

CONVERSATION STARTER: NATURAL ENVIRONMENT



BACKGROUND

The City of Kamloops has a total land area of approximately 29,000 hectares, less than 20% of which is considered to be urban and approximately 40% within the Agricultural Land Reserve. Despite the large amount of undeveloped land, concern for the environment is increasingly important as our population grows. Protection of Environmentally Sensitive Areas (such as watercourses, steep slopes, grasslands, and wildlife habitats) is important for the long-term interest of Kamloops citizens and its growth. The implementation of measures and guidelines will help to achieve a balance of continued urban growth with environmental protection and sustainability.

CURRENT TRENDS

- Mountain pine beetle infestation has run its course
- Increased wildfire activity and high summer temperatures increase water demands, particularly for irrigation
- Increased attention to water conservation
- Increased intensity of storms
- Continued desire for large lots and monster houses
- Increased intensity of development leaves fewer natural areas
- Desire to locate next to City watercourses
- Development of urban neighbourhoods that are un-walkable
- “Throwaway lifestyle” consumption habits
- Increased carbon footprint and warming climate in Kamloops
- Opposition to industry expansion and growth due to environmental concerns
- Use of pesticide continues to be a contentious issue
- Invasive species impact ecosystems, displace native plants and decrease habitat for wild/domesticated animals

WHAT DOES KAMPLAN 2004 SAY?

- Protect and enhance the natural environment, particularly sensitive and unique natural areas
- Protect and enhance fish and wildlife habitats in balance with development, recreational use and flood protection
- Continue efforts to improve air quality
- Continue to participate in the Partners for Climate Protection program to reduce local GHG emissions
- Encourage the development of a compact, ecologically friendly and efficient land use and transportation system that emphasizes energy conservation, air quality, land stewardship, and sustainability
- Develop and maintain an aesthetically appealing and environmentally sensitive urban environment
- Identify areas of hazard and establish appropriate guidelines for development, including mitigation measures or restrictions, to help ensure public safety and protection from property damage

WHAT DOES THE SUSTAINABLE KAMLOOPS PLAN SAY?

- Develop a carbon neutral strategy for the City
- Enhance stormwater management systems for changing rain patterns and raise public awareness
- Review floodplains and determine protection measures
- Protect development from hazardous conditions through avoidance and/or mitigative measures
- Encourage the retention of existing and planting of new trees and promote natural landscaping techniques
- Identify and protect environmentally-sensitive areas
- Continue to reduce water demands, especially in summer
- Greatly reduce the amount of solid waste going to landfills and increase reuse and recycling

CURRENT CHALLENGES

- Air pollution from high reliance on private vehicles due
- Urban sprawl and increased development on steep hillsides
- Climate change could impact biogeoclimatic characteristics
- Soil contamination
- Riverbank erosion
- Topographical and geological restrictions to development: land within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), steep slopes, silt bluffs, unstable soils, and flood plains
- Overlap between sensitive ecosystems and habitat for rare and endangered species and future development areas
- Degradation of water quality through storm water runoff, dumping from industry
- Impacts to riparian areas and fisheries from construction
- Increased storm intensity causing challenges with stormwater systems
- Reducing water demand, particularly during summer
- Loss of vegetation due to pine beetle infestation diminished natural ability to absorb moisture
- Adverse interactions between residents and wildlife
- Lack of authority to regulate the sale of pesticides
- Disturbance of undeveloped natural spaces contributes to the spread of noxious/invasive weeds

KAMPLAN (2004) SUCCESS STORIES

- Established national "Clean Air Day" in Kamloops and participated in Word Rivers Day and Bike to Work Week
- Airshed Management Plan and Agriculture Area Plan
- Curbside and Multi-family residential recycling program
- City-wide residential water metering
- Kamloops Centre for Water Quality.
- Completed Master Watershed Plans for Brock/North Shore and Batchelor
- Adopted pesticide use control by-law (2010) for residential/ornamental landscapes
- Used goats for weed control in unmanaged areas
- Increased public awareness of noxious/invasive weeds due to popularity of goats

OPPORTUNITIES

- Car sharing program and increased transit routes
- Developing compact communities and neighbourhoods that are pedestrian and cyclist friendly
- Implementing the Airshed Management Plan
- Increasing stormwater management activities
- Working with regional, provincial, and national partners to prepare for a range of climate change impacts
- Riverbank stabilization/protection program
- Preserving riverfront properties and developing a shoreline management plan
- Universal water metering to reduce demand and consumption
- Increase public awareness about the financial and environmental benefits of water conservation
- Increase public awareness of sensitive ecosystems and rare and endangered species habitats within the City
- Review and update landscape guidelines with greater focus on water conservation
- Curbside composting program
- Leave strips or buffer areas around ecologically sensitive areas
- Increasing recycling through public awareness/education
- Increasing public awareness/education on wildlife safety
- Continue to work towards a Natural Areas Management Plan to guide development and management of natural areas
- Continue 'healthy landscapes' campaign to educate residents on integrated pest management techniques
- Amend bylaw and develop seeding/restoration protocol to address spread of noxious/invasive weeds during development

Did you know? Kamloops made national news for our use of goats for natural weed control.

