest growth is found only on the alluvial soils in the major river valleys. The forest resource of the area is limited, and for this reason it is valuable to the community of Old Crow. This resource is used as the major source of heating in Old Crow. Wood is also used for rough construction purposes. Yukon Forest Resources has some preliminary forest cover mapping for the Old Crow area and inventory collection is ongoing.

Specific issues for the Commission to consider are:

- Examination of the existing use of timber resources within the area (i.e. fuelwood, building materials)

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- Potential impacts of any harvesting activities on habitats, soils, water quality and other non-timber values
- Fire protection measures including possible locations to apply fire smart strategies

4. Mining

[Background information needed from Economic Development, i.e. something to describe what activity has occurred and/or what we know about the mineral potential here.]

Specific issues for the Commission to consider are:

- Access to resources?
- Potential impacts that mining activities may have on the environment?

*- time needed to
- MRA potential
- integrate to RGS data base
- access to
- min claims
- Quartz Act
- LMR
- areas needing high level protection should be identified away*

5. Transportation and Community Services

The plan should examine issues related to existing infrastructure related to community and transportation services within the area. There should also be some examination of the need for future municipal type services such as solid waste disposal sites, sewage lagoons, potable water sources, firehalls, etc.

Specific issues for the Commission to consider are:

- Potential future road access to Old Crow
- Management of the Dempster Highway corridor including right of access to road building and maintenance materials (borrow pits, gravel quarries, rip rap sources). A utility corridor should also be protected along the Dempster Highway for possible future development. It should include 200 by 200 meter sites by any settlement or developed area for potential substation sites.
- telecommunications, electrification
- The need to preserve the ability to provide reasonable ground access to any location if necessary
- Access to resources within the planning region
- Private roads, private airstrips and the Tuttle Airstrip
- Access to future tidewater port (i.e. Shingle Point, King Point)

6. Settlement and Local Area Planning

The plan should provide recommendations for the pattern and sequence of future growth and identify generally areas for municipal expansion, future growth nodes for cottaging, rural residential, commercial, industrial land or mixtures of these classes of land and/or other development in the region

Specific issues for the Commission to consider are:

- The plan should determine whether additional planning at a more detailed level would be of value for particular areas (i.e. local area planning and zoning)

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- Ad hoc Dempster Highway development (cabins) impact on the landscape. The regional plan should consider identifying and designating areas for permanent or temporary structures and day use activities. Providing designated locations for development helps manage visitor activity and minimize damage to the environment and landscape.
- The plan should provide recommendations for livable communities (An example of this is the “Ahwanees principles” which may be found at www.sustainable.doe.gov/landuse/luahwane.shtml)

7. Tourism

The North Yukon region has very good potential to attract a limited and managed number of visitors drawn by the unique and pristine features of the area. There has been significant growth in the wilderness/eco tourism industry here and this sector continues to show potential for continued growth. Over the past two years the Department of Tourism has worked with VGFN citizens interested in pursuing tourism opportunities in the area and they are also in the preliminary stages of completing a Tourism Plan for this region.

Specific issues for the Commission to consider are:

- Consideration of tourism values and potential in light of other development interests
- How tourism development can occur in a sustainable manner, while respecting and not interfering with traditional activities, while generating economic and employment benefits for the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation
- The measures to maintain the landscape and minimize the impact of any development on visitor's experiences
- Some tourism operators in the region have indicated the need for more certainty around land use and business development opportunities and have expressed concerns about pursuing development in the event that the rules will change.

8. Yukon Protected Areas Strategy

[Background information needed from YPAS Secretariat –something about YPAS initiative to establish a representative area for the Eagle Plains Ecoregion?]

9. Process related Issues

There are a number of planning related activities underway in this area that have been initiated by various governments and/or mandated bodies under the VGFN Final Agreement. These include Fish & Wildlife Management planning, YPAS related planning, Vuntut National Park Plan, Special Management Area planning, Oil and Gas Disposition and Licensing processes, Tourism planning etc. In the early stages of the regional land use planning process, the Commission should become familiar with these processes and determine how it should be involved from a regional land use planning perspective and ensure ongoing coordination with these activities. For example, issues such as access management should be dealt with in a coordinated manner to ensure that single use roads are not developed where a multiple use roads could be built.

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It is our understanding the Commission is planning to hold a series of workshops in May to seek public and government input on issues related to the planning region. Please note that we would be pleased to assist the Commission in any way possible in the workshops. This includes making staff available (where possible) to provide presentations on any of the issues discussed in this letter.

We look forward to working with you in the future as the planning process proceeds.

Sincerely,

Don Hutton
Director, Policy and Planning

- c. Hugh Monahan, Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation
Roger Horner, DIAND, Canada
Ron Cruikshank, Yukon Land Use Planning Council